



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Joint Doctrine Note 1/12  
**Strategic Communication:  
The Defence Contribution**



# JOINT DOCTRINE NOTE 1/12

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION: THE DEFENCE CONTRIBUTION

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is promulgated  
as directed by the Chiefs of Staff



Head of Doctrine Air and Space (Development, Concepts and Doctrine)

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# PREFACE

## Purpose

1. Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1/11, *Strategic Communication: The Military Contribution* was published in March 2011 with the intention of it being a start-point in Defence's effort to understand better the purpose and value of strategic communication. The publication was acknowledged to have provided a good insight into the problems relating to strategic communication but was equivocal in stating what needed to be done about it; in particular, Chapter 3 held back from suggesting structures and processes that might be required to conduct effective strategic communication.

2. Since its publication, thinking around strategic communication has continued to evolve and some of the ideas initially proposed have been developed and introduced. The 2011 military campaign in Libya offers an early example of different government departments collaborating to integrate words and actions in support of overall government objectives.

3. As a result, *Strategic Communication: the Defence Contribution* has been revised. This Edition replaces JDN 1/11 and contains a revised Chapter 3 entitled *Conducting Strategic Communication* to capture some of the progress made, and to offer a clearer model for further development. As with the previous publication, this JDN focuses on the MOD but recognises that strategic communication is a cross-government enterprise; led, and directed, by the Cabinet and the National Security Council.

## Context

4. The importance of strategic communication in meeting national policy goals has continued to grow both within the MOD and across government. Initially, a key driver was the recent experience of our struggle to forge coherent strategies for our campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to communicate them to audiences in a compelling way against a backdrop of 24-hour and, increasingly pervasive, social media. While there was considerable effort to communicate, this had not been matched by a deepening understanding of strategic communication in the contemporary environment. Some progress was made in the approach to strategic

communication during Operation ELLAMY, the UK element of the NATO operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR, in Libya in 2011. It is important that this progress is recognised and developed.

*'HMG did not appear to have produced a fully integrated interagency strategy for southern Iraq until January 2009...*

*...The absence of a coherent UK coalition and strategic narrative and the increasing unpopularity of the war created a very challenging environment for media operations. This became even more difficult when UK and US strategy diverged after the US decision to surge in Jan 07.'*

Brigadier Ben Barry OBE  
Operation TELIC (Jun 05-Jun 09) General Staff Analysis

5. This imperative is driven and magnified by today's information and media environments. Everything we say and do is exposed to instantaneous global scrutiny, not just by conventional media with its own biases and agendas, but also by individuals able (and inclined) to transmit information and news via the world-wide-web; 'what is said in Helmand, is heard in Huddersfield' and vice versa.

6. Satellite communications and the internet mean that information flow is now so prevalent, potent and unavoidable that it forms as much a part of the strategic environment as the terrain or weather. Like the terrain and weather, it can neither be ignored, nor controlled. Increasingly, information can be regarded as a strategic instrument in its own right, with influence being its desired product.<sup>1</sup>

7. We need to be able to communicate the strategy we forge, which demands that it is capable of simple explanation. Strategic communication must be integral to strategy, providing the means to explain our ideas in a compelling and persuasive way through an engagement in dialogue. This requires us to listen, and adapt our messages and channels for communication over time. Ultimately, the dialogue may tell us that we need to adjust the strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Royal College of Defence Studies, *Thinking Strategically* (October 2010 Edition).

8. Our dialogue with any audience is only one of many that audiences will be privy to. The information environment exposes audiences to agendas and messages from all quarters. To make a compelling and persuasive case – one that will resonate with audiences in this unrelenting contest – requires us to align better our words, images and actions to influence key decision-makers and their people for strategic effect. This involves everyone, not just communicators. We will also need to recognise the importance of domestic audiences on opinion formers at home, and of international audiences and diasporas on our governments, including our coalition partners. We also need to understand audiences better: their culture, motivations and pre-conceptions.

9. Information can no longer be routinely subordinated to the more familiar and comfortable concepts of manoeuvre and force. Too often in the past we have placed information on the periphery of our operations, failing to understand that reinforcing, or changing, the attitude and behaviour of selected audiences can have equal, if not greater, utility than force in securing our operational objectives. Recent experience in Afghanistan and Libya has shown we cannot afford to think about influence and information as separate lines of operation. Given a competitive and interconnected information environment, we must re-prioritise our approach. It is in this context that strategic communication offers considerable opportunity to help achieve our objectives more effectively.

## **Structure**

10. This JDN is written in 3 chapters:

a. Chapter 1 defines and describes strategic communication, explaining why it matters. It then expands on what strategic communication is and how Defence contributes to it before examining what this means for Defence, and, more broadly, across-Government.

b. Chapter 2 sets out the context: we examine the communication environment, with implications from the current operational, political and information environments. The human dimension is then considered, including the need to engage with audiences and to continue to develop a better understanding of them. The final 2 sections look at types of communication and narratives.

c. The revised Chapter 3 summarises the requirement for, and describes how, strategic communication should be conducted and co-ordinated, reflecting emerging lessons from current operations. Section 1 reiterates the requirement while Section 2 examines the implications for policy-makers, commanders and staffs. Section 3 describes the structures, processes and products which together make strategic communication within defence work, while Section 4 briefly considers wider implications for education and training. The Chapter includes a number of annexes providing examples of strategic communication products.

In the interests of brevity, additional material to help build an understanding of strategic communication and inform debate, has been excluded. Along with supporting research material, including NASA's<sup>2</sup> approach to strategic communication, this additional material is available online at the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) website. It includes other definitions in use, the US and NATO's approach, and some detail on target-audience analysis and communication models:

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/MicroSite/DCDC/OurPublications/JDN/>

11. Readers with observations on the publication who also wish to engage in the debate are encouraged to do so and should contact [DCDC-AHFuncDoc@mod.uk](mailto:DCDC-AHFuncDoc@mod.uk) or [DCDC-FuncDoc4SO1@mod.uk](mailto:DCDC-FuncDoc4SO1@mod.uk).

## LINKAGES

This JDN is designed to accompany our joint military strategic doctrine, *British Defence Doctrine* (BDD) and its immediate family of keystone publications of Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 01, *Campaigning* and JDP 04, *Understanding*. Additional guidance is contained in JDN 3-11, *Decision-making and Problem Solving: Human and Organisational Factors*. Elements of this JDN have been incorporated into JDP 5-00, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, *Campaign Planning* Change 1, issued in 2011 and JDP 3-00, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, *Campaign Execution* Change 1 to be issued in early 2012. An update of the JDP 3-80 series of publications covering information operations, media operations and psychological operations is planned for 2012/2013.

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<sup>2</sup> National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

# STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION – THE DEFENCE CONTRIBUTION

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## CHAPTER 1 – UNDERSTANDING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

101. Strategic communication has emerged in its current form in response to the demands of an interconnected world. For Defence, the environment has become more complex in some fundamental ways, including: the contemporary character of conflict; the rapidly evolving information environment; the increasingly globalised world and the changing face of adversaries. Strategic communication aims to make us more effective in dealing with these complexities as we pursue our national interests.

102. This Chapter has 4 sections. In Section I, a Defence definition of strategic communication is proposed. Section II considers the purpose of strategic communication – what it does for us. In Section III, what strategic communications means to Defence is discussed. This includes the relationship between policy, strategy and strategic communication, as well as the types of strategic communication that Defence is required to contribute to. Finally, in Section IV, the Chapter describes some broad implications for Defence.

### SECTION I – DEFINING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

#### Definition

103. There is not yet a single common definition for strategic communication, or STRATCOM for short, although a number are currently in use.<sup>1</sup> Taking into consideration those definitions and other informed debate, the proposed definition for Defence is:

*Advancing national interests by using all Defence means of communication to influence the attitudes and behaviours of people.*

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<sup>1</sup> The topic of strategic communication is confused because (1) the term has many definitions, both formal and informal, (2) a variety of meanings depending on the definition and how it is written (capitalised, abbreviated, in the plural or as an acronym) or the context within which it is used, and (3) a number of other terms overlap with the intent of strategic communication, including power and influence.

104. This definition is clear, succinct and easily recalled. Essentially, it is a distillation of the current National Security Council (NSC) draft version and is thus aligned with cross-government thinking:

*The systematic and co-ordinated use of all means of communication to deliver UK national security objectives by influencing the attitudes and behaviours of individuals, groups and states.*

105. The NSC draft describes communication as ‘words, images and public actions. It includes public information, public affairs, information operations, defence diplomacy, soft power activities and diplomatic campaigning’. Defence makes a contribution to all these activities, as well as public actions that include operations and ceremonial activity.

## **SECTION II – THE PURPOSE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION**

### **Information and the National Instruments**

106. The ultimate purpose of strategic communication is to advance the national interest and to support national policies and objectives. Many countries consider that there are 4 instruments of national power: diplomatic, information, military and economic. The UK considers only 3 instruments: diplomatic, military and economic, with information considered as an enabler for all of them.

107. Strategic communication has a critical role to play in directing and integrating the information strand with the different instruments of power. It focuses all leaders, planners and operators on crafting and delivering communications in a way that is co-ordinated, coherent and mutually reinforcing.

### **Strategic Direction**

108. Strategic communication helps us to achieve our strategic objectives. It is a tool of strategy, exercised by the most senior levels of government when they craft and weave the core messages in support of policy goals. It is one way by which the strategic leadership provides direction and guidance to the machinery of government.

## SECTION III – WHAT STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION MEANS TO DEFENCE

### Implications for Defence

109. Defence has to ensure that its words in strategic communication are matched by its deeds. To achieve the desired influence,<sup>2</sup> strategic communication needs a credible policy and strategy that is designed, integrated and communicated from the strategic to the tactical levels. This requires the MOD to execute its dual functions as a department of state, and a military strategic headquarters, as one coherent body.

110. For Defence, strategic communication should be considered in 2 related ways.

- Defence as a department of state delivers military capability in support of national interests. This includes a contribution to national security, understanding and awareness. Everything that Defence, and those in it, say and do affect perceptions of its ability to support national interests. So, what is said and done with respect to capabilities such as people, equipment and infrastructure can have an effect on strategic communication.
- Defence also, however, conducts specific operations. Strategic communication must be an integral part of the strategy and the design for operations. Defence's reputation is affected both by its perceived success in current operations, and by its perceived ability to sustain future capability. Poor reputation will encourage perceptions of national weakness. It may also reduce trust based on the reputation of the organisation rather than the capabilities of an individual. A good reputation will build trust and encourage perceptions of national strength.

111. Strategic communication is primarily a philosophy, partly a capability and partly a process. The philosophy of strategic communication is the key element for Defence since it underpins our approach to delivering outputs –

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<sup>2</sup> Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 3-40, Security and Stabilisation: the Military Contribution defines influence as the power or ability to affect someone's beliefs or actions; or a person or thing with such ability or power.

the alignment of words, images and actions to realise influence. This philosophy needs to be applied by everyone. Achievement of the outputs requires a supporting process and makes use of a range of capabilities, including media and communications, information activities and psychological operations.

## Policy, Strategy and Strategic Communication

112. Strategic communication is integral to strategy, both informing and supporting policy. Good strategy is usually forged from a single big idea, or a coherent collection of smaller ideas, with a clear underpinning rationale and unifying purpose. To be effective, the strategy must be instantly communicable if it is to gain traction at home and abroad. The logic of the strategy and its appeal should be compelling and easily understood. It must seek to gain and maintain the initiative and be set firmly in the context of the political purpose. It should bind the key players and the instruments of power, and in its totality should be simple, or at least capable of explanation in simple terms. Strategic communication is the means by which leaders and commanders set out and communicate the strategy. Again, this requires more than words; it requires demonstrable deeds.<sup>3</sup>

The Defence contribution to strategic communication is more fundamental than simply media relations or operations. It goes to the heart of national strategy and Defence's obligation to support and inform it. Strategic communication will fail where there is an absence of policy and strategy, where it is not crafted as integral to the strategy, or what is said and done do not align with the strategy. For example:

- Media stories about redundancy notices served over e-mail undermines the strategic communication theme of care for our people.<sup>4</sup>
- Civilian casualties caused by international forces undermines the theme of helping to protect the people of Afghanistan.

<sup>3</sup> Royal College of Defence Studies, *Thinking Strategically*, October 2010.

<sup>4</sup> The story referred to the advice to some warrant officers on the Army Long Service List that their 12 month rolling contracts may not be renewed, but the public perception was of redundancy being served in a callous and disrespectful manner.

- Salacious activity reported in the media undermines the reputation of Defence and our themes of responsibility, trust and the high moral standards of servicemen and women.

Since strategy is the expression of ends, ways and means, the strategic communication in respect of the operational air-bridge to Afghanistan may be: *A critical aspect of our operation, admittedly fragile, but workable within current means, largely due to the excellent work of all personnel involved, including the understanding of passengers.* The message seeks to reassure Parliament, the public and members of Defence using the air-bridge that it is being managed effectively. This then requires not only MOD communicators to align themselves with these words, but for personnel to have expectations managed through briefings; for means to be established to offset the disadvantage suffered by individuals when the air-bridge fails; and for aircrew, logisticians, mechanics and movers to continue to do everything they can to make the air-bridge work. This extends through all levels of Defence from the Ministerial announcement in Parliament, to the operational commands, the single Services, Directorates' of Equipment Capability, units being deployed and recovered, down to the operators of the air-bridge. It extends, for example, to the flexibility and initiative shown by a junior caterer when an aircraft makes an unscheduled stop and refreshments are required, out-of-hours and at short notice; actions being aligned with words.

## Types of Strategic Communication

113. There are broadly 5 types of activity that deliver strategic communication across Government.<sup>5</sup> Defence contributes to these in different ways, although there is overlap between them.

- **Public messaging designed to reassure and build trust in the institutions of Defence.** This is delivered through online and offline media channels, via opinion formers and in some instances through targeted direct communications. The Defence Media and Communications organisation leads the majority of this work, which also meets Defence's wider obligation to inform the public in an open society.

<sup>5</sup> Draft National Security Council (NSC), *Strategic Communication* paper, as at 7 February 2011.

- **Activities designed to engage UK individuals, communities and businesses to inform, alert and drive behaviours that build resilience.** These are cross-Government activities, particularly through the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat. Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Military Strategy and Operations) (DCDS (Mil Strat and Ops)), Director General Security Policy, Director Defence Media and Communications, and the Front Line Commands<sup>6</sup> provide a majority of the Defence contribution.
- **Activities designed to change attitudes and influence the behaviours of individuals and groups.** These activities are led by DCDS (Mil Strat and Ops) and supported by Defence Media and Communication's Operational Communications. The Chief of the Defence Staff's (CDS) Strategic Communications Officer also has a key role.
- **Activities that reduce the likelihood of actions against UK interests by building international influence (soft power).** Soft power is based on how other nations may aspire to be like us, 'the ability to obtain preferred outcomes through attraction'.<sup>7</sup> Defence contributes through the effectiveness of its hard power – the quality and reputation of the Armed Forces – and a range of soft power activities that include military capacity building, outreach programmes, defence diplomacy and regional engagement. It requires a co-ordinated contribution externally across Whitehall (Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Department for International Development (DFID) primarily) and internally in MOD from Director General Security Policy, DCDS (Mil Strat and Ops), Director Defence Media and Communications and Front Line Commands. CDS' Strategic Communication Officer has now also assumed a role.
- **Communication in support of diplomatic efforts designed to influence friendly or hostile states.** This is primarily Government and FCO business, although Defence makes a limited contribution when required by Government, particularly through key-leader engagement.

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<sup>6</sup> The single-Service commands of Commander-in-Chief FLEET, Commander-in-Chief LAND, and Commander-in-Chief AIR.

<sup>7</sup> Nye J S Jr, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, page 3, New York, Public Affairs, 2004.

114. Strategic communication is the business of all in Defence, not just communicators. To be successful it requires a clear articulation by leaders of the effects that are to be achieved and a detailed understanding of the ways in which audiences can be influenced in support of these effects. It also requires: command-led communication objectives and activities; processes for co-ordinating the delivery of communication; a capacity to measure effect; and expert communicators to support commanders.

115. Everyone needs to be communication aware. Opportunities to support strategic communication will exist at all levels and it is important that they are seized upon. People should feel empowered to communicate, which requires both a decentralised approach and discipline with respect to the guiding narrative. Really smart organisations are able to decentralise and communicate effectively not only because people are brought together by a philosophy (in this case, strategic communication), but because they have the judgement and discipline to practise it. (Some of the most effective communicators are relatively junior in organisations.)

## **SECTION IV – BROAD IMPLICATIONS OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FOR DEFENCE**

116. Defence will reflect and align with the strategy and core messages emanating from government, and may need to develop a subordinate military strategy and complementary strategic communication. This is where a combination of capability and process are required to ensure that messages are coherent and co-ordinated. Messages also need to be tailored in the way most appropriate to their audience in order to have influence.

117. Although policy and national strategy should shape the military strategy, MOD's capacity for strategic planning may have to be used as a catalyst to the Government's formulation of strategy. The development of strategy may need to be more iterative and dynamic than the hierarchy of government suggests.

118. Strategic communication requires the co-ordinated use of different information capabilities of Defence such as information operations including psychological operations and *presence, posture, profile*, alongside defence

diplomacy and in conjunction with other levers such as manoeuvre and fires.<sup>8</sup> Co-ordination of these information capabilities with Media Operations or Public Affairs is also required and oversight by a unifying information or communication authority is helpful. However, while all communication should be coherent, a firewall must exist between the routine conduct of Media Operations and other influence activities in the operational space, which could include operational and tactical deception. This firewall helps meet Defence's obligation to inform truthfully.

119. Strategic communication is more than doing the information activities mentioned above more effectively. In planning all of our activity in the future we should try to be guided by the question *what does this communicate to those we wish to influence?* Individuals in Defence will need to apply the principles of strategic communication to ensure that their words, images and actions support the core message and strategy. Like commander's intent, the core message needs to be a clear, concise and memorable extract, not a long monologue.

120. There will always be a requirement for high quality, specialist strategic communicators; they are a select group. But the strategic requirement is for a cultural change in communications awareness and understanding at all levels in Defence. This has significant implications for training, career and professional development. Defence may need to build a professional civil-military communication career stream.

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<sup>8</sup> This is the doctrinal framework of *joint action*, defined as *the deliberate use and orchestration of military capabilities and activities to realise effects on other actors' will, understanding and capability, and the cohesion between them*. JDP 3-00 (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) *Campaign Execution*, page 3-1.

### High Level Strategic Messaging – Mers-el-Kebir

In June 1940 Britain's position was precarious; militarily inferior to her enemies, her only hope of surviving a protracted conflict would be if other powers joined in the fight against Germany. Unfortunately the predominant world opinion was that Britain would not stand. In particular, during 1939 and 1940 the US ambassador in London, Joseph P Kennedy, continuously painted a pessimistic picture of the British capacity and desire to prosecute the war with Germany in an effective and vigorous manner.<sup>9</sup> This led to a growing doubt within the US that Britain had the stomach for all-out war resulting in Churchill becoming acutely conscious of the weakness of his support in some areas of the American administration and the need for his strategic message of total opposition to the Third Reich to be reinforced.

In July 1940 the most powerful squadron<sup>10</sup> of the French navy docked in the naval base at Mers-el-Kebir on the North Western Algerian coast. Fearful that Germany might seize these vessels and thus overturn the balance of naval power in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, and also mindful of the need to demonstrate resolve, Churchill blockaded the port and issued an ultimatum to the French commander which involved the surrender of the ships with an answer required within 6 hours. Prior to the expiry of the ultimatum the Fleet Air Arm mined the entrance to the port and when no satisfactory answer was received Churchill ordered the Royal Navy to open fire on our former allies. The majority of the French fleet was sunk or disabled and a total of 1,300 French sailors and marines were killed.

The German propaganda ministry depicted the incident as a brutal act against a former ally and it caused much bitterness within the French Navy. In the US it was seen in a different light – as proof of the determination of the British Government to back up Churchill's grandiose statements on fighting the Germans. The strategic messaging was clear and the critical audience, the American administration, took it to heart. The British stomach for the fight was never doubted again.

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<sup>9</sup> "Democracy is finished here", Ambassador Kennedy quoted in the *Boston Sunday Globe*, 1940.

<sup>10</sup> The Squadron *Atlantique* commanded by Admiral Gensoul, consisted of 34 vessels including 2 battleships, 2 battle cruisers, a seaplane carrier and 13 destroyers.



## CHAPTER 2 – THE COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT

201. Chapter 2 examines the context in which strategic communication takes place. There are several key points: conflict is likely to become increasingly population-focused and scrutinised; the political environment does not always allow us to craft either policy or strategy with the immediacy and clarity we may hope; and a constantly evolving information environment is likely to make our future activities, both routine and operational, more complex.

### SECTION I – THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

#### The Changing Character of Conflict

202. The nature of conflict is unchanging. *'It will remain a violent contest; a mix of chance, risk and policy whose underlying nature is both human and, at times, apparently irrational'*.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, the character of conflict is inherently volatile. Changes in technology, communication, climate and demographics as well as political, social and economic change can all shape the character of conflict.

203. The introduction of modern technology into the information environment is one example of changing character. Consider, for example, how a farmer in southern Helmand can attend a governor's shura (meeting) and within minutes of its end communicate his perception of that shura's message globally, if he wasn't *tweeting* during it. We are now engaged in a battle of views and opinions on an international scale that extends far beyond the geographic boundaries of violence in the conflict, but which has the potential to fuel that violence from afar. This requires us to shift centre-stage influence and information effect (the resultant attitudes and behaviours of audiences produced by words, images and actions) in building our strategy, designing our communications and conducting our operations.

204. The future operating environment will present threats that defy neat categorisation and their diffuse nature means that there are no longer *rear*

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<sup>1</sup> MOD Strategic Trends Programme, *Future Character of Conflict*, DCDC, paragraph 8, 2010, page 6. It expands on the likely battlespace of 2014 from paragraph 24 over pages 20-25, describing it as *'increasingly contested, congested, cluttered, connected and constrained'*.

areas, even at home. Future adversaries are likely to increasingly blend a range of asymmetric and conventional means. States may seek to avoid state-on-state conflict, but instead use proxies and non-state actors. Adversaries will capitalise on access to technology, but continue to use and adapt proven ways of warfare. They may assume different persona, political, social and para-military. Additionally, they may attempt to work unencumbered by the legal, ethical, media scrutiny and public perception constraints that apply to our own forces.

205. Time, space and strategic compression<sup>2</sup> are increasingly constricting. The speed of communication and change, and increasing physical congestion reduce our freedom to manoeuvre on the land, physically and mentally. The margins for error are reducing. Tactical mistakes have always had the potential to have strategic impacts, but the chances of that happening are increasing exponentially.<sup>3</sup> Coherent strategy and narratives are likely to be increasingly important not only to mitigate public and interest-group scrutiny in cyberspace and the media, but to reinforce or shift attitudes and behaviour in our favour.

## **SECTION II – AMBIGUITY IN THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT**

206. Politics are usually characterised by ambiguity and room for manoeuvre until the point of commitment in policy. Since war has always been a matter of political choice, Defence needs to work within this ambiguity. Strategic partnerships complicate this because: they oblige us to take certain actions; in more equivocal circumstances they can require a consensus to be forged which takes time; and because where we depend on others for our enablers, this may reduce our freedom to operate.

207. War also requires the political and majority support of the population in whose name it is waged. The authority to use the military instrument is nuanced and can occur without prior approval by Parliament. However, for major operations such approval is expected by the wider UK population and it is important to maintain public support. This may take time, particularly if a UN Security Council Resolution is required. Establishing the policy and strategy

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<sup>2</sup> How the characteristics of the strategic, operational and tactical levels increasingly appear at other levels; for example, the increasing requirement for tactical commanders to co-ordinate diplomatic, economic and military means; hitherto a strategic and operational level characteristic.

<sup>3</sup> DCDC Head of Land and Research Paper, *Conflict on Land*, 2010.

with the urgency, clarity and credibility required to underpin strategic communication is rarely straightforward. As our adversaries may be less constrained by principles of legitimacy and credibility, in future conflicts, the UK is likely to be starting without either the military or the information initiative.

208. Strategic communication flows from policy and strategy. Even where there is a clear political aim, however, for the reasons of uncertainty and delay described above, it does not always translate easily into effective strategic communication.<sup>4</sup>

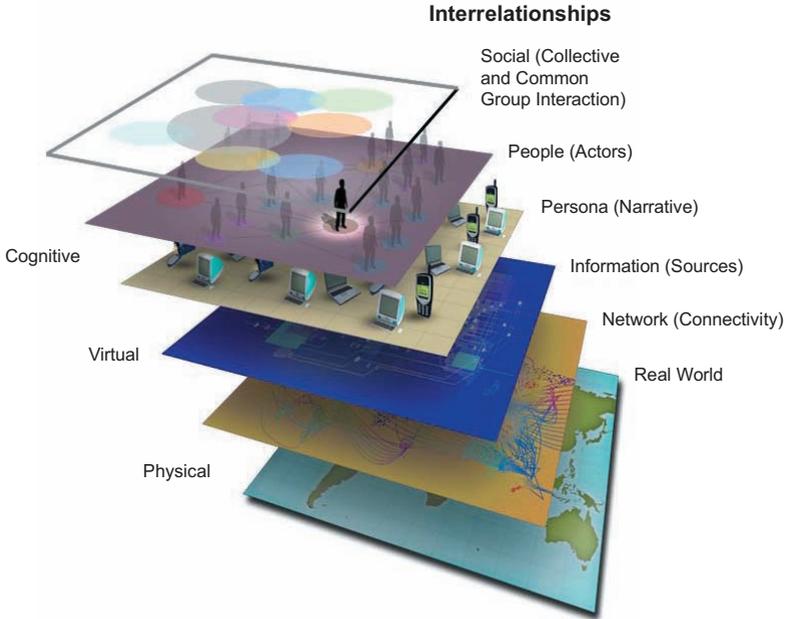
209. Events in Egypt (February 2011) demonstrated the strategic communication challenge for a western state where a national interest of promoting the development of democracy can conflict with the desire to maintain stability and a proven ally in furthering the Middle East peace process. In Afghanistan, NATO's counter-insurgency strategy is linked very closely to undermining the legitimacy of the Taliban and building the legitimacy of President Karzai's government. However, questions over the conduct of elections in 2010 and continuing allegations of corruption in the Afghan government threaten to undermine the NATO strategy. It is not enough to articulate policy and strategy; they must also be credible in word and deed.

### **SECTION III – THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT**

210. Events in the world are transmitted as information through networks before getting into peoples' minds, which is where that information is then subject to pre-conception, interpretation, bias, agenda, adjustment and possibly re-transmission. This is the span of the information environment, which can be visualised as comprising 2 main facets; the domains, (cognitive, physical and virtual) and the interrelationships within them, as shown at Figure 2.1.

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<sup>4</sup> See case study: Utting Kate Dr, *The Information Campaign and Countering Insurgency: Lessons from Palestine 1945-1948*, <http://www.rusi.org/analysis/commentary/ref:C4AB7E3B86C0B8/>



**Figure 2.1 – The Information Environment**

211. The first facet is comprised of the inputs into 3 domains: the cognitive domain – how we think; the virtual domain – how we communicate; and the real world of how we interact as nation states, cultures and societies – the physical domain. The second facet is the inter-relationships between 6 elements – or layers – of the environment. These are: the real world and its events; the network connectivity that delivers information; the information itself; the persona that inhabit the environment and who develop the narratives in it; and the actors and social groups (both collective and common) that interpret and exploit the environment.

212. Successful strategic communication requires an engagement that considers not only the 6 elements of the environment, but also an understanding of audiences through the cultural aspects of the physical domain, the workings of the virtual domain, and how engagement is perceived in the cognitive domain. The communications we craft will be driven by an assessment of the availability, reliability and vulnerability of the communication

infrastructure; an evaluation of the communication channels most suitable for delivering the message; and analysis of the target audiences so that we can craft a message appropriate to them. This makes the information environment a challenging one in which to operate, and is why constant reassessment is inevitable.

## Human Cognition

213. Cognition is the term used by psychologists to describe the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information or knowledge to achieve understanding, reasoning, meaning, judgement, learning and memory. It is about how people think and how they may think differently when doing different activities.<sup>5</sup>

214. The pervasiveness of information and communication technologies, combined with operational constraints on the use of force, raise the importance of influence in achieving operational and strategic objectives. To apply influence with success requires an understanding of human psychology and the processes of cognition. This is a complex and non-exact science where cause and effect are hard to establish. Context, culture, personality, problem-solving styles and knowledge are just some of the factors that shape an individual's perceptions and decisions. What is important is determining the meaning of any communication, not its manner; *what is meant*, rather than *what is said*.

215. If Defence is to become more effective at strategic communication for influence, it will need to develop a better understanding of the audiences and how they receive information and make decisions. In the future we should not be asking *what would we be thinking if we were in their shoes?* Instead we may more usefully ask *what would **they** be thinking in their shoes?* Accepting that this is the case has profound implications for strategic communication and how we design and execute operations.

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<sup>5</sup> Refer, for example, to Pretz J E, *Intuition Versus Analysis: Strategy and Experience in Complex Everyday Problem Solving*, Memory and Cognition, 36 (3), 2008, pages 554-566.

## Diversity and Complexity of the Information Environment

216. Recent military operations have shown that some of the most influential opinion forming outlets for target audiences have fallen at either end of a technology spectrum. In Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, centuries old mechanisms for discussion and discourse – Shuras, Loya Jirgas, honour codes such as Pashtunwali – carry great effect, while at the other end of the spectrum new and emerging information outlets such as blogs, websites, *you tube* and *twitter* have also proven highly effective. The information environment is extremely diverse and, in planning for future operations, may not always be readily apparent or familiar to us. In the future, we will need to develop this familiarity across the full range of channels, technical and traditional, for effective strategic communication.



217. The growing number of forums, media and platforms, and speed of information transfer are just some of the factors that make the information environment challenging to operate in. The challenge is heightened by the: global audience; active nature of that audience and its multitude of *voices*; diversity of cultures; and the potential reach of individuals. It is this, combined with its diversity, that makes the information environment so complex.

### The Media

218. The ubiquity of the global media complicates our ability to influence and manage perceptions, both within and external to the immediate area of operations.<sup>6</sup> Media reporting of apparently minor events can create significant interest, placing additional priority on deployed personnel being alert to the potential implications of their actions. Commanders must contend with

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<sup>6</sup> Particularly emerging (or new) media such as mobile phone footage, blogs and social networking sites such as *twitter* and *facebook*.

multiple audiences simultaneously – domestic, allied, in theatre and regional – by tailoring appropriate, coherent and credible messages. As General Rupert Smith observes, this is ‘a *global theatre of war, with audience participation*.’<sup>7</sup>

## Now Media

219. *Now media* is a term used to describe the effect of media, rather than its character. Traditional media, that is to say newspapers, television and radio, and emerging (or new) media, which is typically internet based such as blogs, social network and other sites<sup>8</sup> are converging, not least because mainstream traditional media journalists increasingly multiplatform to supplement both the news gathering capability and their output. During the Mumbai massacre, largely covered by TV companies with a single panoramic shot of the Oberoi Trident Hotel, people inside the hotel were able to *tweet* what was happening. At its peak there was more than 1 tweet per second. The shortage of blood at the local hospital, and hence the need for blood donors, was tweeted before any traditional news media publicised the story. The idea of *now* media is useful because it can help guide us to find the conduit which is most relevant for communication. That may well be a conventional newspaper, or a blog site, but it could equally be a Shura or tribal story telling.

### New Media

During the 7/7 attacks on London, the official government narrative and traditional media channels were unable to keep pace with new media. Within 80 minutes of the attack there were 1300 blogs indicating that the cause was explosive devices whilst 20,000 emails, 3000 text messages, 1000 digital images and 20 video clips deluged BBC news during the next few hours.

*Skyful of Lies and Black Swans* – Nik Gowing

220. The effect of *now* also helps us understand another key issue – that of speed. As television journalist Nik Gowing describes, being *first* to enter the information space, and *fast*, with their information may be a good thing, but

<sup>7</sup> Smith R, *Utility of Force – The Art of War in the Modern World*, Penguin Books, 2006, page 289.

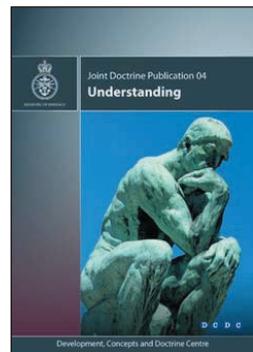
<sup>8</sup> See <http://order-order.com/>, for example – the Guy (Guido) Fawkes website covering UK parliamentary news.

how *flawed* may that information then prove?<sup>9</sup> Truthful and accurate information takes time to establish. However, where there is an information void, or we choose not to compete, we cede the initiative to our competitors who remain free to both pull and push information.

221. As Gowing points out, traditional media such as the BBC are struggling with this as much as states and other organisations.<sup>10</sup> The BBC's reputation for reporting the truth is under increasing commercial pressure from competitors simply seeking to be first with the story. One response to this may be to emphasise credibility in the information that states and organisations provide, which is built on the ability to be both truthful and reliable. Building on this reputation for credibility, it may be possible to operate *faster*, if not always *first*, and accept some risk that elements may be *flawed*. Implicit in this approach, however, is an absolute requirement to be first and fastest if information is found to be incorrect. Working out whether this is the right or wrong approach, given the audience, can be achieved through engagement and dialogue. This helps us to develop an understanding of our audience.

## SECTION IV – THE HUMAN DIMENSION: UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCES

222. Effective strategic communication requires understanding, and understanding requires the engagement of audiences. This includes not only the person or people we seek to communicate with, but the environment they inhabit, how they move within it, how they interact within it, and their motivations. JDP 04, *Understanding* provides useful guidance<sup>11</sup> complemented by JDN 3/11, *Decision-making and Problem Solving: Human and Organisational Factors*. Understanding provides foresight, insight and context for decision-making and ultimately it informs the development of policy and strategy. However, it is not static but develops through engagement, knowledge and synthesis, leading to greater understanding.



<sup>9</sup> Gowing N, *Skyful of Lies and Black Swans*, CHALLENGES, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, July 2009.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> See Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 04, *Understanding*, Chapter 3, Sections V and VI.

223. Having an understanding of audiences and knowing in advance the effect that we wish to achieve will help us decide, in part, on the type of communication we use. A nuanced understanding will help us to calculate which sections of a population our message is best targeted at in order to achieve our objective. It will also help identify which means of communication will best reach a given audience.<sup>12</sup>

### **Understanding the Audience**

In Haiti aid workers found that local street dialects and colloquialisms owed much to the traditions and practise of voodoo. To understand, and to then effectively communicate in a manner that would resonate with largely illiterate indigenous audiences, they were required to develop a basic understanding of voodoo.

Commanding Officer 15 PSYOPS Group

224. It is this refinement of understanding that ultimately turns strategic level communication and narratives into the themes and messages that are applied to specific audiences by sectors of government or operational commanders. Engagement with audiences by listening, through measures of effectiveness designed as a result of better understanding such as focus groups or a shura in-theatre, creates a dialogue that can help inform us on our strategy. It is quite possible, however, that we may not like what we hear through this dialogue. It will be important in such circumstances that we do not simply assume through institutional blindness<sup>13</sup> that our communication is wrong; it may be the strategy.

## **SECTION V – TYPES OF COMMUNICATION**

225. In terms of communication, there are 3 basic levels one can describe: informational, attitudinal, and behavioural. Informational communication seeks simply to impart (for example, a news item such as *HMS Manchester Visits Merseyside before Decommissioning* on the MOD website). Attitudinal communication seeks to positively influence people's opinion on a particular issue. This is a key component of routine political communication (for

<sup>12</sup> In psychological operations especially, the technique of Target Audience Analysis is used. This might be developed for aspects of strategic communication.

<sup>13</sup> Psychologists may refer to it as cognitive dissonance.

example, the Government's efforts to improve internal and public confidence in the medical support provided to Armed Forces personnel, particularly those wounded on operations). Behavioural communication seeks to induce a particular type of behaviour, either reinforcing or changing it (such as the laws to make people wear seatbelts, or increasing the tax on cigarettes to reduce the numbers of smokers in the country). The 3 types of communication can be linked together but are not necessarily dependent upon each other. For example, *attitudinal* and *behavioural* campaigns can be combined (such as in the *Give Up Smoking* campaign), while informational campaigns may seek no attitudinal or behavioural change at all.

## SECTION VI – NARRATIVES

*A statement of identity, cause and intent around which government, people and armed forces (and perhaps even some allies) can unite. It must be convincing, transparent, adaptive and above all attractive.*

Professor Paul Cornish<sup>14</sup>

226. The use of metaphor and storytelling has been highlighted to help develop shared understanding and inspire new understanding.<sup>15</sup> Narratives are compelling story lines which explain events convincingly and from which inferences can be drawn.<sup>16</sup> They should provide the overall *raison d'être* for our operations. The best narratives are short and succinct. From the narrative key themes and messages are developed.

227. If the strategy is correct, the narrative may not need to change over time. For example, the UK did not enter World War II expecting to fight an existentialist conflict; if anything the hope was that fighting would not be protracted and that Hitler's ambitions would be thwarted by a display of Allied solidarity. But by late 1940 the situation had changed and the UK Government realised it was in a war of national survival; from that point the strategic

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<sup>14</sup> Cornish P, *The US and Counterinsurgency*, International Affairs, 85:1, 2009, page 76.

<sup>15</sup> Boal K B and Schulz P L, *Storytelling, Time and Evolution: The Role of Strategic Leadership in Complex Adaptive Systems*, The Leadership Quarterly, 19, 2007, pages 411-428.

<sup>16</sup> Freedman L, Professor, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs* (International Institute for Strategic Affairs, Adelphi Paper 379, 2006, page 22.

narrative became that the UK was fighting an existential threat. During the course of the next 5 years that narrative never changed but key messages and themes were constantly developed to fit the changing operational picture. All of our words, deeds and actions, both in the military and civilian domains should be cast within the strategic narrative.

228. The narrative should be the result of dialogue and formed from a shared analysis and understanding or perception. It must be more than a simple list of facts and may even convey an emotional link, although such links carry a risk if they are subsequently broken. The narrative can also help provide a strategic focus to guide actions and a framework for decision-making. This assists individuals or teams to discard actions or proposed courses of action that do not conform to the narrative and, by extension, strategy.<sup>17</sup>

229. Throughout the world different groups will often develop competing narratives to achieve influence in a particular field; the oil industry and the environmental lobby is one example. Recent operations demonstrate how our adversaries will seek influence among local, regional and world audiences through their own narratives, probably based on their own more comprehensive understanding of the local situation. Our own narrative will therefore be in competition with narratives from groups or individuals whose views are markedly different from our own. This contest places a higher premium on cultural understanding and cognition.

230. In the global information environment it is very easy for competing narratives to also be heard. Some may be deliberately combative – our adversaries for example, or perhaps hostile media. Where our narrative meets with the competing narratives it is referred to as the *battle of the narratives*, although the reality is that this is an enduring competition rather than a battle with winners and losers. The challenge for the Government and Defence is to craft strategic communications to reinforce the narrative. The more agile participants, who can exploit a range of information channels to reach far wider and larger, as well as smaller and more specific, audiences are likely to gain the advantage. This is borne out in the increasing success of militarily weak, but informational-strong, protagonists in conflict since 1950.<sup>18</sup> The power of

<sup>17</sup> Worthington J, Commander, *Post SDSR Way Ahead*, Proposed Narrative.

<sup>18</sup> Arreguin-Tofts I, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

the narrative – its ability to resonate with audiences – is more important than ownership or control or how the narrative is transmitted.

### **Simplicity of Narrative – The Adversary**

Al-Qaeda's narrative commences in 1095 and covers some 30 events since that date including the colonial period, discovery of oil in the Middle East, dismantling of the Ottoman Empire, Suez Crisis and Danish cartoons of The Prophet Mohammed. All these facts can be distilled down to a single, memorable line – *'the West is at war with Islam'*.

In 2006, the Taliban produced a simple, 5 line message to counter the expansion of the International Stabilisation Assistance Force into Helmand: *'Our party, the Taliban. Our people and Nation, Pashtun. Our economy, the poppy. Our constitution, the Shari'a. Our form of government, the Emirate.'*

231. To compete whole-heartedly in the global information environment requires the use of collective voices, each telling their part, using a wide variety of traditional and new media. One consequence is that we need not just a *compelling narrative* – one that is credible, readily understood and resonates with audiences – but one that is accompanied by the delegation of authority for decentralised execution. Chapter 3 examines how we may achieve this.

## CHAPTER 3 – CONDUCTING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

301. This Chapter reflects emerging lessons from current operations, summarising the requirement for, and describing how, strategic communication should be conducted and co-ordinated. Section 1 reiterates the requirement for conducting strategic communication. Section 2 examines the implications for policy makers, commanders and their staffs, and determines some fundamental principles. Section 3 describes the structures, processes and products which collectively make strategic communication within Defence work. Finally, Section 4 considers the wider implications for personal development, education and training.

### SECTION I – THE REQUIREMENT

#### Strategy and Strategic Communication Planning

302. Chapter 1 examined the link between policy, strategy and the levers of power; in short, policy dictates the desired ends while strategy determines the balance between ways and means. Together they describe what needs to be achieved, how to achieve it, and with what.

303. The definition for strategic communication in Defence outlined in Chapter 1 articulated the core of the wider strategic communication concept and how it fitted into the framework of ends, ways and means, namely; advancing national interests (the ends) by using all means of Defence communication (the means) to influence the attitudes and behaviours of people (the ways):

- a. *Advancing national interests* establishes the strategic nature of the concept. It conveys that MOD personnel need to be aligned with, and working towards, national strategic goals in conducting strategic communication.
- b. *All means of Defence communication* captures the idea that all words, images and actions (non-lethal and lethal) convey a message. Implicit is the requirement that those sending a message and seeking to achieve influence should understand how messages will be perceived and understood by all those who receive them. Therefore,

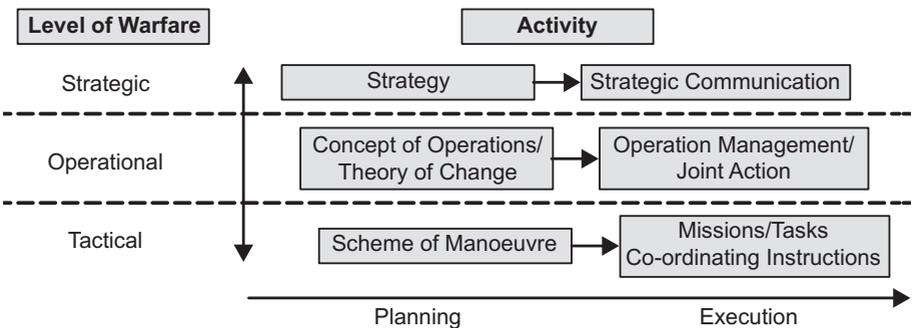
the character of the audience (whether targeted or not) is a critical consideration.

c. *Influence the attitudes and behaviours of people* emphasises the cognitive nature of the effects being sought. It shifts the practitioner away from a simply lethal approach to wider possibilities.<sup>1</sup>

d. Strategic communication must be employed at the earliest stage in the development of strategy and during the planning for contingency operations; it is an integral part of campaigning.

### Levels of Strategic Communication

304. Strategic communication is primarily a strategic-level responsibility for it is at this level that national policy is set, the overarching narrative is shaped, and co-ordination occurs between different government departments. Every level of command, however, has a role to play in actively engaging in a strategic communication culture and its implementation. It is the structures and processes supporting this relationship that offer a mechanism to link strategy with tactical activity. Together, they seek better coherence across the levers of national power. The relationship between such processes is illustrated in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1 – Strategic Communication: How Processes Align at the Strategic, Operational and Tactical Levels**

<sup>1</sup> Of course, lethal activities can influence people.

305. At the strategic level there are 2 distinct, but related, types of strategic communication. The first is the routine business of delivering enduring UK policy; this is long term in nature, with the aim being to deliver regional stability, development and trade objectives and to maintain UK reputation at home and abroad. The second is strategic communication related to crisis management or military campaigns.

306. Strategic-level policy articulates the objective or political end state which will normally be centred on a behavioural outcome against one or more target audiences. This behavioural outcome, or information effect, will shape the strategic narrative and the overarching themes linked to a particular information strategy. During a crisis response or military operation, it is the information effect, narrative and themes that an operational level commander uses as the basis for his concept of operations or theory of change. From these elements he will derive decisive conditions and supporting effects, all coherent with the strategic communication plan.

307. At the tactical level, the components will conduct the activities that meet the requirements of the commander's campaign plan. It is at this level that words, images and actions are most obvious through the mediums of information activities, fires, manoeuvre and outreach. Coherence with the narrative and themes articulated at the strategic level is critical.

## **SECTION II – PRINCIPLES AND IMPLICATIONS**

*Actions will speak louder than words over time!*

Chief of the Defence Staff, March 2011

308. Strategic communication should be at the heart of the development and implementation of national policy. It is an all-government activity; it can not be owned by a single department or directorate and should not be seen as a mere adjunct of media and communication. To be effective, there must be clear direction from the highest levels and a pan-government co-ordination mechanism. In the UK, the National Security Council provides this facility. Although strategic communication relies on clearly directed policy, decentralised and empowered execution is vital.

## Principles

Speed	Accuracy	Truth	Credibility
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309. This JDN proposes 7 principles articulating the key elements of strategic communication as a philosophy.

Principles of Strategic Communication
Empowerment
Policy Driven
Assessment
Adaptability
Engagement
Credibility
Coherence

Although specifically related to the MOD, they have been developed after studying work conducted by other nations or organisations. There are many parallels, and a comparator table is attached at Annex 3A.

- a. **Empowerment.** Speed of response is often critical; therefore, commanders should be prepared to accept risks in accuracy in order to enter the information space early. Effective strategic communication recognises that commanders, and their people at all levels, must be confident to use all means of communication to exploit opportunities. Indeed, the best communicators are often commanders and soldiers<sup>2</sup> at the tactical level. To exploit this we must provide them with appropriate training as well as guidance and

<sup>2</sup> Includes sailors, marines and airmen.

relax overly restrictive control mechanisms; *we must be prepared to lose control to gain control.*<sup>3</sup>

### **International Stabilisation Assistance Force Civilian Casualties**

On 21 February 2010, an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) airstrike caused a number of civilian casualties in the province of Uruzgan. Early the following day the Deputy Commander of ISAF, Lieutenant General Sir Nick Parker, appeared in front of the world's media to talk about the incident. Before the ISAF Joint Assessment Team had completed its report, he stated that Commander ISAF had been to see the President the previous evening and had reiterated to his commanders that they must make judgements based on avoiding civilian casualties. He went on to say that ISAF were deeply aware that if they killed the people they were there to support it would undermine their credibility, and reiterated that they cared deeply when such incidents occurred. He concluded by offering an apology, stating that he was extremely sorry for the tragedy that certain ISAF activities had caused certain families.

Although a day after the event, this was an example of a senior commander entering the information space and, by apologising before the conclusion of an assessment, he took some of the 'sting' out of potentially hostile media coverage.

b. **Policy Driven.** Policy will dictate strategic goals. It provides the starting point for strategy including the information strategy and narrative. Policy makers and leaders should accept the requirement for clear aims and objectives with the understanding that these may change over time, requiring an ability to adapt within the principles of credibility and coherence.

c. **Assessment.** Commanders should apply systematic evaluation to all strategic communication activity to measure the effect on the attitudes and behaviours of target audiences. This assessment process will allow messages or activities to be altered or discarded as appropriate. Although the conduct of assessment will always be challenging, it must be planned from the outset and will

<sup>3</sup> Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (ACDS) Development, Concept and Doctrine, at the Chief of the Defence Staff's (CDS) Strategic Communication Seminar, March 2011.

often drive the allocation of intelligence collection and analytical resources.

d. **Adaptability.** Organisations must make innovative use of a range of communication channels, both traditional and new. Additionally, they should be responsive to feedback from audiences and adversaries including their own or, counter narratives.

e. **Engagement.** Successful strategic communication requires, through dialogue, engagement with a number of different audiences and stakeholders, both internal and external. This develops our understanding of the drivers that form their attitudes and behaviours, thereby allowing us to better align words and deeds with policy.

f. **Credibility.** In order for messages to resonate they must be credible; both in terms of the channel through which they are delivered as well as their source. They must match with what people are experiencing on the ground. Clear and simple truths are likely to have more resonance and prove more compelling and enduring than complex, crafted positions.

g. **Coherence.** Incoherence of messaging at different levels and across different departments undermines our credibility with audiences and presents opportunities to our adversaries. Narratives, themes and messages must be nested both vertically and horizontally, not simply within Defence but also with other government departments and multinational partners.

### Coherence

On 15 April 2011, President Obama of the United States, President Sarkozy of France and Prime Minister Cameron of the United Kingdom wrote a joint letter to *The Times* of London, the *International Herald Tribune* and *Le Figaro* declaring a joint position in regards to the Libyan crisis, particularly its then leader, Colonel Gaddafi. The letter expressed their joint determination to maintain pressure on Gaddafi, and pledged continued North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military pressure on his forces. The letter was reported worldwide, constituting an example of coherent messaging at the strategic level. The words were underpinned by action, sending a strong message to audiences in Libya and the neighbouring region, as well as the leaders' own countries and across the wider international community.

Subsequent polling of domestic audiences in the UK indicated reduced support for intervention until the fall of Tripoli. This underlines the importance of assessing a statement's impact on all audiences and understanding the cost versus benefit implications before publication.

### Implications for People

310. **Policy Makers.** Without clear objectives, it is difficult, if not impossible, to develop a successful strategy. Direction from the National Security Council forms the basis for the deliberations of the Security Co-operation and Operations Group to determine security priorities and objectives. In turn, this informs the apportionment of resources for intelligence collection, contingency planning and security co-operation.

311. **Planning.** Planning must determine the required effect; normally this will be centred on changes of behaviour and attitude within a specific target set. This sets the criteria for campaign objectives and their supporting decisive conditions and effects.<sup>4</sup> Within MOD, the strategic planning area should maintain a small, embedded strategic communication staff to provide a secretariat function and to co-ordinate the MOD's contribution to pan-government strategic communication as detailed in Section III.

<sup>4</sup> See Joint Doctrine Publication (JDP) 5-00, *Campaign Planning*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Change 2 which is due to be published in late Spring 2012.

312. **Intelligence.** Intelligence should focus on developing deep understanding of those areas designated as important by the National Security Council and the Security Co-operation and Operations Group. Priority should sit with understanding the human terrain,<sup>5</sup> its social and communication networks, attitudes and perceptions of self and the world around it. An in-depth understanding of the target audiences (motivations and interests) is fundamental to the success of messaging. Intelligence products will often be required for very specific time-sensitive reasons and these products may have to be declassified to support messaging.

313. **Operations.** All activities conducted by a joint force send messages and contribute to influence. These activities must support the strategic narrative and be coherent with the actions and messages being delivered through the other levers of power. Activities should be considered and undertaken as much for their influence value as for their physical impact.

314. **Communications Staffs.** Specialist media and communications staff operate at all levels, in support of departmental, reputational and operational messaging. They are integral to strategic communication, providing expert input to policy, to operational plans and to strategic communication development. Media and Communications activity will be coordinated and integrated with other strategic communication activity. Media and Communications staffs will provide advice to commanders on all aspects of media and communications, and ,where necessary, prepare others for engagement with the media. They will encourage the use of the right personnel in the delivery of messages, and support them. Personnel engaging with the media must recognise that with increased empowerment comes additional responsibility to apply self-discipline to ensure consistency and coherence with departmental intent.

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<sup>5</sup> JDP 04, *Understanding*, defines human terrain as: *the social, political and economic organisation, beliefs and values and forms of interaction of a population.*

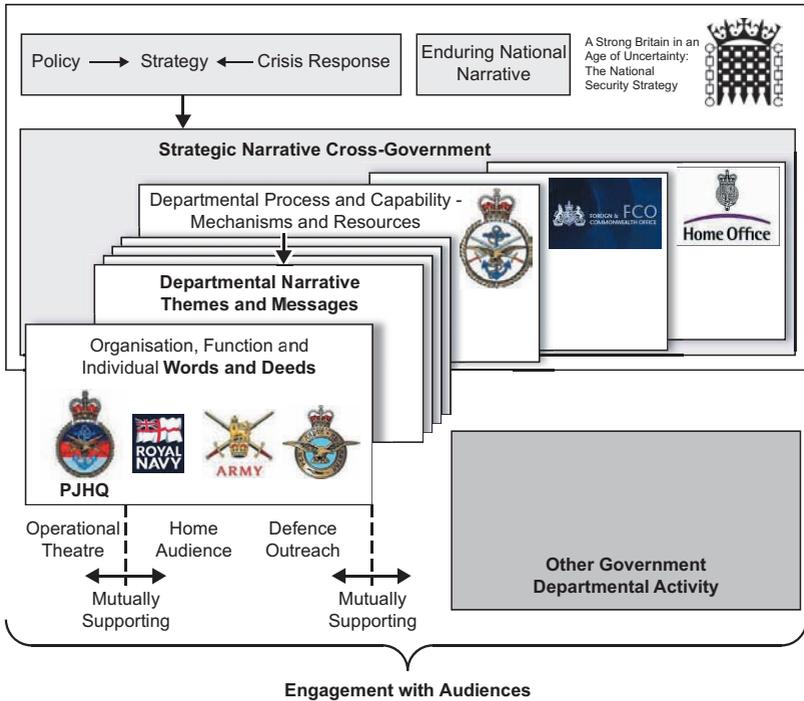
## SECTION III – STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

### Role of Narratives

315. Chapter 2 provided some definitions of narratives, explaining their importance and how they should be derived through understanding of the target audience. A narrative allows people to make sense of the world around them. Narratives provide a strategic focus to strategic communication, which acts as a guide to action.

316. Narratives can take a variety of forms. At the centre is the UK national narrative; an enduring story which describes the nation's position as a parliamentary democracy, one of the top 10 economies in the world, leader of the commonwealth; and whose values of rule of law, democracy, free speech, tolerance and human rights are echoed in the National Security Strategy of 2010. This narrative will rarely change, and then only gradually over time. It is an important factor in how we are viewed by the rest of the world. Consequently, we value a long-term narrative which depicts the UK as competent, robustly inclusive, and conducting actions that are legitimate; this approach builds credibility and trust.

317. In addition to the long-term national narrative, the National Security Council develops a narrative for the UK's response to any crisis to convey our specific policy and strategy for a crisis or region. Its purpose is to present the case for a particular course of action in a manner which allows all government departments to understand their role in the strategy, to maintain the support of the UK population and, where appropriate, the international community. Strategic-level crisis narratives will form the basis for any departmental narratives developed by the MOD, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) or other departments, all of which will be nested within the strategic narrative. This hierarchy is shown at Figure 3.2.



**Figure 3.2 – Narratives Hierarchy**

**OPERATION ELLAMY – 2011**

In March 2011, the UK and France successfully lobbied the UN to pass a United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) which authorised the use of *all necessary measures* to protect civilians in Libya under threat of attack. The CDS Directive to the UK Joint Commander contained the following strategic narrative:

*UK action in Libya is necessary to protect the Libyan people, is legal under UNSCR 1973, and is being successfully delivered by a broad international coalition under multinational command.*

Although short and succinct, this narrative encapsulated the UK’s broader objective, its legal basis and international consent.

## **Role of the National Security Council**

318. The National Security Council was established in 2010 to oversee all aspects of the UK's security, including the international security agenda. It acts as a briefing and decision-making forum for the Prime Minister and heads of departments; it is designed to integrate the work of the: MOD; Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO); Home Office; Her Majesty's Treasury; Energy and Climate Change; Department for International Development (DFID); and other ministerial departments, as well as the intelligence agencies and other departments contributing to national security. The National Security Council meets at various levels with meetings convened to review specific issues, for example, the National Security Council (Libya) (NSC (L)) during the Libyan operation. Such meetings are chaired by the Prime Minister and act as an executive group. Sitting below such groupings are the National Security Council (Officials) (NSC (O)) meetings chaired by the National Security Co-ordinator and consisting of senior officials from key departments. The MOD is represented by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and Chief of Defence Intelligence (CDI).

## **The Role of the MOD Strategic Communication Branch**

319. Sitting within the MOD's Military Strategic Effects and Strategic Communication Directorate is the Strategic Communication Branch. The Strategic Communication Branch supports the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (ACDS) (Military Strategy) to work with other departments across government to co-ordinate and synchronise all means of Defence communication to influence target audiences. While communication activity remains the responsibility of individual branches across Defence, the strategic communication branch will seek to integrate that activity within strategic planning from the outset.

## **Enduring Strategic Communication**

320. Enduring strategic communication within the MOD is likely to focus on 2 main areas. Firstly, activities relating to the MOD's position as a department of state supporting government policy objectives, and secondly, protection of departmental reputation. The latter is a critical component of credibility which underpins the MOD's ability to support UK security objectives. Director Media and Communications (DMC), under the

Permanent Under Secretary, is the departmental lead for all external public communication ensuring coherence of MOD public messaging, including internal communications, across all activity and lines of development.

321. The National Security Council sets the UK's security priorities and decides on areas of strategic focus; this allows intelligence agencies to allocate resources to understanding particular regions or, issues vital to UK national interests. These priorities will provide the focus for the Security Co-operation and Operations Group to produce the *operational tasking list* and *security co-operation priority list*. When significant new security issues arise (most obviously overseas crises such as Libya, or domestic ones, such as outbreaks of pandemic diseases (for example, the foot and mouth crisis)) the National Security Council is likely to pull together a pan-government team to develop the communication strategy of the UK Government response. The National Security Advisor has encouraged all senior owners for national security risks to include an element of strategic communication work in their plans.<sup>6</sup>

322. A Strategic Communication Steering Group (SCSG) may be established under the authority of the Cabinet Office. The Cabinet Office may then direct which department will take the lead, a responsibility that could shift as a crisis unfolds. For example, the FCO could lead during the *shaping and preparation* phase, shifting to the MOD for any decisive military phase, then back to the FCO or DFID for post-conflict, or reconstruction, activities. This steering group would examine current priorities and areas of emerging interest to scope opportunities, anticipate and address challenges, and provide an agreed, pan-government narrative and approach.

323. Within the MOD, the SCSG is chaired at the 2\* level by ACDS (Military Strategy) with membership from across MOD branches who contribute to strategic messaging (Military Strategic Plans, Defence Media and Communications, Military Strategic Effects and Strategic Communication, Defence Intelligence, International Policy and Plans, the Operations Directorate and the Permanent Joint Headquarters). The attendance of key policy and communication stakeholders from other government departments and intelligence agencies would facilitate a co-ordinated pan-government response. Other subject matter experts and academics are invited to provide

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<sup>6</sup> Cabinet Office letter dated 17 June 2011, *National Security and Strategic Communication*, to the members of the National Security Council.

advice in specific areas. The SCSG would provide coherent strategic defence direction to deliver coherence between word and deed. It should be supported by staff from the MOD's Strategic Communication Branch who will also provide a secretariat.

324. Sitting below the SCSG is a Standing Strategic Communication Working Group (SCWG) with the same cross-government representation at desk level. It informs and supports the SCSG's work and is chaired by staff from the strategic communication branch. Likely outputs:

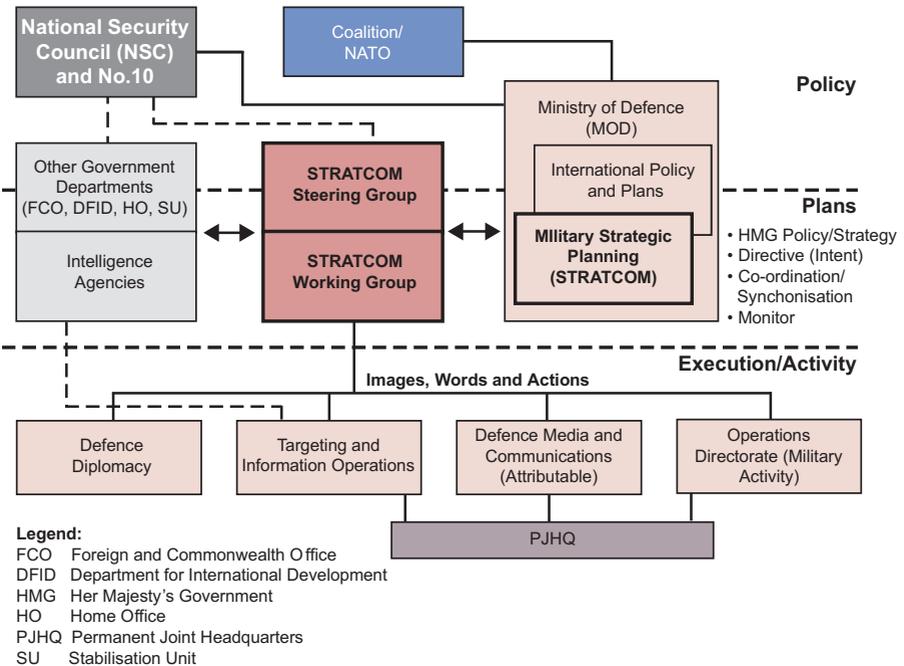
- a. Prioritised and synchronised regional engagement plans.
- b. Agreed narratives for Security Co-operation and Operations Group priority countries and UK contingencies developed in co-ordination with the FCO/Home Office.
- c. Identification of strategic communication opportunities from pre-planned and routine activity.
- d. Co-ordinated, synchronised or de-conflicted messages from all defence means of communication.
- e. A mechanism for other government departments to co-ordinate cross-government communication activities during an event management or crisis response.

## **Crisis Response**

325. The National Security Council will direct the national response to a particular crisis and could establish a Strategic Communications Team (for example, the Afghan Information Strategy Group or the Libya Communications Team for Operation ELLAMY). This group takes the National Security Council priorities, together with ministerial policy, direction and guidance, to develop an agreed, UK pan-government approach to crisis response, in particular, articulating messaging priorities.

326. Subordinate to the Strategic Communication Team will be a steering group and a working group comprising representation from the key Whitehall departments engaged in a particular operation or crisis. The National

Security Council may designate a lead department to act as co-ordinator and secretariat for these bodies. The MOD SCSG and SCWG described in paragraphs 322 and 324 provide a potential model for this. Figure 3.3 illustrates pan-government relationships as employed during Operation ELLAMY; in this example the MOD acted as the lead co-ordinator.



**Figure 3.3 – Crisis Response: Strategic Communication – Cross-Government Relationships**

327. The roles of the strategic communication team, steering group and working group are as follows:

- a. **Strategic Communication Team.** The Strategic Communication Team, established by the National Security Council, responsibilities may include:

- (1) Providing an agreed UK approach for a response to a specific crisis, or event, based on National Security Council, allied nations and wider international priorities.

- (2) Issuing the weekly Number 10 Grid<sup>7</sup> that focuses on events requiring Ministerial or media engagement over a rolling 3-week period.
- (3) Giving direction on priorities, co-ordinating media engagement and overall messaging.
- (4) Providing progress briefs to the National Security Council.
- (5) Providing National Security Council direction and guidance to the SCSG and SCWG.

b. **Strategic Communication Steering Group.** This cross-government body, described in paragraph 322, receives National Security Council direction, intelligence assessments and campaign effectiveness assessments to:

- (1) Develop and monitor strategic-level action plans focussed on achieving strategic effects against specific target sets.
- (2) Co-ordinate government activity across all departments to de-conflict, synchronise and ensure coherence within the strategic narrative.
- (3) Prepare submissions that seek decisions from the National Security Council.
- (4) Recommend changes to current targeting policy and priorities.
- (5) Guide the priorities of the SCWG.

c. **Strategic Communications Working Group.** Taking outputs from both the Strategic Communication Team and the SCSG, the SCWG will:

- (1) On behalf of the SCSG, develop the Strategic Communication Actions and Effects Plan (SCAEP). This

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<sup>7</sup> The *Number 10 Grid* lays out key engagements and media activities by Ministers and other senior government figures.

contains the strategic narrative, a strategic centre of gravity analysis, objectives, target audiences and desired effects. An example of a SCEAP is at Annex 3B.

(2) Develop detailed storyboards relating to particular phases of the crisis, or operation, detailing primary target audiences, a narrative or strategic communication effect. Subsequently they develop the ends (primary objectives), ways (events) or means (activities) to exploit. An example of a storyboard is at Annex 3C.

(3) Develop and maintain the *strategic communication synchronisation matrix* to track and monitor activities across all 3 levers of power, particularly those of key strategic impact and those that are relevant but outwith UK's control. An example of a strategic communication synchronisation matrix is at Annex 3D.

(4) Ensure that the messages being delivered by all departments and agencies are coherent with the overall objectives, strategic narrative and SCEAP.

(5) Identify any proposed activities that may require additional senior guidance or authority to prosecute.

(6) Make recommendations for full-spectrum target development.<sup>8</sup>

## **Linking Strategic Communication to Military Operational Planning and Tactical Activity**

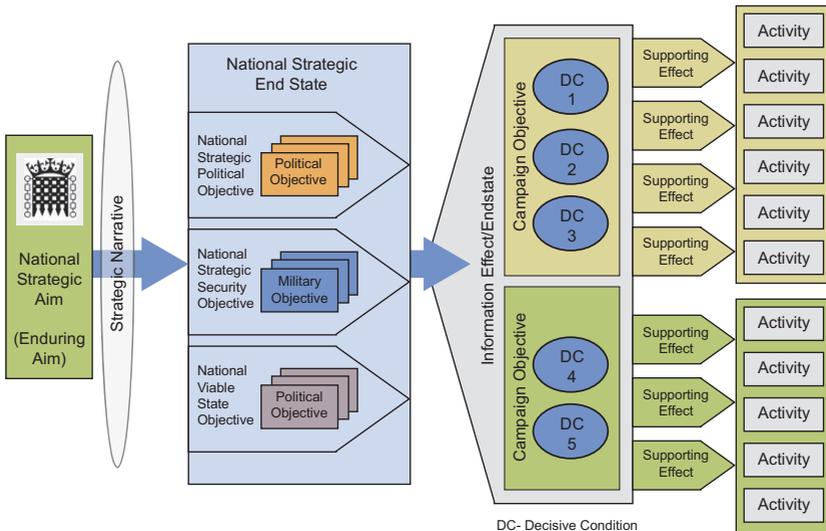
**328. Shaping (Phase 0) Operations.** As part of a wider government strategy, Defence will employ strategic communication activity to support UK diplomatic and economic lines of activity. Using Her Majesty's Government's (HMG) strategies and political direction, co-ordinated strategic communication activity can have an effect in addressing the early phase of a crisis. This includes pre-emptive and non-violent intervention targeted at a range of audiences to change, guide or alter perceptions and behaviours without the need for, or ahead of, physical coercive engagement. The primary means of

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<sup>8</sup> Engagement of a variety of target sets using all 3 instruments of power and both lethal/non-lethal means.

delivering these messages is through routine defence diplomacy, regional engagement and *outreach* with allies/regional actors. Longer-term messaging can be conducted in conjunction with, or on behalf of, other departments using commercial communication companies managed by Military Strategic Effects and Strategic Communication, or other strategic communication specialists.

**329. Operational Campaign Design.** At the strategic level, the Current Operations Group (COG) provides the military planning direction to support HMG policy. Through the Strategic Planning Group and political/military analysis, the detailed military options and planning direction is agreed. During this process the strategic narrative should be confirmed with the National Security Council; this can then be developed as key strategic communication themes and objectives. This provides sufficient detail to contribute to the CDS Planning Directive to the Joint Commander, and, subsequently, the detail can be refined and the key messages identified ready for inclusion in the CDS Directive. These key messages and the narrative will form the basis for the operational commander’s campaign design where he will use the narrative to guide his campaign objectives and map the decisive conditions he must create to achieve it. This initial process is illustrated in Figure 3.4.



**Figure 3.4 – Strategic Communication Campaign Planning Process**

Figure 3.4 shows the link between the narrative, information effect and planned activity. Once execution begins, the process becomes less linear and commanders and planners will adjust activities to respond to the changing environment as the campaign progresses.

330. **Joint Action.** *Joint action* is the model by which the full range of military capabilities and activities are orchestrated to realise effects on an actor's capability, will and understanding in order to achieve influence.<sup>9</sup> Influence is achieved when the behaviour of an actor is affected. Joint Action provides a useful model for visualising the relationship between these (represented at the operational and tactical levels by Information Activities, Fires, Manoeuvre and Outreach) and how they should be integrated to achieve a behavioural effect. Further detail can be found in Chapter 3 of JDP 3-00, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, *Campaign Execution*.

331. **Full Spectrum Targeting.** Full spectrum targeting is a holistic approach to targeting; reviewing all targets together and apportioning action (non-lethal and lethal) in accordance with the campaign information strategy and desired behavioural objectives.<sup>10</sup> Through this process, a detailed analysis is conducted of the range of actors (adversarial, neutral and friendly) associated with a particular crisis, identifying levers and vulnerabilities that can be affected in order to shape behaviours and to influence. Full spectrum targeting underpins joint action, and further detail is contained in Annex 3B of JDP 3-00, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, *Campaign Execution*.

## SECTION IV – WIDER IMPLICATIONS

332. **Training and Education.** Training in campaign planning must emphasise the planning of effects utilising capabilities across the full, non-lethal and lethal, spectrum in order to achieve an information effect as articulated in JDP 5-00, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, *Campaign Planning* and JDP 3-00, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, *Campaign Execution*. The requirement to relax restrictions on engagement between military personnel and external organisations (including the media) has already been mentioned. If this is to be effective, then all personnel must receive appropriate education and training to allow them to understand engagement, and the inherent opportunities and risks.

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<sup>9</sup> JDP 3-00, *Campaign Execution*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Change 1 due to be published in late Spring.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

333. **Regional Expertise.** Effective engagement with audiences requires a deep understanding. Recent campaigns have demonstrated the value of cultural advice and academic input into PRISM groups.<sup>11</sup> Introducing a regional understanding strand into the through-career education of officers and soldiers should provide a foundation for this.

334. **Information and Communication.** Personnel who serve in information activities, (information operations, Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), Civil-military Co-operation (CIMIC) and media operations) posts could be flagged on the Joint Personnel Administration system to allow them to be identified for future employment within these fields. A review of training to identify shared competencies will allow each field to complement the other and provide a record of a pool of specialists without the need to develop a full career field. Experience in these fields should be recognised for the critical contribution they make to operational capability.

335. **Academic and Scientific Input.** In addition to developing deeper regional expertise within the military, better links should be established with the wider academic and scientific community to support planning and execution of strategic communication.

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<sup>11</sup> In 2010, Major General Carter, Commander of Regional Command South in Afghanistan, created a PRISM group within his headquarters which drew on academia amongst other sources to consider particular issues in order to offer differing perspectives so as to challenge conventional thinking.



## ANNEX 3A – COMPARATOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

UK MOD	US	NATO	REMARKS
Policy Driven	Leadership Driven	Leadership	All strategic communication models (including that of the UK FCO) emphasise the requirement for unambiguous leadership in the form of clear policy objectives.
Engagement	Dialogue Understanding	Understanding Audiences	Strategic communication is a 2-way engagement process involving listening, as much as transmitting; this develops understanding.
Adaptable	Responsive Continuous	Agility Creativity	Successful strategic communication requires an ability to adjust what we say, show, and do, in response to improved understanding of the target audiences. This can also be in response to the counter narrative of our adversaries.
Assessment	Results Based	Assessment	Assessment.
Credible	Credible	Credibility	<i>Simple truths speak more loudly than complex crafted positions.</i> <sup>1</sup> Audiences will more readily accept a message if the source and message seem credible in their eyes.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Michael Clarke – CDS’ Strategic Communication Seminar, March 2011.

Conducting Strategic Communication

UK MOD	US	NATO	REMARKS
Coherent	Unity of Effort Pervasive Continuous	Collaboration Comprehensive Continuity	To maintain credibility and avoid information fratricide. Words and deeds must be cast within the strategic narrative and have the same underlying basis from strategic to tactical level, and across all the levers of power.
Empowerment		Empowerment	The best communicators are often relatively junior. If they are to be exploited, they require training in engagement and empowerment, which demands the relaxing of restrictions preventing them from doing so.

## **ANNEX 3B – STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION ACTION AND EFFECTS PLAN**

3B.1 **Introduction and Strategic Aim.** Her Majesty's Government (HMG) aim:

- a. Long term.
- b. Short term.

3B.2 **Objectives and Effects.**

- a. **Objectives.** Overall information objectives for a range of target audiences.
- b. **Desired Effects.** Such as developing understanding of particular target audiences, isolating particular elements, promoting stability, etc.

3B.3 **Strategic Communication Narrative and Themes.**

- a. **Core Narrative.**
- b. **Strategic Communication Themes.** Coalition integrity, regime isolation, protection of civilians, promotion of legitimacy, etc.
- c. **Outcomes.** Behavioural or attitudinal outcomes.

3B.4 **Strategic Centre of Gravity Analysis.** Main focus on adversaries but should also be conducted for coalition, regional and neutral audiences.

3B.5 **Key Target Audiences.**

- a. Joint Operations Area
- b. Regional
- c. International
- d. Home

3B.6 **Key Enduring Messages.**

**3B.7 Enabling Objectives.** What do we need to understand to better equip us to achieve our objectives?

- a. Intelligence/Information gaps.
- b. Involved parties (by department/branch) with a nominated lead.
- c. Progress in closing information gap.

**3B.8 Objectives.** What information effect is required, and against which target audiences? For example:

- a. **Objective 1.** Regime and supporters are coerced to comply with the demands of the international community.
  - (1) Threats
  - (2) Challenge
  - (3) Response

Serial	Effect	Target Audience	Theme	Means	Success Indicators	Remarks

- b. **Objective 2.** The international community and people of XXXX are persuaded not to support the regime.
- c. **Objective 3.** The international community and people of XXXX are encouraged to support the emerging new government.
- d. **Objective 4.** Regional and international support for the coalition is maintained.
- e. **Objective 5.** Domestic audiences support for HMG actions is maintained.

**3B.9 Key Enduring Messages.** Emphasising what action is being taken, why, and the limitations of commitments.

## ANNEX 3C – AN EXAMPLE OF A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION STORYBOARD

### 1. Intensification of Campaign.

<b>Op XXXXX Campaign STRATCOM Themes</b>	<p><b>Regime</b> – Fracture cohesion and convince leadership that time is up.</p> <p><b>Protection</b> – UK and allies are deploying additional capabilities which will provide increased protection to the XXXXX population.</p> <p><b>Co-operation</b> – UK and allies are increasing pressure on XXXX.</p>
<b>Primary Target Audiences</b>	<p>Regime inner circle.</p> <p>XXXXX population.</p> <p>International and home audience.</p>
<b>Master Theme</b>	<p>Reassure the XXXXX population and the international community that the UK, in conjunction with NATO, is ready and able, to adapt its tactics to support the increasing gains of the opposition.</p>
<b>STRATCOM Effects</b>	<p><b>Coercion</b> – Regime leader to capitulate.</p> <p><b>Influence</b> – Leaders’ days are numbered, increasing numbers of the inner circle are defecting. The XXXXX people are rejecting XXXXX as their leader.</p> <p><b>Reassure/Inform</b> – NATO’s plan, and the UK contribution to it, continues to evolve and develop using new capabilities to increase the pressure on XXXXX and ensure the protection of the people under the authority of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) #####.</p>

<p><b>Primary Objectives/ Themes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The psychological pressure on XXXXX in his seat of power is increased.</li> <li>• The number of high-level defections is increasing – XXXXX your supporters are deserting you!</li> <li>• XXXXX's international isolation is increased.</li> <li>• XXXXX must recognise that further failure to meet demands of UNSCR ##### will only result in intensification of NATO's military effort.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity</b></p>	<p>Diplomatic activity at G8.</p> <p>Deployment of new capability (for example, AH 64 helicopters).</p>
<p><b>Means</b></p>	<p>PM/Ministerial statements.</p> <p>Demonstration<sup>1</sup> using attack helicopters.</p>
<p><b>Risk: 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Order Effects</b></p>	<p>Create false expectation that new capability will achieve more than it is capable of.</p> <p>Accusations of mission creep.</p> <p>Rebels reduce campaign momentum if they think NATO will do the fighting for them.</p>

**2. Main Messaging Events/Opportunities to Support the Information Already Passed to the UK Media.**

Date	Event/Opportunity	Message
<p>XX Month 20XX</p>	<p>Press facility at RAF Station X</p>	<p>Detail of attack helicopters deployment, compare effectiveness in theatre with the capability uplift on Op XXXXX.</p>

<sup>1</sup> In this context, demonstration is defined as: *an attack or show of force on a front where a decision is not sought, made with the aim of deceiving the enemy.* Allied Administrative Publication (AAP-6), NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions of Military Significance for Use in NATO, 2011.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event/Opportunity</b>	<b>Message</b>
XX Month 20XX	PM: press conference with, for example, the President of the USA	Opportunity 1 to demonstrate Allied resolve and unity.
XX Month 20XX	PM: press conference with, for example, the President of France	Opportunity 2 to demonstrate Allied resolve and unity.
XX Month 20XX	CDS STRATCOM Officer conducts press conference	



# ANNEX 3D – AN EXAMPLE OF A STRATCOM SYNCHRONISATION MATRIX

Agencies		Timeline				
		06-12 Jun	13-19 Jun	20-26 Jun	27 Jun - 3 Jul	4 -10 Jul
National Security Council Comms Team <sup>1</sup>		● National Security Council				
Key Events	RoW	● African Union (AU) Summit				
	UK					
	Regional					
	JOA	● Foreign Secretary Meets Regional Leaders				
UK Deployed Force Elements		↑ UK Task Force Deployed to JOA				
X Whitehall Activity	Diplomatic					
	Economic					
	Stabilisation					
Alliance Activity (e.g. NATO, EU, EPDA)			↑ NATO Summit			
Key Allies (eg. US, FRA)						
International Organisations (e.g. UN) <sup>2</sup>						
In-country Organisations <sup>3</sup>			↑ FRA Carrier Task Group Deploys			
Defence Activity	Information Operations <sup>4</sup>		● United Nations Security Council	● International Criminal Court Announcement		
	Media Operations					
	Defence Diplomacy					
	Physical Activity		★			
Special Forces/Agencies/ Special Capabilities					↑ Air Campaign Begins	

**Legend:**

- EU - European Union
- FPDA - Five Powers Defence Agreement
- FRA - France
- JOA - Joint Operations Area
- RoW - Rest of the World
- UN - United Nations
- Date of UK activity
- Date of AU activity
- Date of UN activity
- ★ Military action
- ↑ Length of activity

1 A Comms Team will form for each operation, for example, Afghan/Pakistan Comms Team, or, Libya Comms Team.  
 2 If its a UN led, rather than a mandated operation UN activities could be covered in the Alliance line.  
 3 This could be a host nation government, or a rebel organisation for (example the National Transitional Council during Operation ELLAMY)  
 4 Overt and Covert communications and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS)



## CONCLUSION

1. Conflict and security have always been driven by a clash of ideas. The new information environment provides a means to transmit, share and develop these ideas on an unprecedented scale; one that is only likely to increase. To secure our national security objectives and prevail in conflicts of the character we have seen in Afghanistan and Iraq, which we expect to see elsewhere in the future, we will need to communicate our ideas in competition with others. This will require us to master how audiences think, communicate and come together: the cognitive, virtual and physical aspects of the information environment.

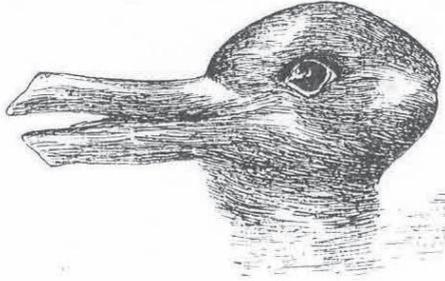
2. Our goals and ideas, and how to realise them, are described in our strategy. If our ideas are to hold sway, they will first need to resonate and chime with audiences. Where they do not, we may need to change our ideas and adjust our goals. Such is the dynamic nature of strategy.

3. In order for our ideas to be heard, they need to be formed, deployed and connected with audiences. This is the acme of strategic communication, a combination of: clear and credible strategy; engagement and understanding of audiences; use of channels for communication; the selection of information; the skilful crafting of the message; and the deftness of timing in communicating it. If we can get this right we should be more able to provide a compelling argument for our ideas and reach out to audiences in a way they can empathise with. It is this that will reinforce or drive behavioural change in favour of our national interests.

4. The greatest challenge is to build a nuanced understanding of our audiences. This requires us to engage with audiences in a dialogue, which involves listening as much as transmitting. For our operation overseas particularly, this requires an engagement not just at the strategic level, but tactically, on the ground, measuring effectiveness and feeding-back insights. Both Central Government and the MOD, as well as other government departments, are in the process of building their understanding of strategic communication. We will need to refine our process, build some capability and, most importantly, embrace the philosophy at all levels. Our strategic communication must be forged in strategy; but to succeed it will need to be translated into coherent words, images and actions through a narrative and

## Conclusion

orders, with all individuals accepting their responsibility as communicators. If we are to realise the potential of strategic communication to secure strategic objectives, we will need to put influence and information effect at the heart of both our military strategy and operational design.



**What Do You Perceive?**

# LEXICON

## PART 1 – ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACDS	Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff
BDD	British Defence Doctrine
CDI	Chief of the Defence Intelligence
CDS	Chief of the Defence Staff
CDS SCO	CDS' Strategic Communication Officer
CIMIC	Civil-Military Co-operation
COBRA	Cabinet Office Briefing Room A
COG	Current Operations Group
DCDC	Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre
DCDS (Mil Strat and Ops)	Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Military Strategy and Operations)
DFID	Department for International Development
DMC	Defence Media and Communications
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
IPP	International Policy and Plans
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JDN	Joint Doctrine Note
JDP	Joint Doctrine Publication
MOD	Ministry of Defence
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
NSC(L)	National Security Council (Libya)
NSC(O)	National Security Council (Officials)
OPCOS (R)	Operations Chiefs of Staff (Routine)

PJHQ	Permanent Joint Headquarters
PUS	Permanent Under Secretary
PSYOPS	Psychological Operations
RC(S)	Regional Command (South)
SCAEP	Strategic Communication Actions and Effects Plan
SCSG	Strategic Communication Steering Group
SCWG	Strategic Communication Working Group
STRATCOM	Strategic Communication
UN	United Nations
US	United States

## **PART 2 – TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

### **Strategic Communication**

Advancing national interests by using all Defence means of communication to influence the attitudes and behaviours of people. (JDN 1/11).

# JOINT DOCTRINE PUBLICATIONS

The successful conduct of military operations requires an intellectually rigorous, clearly articulated and empirically-based framework of understanding that gives advantage to a country's Armed Forces, and its likely partners, in the management of conflict. This common basis of understanding is provided by doctrine.

UK doctrine is, as far as practicable and sensible, consistent with that of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The development of national doctrine addresses those areas not covered adequately by NATO; it also influences the evolution of NATO doctrine in accordance with national thinking and experience.

Endorsed national doctrine is promulgated formally in JDPs.<sup>1</sup> From time to time, Interim JDPs (IJDPs) are published, caveated to indicate the need for their subsequent revision in light of anticipated changes in relevant policy or legislation, or lessons arising out of operations.

Urgent requirements for doctrine are addressed through Joint Doctrine Notes (JDNs). To ensure timeliness, they are not subject to the rigorous staffing processes applied to JDPs, particularly in terms of formal external approval. Raised by the DCDC, they seek to capture and disseminate best practice or articulate doctrinal solutions which can subsequently be developed in due course as more formal doctrine. Alternatively, a JDN may be issued to place some doctrinal markers in the sand, around which subsequent debate can centre.

Details of the joint doctrine development process and the associated hierarchy of JDPs are to be found in JDP 0-00 *Joint Doctrine Development Handbook*.

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly named Joint Warfare Publications (JWPs).

