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Public Affairs: A Strategic Communication Force Multiplier

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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ABSTRACT

As the 10th anniversary of 9/11 approaches many, both in and out of government, are concerned that the United States is losing the war on terror. This growing concern can be linked, in many ways, to overall national strategic communication (SC) efforts. Gaining ground in the war on terror will not come from kinetic actions alone. It is essential that the U.S. appropriately tailor the messages delivered to the international community.

Unfortunately, the U.S. hasn't been overly successful in this endeavor and there is much work to be done to improve SC efforts within the Department of Defense (DOD). Defense Department senior officials have determined that the employment of strategic communication is a means to achieving strategic ends. Given the recurring challenges with the employment of SC, the most effective way to achieve noted strategic ends is through the utilization of PA as a strategic communication force multiplier. This paper examines the evolving nature of SC, reviews current joint doctrine and identifies gaps in guidance, analyzes the efforts in executing SC across the combatant commands and explores leveraging PA as an SC enabler. This paper concludes with recommendations for the future development of SC execution guidance given the recent review directed by the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF).

INTRODUCTION

As the 10th anniversary of 9/11 approaches many, both in and out of government, continue to “express deep concern that the United States is losing both the global war of ideas against Islamic extremists and the war on terror itself.”¹ This growing concern can be linked, in many ways, to overall national strategic communication (SC) efforts. U.S. efforts in the area of SC have been criticized for lacking credibility and for not being properly coordinated across the spectrum of government agencies. This concern resonates with top political and military leaders and was recently captured by Admiral Mullen in a 2009 article published in Joint Force Quarterly in which the CJCS pushed for “getting back to the basics” when it comes to SC. Gaining ground in the war on terror will not come from kinetic actions alone. “In order to be successful, it’s important for our messages to be coordinated – quick and credible. They must speak to the conscience of people around the world.”² Unfortunately, the U.S. hasn’t been overly successful in this endeavor and there is much work to be done to improve SC efforts within the Department of Defense (DOD).

Operational leaders appreciate that SC is a critical element to achieving victory in current and future conflicts, but continue to wrestle with how to employ it effectively given the lack of guidance and execution doctrine. A view across the combatant commands illustrates that “many different approaches to SC are being utilized, with uneven results. Processes are often quite different and integration into the planning process is not consistent.”³ Operational planners recognize the complementary nature of SC in relation to the key operational functions, but are unclear on how to integrate SC into planning. Of the three primary supporting capabilities for SC, Public Affairs (PA); Information Operations (IO); and Defense Support to Public Diplomacy, PA is the most vital to ensuring credibility

in reaching and influencing international audiences. As the commander's principle spokesman and key media coordinator, PA is best qualified to lead the charge to improve communication efforts.

Defense Department senior officials have determined that the employment of strategic communication is a means to achieving strategic ends. Given the recurring challenges with the employment of SC, the most effective way to achieve noted strategic ends is through the utilization of PA as a strategic communication force multiplier. This paper examines the evolving nature of SC, reviews current joint doctrine and identifies gaps in guidance, analyzes the efforts in executing SC across the combatant commands and explores leveraging PA as an SC enabler. This paper concludes with recommendations for the future development of SC execution guidance given the recent review directed by the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF).

BACKGROUND

By 2004, the United States was entering its second and third year, respectively, of combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and was struggling with winning the “war of ideas.” As combat operations continued, Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz requested assistance from the Defense Science Board (DSB) to conduct a study on the transition to and from hostilities.⁴ In analyzing the strategic information environment post 9/11, the DSB determined much work was needed in the area of SC. The 2004 DSB offered multiple recommendations at the national level, but recognized deficiencies in both the Department of Defense and State. Specifically, the 2004 DSB recommended that “the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Joint Chiefs of Staff ensure that all military plans and operations have appropriate strategic communication components.”⁵ Despite this astute

recommendation, the 2004 DSB did not offer a working definition for SC and another two years would pass before the United States Government would adopt a formal definition of SC.

The *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* released by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) on 1 February 2006 provided guidance and direction to combatant commanders (CCDRs) on how to integrate communication capabilities to support SC efforts. However, the Chairman emphasized that it was “important for commanders to consider that maximum effectiveness for all aspects of strategic communication may rest upon a successful public affairs program.”⁶ While the Chairman did convey vision and guidance on SC to the CCDRs in this document, much work was still required codifying programs and doctrine governing the execution of SC at the operational level.

In the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report*, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld acknowledged that victory in *the long war* was contingent upon a SC campaign built upon credibility and trust.⁷ Even though the 2006 QDR addressed gaps in primary supporting SC capabilities, specifically PA, it did not attempt to define SC; that responsibility was left to the DOD professionals tasked with follow-on QDR actions.

In September 2006, the *QDR Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communication* was published capturing, for the first time, the definition of SC.⁸ In addition to promulgating a definition for SC, the QDR Roadmap established the goal for DOD to increase its effectiveness by integrating communication into policy development and operational planning, execution and assessment.⁹ The objectives established to achieve this goal required DOD to develop SC doctrine and to define roles, responsibilities and relationships for the

primary support capabilities, such as PA. Despite the QDR Roadmap's recognition of the need to establish doctrine integrating SC into operational planning, joint forces today still lack execution doctrine from which to plan.¹⁰

As the U.S. enters its tenth year of combat operations in Afghanistan, the phrase *strategic communication* has become commonplace among defense professionals, however much is still needed in clarifying what SC truly is and how it should be employed. Even though CCDRs may not have concrete guidance on how to employ SC, there is a distinct appreciation of it. Major strategic-level documents to include the 2010 NSS, 2010 QDR and 2011 NMS all address SC in some manner sending a message that despite some pre-identified capability gaps, SC is on the scope of national leaders and therefore must be a priority for CCDRs.

The 2009 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) required DOD to provide a report to Congress on the department's SC structure and method for advising SECDEF on SC priorities. In February 2010 SECDEF released the 1055 report, named after the section of the NDAA that required it, proclaiming that DOD views SC in the broadest sense as "the process of integrating issues of audience and stakeholder perception into policy-making, planning and operations at every level."¹¹ A follow on to the 1055 report comes in the form of a memorandum released by SECDEF in January of this year announcing changes within the department. Specifically, SECDEF formally designated the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)) and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ASD(PA)) as SC co-leads and directed USD(P) to publish a new DOD Directive and Instruction clarifying the definition of SC. Recognizing gaps in doctrine and deficiencies in guidance, SECDEF further directed USD(P) to address the execution of SC at the joint force level and to clarify

the method by which CCDRs participate in the SC process.¹² Since SECDEF has directed a review of DOD SC directives and policies, now is the time to address the shortfalls and codify execution guidance for the CCDRs.

Regardless of the institution one operates within, one thing remains constant – words matter. The CJCS confessed he doesn’t like the term, *strategic communication*, and admits “we get too hung up on that word, *strategic*.”¹³ Many would agree with Admiral Mullen that certain terms can have multiple meanings. In discussing this issue with Mr. Jeff Gradeck, EUCOM SC Director, he stated that “when people hear [the term] ‘strategic’ they think policy and when they hear ‘communication’ they think public affairs.”¹⁴ In JP 3-61, *Public Affairs*, PA is defined as: “those public information, command information, and community relations activities directed toward both the external and internal publics with interest in the Department of Defense.”¹⁵ It is important to recognize that PA is a distinct supporting capability and is *not* synonymous with SC. Despite popular belief, there is no “SC umbrella” in which functions reside, however SC is the process that synchronizes supporting capabilities.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

Public Affairs Must Remain Distinct

*Public Affairs and strategic communication are two very different things.*¹⁶

- Admiral James Stavridis

Primary responsibilities assigned to PA professionals include advising the CCDR on public relation activities, delivering truthful messages on behalf of the CCDR, and providing proper assessment of anticipated public support for operations. PA activities are typically tactical by nature and therefore “a strategic communicator must stay at the strategic level and not dip down to the tactical level represent by public affairs.”¹⁷ According to Mr. Brian

Cullin, Director, Communication Planning and Integration at Office of Secretary of Defense for PA, “some believe PA is too soft and delivers no strategic effect and therefore has no place in operations.”¹⁸ The view that PA serves a different end than SC does creates firewalls to ensure PA remains a distinct capability.

Joint doctrine captures the essentiality of synchronizing SC-related PA and IO activities while also acknowledging that “it is equally important that the distinction between PA and IO activities remain clear so as not to diminish their effectiveness and institutional credibility.”¹⁹ Credibility is the greatest strength possessed by PA professionals. Gaining media trust can be challenging, but once PA professionals have established a mutually supporting relationship with the media that relationship can pay huge dividends in return. However, “when the military does not get it right, and the media feels that the military has used them for other than straight-forward reporting of the facts, reporters are quick to turn that into a story itself, which could be considered a direct hit to the public affairs operational credibility.”²⁰ Once the credibility of a PA professional is challenged, it may never be reestablished potentially threatening a future negative relationship between a CCDR and local media. For this reason many argue against utilizing PA in SC efforts.

A key component of SC is messaging. It is extremely critical in this 24-hour instant access information age that the military deliver quick and accurate messages in order to avoid any negative propaganda from adversaries. Utilizing PA as a SC force multiplier to deliver appropriately-tailored messages could be problematic and damage the credibility of PA professionals. Forcing PA into the strategic communication business of messaging “strips it of its distinctive character and consequent benefit to the military, the war effort and ultimately strategic support for operators in the field. If PA is compromised through

activities that will cast doubt on its candid forthrightness, it loses its purpose and value to the military.”²¹

It is important to recognize that SC is a CCDR’s responsibility and the most effective way of employing SC is through an integrated effort of all communication functions. PA can be a key driver in SC efforts without compromising credibility. PA professionals are trained in media relations and appreciate the strategic effects of messages. CCDR’s will maximize the strategic effects of the messages delivered by PA professionals without compromising tactical PA credibility. Therefore, in order to provide the CCDR the right tools for an effective SC program, it is necessary to take down established firewalls producing a more unified SC effort.²²

Joint Doctrine

Following the release of the 2006 QDR and the QDR Execution Roadmap for SC, joint doctrine was updated capturing the DOD definition for SC and a litany of references to the role of SC in operational planning. To date, no stand-alone doctrine exists for SC and planners must review various joint documents to determine individual function roles and responsibilities. Additionally, there is little doctrinal guidance for how CCDRs should employ SC at their level. Some would argue there are obvious gaps in doctrine that must be addressed, while others would advocate that the joint staff is not in the business of telling CCDRs how to “suck an egg” and what is currently codified in joint doctrine is sufficient. Mr. Gradeck concurs that there is not “a whole lot of guidance. We are left alone to execute and as long as they [Joint Staff] are informed they’re happy.”²³

JP 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, specifies that “joint operation planning must include appropriate SC components and operation plans will include an Annex Y (Strategic

Communication) containing a proposed SC strategy”.²⁴ Even though JP 5-0 is clear about the requirement for Annex Y, there is no gatekeeper and “some combatant commands have stopped using Annex Y in favor of placing two or three paragraphs in the commander’s intent section and referring to the IO and PA annexes.”²⁵ Additionally, joint doctrine emphasizes that SC efforts must be synchronized and should be fully integrated in operational planning and execution processes but offers no guidance on how relationships should be established or what framework planners should use.²⁶ The *Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES) Volume 1*, specifies that standing groups, whether boards, cells or working groups, will synchronize SC efforts at the CCDR level in order to positively impact decision cycles.²⁷

JOPES fails to specify a standardized structure for these standing groups and today each of the combatant commands is structured differently. According to Mr. Brian Cullin, OSD(PA), whose primary responsibility is to coordinate all the combatant commands SC efforts, “what we have right now is not working. Every one of the combatant commands has a different organization structure for their communication efforts.”²⁸ The varied and stovepiped nature of how SC and PA directorates are organized across the combatant commands creates challenges in coordinating and synchronizing overall DOD communication efforts. When asked if there should be a standardized structure across the combatant commands, Mr. Cullin responding with a resounding “yes”. Not only should there be a standard, but PA must be at the forefront of all public communication planning, strategy and engagement.²⁹

In an attempt to bridge the gaps in joint doctrine, U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) created the Commander’s Handbook for Strategic Communication and

Communication Strategy. Recognizing that there is “very little doctrinal guidance and no universal agreement on the best way to plan and execute SC,” JFCOM created this handbook not as a substitute for doctrine, but rather as a compilation of lessons learned, best practices and alternative organizational options.³⁰ While this handbook is a valuable resource to strategic communicators, especially those at the combatant command level, it is not a substitute for doctrine and is only “suggestive” in nature. Until stand-alone doctrine is developed, there is nothing preventing CCDRs from exercising latitude in how they capture SC in their planning efforts, if at all.

Strategic Communication at the Combatant Commands

“If we’ve learned nothing else these past 8 years, it should be that the lines between strategic, operational, and tactical are blurred beyond distinction”³¹

- Admiral Michael C. Mullen

Combatant commanders face a multitude of challenges today and being able to convince others to think and act in ways compatible with U.S. national interests and strategic objectives can be a daunting task. Recognizing these challenges, JFCOM conducted a capabilities-based assessment and recommended establishing a SC Joint Integrating Concept (JIC), which was approved by the Joint Requirements Oversight Committee in October 2009. The intent of the JIC was to provide a solution for the future joint force commander. Specifically, how a future joint force commander “could plan and perform strategic communication at the theater-strategic and operational levels within the context of broader national-level strategic communication efforts in order to affect the behaviors of selected populations, governments or other decision-making groups. Additionally, this JIC posits that strategic communication will not be an adjunct activity, but will be inherent in the planning and conduct of all operations. It should be proactive, not reactive.”³² The operational

solution to this problem is “informed and adaptive listening and signaling to affect perceptions, attitude and beliefs which are dependent upon understanding potential audiences and assessing the effects of signals.”³³ Leveraging PA best suits the CCDR to understand potential audiences. PA professionals appreciate the strategic effects carried in even the simplest of messages and are trained in tailoring messages based on the needs of the audience.

CCDRs have creatively improvised methods for organizing and employing SC. When SC was first introduced within DOD, it was thrown together in a rather ad hoc fashion with no consistency across the combatant commands. The manner in which SC was stood up did not set conditions for success at the operational level and according to the Mr. Gradeck, “it set us back about two years.”³⁴ Despite the lack of established doctrine, CCDRs are incorporating SC into operational planning and many have achieved success with their SC efforts. The most successful combatant commands are those who are able to understand their audiences and effectively communicate their messages. Each of these combatant commands is capitalizing on PA professionals to lead their charge.

SC is a commander’s responsibility and command involvement is critical to a successful SC program. Admiral Stavridis is possibly one of the most knowledgeable and outspoken commanders of the importance of SC. While Commander, U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), he considered SC as an enabling capability for policy and planning decisions and actions. Appreciating the diversity of his command, he acknowledged that “nothing we do is more important than strategic communication.”³⁵ Admiral Stavridis also believed that the place to “organize” SC is at the operational level in order to execute smoothly at the tactical level. He divided his area of responsibility into four

subregions to better tailor messages, maximize resources, find synergies and move out on the greater regional strategic plan.³⁶

In addition to SOUTHCOM's regional focus, Admiral Stavridis advocated for integrating capabilities in order to produce the greatest strategic effects. He recognized PA as one of the many tools available for accomplishing SC. The voyage of the USNS *Mercy* in 2006 is just one example of how PA has been employed as a SC force multiplier. During the *Mercy*'s 3-month cruise, crew members performed over \$30 million in services and goods transfers and saw over 200,000 patients. All of their efforts were aggressively communicated using a detailed SC plan. The onboard PA team was able to communicate continued U.S. involvement, commitment, and presence in the region evoking a measurable impact on the impressions others have of the U.S.³⁷ Considering the operational solution depicted in the SC JIC, understanding audiences and affecting perceptions, it is apparent SOUTHCOM has achieved success in this area and demonstrated that success through capitalizing on PA.

The day Admiral Stavridis took command of U.S. European Command (EUCOM), he held a town hall meeting in which he laid out his top three priorities – building partnership capacity, interagency, and strategic communication.³⁸ Mr. Gradeck, current EUCOM SC Director and retired Navy Captain PAO, credits most of EUCOM's success in the SC arena to Admiral Stavridis' leadership and comments during that Town Hall meeting. "When the 4-star publicly declares that SC is one of his top priorities, it immediately becomes a priority for the entire command and our SC stock goes up exponentially."³⁹ Direct CCDR involvement is vital for strategic communicators at the operational level because as it stands now SC directors have no authority over established SC working groups. Getting

organizations to dedicate time and personnel can be challenging if there is no command involvement.

Another credit to EUCOM's success is the EUCOM SC Directive which establishes and prescribes policy and responsibilities for EUCOM SC efforts. EUCOM's SC strategy of a message-centric approach to SC is captured in this directive and guides all phases of operational planning. This directive also identifies the responsibilities of the EUCOM SC Directorate and details how the J3 will integrate the SC directorate into the planning cycle and how it will be utilized by the J5 in theater campaign and contingency plans.⁴⁰ This is critical because the document formally identifies who has the lead on SC for the command and more importantly, marries SC professionals up with planners who are leading operational planning teams (OPT), developing commander guidance, conducting deliberate and crisis action planning and issuing operational orders.

EUCOM's Strategic Communication Working Group (SCWG), chaired by Mr. Gradeck, actively participates in crisis and deliberate planning and is the "forum to further analyze SC issues and adjust themes, messages and methods."⁴¹ At EUCOM, the SCWG meets weekly and reports to the EUCOM Chief of Staff who convenes the SC Executive Steering Group to address issues at the General Officer/Flag Officer level. Mr. Gradeck appreciates the level of command involvement as it alleviates some pressure of integrating multiple capabilities. He also acknowledges that since SC is a process, it doesn't need a large office with a ton of people; the key is integrating efforts. When asked what role PA serves in EUCOM SC efforts, Mr. Gradeck responded that "PA brings a capability that we, as strategic communicators, capitalize on when tailoring our messages."⁴² Even though EUCOM employs PA as a force multiplier in its overall SC efforts, Mr. Gradeck does not

believe PA and SC need to be “one in the same and they certainly don’t need to sit in the same office, but PA does complement SC and must be a key component of any SC effort.”⁴³

A CCDR’s ability to develop an integrated plan that delivers an effective, coordinated message is essential to any effective SC efforts and equally vital to promoting U.S. national interests abroad. U.S. Pacific Command’s (PACOM) SCWG’s efforts in this area are commendable. Similar to EUCOM, the PACOM SCWG has no authority to task but is comprised of “good people doing great things.”⁴⁴ PACOM SC efforts are structured around discrete events and PACOM strategic communicators, to include PA professionals, are critical elements of each OPT to ensure the appropriate message is delivered.

The success of PACOM’s efforts to effectively communicate the intent of Operation TOMODACHI, disaster relief efforts to Japan, can be attributed to PACOM’s crisis action planning and use of social media to communicate messages. Navy social media sites were some of the first social network sites to post notifications of the event. Within two hours of the earthquake striking Japan, U.S. Pacific Fleet was posting on Facebook. Early notifications were essential in not only notifying the world of the crisis but also in providing “immediate warning to areas that may have been affected by follow on tsunamis and for offering condolences to the people of Japan.”⁴⁵ By involving PA, specifically social media, in the planning process, PACOM was able to craft and deliver messages illustrating U.S. relief efforts in a way that demonstrated the value of the relationship between the U.S. and Japan.

The consistent theme through the above examples is that “combatant commanders are using the committee-style approach to SC. They are not necessarily creating new organizations within their command, but are setting in place processes that work given the unique circumstances within their respective AORs.”⁴⁶ As the above examples illustrate, it

can be argued that there is effective employment of SC at the operational level despite clear execution guidance from the joint staff. However, not all of the combatant commands are as successful in their endeavors. Mr. Cullin confesses that “some are doing better than others. We say we integrate efforts but in reality we don’t. Everyone needs to be under the same roof.”⁴⁷ Why continue to leave how to execute SC as a process to the discretion of the CCDR when there are multiple best practices to benchmark? The time to codify processes and clarify responsibilities is now given the release of the 1055 report and the January 2011 SECDEF memorandum.

Filling in the Gaps

As demonstrated throughout this paper, SC involvement in operational planning is essential for an effective SC program. What is currently captured in joint doctrine may be adequate but it is not sufficient. In a 2009 article in JFQ, Admiral Mullen highlighted that the problem with our ability to effectively communicate strategically isn’t that we are necessarily bad at it but rather that our messages lack credibility.⁴⁸ One of the nine principles of SC is credibility; SC requires a “professional force of properly trained, educated and attentive communicators. Credibility also often entails communicating through others who may be viewed as more credible.”⁴⁹ Capitalizing on PA can fill in the gaps and provide that much needed credibility.

Current PA doctrine emphasizes the “crafting of messages and the capacity to deliver the message.”⁵⁰ Additionally, there have been a number of initiatives aimed at developing PAOs who are more sophisticated in dealing with international communications.⁵¹ One said initiative is the revision of PA courses at the Defense Information School which are now aimed at better preparing PA professionals to assume roles as SC leaders and to prepare

senior PAOs to serve as effective SC counselors across the combatant commands.⁵²

Unfortunately better training is not enough; having well-trained PA professionals is only one part of the equation.

Mr. Cullin is a big proponent for not only formally integrating PA and SC offices under the same roof, but also for capitalizing on the effective media relation experience of PA professionals. According to Mr. Cullin, “we say we are integrated, but in reality PA offices sit in other buildings. Not integrating is like not including an awareness of the battle space when planning an operation. Having communication responsibilities in two different shops leads to dysfunction regardless of how good the staff is.”⁵³

Multiple initiatives have emerged within DOD as a result of the 1055 report. The establishment of the Global Engagement Strategy Coordination Committee, chaired by ASD (PA) and OSD Policy, meets biweekly to address evolving SC issues. Mr. Cullin noted that this committee emerged in order to fix problems across the staffs and to integrate PA with policy, communications planning and strategy across DOD. Additionally, Mr. Cullin noted this was a move in the right direction as PA professionals, given their experience as the commander’s spokesman, understand both the potential and risks that communication messages carry and in order for the [Defense] Department to move forward, the formal integration of PA into all phases of SC is necessary.⁵⁴

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Since the DOD accepted the recommendations of the 2004 DSB report and formally adopted a working definition of SC, CCDRs have made significant progress employing SC at the operational level. However, there is much room for improvement as SC is not standardized across the combatant commands and CCDRs are exercising their “county

options” in developing and executing SC. In addition, the identified gaps in doctrine leave room for individual interpretation which complicates synchronization of SC efforts across the commands and sets conditions for inconsistencies at the strategic level. The DOD needs to ensure the U.S. maintains credibility when delivering messages to the international audience, especially as operations continue in Iraq and Afghanistan and as future operations unfold.

Ongoing discussions with key SC professionals reveal that many feel the current SC definition is too broad and vague. With the ongoing review of SC operations within DOD, now is the time for USD(P) and ASD(PA) to clarify the definition of SC and address the deficiencies in execution of SC at the joint force level. In addition to suggestions raised earlier in this paper, the following recommendations are offered:

- Joint staff should establish an organizational framework for how SC cells are to be structured at the combatant command level and formally capture this framework in doctrine to ensure standardization across the commands.
- Formally integrate PA and SC offices to include co-location. The way it is organized today PA plays a key role in SC efforts but is not fully utilized. PA involvement in planning is critical to ensuring information is accurately captured and messages are delivered appropriately creating the intended strategic effects. Formally integrating PA and SC ensures SC directors have authority over PA professionals and can direct their involvement in SC planning to improve DOD’s ability to deliver accurate, timely and truthful messages.
- Joint staff should benchmark the EUCOM SC directive and mandate the other CDRs to publish a similar directive. When SC is a priority of the commander it quickly becomes a priority for the entire command and those charged with directing

SC efforts are better equipped to ask for resources and personnel when they have the support of the CCDR. The successes SOUTHCOM and EUCOM have enjoyed can be directly attributed to the operational leadership of Admiral Stavridis and his declaration of SC as one of his top priorities.

- Establish SC as the seventh operational function.⁵⁵ With SECDEF's recent interest in addressing the execution of SC at the joint force levels, now is the time to capture the CCDR's most crucial instrument of power. This recommendation is reinforced by Newt Gingrich who writes "SC in a real-time worldwide information system is a branch of the art of war comparable to logistics or intelligence. It will require staffing, education and practicing at about the same level as intelligence or logistics to be successful."⁵⁶ Some would argue, SC is already captured under operational fires, however I would argue that IO is adequately captured under fires but SC is much broader than IO and setting it apart as a distinct function will emphasize its importance at the operational level.

Despite advances in DOD SC efforts, much work still needs to be done since the U.S. continues to face challenges in the "war of ideas." As the U.S. enters its 10th year of fighting the war on terror, it is essential that operational commanders recognize that SC is an enabling function that guides and informs decisions and is not an organization unto itself in which all communication activity is captured underneath it.⁵⁷ This paper does not advocate that PA is synonymous with SC, but rather it is a force multiplier that the CCDR can utilize to promote his command's SC efforts in order to achieve national objectives.

NOTES

¹ William M. Darley, “The Missing Component of U.S. Strategic Communications,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 47, 4th Quarter 2007, 109.

² Karen Hughes, “Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy: Interagency Coordination” (address, Department of Defense Conference on Strategic Communication, Washington, DC, 11 July 2007).

³ U.S. Joint Forces Command, *Commander’s Handbook for Strategic Communication and Communication Strategy*, Version 3.0 (Suffolk, VA: Joint Warfighting Center, 24 June 2010), O-1, <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/DIME/documents/Strategic%20Communication%20Handbook%20Ver%203%20-%20June%202010%20JFCOM.pdf> (accessed 14 April 2011).

⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication* (Washington, DC: DSB, September 2004), 88. <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/ADA428770.pdf> (accessed 24 March 2011).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁶ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* (Washington, DC: CJCS, 1 February 2006), 30, <http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/2006-01-25-Strategic-Plan.pdf> (accessed 14 April 2011).

⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, *2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: DOD, February 2006), 92, <http://www.defense.gov/qdr/report/report20060203.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2011).

⁸ SC is defined as *focused United States Government processes and efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable to advance national interests and objectives through the use of coordinated information, themes, plans, programs, and actions synchronized with other elements of national power.*

U.S. Department of Defense, *2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Strategic Communication (SC) Execution Roadmap* (Washington, DC: DOD, September 2006), 3, <http://www.defense.gov/qdr/report/report20060203.pdf> (accessed 25 March 2011).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰ Norberto R. Menendez, “Theory as Foundation for Strategic Communication Doctrine” (research paper, Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department, 2009), 6.

¹¹ Secretary of Defense, *Department of Defense Report on Strategic Communication* (Washington, DC: SECDEF, December 2009), 1.

¹² Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, Strategic Communication and Information Operations in DoD, memorandum, 25 January 2011.

¹³ Michael G. Mullen, “Strategic Communication: Getting Back to Basics,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 55, 4th Quarter 2009, 2.

¹⁴ Jeffrey Gradeck, telephone call with author, 13 April 2011.

¹⁵ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Public Affairs*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-61 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 25 August 2010), 43.

¹⁶ James G. Stavridis, “Strategic Communication and National Security,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 46, 3rd Quarter 2007, 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

¹⁸ Brian P. Cullin, telephone call with author, 18 Apr 2011.

¹⁹ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Enclosure B to Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES) Volume 1* (Washington, DC: CJCS, 29 September 2006), 18.

²⁰ Carla M. McCarthy, “Public Affairs: Maintaining Credibility While Evolving Strategic Communication” (research paper, Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department, 2007), 12.

²¹ William C. Darley, “Why Public Affairs is Not Information Operations,” *Army Magazine*, January 2005, http://www.ausa.org/publications/armymagazine/archive/2005/1/Documents/FC_Darley_0105.pdf (accessed 20 April 2011).

²² USJFCOM, *Commander’s Handbook for Strategic Communication*, xix.

²³ Jeffrey Gradeck, telephone call with author, 13 April 2011.

²⁴ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operation Planning*, Joint Publication 5-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 26 December 2006), II-2.

²⁵ USJFCOM, *Commander’s Handbook for Strategic Communication*, xviii.

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- ²⁶ Menendez, "Theory as Foundation," 9.
- ²⁷ CJCS, *JOPES Volume 1*, B-20.
- ²⁸ Brian P. Cullin, telephone call with author, 18 Apr 2011.
- ²⁹ Brian P. Cullin, telephone call with author, 18 Apr 2011.
- ³⁰ USJFCOM, *Commander's Handbook for Strategic Communication*, i.
- ³¹ Mullen, "Strategic Communication," 2.
- ³² U.S. Joint Staff, *Strategic Communication*, Joint Integrating Concept Version 1.0 (Washington, DC: Headquarters U.S. Joint Staff, 7 October 2009), iii.
- ³³ Ibid., 9.
- ³⁴ Jeffrey Gradeck, telephone call with author, 13 April 2011.
- ³⁵ Stavridis, "Strategic Communication," 4.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 6.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 5.
- ³⁸ Jeffrey Gradeck, telephone call with author, 13 April 2011.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ U.S. European Command, *Strategic Communication Directive*, ECI 3200.04.0 (Stuttgart, Germany: USEUCOM, 14 April 2009), 3-4.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 6.
- ⁴² Jeffrey Gradeck, telephone call with author, 13 April 2011.
- ⁴³ Jeffrey Gradeck, telephone call with author, 13 April 2011.
- ⁴⁴ LT Theresa Donnelly, telephone call with author, 14 April 2011.
- ⁴⁵ U.S. Navy Department of Information, "Operation Tomodachi and Navy Social Media Presentation Transcript," <http://www.slideshare.net/USNavySocialMedia/crisis-communication-stages-operation-tomodachi> (accessed 20 April 2011).
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- ⁴⁹ USJFCOM, *Commander's Handbook for Strategic Communication*, A-2.
- ⁵⁰ Menendez, "Theory as Foundation," 14.
- ⁵¹ Darley, "Why Public Affairs," 109.
- ⁵² Defense Information School, "Information and reading material for Joint Senior Public Affairs Course (JSPAC)," http://www.dinfos.dma.mil/Dinfosweb/Students/DINFOS_JSPAC.aspx (accessed 30 March 2011).
- ⁵³ Brian P. Cullin, telephone call with author, 18 Apr 2011.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Paper author recognizes MAJ Harper offered the same recommendation in his research paper from 2008, however paper author independently drew this conclusion before reading MAJ Harper's paper but wanted to formally acknowledge his efforts.
- ⁵⁶ Stavridis, "Strategic Communication," 4.
- ⁵⁷ Mullen, "Strategic Communication," 4.

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