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ORGANISATION DU TRAITÉ DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD**

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TO: See Distribution

SUBJECT: **NATO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION HANDBOOK V1.0**

DATE: 20 September 2017

REFERENCES:

- A. MC 0628 (Final), NATO Military Policy on Strategic Communications, dated 26 July 2017.
- B. MCM-0085-2010, Military Concept for NATO Strategic Communications, dated 11 August 2010.
- C. IMSWM-0051-2011(SD1), NATO Strategic Communications Military Capability Implementation Plan (CIP), dated 11 April 2011.
- D. PO (2009) 0141, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, dated 29 September 2009.

1. With the publication of Reference A, there was acknowledgement of the need for dedicated focus on, and capability development within Strategic Communications (StratCom). Reference B tasked ACT to develop a StratCom Handbook in order to improve NATO's capabilities in the Information Environment.
2. A "Draft for Use" version was Bi-SC signed in May 2015 and reviewed after 18 months to take all lessons identified from 2015 and 2016 exercises and experimentation into account.
3. Enclosure 1, the NATO StratCom Handbook v1.0, describes current processes, procedures, and tools of StratCom within the NATO Command Structure (NCS) for all levels, in order to improve consistent messaging and conduct of operations through various NATO activities.
4. It provides an accurate understanding of the NATO StratCom to be implemented in the operational planning process and staff battle rhythms built around the NATO Narrative.



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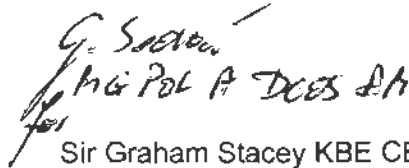
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ENCLOSURE:

1. NATO Strategic Communication Handbook v1.0

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## **NATO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION HANDBOOK**

Ver 1.0 – September 2017

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## PREFACE

The NATO Strategic Communication (StratCom) Handbook is intended to be applied to the entire headquarters (HQ), including the Command Group (CG) and all staff officers. It aims to improve the reader's understanding of a holistic approach to military activities and describe their role within the larger NATO StratCom organization. It is designed to assist StratCom practitioners and HQ staff who interact with StratCom at all levels of command. In operations, the focus of the StratCom effort is generally at the strategic and operational levels, and this Handbook reflects that. It is important for those interacting with the strategic and operational levels to be aware of these processes. The guide and table below describe the areas of the Handbook best suited for each reader's purposes:

**Chapter 1** - Introduction to StratCom applies to the entire staff as a general introduction to StratCom.

**Chapter 2** – Roles, Responsibilities, and Coordinating Mechanisms assist the entire staff in understanding how StratCom in NATO is practiced from the NAC down to the staff officer.

**Chapter 3** – Understanding the Information Environment (IE) and Narrative Development guides the communication capability and information staff functions<sup>1</sup> through the process of understanding the IE and developing the NATO Narrative. This process is essential to ensuring plans and activities support the NATO Narrative, counter competing narratives, and prevent separation from neutral narratives, ideally drawing neutral narratives closer.

**Chapter 4** - Planning is directed at the StratCom practitioner while equipping the communication capability and information staff functions with the tools necessary to participate in the planning process and to produce StratCom products.

**Chapter 5** - Mission Execution guides the StratCom practitioner through battle rhythm events in which they are expected to lead, participate, and contribute. This chapter applies primarily to StratCom practitioners, but is also useful for all the communication capability and information staff functions.

**Chapter 6** – Engagement is covered from a StratCom perspective with respect to planning and conducting engagement activities. This chapter primarily focuses on engagements conducted by senior leadership assigned to strategic and operational HQ; however, many of the principles also apply to engagements conducted at a lower level. This information is intended to complement, rather than replace, specific “in-theatre” guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> In this Handbook, the term “communication capability and information staff functions” refers to PSYOPS, along with Military Public Affairs (Mil-PA) and Information Operations (Info Ops), and at the political/strategic level, Public Diplomacy



<b>Content</b>	<b>Command Group Staff</b>	<b>Staff with Significant StratCom Interaction</b>	<b>StratCom Practitioners</b>
Chapter 1	Required	Required	Required
Chapter 2	Required	Required	Required
Chapter 3	Recommended	Required	Required
Chapter 4	Recommended	Recommended	Required
Chapter 5	Recommended	Recommended	Required
Chapter 6	Recommended	Recommended	Required
Annexes	Not required	As required	Required

*Figure P-1: Target Readership*

The concepts within this Handbook will enable the StratCom practitioner to contribute appropriate products to the HQ effort. In the development of this Handbook, NATO's Strategic Commands<sup>2</sup> relied heavily on experimentation, stakeholder input from staff officers who fill these billets, research by multi-national organizations and best practices derived from lessons identified.

For any questions, concerns, or need for clarification, please contact HQ Supreme Allied Command Transformation StratCom Capability Development, at 757-747-4246.

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<sup>2</sup> Allied Command Operations (ACO) and Allied Command Transformation (ACT), to be referred to in this Handbook as the Bi-SCs.

## CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING STRATCOM

1-1 **Aim.** The global strategic environment has dramatically evolved since the end of the Cold War and will continue to do so. A networked world has rendered both state and non-state actors capable of employing conventional, unconventional, and hybrid strategies<sup>3</sup>, empowering them to shape their narratives within a continuous and global information cycle. This chapter outlines the Alliance's communication issues that StratCom is designed to address. It also describes NATO StratCom as a function, process and mindset, and provides a basis for building success in the Information Environment (IE) and subsequently, the operational environment.

1-2 **The Communication Problem.** Maintaining credibility, closing the “say-do” gap, and seeking to integrate kinetic and non-kinetic activities more closely in pursuit of its goals and objectives, remains a significant challenge for NATO. Indeed, such is the importance of information to mission success that, on occasion, policies and actions may need to be adapted in response to the imperatives of achieving the information aspects, underpinning the overall objectives. To meet our adversaries, and successfully and efficiently operate in this environment, all Alliance communication efforts at all levels (political, strategic, operational, and tactical) must be seamlessly coordinated and integrated, communicating clear, concise messages as cascaded down from NATO HQ through Allied Command Operations (ACO). These ends are achieved via **StratCom**. In the context of the NATO military, StratCom is *the integration of communication capabilities and information staff function with other military activities, in order to understand and shape the Information Environment (IE), in support of NATO aims and objectives*<sup>4</sup>.

- a. **Communication Capability and Information Staff Functions.** The Alliance has a number of specialized staffs that are specifically tasked with communication planning and execution, and provide support and advice to Alliance leadership and military staffs regarding communication. The StratCom process gathers the expertise from these specialist staff elements to better coordinate and integrate communication objectives throughout all NATO processes.
- b. The **Information Environment** is “an environment comprised of the information itself; the individuals, organizations and systems that receive, process and convey the information and the cognitive, virtual and physical space in which this occurs”<sup>5</sup>. The IE is where humans and automated systems observe, orient, decide and act upon information and is therefore the principal environment of opinion building and decision making.
- c. **Information Activities** are actions designed to affect information and/or information systems. They can be performed by any actor and include protection measures<sup>6</sup>.

1-3 **StratCom as a Function.** To ensure coherence of NATO's actions and words, the communication capability and information staff functions (PSYOPS, Info Ops, Mil-PA) will be responsible for execution of information activities, but StratCom/Director of Communications (or similar

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<sup>3</sup> ISIM-0099-2015: Hybrid Strategy – A strategy based on a broad, complex, adaptive, and often highly integrated combination of conventional and/or unconventional means, overt and/or covert activities, military, paramilitary and/or civilian actors conducted across the full spectrum of elements of power targeted at decision making and complicating engagement

<sup>4</sup> Definition from MC 0628 NATO Military Policy on Strategic Communications, June 2017

<sup>5</sup> NATO AJP 3.10 Allied Joint Doctrine for Information Operations, December 2015

<sup>6</sup> MC 0422/5, NATO Military Policy on Information Operations, February 2015

title) will have coordination and integration authority, supported by appropriate structures, to direct coherence communication planning towards aligned outcomes.

**1-4 StratCom as a Process.** In this context, the role of StratCom is that of “campaign manager,” concentrating existing communication resources and activities to achieve specific, measurable effect. Campaigns are informed by in-depth audience insight and IE assessments, and include detailed narrative and strategy development resulting in the creation of StratCom Frameworks to provide focus for communication functions. StratCom Frameworks (paragraph 5-6 and [Annex C](#)) are the primary tool issued by NATO leaderships to provide overarching direction and guidance (D&G) for StratCom, driving the development of implementation plans. Such implementation plans ([Annex G](#)) guide communication activities and outputs of the campaigns, and are subject to rigorous assessment and monitoring, informing follow-on strategy development.

**1-5 StratCom as a Mindset.** StratCom is also regarded as a mindset promoting a broader understanding of communication, going beyond traditional media and non-kinetic approaches to the achievement of desired effects in the IE. Staffs and planners mindset must understand that all actions communicate, thus, it is essential for a staff to understand how NATO words and deeds will be perceived across the IE at all times. This mindset must permeate from strategic/operational Commanders down to the tactical level. Staffs should include resident experts in all communication capability and information staff functions to help facilitate understanding through the use of the Alliance’s narrative, cultural awareness, unity of effort, consistency, credibility, and applicability.

**1-6 StratCom Principles:**

- a. All activity is founded on NATO’s values;
- b. The IE must be understood;
- c. Activity is driven by objectives derived from Narrative, Policy, and Strategy issued within a framework of political-military direction;
- d. Credibility and trust are vital attributes and must be protected;
- e. Words and actions must be aligned;
- f. Communication is a collective and integrated effort;
- g. Focus is on achieving (a) desired effect(s) and outcome(s);
- h. Communication is empowered at all levels.

**1-7 Political Guidance.** StratCom execution at the operational level is formed by Direction and Guidance (D&G) from the NAC, appropriately relayed through the chain of command (see Chapter 2). This guidance may come in the form of a NATO HQ Narrative; as part of an overall communication campaign; directly, as part of the NATO HQ annual strategy; and/or part of a NATO HQ-issued StratCom Framework.

**1-8 Conflict and Crisis Communication.** Often, Commanders are faced with unexpected situations that could have very strategic/political effects. As a result, crisis communication at the operational level occurs frequently. Effective use of NATO’s Narrative and general StratCom Frameworks (in the absence of specific “campaign-based” Frameworks or other D&G) is essential in

the management and control of most crises. At times, an immediate response requires detailed coordination among all communication capability and information staff functions. In these cases, Commanders will direct available Subject Matter Experts (SME) to undertake information activities, develop and implement plans to mitigate negative effects, and achieve the Alliance's goals.

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## CHAPTER 2: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND COORDINATING MECHANISMS

2-1. **Aim.** This chapter identifies the roles, responsibilities, and the coordinating mechanisms that are necessary for a HQ to communicate strategically, including the understanding of the role of StratCom within a HQ, and the relationships with higher and lower echelons. Understanding the relationships within the HQ and the broader StratCom community as part of an overall StratCom effort is key to developing the working relationships necessary to be effective. It is important to understand ALL of the roles and responsibilities throughout the NATO Command Structure (NCS) not only to ensure all stakeholders have situational awareness, but more importantly, to understand the key communication capability and information staff functions and how they affect communication at all levels.

### 2-2. NATO StratCom Bodies

- a. **North Atlantic Council (NAC).** The NAC provides overall guidance and direction to NATO StratCom efforts, as well as mission-specific strategic and political guidance for NATO communication capability and information functions;
- b. **Secretary General (SecGen).** The SecGen is the principal spokesperson for the Alliance and provides specific D&G on StratCom to all NATO civilian and military bodies on Alliance policy;
- c. **Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy Division (ASG PDD).** The ASG PDD has the overall responsibility for StratCom on behalf of the SecGen. The ASG PDD oversees the coordination of all StratCom activities across all NATO civilian and military bodies and commands, and also directs all public diplomacy activities to ensure coordination and synchronization;
- d. **NATO Spokesperson.** The NATO Spokesperson, on behalf of the SecGen, provides day-to-day direction of all NATO HQ media activities, including messaging, and offers guidance to Military PA (Mil-PA) to ensure that all NATO messages and communication are consistent with political direction and decisions;
- e. **Military Committee (MC).** The MC provides overall policy for NATO staff functions, in accordance with political direction, decisions, and consensus, providing military advice to the NAC on StratCom issues;
- f. **Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC).** The CMC is the principal military spokesperson for the Alliance on all military issues;
- g. **International Military Staff (IMS) Public Affairs and StratCom Advisor (PASCAD).** IMS PASCAD provides spokesperson services for the MC, supports the MC, its Chairman, and the Director General IMS on StratCom issues. The PASCAD facilitates interaction and coordination between the MC, the Bi-SCs, and the Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) on Mil-PA and StratCom issues, and chairs the StratCom Military Committee Working Group (MCWG);
- h. **IMS Information Operations (Info Ops).** The IMS Info Ops Division is responsible for MC Policy on Info Ops and PSYOPS, and facilitates cooperation between the Bi-SCs and the MC on Info Ops and PSYOPS issues;
- i. **Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).** SACEUR provides D&G on StratCom within ACO, in accordance with overall direction from NATO HQ. SACEUR is the principal military spokesperson for current Alliance operations;

j. **Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT).** SACT provides StratCom support within ACT, and provides StratCom concept and capability development in accordance with overall direction from NATO HQ. SACT is the principal military spokesperson on NATO transformation, training events, and exercises;

k. **Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe Strategic Communication (SHAPE StratCom).** SHAPE StratCom is responsible for developing, planning, and integrating Alliance StratCom activities in support of current NATO operations. SHAPE StratCom, in accordance with overall direction from NATO HQ, also supports subordinate ACO HQs' StratCom efforts;

l. **Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation Strategic Communication (HQ SACT StratCom).** HQ SACT StratCom leads capability development, training, exercise support, and implementation of emerging StratCom processes, in coordination with ACO. Additionally, HQ SACT has the added role for coordinating the Programme of Work for the StratCom Centre of Excellence (COE);

m. **Joint Force Commands, Joint Task Force, and Single Service Command (JFC/JTF/SSC).** StratCom coordination and synchronization occurs at all levels of command and needs to be staffed to reflect this. At Joint and Component level, the Chief StratCom should be included in the Staff Advisory Group (SAG) that has direct access to the Commander and the Command Group (CG). Subordinate HQs have flexibility over organizing information coordination structures and procedures that are appropriate to their circumstances.

**2-3. Chief StratCom and Staff<sup>7</sup>.** The Chief StratCom develops and implements processes and procedures that facilitate communication coordination in support of the mission. As directed by the CG, the Chief StratCom ensures coherence across the communication capability and information staff functions with all other staff advisors and functions. Since StratCom remains a command responsibility and a CG function, within subordinate HQs, the Chief StratCom and his or her staff should:

- a. Advise the Commander on all matters related to the IE;
- b. Liaise with higher and lower level StratCom entities to manage the horizontal and vertical coordination and keep the Commander apprised of all StratCom matters;
- c. Participate in Working Groups (WG) to ensure any actions (or not taking actions) has an effect on the IE, they remain consistent with Alliance aims/objectives;
- d. Contribute to development of campaign Concept of Operations (CONOPS), Operation Plan (OPLAN), branch and sequel plans, and translate the StratCom Framework for the operational level. This will include providing StratCom SME support to the OPLAN, Framework, Fragmentation Orders (FRAGOS), and any additional planning documents;
- e. Develop communication/implementation plans based on the received Framework. Additionally, support and encourage subordinate level commands to create their own communication/implementation plans, as appropriate, to align with the received Framework;

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<sup>7</sup> The title Chief StratCom refers to the person on the HQ staff responsible for coordinating communication activities with other staff activities on behalf of the Commander. In NATO military headquarters, as directed by Military Committee policy 0628, communication functions should be grouped with the lead role assumed by the Director, Communications Division, Deputy Chief of Staff for Communication, or similar title. The title may vary with the organization.

- f. Act as an advisory member of the Crisis and Operations Panel (COP).

**2-4 StratCom Staff Communication Management Tasks.** The implementation of an integrated approach to communication at a military operational-level HQ is represented by a set of tasks listed below that the Chief StratCom and his or her staff (and additional staff elements) perform. The Chief StratCom coordinates all of these efforts to achieve the added value that is expected from StratCom implementation.

- a. **Analysis of the IE.** Situational awareness is a prerequisite for understanding the IE. It enables the identification of opportunities and risks, and provides the baseline for the assessment of effects. Analysis of the IE is a cross-dimensional interdisciplinary continuous task, which must be performed by a trained staff. Analysis must be translated, shared, and operationalized in order to benefit the staff and the Commander;
- b. **Effects Development.** The development of desired effects is a key task that collectively involves assessors and planners. It must be based on a profound understanding of the IE, the mandate and mission objectives, as well as the available capability able to create and measure respective effects. The development of effects in the IE needs to be fully integrated with the development of operational effects;
- c. **Contribution to Targeting.** All actions, kinetic and non-kinetic, have an effect on the IE, either in a positive manner by closing the say-do gap, or negatively by contradicting the message to audiences within and outside the Joint Operations Area (JOA). Negative effects from collateral damage, and especially civilian casualties, have the potential to do significant damage to the mission;
- d. **Activity Planning.** Planning is conducted by Info Ops through J3/J5, and the Information Activities Coordination Board (IACB)<sup>8</sup>. To support this effort, some or all activities may be coordinated by the StratCom staff;
- e. **Communication Activities Integration.** Effective and efficient communication requires harmonization and synchronization of communication activities. Furthermore, activities designed to create information effects must be coordinated with other force activities and maneuver operations that, through human perception, affect the IE as well;
- f. **Communication Engagements.** Direct communication promotes the principles of transparency, credibility, and authenticity. Therefore, opportunities for Commanders and senior advisors to directly address audiences should be carefully sought after and planned. In principle, the personal commitment of the senior leadership is the preferred option. Because communication managers are communicators at the same time, the HQs' communication capability and information staff functions need to plan and act carefully, and in sync to convey the right messages to their colleagues and counterparts;
- g. **Media Communication.** Larger audiences can be best reached by media channels, social media, traditional print, etc. The Command disposes of its own media capabilities and may also employ public or commercial media by contracting or buying news time and newspaper inserts, by providing selected information at compulsory media events, or through embedded journalists. Once released into the public domain, the original information is no longer under the Command's control.

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<sup>8</sup> NATO AJP-3.10 – "Allied Joint Doctrine for Information Operations," December 2015

Therefore, in order to sustain the principles of transparency, credibility, and authenticity, media outlets need to be coordinated and documented<sup>9</sup>.

h. **Assessment of Effects.** Driving and shaping communication requires dynamic and prompt measurement of effectiveness starting with the development of a base line assessment in order to design and appropriately adjust information effects and activities. This task needs to be closely linked to the continuous analysis of the IE comparing it with the base line assessment, which provides the baseline for change assessment, and to effects development and activity planning.

i. **Education and Training.** Given the crucial role of StratCom in supporting NATO's objectives, appropriate education and training for both StratCom practitioners and wider staff alike is essential for mission success. StratCom should be command-led and a mindset to be inculcated across the staff, if it is to be successfully integrated in all planning and activities. This requires communication experts to advise and support staff processes and working routines, as well as general communication training for all. Further, given the varied, non-communication experience of many StratCom practitioners, it is essential that formal national and NATO professional training is undertaken to develop the requisite expertise which should be retained within the communication community thereafter. Likewise, internal staff development and training programmes should be conducted for all staff to increase wider understanding of the IE and enhance overall HQ capability in achieving mission success.

2-5 **StratCom Working Relationships.** The following relationships guide all levels of command to ensure compliance and coherence with the overall direction of StratCom set by NATO HQ:

- a. The NAC and SecGen direct all NATO StratCom - civilian and military;
- b. ASG PDD is responsible for the overall coordination of NATO StratCom, civilian and military, within the overall direction set by the NAC and the SecGen. Within NATO HQ, ASG PDD ensures coordinated communication efforts (primarily through the development of the NATO Communications Strategy). The ASG PDD is responsible for establishing and chairing a regularly-scheduled standing body, presently called the StratCom Policy Board (SCPB), which brings together the relevant elements of the information community, including SHAPE, HQ SACT and the IMS, as well as representatives from other NATO divisions. On behalf of the NAC, ASG PDD provides guidance to, and oversees coordination of the MC/IMS, ACO, and ACT StratCom;
- c. SHAPE and HQ SACT StratCom, and Chief PAOs (CPAO) ensure coherence with the overall NATO StratCom effort in their areas of responsibility (AOR). Additionally, SHAPE provides SME support in the development of the overall Frameworks for IS-PDD. SHAPE has oversight for all subsequent level Frameworks, communication plans, implementation plans, FRAGOS, etc.;
- d. JFCs' Chief StratCom (and their NATO Force Structure (NFS) equivalents) are responsible for the implementation of the NATO Framework by creating operational-level communication and implementation plans, and FRAGOS. Operational-level Chiefs StratCom will encourage subordinate HQs to create their own implementation plans specifically tailored to their mission and AOR. Approval for subordinate level communication plans rests with the next higher echelon Chief StratCom.

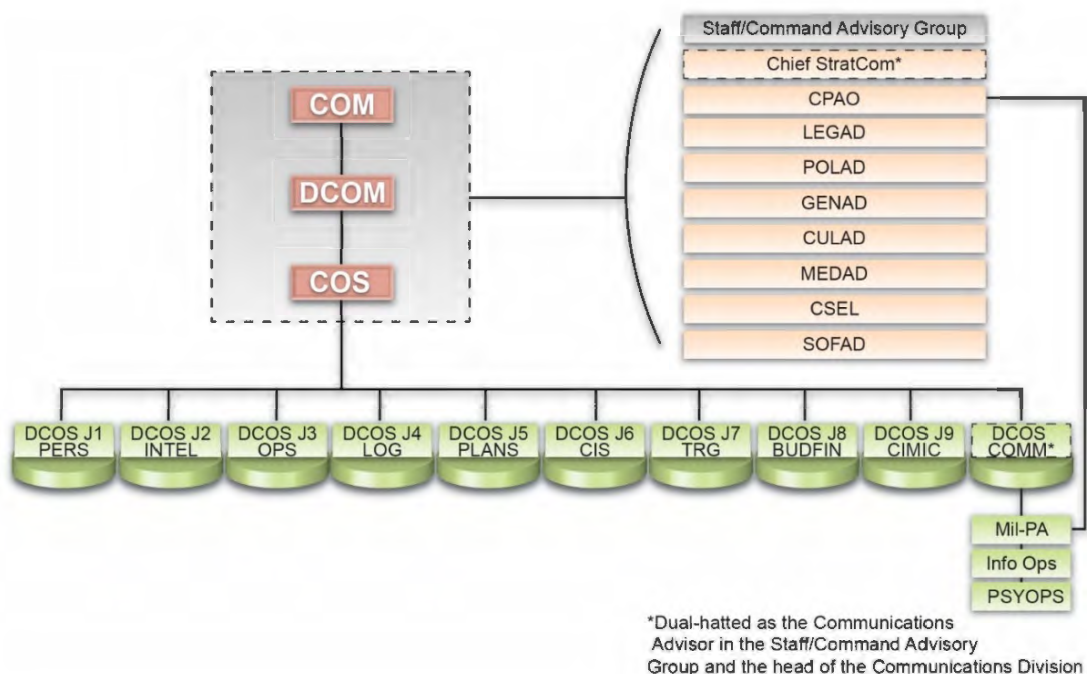
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<sup>9</sup> MC 0411/2, NATO Policy on Civil-Military Cooperation, April 2014



**2-6 Organizational Structures.** In addition to being a mindset, StratCom is a coordination and advisory function of the HQ and direct access to the Commander and CG is essential. It is recognized that StratCom organization is still in a transitional state and Commanders will decide the precise details regarding how their staffs will be organized. At SHAPE, the CG has directed that the PYSOPS, Mil-PA, and Info Ops will be grouped together. In the event other commands choose to do the same, the particular requirements of PYSOPS, Mil-PA, and Info Ops would still be met through retention of their functional responsibilities. Two basic models are presently in use:

- a. The “**grouped** model<sup>10</sup>” (Figure 2-1). This model groups PYSOPS, Mil-PA, and Info Ops in one body led by the Chief StratCom as the Deputy COS COMM (or equivalent) who reports directly to the CG. This model accommodates traditional staff functions by dual-hatting as necessary. While part of the Communications Division, the CPAO retains direct access to the Commander and ownership of his or her Mil-PA staff;



*Figure 2-1: StratCom Organizational Model #1*

<sup>10</sup> MC 0628, the NATO Military Policy on Strategic Communications prescribes a structure wherein the Chief StratCom/Director of the Communications Division reports directly to the Command Group and is supported by appropriate structures to direct coherent communications.

b. The “**legacy model**”<sup>11</sup> (Figure 2-2). This model places the Chief StratCom and CPAO in the SAG and the communication functions in their respective traditional staff locations (Info Ops and PSYOPS under J3). As effective StratCom execution relies on different staff processes that are traditionally performed in J2/3/5/6/9, coordination of these processes is essential to success. In this model, the Chief StratCom possesses coordination authority under CG D&G, and works through boards, working groups, and meetings to achieve consensus and guide planning and operations activities.

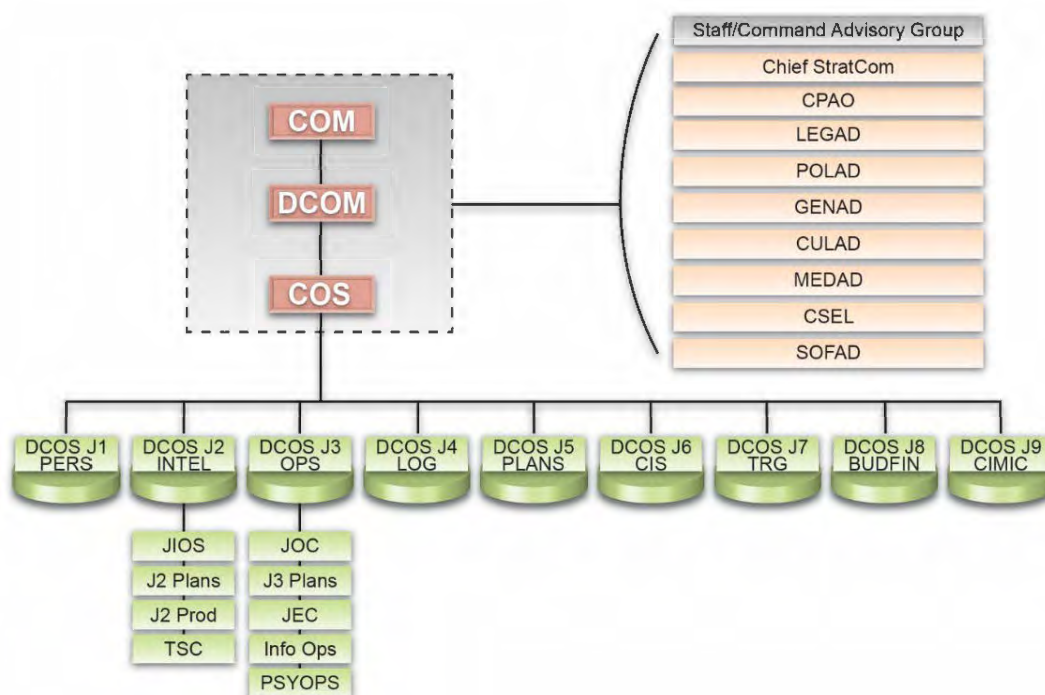


Figure 2-2: StratCom Organizational Model #2

**2-7 Horizontal Coordination Mechanisms.** To ensure synergy between all information activities, the effective coordination of StratCom processes requires specific mechanisms, structures, and personnel with assigned responsibility for StratCom implementation. Operational level and subordinate HQs’ information activities are to be coordinated with, and in support of, SHAPE D&G. Those managing StratCom and chairing IACBs or similar bodies must have experience and seniority to effectively coordinate across the staff functions. Such bodies should operate under the direct authority of the CG.

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<sup>11</sup> MC 0628, NATO’s Policy on Strategic Communications facilitates the changes within NCS, NFS, and on NATO Missions and Operations required to achieve success within the IE. At the national level, Nations are not tied by its contents and may apply structures and approaches appropriate to their requirements. In NATO headquarters, the grouping model will always be used even if achieved via dual-hatting.

## CHAPTER 3: UNDERSTANDING THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT AND NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT

**3-1 Aim.** This chapter explains how Commanders develop their understanding of the IE prior to the issuance of any strategic guidance to develop situational awareness and guide future planning efforts. Particular outcomes and products as a result of these steps should include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Comprehensive understanding of the strategic environment, with particular focus on the IE;
- b. Increasing situational awareness for potential areas of interest (AOI)/AORs;
- c. Identifying and addressing opportunities and shortfalls within the communication capability and information staff functions;
- d. Shaping potential planning activities;
- e. Educating the staff on the narrative landscape.

**3-2 Inputs.** Successful communication requires an understanding of the behaviours, attitudes, perceptions, opinions, grievances and concerns of actors, and how these change over time. StratCom efforts require the following considerations and inputs:

- a. Horizon scanning and narrative development requires baseline assessments and initial development of the operational picture to be established, followed by a continuous assessment and analysis of the IE. Information staff function elements should initiate this process in conjunction with other staff elements, coordinated by the StratCom staff to develop understanding from a range of sources, such as:
  - (1) NATO interests - related to caveats; however, these interests may supersede all other regional/political interests;
  - (2) Political D&G, resolutions and/or agreements – develop general political landscape;
  - (3) Leadership D&G (SecGen, SACEUR, etc.) – key messages, themes, and overall end state;
  - (4) Assessments (Legal Advisor (LEGAD), Political Advisor (POLAD), Gender Advisor (GENAD), etc.) – message applicability and legality, constraints, restraints, and boundaries;
  - (5) Open source regional reports – Derived from Mil-PA, Info Ops, and J2 information analysts – should pay attention to all forms of open source material. Initial assessment of the IE can be gained through these resources;
  - (6) Area, historical, cultural, linguistic, anthropological studies and other relevant subjects and topics – to determine audiences, capabilities, sensitivities, communication methods, infrastructure;

- (7) General intelligence assessments – specific key personnel and factions, communication/media infrastructure, J2 picture (use of information analysts);
- (8) CIMIC and CMI activities – Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), International Organization (IO), Governmental Organization (GO), CMI local actors, Internally Displaced Person/refugee status, etc.;
- (9) Initial media assessment by Mil-PA provides perceptions, opinions, online behaviour, online activities, and societal groups that use social media; capabilities and shortfalls; infrastructure, and accessibility/penetration;
- (10) Lessons Learned – practical identification of all shortfalls and successes in common operational environments;
- (11) Network/stakeholder assessment – social, media, cultural networks and stakeholder<sup>12</sup> identification, and description of interests and power base;
- (12) Cyber assessments – assessments conducted of both the physical and virtual IE by cyber professionals.

b. Initial manpower and resource requirements should be assessed at this time as well. The Chief StratCom should collate and identify all personnel/equipment/budget requirements, augmentation, SME support, qualification requirements, etc.

### 3-3 Processes, Procedures, and Tools

a. **Understanding and Analysis** – In order to achieve understanding through horizon scanning and narrative development, the following tasks must be undertaken:

- (1) Assess political, military, economic, and diplomatic activities related to the situation. Chief StratCom and his or her staff must work closely with LEGAD, Cultural Advisor (CULAD), POLAD, GENAD, and other staff elements to assess the political and diplomatic efforts of NATO to better understand political objectives and strategies. J2 should be a major enabler in developing understanding in this area. The political negotiation and mandating process is the baseline for later planning products, restraints, constraints, and guidance. Assessing this process helps to understand political and political-military level guidance, which is a precondition for the planning and later, the conduct of consistent communication and action at all levels;
- (2) Conduct media, stakeholder, network, audience analyses – identify gaps, issues, etc. In horizon scanning and narrative development, all communication capability and staff functions should begin to assess relevant parts of the IE such as media, stakeholders/actors, social/human networks, and audiences. The resources to do these assessments may be limited at this stage but StratCom staffs should have identified which discipline and staff element can support and provide relevant

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<sup>12</sup> In this context, “stakeholder” includes relevant groups and entities that have influence or could be affected by operations in the AOI. Examples of a stakeholder could be corporations operating in the AOI, political organizations, religious factions, individuals, outside political/geographic organizations, etc.

information. StratCom supports and guides the process to identify the most important and critical information needs;

(3) Utilize key language, cultural and regional skills necessary to understand the IE. To understand human communication and behaviour in the AOI, cultural and regional political information, infrastructure, and sociological scientific subject matter expertise is regularly needed. After the need for scientific and/or special expertise support is defined, the staffs have to ensure that the support is available and well integrated within the staff. Some expertise may be available within the military (national and/or NATO capabilities) and can be reorganized in a way to effectively support the responsible command. The command may build a sustainable/reliable working relationship to civilian organizations and enterprises like GOs, NGOs, civil society organizations, universities, industry (research companies), NATO and national COEs and others. Operations Security (OPSEC) may be a limitation to take into account;

(4) Conduct seminars/workshops with appropriate organizations. StratCom staffs and related SMEs together should consider organizing a community of interest and pool knowledge. Often special expertise relevant for a regional crisis can be found within academia, foundations, and other organizations. These organizations, institutions, and independent experts should be identified and first contact established. Seminars and workshops may be an appropriate tool to establish a network of experts which could help to understand the IE. For planning and conduct of Alliance activities, the establishment of a strong network of external (non-military) experts could be highly beneficial. StratCom staff should encourage the communication capability and information staff functions to identify their own shortfalls and to request necessary budget and legal support to hire the necessary expertise. The Chief StratCom should be a strong advocate to ensure that the communication capability and information staff functions are resourced properly in order to fulfil their specific task within the overall StratCom approach;

(5) Understanding of existing narratives. Narratives are the basis for coherent communication as well as information activities by various actors. A clear understanding of existing, dominating narratives is a critical precondition for the understanding of the overall IE. Narratives of the most influential actors or factions should be mapped in order to display in an easy and simplistic way main characteristics of their used stories. Identifying the stories within different narratives allows for a comprehensive understanding of the narrative landscape. Additionally, understanding competing narratives helps create NATO Narratives and frame supporting stories in a culturally, socially and historically-attuned manner. Info Ops, Mil-PA, PSYOPS, CIMIC, J2, POLAD, and CULAD, among other staff personnel, may help populate and regularly update the narrative map. Mapping of existing narratives should be an integral part of the assessment process.

**b. Organizational Issues**

(1) Identify Shortfalls and Gaps. Communication capability and information staff functions should conduct a gap analysis and coordinate requirements to avoid duplication. Particular consideration should be given to identifying the need for augmentees in line with Chain of Command responsibility. The StratCom Points of Contact in this Handbook ([Annex K](#)) can serve as one platform to identify and find

trained personnel. The StratCom COE in Riga, Latvia, may be called upon to support a surge task ([www.stratcomcoe.org](http://www.stratcomcoe.org));

(2) Assess the status/level of training. Evaluate internal capabilities/qualifications and experience of StratCom-related personnel. A minimum requirement to fill a billet is a successful completion of accredited NATO or national training and/or relevant operational experience.

**3-4 Initiate Narrative Thinking.** A narrative is a social construct that coherently inter-relates a sequence of historical and current events. It is an account of a community's collective experiences embodied in its belief system, and it represents the collective's symbolically constructed shared identity. Ideally, a strategic NATO Narrative should drive the overall NATO strategy. Narratives provide a tool to align words and deeds. Inputs to this strategic Narrative can commence leading up to planning with inputs from lower echelons, but would require refinement and solidification during the initial phases of formal planning. A NATO Narrative should be the result of dialogue and formed from a shared analysis, understanding and perception by both strategic and operational staffs. The Narrative shapes the operational-level Commander's Intent. A Narrative Development Tool is shown in [Annex B](#), and can help provide a starting point for the narrative development process.

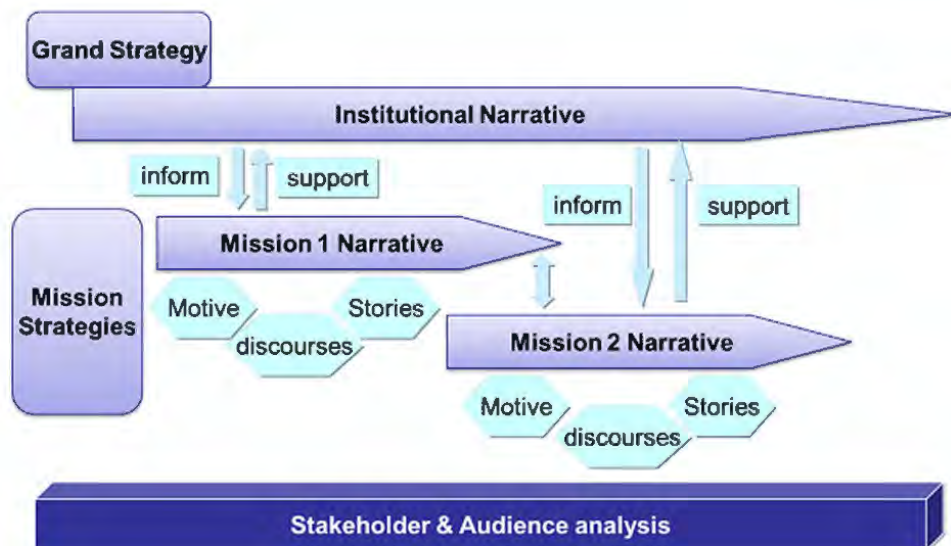


Figure 3-1: Narrative Hierarchy

### 3-5 Characteristics of Narratives

a. **Narrative Arc.** There are many theories about the forms and structures of different types of narratives, but one that captures the common agreement of scholars from Aristotle to the present day is the idea of a narrative arc. Narratives are born in conflict, which may be between two participants or within one. These lead to a desire. The trajectory of the arc is constituted by the participants, actions and events (stories) that drive towards a satisfaction of the initiating desire. When a narrative comes to an end (either through satisfying the desire or the failure to satisfy), the conflict is resolved;





Figure 3-2: Narrative Arc

b. **Narrative Landscape.** The Narrative landscape describes the complex array of narratives prevalent within a specific social, economic, political, and mediated environment. The Narrative landscape is an integral part of the IE. It incorporates the actors, audiences, the topics and stories (including myths, legends, characters and symbols of each), and their expression and communication through media (print, audio-visual, oral, electronic, etc.). The Narrative landscape describes the multitude of systems interacting in a region. When two or more organizations operate in the same time and space continuum, their respective narratives could be perceived as either competing or complementing. An example of this is the United Nations and NATO working in the same theatre of operations, both with their own narratives, which, though not really opposing each other, may not necessarily be mutually supportive. Just as the natural landscape is a multi-layered ecosystem consisting of topography, rivers, plant types, animal types and weather, the Narrative landscape consists of myths, religious stories, histories, popular fictions, contemporary news accounts, and many other elements. Audiences are part of the Narrative landscape, and the ways they inhabit that landscape affect their understanding of anything introduced into that landscape;

The development of stories appropriate for the respective stakeholders they are aimed at, should utilize an in-depth analysis of the Narrative landscape (including relationships of stakeholders, events, and environmental factors, as well as analysis of story expectations shaped by the individual stakeholder groups' diverse perspectives). Stories and storytelling might need to be adjusted based upon constant monitoring of changes within the IE.

c. **Narratives as Systems of Stories.** Narratives are communicated through storytelling. Historically, humans have used storytelling to capture and preserve traditions and heritage. We use storytelling to illustrate a point, teach a lesson, or illustrate complex ideas. Stories are a communication mechanism that helps people understand and retain information. Stories are word pictures which connect information to emotion through individual experience. Stories appeal to both the cognitive and emotional domain.

Stories need to meet expectations and perceptions of the relevant stakeholder groups. The more a story takes into account cultural, personal, role-specific, religious, and media-structural expectations, the more tangible, relevant, and the more understood and

expected it becomes. Story communication must be concise, consistent, credible, emotional, connectable, and tactful, much less a complete version of the narrative.

A narrative is a system of stories. Stories express the participants, actions, and events that constitute the Narrative Arc. Collectively the whole system captures values and identity, executes ideological functions, and structures information. As a system, a narrative as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The components (of this narrative system) include the stories themselves, characters and archetypes, events, and story forms (patterns facilitating understanding).

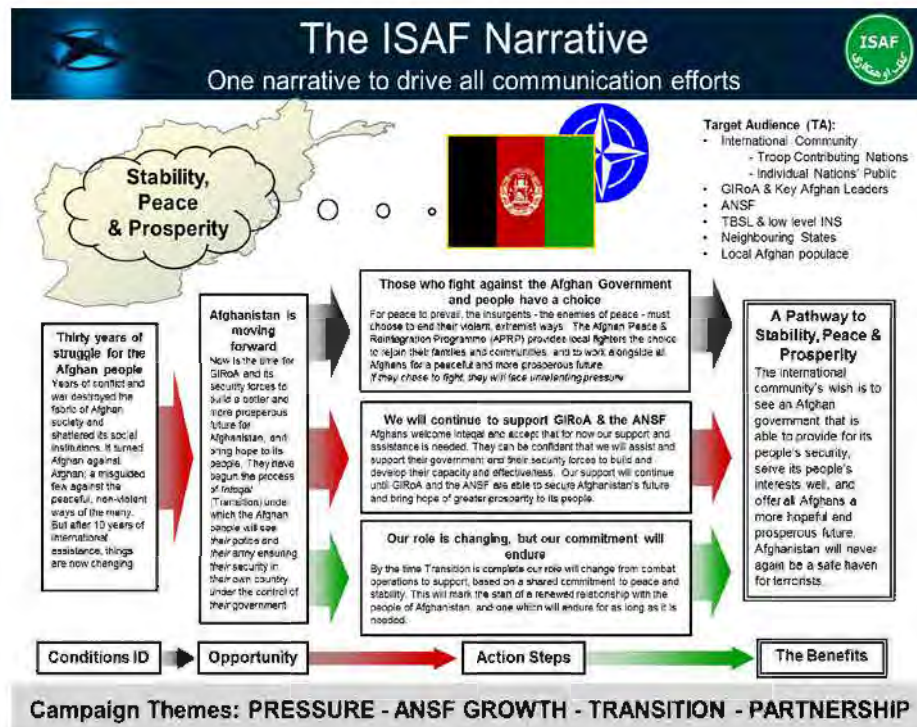


Figure 3-3: ISAF Narrative Arc Example

**3-6 Outcome and Products.** Outcomes and products developed through horizon scanning and narrative development are used to gain an overall better understanding of the IE across the staff. They provide a basis to continuously improve working relationships and information networks. Some examples of particular products and outcomes should be:

- Improved situational awareness/understanding;
- Initial assessment framework;
- Information gap analysis and mitigation;
- Network of internal and external experts (linguists, language, cultural, regional, anthropological, etc.);
- Initial audience identification;
- Vertical, horizontal, and external integration and sharing of information;
- Develop possible narrative(s).



These products should support successful StratCom, resulting in the complete alignment of words, images, and actions to achieve desired objectives.

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## CHAPTER 4: PLANNING

**4-1 Aim.** The Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD) articulates the military planning process in response to emerging crises, and identifies the points in the process at which StratCom D&G and/or products are required. This chapter describes StratCom-related processes that should be included in the Operational-Level Planning Process (OLPP) carried out by designated Joint HQs (JHQ). It also further develops outputs concerning StratCom participation in exercise planning, horizon scanning and previous narrative development, and takes into consideration D&G from the political and strategic levels.

In addition to its coordinating function, NATO regards StratCom as a process and a mindset, rather than a capability. In this context, the role of StratCom is that of “process owner,” requiring StratCom staff and structure to ensure the process stays on track. This involves active participation in planning, setting objectives and effects, removing barriers to effective cooperation, encouraging strategic and long-term perspectives, assessing performance, and seeking to improve both process and outputs. Prior to the conclusion of these phases of planning, the following shall be completed:

- a. NATO Narrative and StratCom Framework (Final);
- b. OPLAN and Communication Functions annexes (Info Ops, PSYOPS, Mil-PA, CIMIC, etc.).

**4-2 NATO HQ Approach and Process.** NATO HQ has adopted the [OASIS Model](#), which ensures a standardized approach to all communication. Although it is not a requirement to use the model in communication planning, it is important to at least be aware of the principles. It involves setting Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely (SMART) objectives; finding or commissioning target audience insight; developing a strategy and implementation plan; and setting clear evaluation metrics.

**4-3 Inputs.** [Annex E](#) describes the strategic and operational-level StratCom-related inputs to the OLPP that enable StratCom outcomes and products to be an integrated and integral part of the OLPP. In addition to these products, D&G is provided from the political and strategic levels in the form of various publications. Further development of the StratCom Framework/Communication Strategy should be refined in parallel with the OLPP. StratCom planning efforts require the following considerations and inputs, as depicted in [Annex E](#), StratCom Alignment with COPD:

- a. **NAC Initiating Directive<sup>19</sup> (NID).** The NID is a political directive triggering formal planning at SHAPE and subordinate commands. The NID should contain the desired NATO end state and the strategic, political, and military objectives that NATO needs to pursue progress and sustain in order to achieve that desired end state. The formulation of the NID includes a number of intermediate steps where political, military, and civil emergency planning resources, and other military considerations are developed by the respective crisis managements committees. In addition, strategic political guidance for the development of StratCom objectives and related implementation plans should be considered, in accordance with NATO StratCom policy. Appropriate elements of such guidance could also be contained in the NID;
- b. **The StratCom Framework with Narrative.** The highest level framework is a NATO StratCom Framework developed at the NATO HQ level. Nested within higher echelon frameworks/communication plans, subordinate frameworks can be developed. See [Annex C](#);

c. **SACEUR Guidance.** In Phase 2 of his or her contribution to the NATO Crisis Response Planning Process, SACEUR will support the Political-Military Estimate by providing a Strategic Assessment (SSA) and then, in Phase 3, his or her Military Response Options (MROs), both of which will integrate StratCom considerations. SACEUR will then provide D&G to the operational level through the Strategic Planning Directive (SPD) (Phase 4a at the strategic level), enabling the development of the Operational Estimate and CONOPS (Phases 3 and 4 at the operational level). This guidance should include, among others, the following in regards to StratCom:

- (1) Targeting guidance;
- (2) StratCom core message;
- (3) StratCom objectives;
- (4) StratCom themes;
- (5) Focus topics;
- (6) Coordination.
- (7) Mil-PA guidance;
- (8) CMI and inter-agency coordination;
- (9) Involvement of partners (Coalition, Non-NATO Entities (NNE)).

The operational-level staff should brief the operational Commander on the appreciation and understanding of the SSA and provide operational-level advice on the draft MROs being developed at SHAPE.

d. **Strategic Planning Directive<sup>13</sup> (SPD).** As part of the overall planning process, the SPD is produced during Phase 4a of the strategic-level planning and feeds into Phase 3a of operational-level planning.

The SPD is issued to provide authoritative direction to SHAPE staffs, the designated Commander JHQ and other ACO subordinate commands. The SPD provides the top-down guidance needed to generate bottom-up requirements, which can then be incorporated into the strategic CONOPS. It provides essential D&G to allow Commander JHQ to commence an Operational Estimate. As such, its release should not be overly-delayed to refine the content. It should provide a succinct capture of the direction, detail, and guidance to date to act as a starting point for the collaborative planning between SHAPE and JHQ functional staff, with a request for operational input. D&G may also include general advice to the wider staff on the potential impact of military activities to communicate strategically or influence audience perceptions;

e. **Operational-Level Planning Process (OLPP).** The StratCom planner should:

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<sup>13</sup> COPD ver 2.0 Chapter III, page 3-57; (3-29)

- (1) Be actively involved in the Comprehensive Preparation of the Operational Environment (CPOE) and IE development process;
- (2) Gain and maintain close coordination with Info Ops, Mil-PA, PSYOPS, but also with POLAD, CULAD, LEGAD, J2, and liaise with higher HQ and applicable subordinate commands;
- (3) Contribute to the assessment of the IE as an integral part of the Operational Warning Order;
- (4) Understand the overall background of the crises and key factors that contributes to an escalation of the situation;
- (5) Be permanently involved in the ongoing planning process, to advise the Joint Operations Planning Group (JOPG) leader and to ensure that StratCom plays a guiding role.

f. **Concept of Operations**<sup>14</sup> (CONOPS). The Strategic CONOPS establishes SACEUR's concept for the conduct of NATO-led military activities in concert with non-military and other military efforts. It incorporates the JHQ main operational requirements for the successful conduct of operations. As such, it cannot be finalized without input from the operational level following the Commander's Operational Estimate. This input is normally provided through a submission of a draft operational-level CONOPS before submission to the NAC for approval. StratCom, along with the communication capability and information staff functions, should be involved and instrumental in the development of the operational-level CONOPS draft. It should be a collaborative effort across the levels to ensure alignment.

**4-4 Processes, Procedures, and Tools.** StratCom, working through the communication capability and information staff functions, should encourage and facilitate an enduring and sustained approach; ensuring outputs are linked to strategic and operational effects. The JHQ JOPG will be tasked to deploy a set of highly-trained planners to SHAPE to assist the Strategic Planning Group, part of the Crisis Action Team (CAT), in the development of all inputs to the planning process. This group should include experienced communication function SMEs (including Chief StratCom) to ensure that StratCom issues are addressed. These personnel should have been involved with the horizon scanning and narrative development to ensure that the experience and knowledge is brought forward into the formal planning process. The following paragraphs discuss key factors that must be considered in regard to StratCom planning.

- a. **Analysis of the IE.** A more focused analysis of the IE should be performed throughout the Situation Awareness phase<sup>15</sup>. It must incorporate the communication capability and information staff functions, and build upon existing analysis and assessment capabilities that were initiated in horizon scanning and narrative development. The analysis should contribute to the CPOE, as well as development of military considerations to then be transferred to MROs;
- b. **Narratives.** A Narrative, as described in Chapter 3 will, when practical, be developed by NATO HQ, with specialized SME support, and is an essential component of the planning process. In the absence of a mission-specific Communication Strategy or a strategic-level

<sup>14</sup> COPD ver 2.0 pg 3-52. (3-26)

<sup>15</sup> ACO COPD V2.0 pg 3-28; Section 3-13 d&e

Narrative at the beginning of the OLPP, the StratCom planner must use information from existing StratCom Frameworks. Refer to Annexes [B](#) and [C](#);

c. A **StratCom Framework** is the primary tool issued by NATO HQ for StratCom D&G. A Framework follows a set format (see [Annex C](#)) covering the background, objectives, aim, themes, focus topics, and coordination. Using these Frameworks as a base, implementation plans should be developed ([Annex G](#)). For additional information regarding StratCom Frameworks, see paragraph 5-6;

d. **StratCom Planning.** The themes within the framework must be interpreted appropriately at the strategic, operational, and tactical level, and therefore require participation from the NATO HQ, SHAPE, JFC, and the SSC level. StratCom ensures that NATO HQ StratCom D&G, and the wider analysis of the IE is accurately reflected in the SSA, MROs, SACEUR's CONOPS, and the OPLAN. StratCom is also responsible for ensuring coherence within the strategic planning documents between all communication capability and information staff functions. One of SACEUR's primary considerations is the achievement of NATO's StratCom objectives, which should be central to the overall objectives outlined in the OPLAN. This includes the explanations and rationale of NATO's policies and activities to intended audiences, as articulated in the Narrative. This is accomplished in the strategic-level planning process and the battle rhythm – specifically, Commander's Intent, coordinating instructions, and respective communication function annexes. ACO, through SHAPE StratCom, also:

- (1) Develops themes aligned with the core Narrative and operational objectives. These must be regularly monitored, assessed and updated as required;
- (2) Identifies opportunities and risks to develop proposals for exploitation and mitigation, respectively;
- (3) Identifies key audience(s) and supports achieving situational awareness and effects development.

e. **JFC/SSC HQ StratCom Planning.** Actions guided by themes and messages provide the most powerful StratCom effects. Therefore, the Chief StratCom should ensure a clear linkage between messages and actions, a task that can only be achieved if all personnel within the planning team understand the Narrative and, therefore, the messages that need to be sent. Unfortunately, the mindset that we send messages about our actions rather than conducting activities to send messages is still prevalent in many HQs, and the Chief StratCom may need to work hard to change this. JFCs should translate and integrate the Framework into all aspects of operations planning, with a particular eye towards information activities. Additionally, theatre-specific StratCom D&G should be provided on a case-by-case basis through the Support Plan and directives. This is accomplished in the OLPP and the battle rhythm, in particular Commander's Intent, Coordinating Instructions, and respective communication function annexes (if required), boards, cells and WGs.

**4-5 Military Activities Directed by SACEUR without OPLAN Development or Initiation.** In the event NATO HQ (the NAC) directs SACEUR to undertake military activities that communicate NATO's resolve to specific key audiences where a specific military operation may not be initiated, it is critical to ensure actions and words are properly aligned. StratCom can become the primary focus. It is recommended that NATO StratCom guidance be developed to ensure cohesion across the Alliance and its member nations.

a. **Operational Assessment Development**<sup>16</sup>. It is essential to develop the means by which to assess, both objectively and subjectively, the effectiveness of communication elements of Alliance activities. The following are key elements for considering the development of measuring effects. J5 leads this process, but communication function SMEs should supply inputs and guide the development.

- (1) **Measuring Progress.** Measuring progress toward mission accomplishment assists Commanders in decision-making and adjusting operations to achieve military objectives reaching a pre-articulated end-state. To achieve military ends, Commanders will attempt to influence the behaviour and attitude of the audiences and adversaries; requiring communication staffs to not only undertake communication activities, but to monitor the effects of those activities and their impacts toward reaching an end state. Progress measurement can be observed by establishing metrics that show change over time. Critical to understanding progress in the IE, Commanders have a robust understanding of the environment before entering it. By establishing a “baseline of behaviour,” progression or failure to make changes can be observed.

Measuring performance is the simplest measurement type and helps track what is being transmitting into the IE. For example, tracking completion of key media engagement activities, press releases, and other StratCom-related activities helps determine if the actions are achieving the desired goals. Measures of Performance (MOPs) answers two questions: “Did we do the right things” and “Did we do them right?”;

- (2) **Measuring Effectiveness.** Measures of effectiveness (MOEs) are indicators used to help gauge the attainment of end-state conditions, achievement of objectives, or creation of effects. MOEs help answer the question, “Are we doing the right things to create the desired effect(s)?” Finding substantive and reliable measures of effectiveness in the IE is more difficult than measuring those resulting from traditional means. Some methods that are commonly used to measure effectiveness of communication activities are: content analysis, survey/polling data, expert knowledge, and quantitative data.

**4-6 Transition and Re-Deployment.** In Phase 6, it is critical to ensure that words in the form of stated policy and actions continue to be aligned. Failure to do so may pose serious consequences to overall NATO credibility and its legacy. This threat can be mitigated by continuing to resource and staff the communication capability and information staff functions through the period of transition during the downsizing of forces. Additionally, a specific transition StratCom framework may be required for the successful disengagement of NATO forces from a crises area. This framework should address the following StratCom aims:

- a. Stability re-assurance to host nation;
- b. Successes and progress in host nation to international community;
- c. Identification and mitigation of continuing de-stabilizing actors or issues;

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<sup>16</sup> NATO Operations Assessment Handbook

- d. NATO member and partner messaging to focus on successes and accomplishments in theatre.

**4-7 Outcome and Products.** The following are key outputs that are central to ensuring that StratCom considerations are correctly incorporated through the planning process:

- a. **OPLAN and Communication Functions annexes.** It is important that NATO's StratCom objectives and NATO's Narrative are integral to the OPLAN, and reflected in the Commander's Intent and Operational Design. Annexes should be coordinated to ensure specialist advice also reflects these considerations and promote cohesive and coordinated activity in support of the campaign plan and effects;

- b. **NATO StratCom Framework and Narrative (Final).** Frameworks provide coherence and facilitate:

- (1) The ability to coordinate NATO and coalition forces' information and communication activities with other military actions, to shape the battle space and maximize desired effects on selected audiences;
- (2) The ability to coordinate NATO and coalition information activities and communication functions with the efforts of other agencies and partners within the context of a broader NATO strategy;
- (3) The ability to develop and disseminate timely and culturally-attuned messages based on the NATO Narrative to inform key audiences;
- (4) The ability to quickly develop and disseminate information designed to influence approved audiences (PSYOPS);
- (5) The ability to document and disseminate information on NATO operations and exercises.

- c. Comprehensive and Continuous Assessment Processes of the IE:

- (1) Development and implementation of MOPs/MOEs;
- (2) The ability to access, produce, and maintain updated information and knowledge on the perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs of audiences;
- (3) The ability to access, produce, and maintain updated information and knowledge on complex social communication systems and the characteristics of various media agencies;
- (4) The ability to detect, monitor, translate, and assess the effects of StratCom efforts of other stakeholders (friendly, neutral, or adversarial);
- (5) The ability to estimate the direct and indirect effects of potential actions and signals on the perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, beliefs, and responses of audiences.

- d. **Direction and Guidance to the SSCs.** The collaborative nature of the OLPP should ensure that StratCom considerations are aligned and incorporated throughout. As such, D&G generated through the development of the OPLAN should present no surprises to subordinate-level Commanders and staff.

**4-8 StratCom in the Exercise Planning Process.** NATO's exercise programme plays a key part of its overall strategic messaging. As such, the delivery of exercises at the strategic, operational, and tactical level cannot be seen as individual events. The training and certification aspects remain the main reason for conducting such activities; however, exercises must also be used as a tool for spreading specific messages to different audiences. The nature of these messages will depend upon the overall scenario, the forces involved and the JOA in which the exercise is being conducted and, in particular, whether the exercise is Computer-Aided Exercise (CAX)/Command Post Exercise (CPX), or whether it has a Live Exercise (LIVEX) element. Different audiences may also be targeted with different messages, but all are likely to be intended to achieve a common StratCom goal (e.g. deterrence or assurance). The key distinction that must be made at this stage is the difference between real-world StratCom messaging and the StratCom conducted as part of the exercise play (i.e., within the scenario).

StratCom plays an important role in the exercise preparation phase and early involvement in the planning process is essential, particularly concerning the real-world messaging. To this end, close coordination with higher HQs to establish initial understanding of the key real-world themes and messages is critical. These can then be refined once greater detail about the exercise is known. However, if elements of the exercise need shaping (e.g. location, activities, participants, etc.) in order to achieve specific messages, this is far easier (and likely to be more successful) if conducted early in the planning process. Trying to change a major element of an exercise at, for example, the Main Planning Conference (MPC) is much harder, and may even lead to resentment and a perception of late StratCom "interference";

- a. **Exercise Planning Timelines.** StratCom personnel need to attend the Initial Planning Conference (IPC) and brief the key real-world themes and messages, so these need to be agreed upon with higher HQ beforehand. Depending upon the scale and nature of the exercise, a StratCom/Information syndicate may be required at the IPC. The exact format will vary, but agenda items should concentrate on real-world messaging and initial thoughts concerning Distinguished Visitor (DV) and Media Day options<sup>17</sup>. StratCom participation at the MPC is also recommended; however, it is suggested that the lead for the "real world" media/information syndicate should transition towards Mil-PA at this point (i.e. for delivery of the messaging already developed). Participation in any interim exercise planning meetings (e.g. Core Planning Team Meetings) depends entirely upon the size and nature of the exercise and the content for that planning meeting.

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<sup>17</sup> An Office of Primary Responsibility for DV Day should be appointed by the Officer Conducting Exercise. Ideally, this occurs beforehand so the nominated individual can attend the IPC. Depending upon the size and scale of the DV Day, a specific DV Day syndicate will likely be required from the MPC onward.



## CHAPTER 5: STRATCOM IN MISSION EXECUTION

5-1 **Aim.** This chapter describes processes and procedures that should be undertaken at the operational level to enhance overall StratCom efforts and achieve the desired outcomes. Although the focus is the operational level, this chapter is relevant to higher and lower levels due to the need for strategic and upper tactical levels to interact with the operational level. This chapter is largely derived from lessons learned/identified from operations, experimentation, and training events.

### 5-2 StratCom Application

a. **Coordination.** In the IE, tactical events can have strategic/political impacts. Close coordination within and between HQs is essential during the execution of operations. It is equally important to integrate non-kinetic and kinetic information effects to support the implementation of strategic-political communication guidance and achieve desired effects:

(1) Internal – Mechanisms in place to coordinate throughout the staff and vertically with higher and subordinate HQ elements. For further detail on coordination and decision meetings and boards, see paragraph 5-5;

(2) External – StratCom practitioners must be able to coordinate with NNE, outside media, and other organizations. This can be done through a close coordination with J9, or can be done directly from Staff elements within the operational level HQ. Entities that may be taken into account for effective external coordination are:

(a) Comprehensive Crisis Operations Management Centre (CCOMC);

(b) StratCom COE;

(c) Academia.

b. **Information sharing and collaboration.** For effective implementation of StratCom and messaging integration, Commands should use collaborative software/hardware capabilities for vertical and horizontal integration of all internal and external stakeholders. To foster common understanding and ensure timely coordination, it is essential to develop common databases/websites/portals, etc., for all key stakeholders.

c. **Integration.** Integration is about orchestrating political and military activities at all levels – vertically and horizontally – to deliver the same narrative. For example, while NATO HQ focuses on diplomatic activities to enhance coherence of messaging of Nations and NATO, SHAPE may focus on the overall posture of forces, and operational or tactical commands will conduct operations using all means. All these activities are supporting each other – orchestrated/integrated – and create a clear and consistent communication effect. The Chief StratCom plays a vital role at all levels to advise Commanders and senior officials in order to facilitate a coherent message in a synchronized manner throughout all levels and layers of NATO. StratCom staffs should continuously interact with higher and lower echelon StratCom staffs to ensure message consistency throughout the different levels. In the case of an ad hoc event, timely response measures are crucial. StratCom staffs should immediately discuss and coordinate appropriate response measures. The Chief StratCom, along with other staff advisors, will then advise the Commander on these measures. This vertical process ensures timely action and horizontal integration;

d. **Mission Command.** The staff and units must be empowered to engage appropriately. Empowerment of appropriate personnel on the staff enhances the command's messaging capability and improve internal and external audience comprehension. Traditional media and internet-based information technologies must be utilized to maximize the impact of this approach. Approval of communication plans at the JFC/Component level shall authorize the respective level for adapting themes, messages, objectives, etc., to fit to the environment. Risk is assumed, and shall be mitigated, through thorough planning and synchronization of the adapted themes, messages etc, in accordance with higher level D&G (in particular, the Communication Strategy/StratCom Framework). For instances where there is ambiguity or the issue is in question, adaptations to particular messaging, themes, objectives, etc., shall be brought before the Information Activities Working Group (IAWG) and decided on in the IACB. The following are necessary for timely communication effects:

- (1) **Direct Liaison Authority (DIRLAUTH).** To ensure timely conduct of activities and release of information, it is essential to provide DIRLAUTH between levels of command for all information activities. Again, the approval of the StratCom Framework and Communication Plans will be the granting authority for DIRLAUTH. With this authority, the communication capability and information staff functions can disseminate important "time sensitive" information activities that will ultimately lead to the principle of timeliness;
- (2) **Commander's Delegation.** At the discretion of the Commander, authority to direct and approve overarching messaging and themes can be delegated to the Chief StratCom. Approval processes must be quick, timely, and adaptable. Mechanisms to implement the narrative, to empower "soldiers" to communicate, lower levels to use social media, and contingency communication planning, should be considered.

**5-3 StratCom Evolution.** StratCom is still evolving and consistent organizational involvement of StratCom within HQs is subject to variation and regular change. This Handbook outlines the current process in use, albeit with an operational bias. The guiding principle is that StratCom must be actively involved at all levels of policy, planning and implementation, and be a fully integrated part of the overall effort. Therefore, StratCom must participate in all meetings necessary to achieve these ends.

**5-4 StratCom within the Battle Rhythm.** The StratCom practitioner is responsible to develop implementation/communication plans based on the overall Communication Strategy and fully integrated with the OLPP (when applicable). The practitioner provides guidance to subsequent levels of command, ensuring vertical alignment throughout NATO. Additionally, the practitioner is responsible for developing and maintaining individual StratCom battle rhythm requirements. A deliberate and well-coordinated information flow and battle rhythm is necessary to facilitate the coordination throughout the vertical and horizontal structures. It is essential that a battle rhythm is created and outlined in individual staff standard operating procedures to ensure proper attendance and coordination efforts.

**5-5 Critical StratCom-Related Meetings/Boards.** The normal battle rhythm contains meetings to support StratCom, including: IAWG, StratCom Working Group (SCWG), Joint Assessment Board (JAB), Joint Coordination Board (JCB), and Info Ops and StratCom Coordination WGs. The process can be managed using a StratCom Synchronization Matrix. A summary of the WGs/Coordination Boards are as follows:

a. **Meetings with StratCom Leading.** Meetings that are not specifically defined in other battle rhythm events; therefore, purpose, participation, and generic agenda (including frequency) are included below;

(1) StratCom Working Group (SCWG);

(a) Purpose;

- 1/ Coordinate all communication on behalf of the Commander;
- 2/ Prepare the Information Strategy Board (ISB) and feed into the Communication Coordination Board (CCB);
- 3/ Clarify for the Commander/situational awareness guidance to inform the Commander.

(b) Participation;

- 1/ Chief StratCom (lead);
- 2/ J2 Info Analysis;
- 3/ J3 Effects & Influence (Info Ops & PSYOPS);
- 4/ J9 CIMIC;
- 5/ PAO, CULAD, GENAD, POLAD, LEGAD.

(c) Generic Agenda (regularly-scheduled and ad hoc): StratCom coordination within the HQ that meets the Commander's Intent, mission, and activity.

(2) Communication Coordination Working Group (CCWG);

(a) Purpose;

- 1/ Focus on the conduct and execution of communication and information activities;
- 2/ Horizontal coordination and integration of own activities; quick, short-term activities, reactions. The SCWG and IAWG feed into the CCWG.

(b) Participation;

- 1/ Deputy Commander/COS (chair);
- 2/ Chief StratCom (lead);
- 3/ J2 Info Analysis;

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- 4/ J3 Effects & Influence (Info Ops & PSYOPS);
- 5/ J9 CIMIC;
- 6/ PAO, CULAD, GENAD, POLAD, LEGAD.

(c) Generic Agenda (regularly-scheduled and ad hoc): Update the Commander on the current/ongoing communication plans and activities, and receive D&G.

(3) Information Strategy Board (ISB);

(a) Purpose;

- 1/ Provide vertical (political, long-term, strategic, end state) focus;
- 2/ Inform the Commander of changes in the political domain (including informal political guidance);
- 3/ Inform the Commander on critical changes within the IE and opportunities to achieve effects in the IE;
- 4/ Ensure political guidance is translated into all staff activities planning and execution;
- 5/ Ensure higher military guidance is fully integrated;
- 6/ Ensure staff effort is in line with Commander Intent;
- 7/ Request communication support required from the strategic and political level to support operations.

(b) Participation;

- 1/ Commander (chair);
- 2/ Chief StratCom (lead);
- 3/ SSC Reps;
- 4/ SAG Reps, including Mil-PA;
- 5/ Joint Staff Function Reps.

(c) Generic Agenda (start of an operation and phase shift thereafter, or following a significant change in the operational situation):

- 1/ Political update. Focus on political changes, statements, activities with effect in the IE (Chief StratCom/POLAD);
- 2/ INTEL update;

- 3/ Info Ops and PSYOPS assessments and future activities update;
- 4/ Update of CG Engagement Plan;
- 5/ Provision of comprehensive advice to the Commander regarding the military information and communication activities;
- 6/ D&G of Commander (overall Operational Design);
- 7/ RFI.

(4) StratCom Coordination Video Teleconference (StratCom VTC). This VTC is comprised of representatives from all information and communication functional areas within the JTFHQ and Component Commands. Membership should be limited to key stakeholders and decision-makers for the Information Campaign.

(a) Purpose;

- 1/ Synchronize and coordinate information activities vertically and horizontally;
- 2/ This meeting of the communication community is crucial to the synchronization of activities and effects from the strategic to the tactical level (i.e. SHAPE through the JTFHQ to the Component Commands);
- 3/ The D&G that comes from this meeting allows the community to steer the communication campaign on a daily basis and assess the IE as a whole in order to have a shared understand.

(b) Participation: All participants at SCWG, CCWG, ISB, and relevant representatives from higher and lower echelons who need updates and/or provide updates and D&G;

(c) Generic Agenda (regularly-scheduled);

- 1/ Chief StratCom: Daily Summary;
- 2/ J2 Info Analyst Update;
- 3/ SHAPE StratCom D&G;
- 4/ Initial Command Element Update;
- 5/ Host Nation StratCom Liaison Officer Update;
- 6/ Component Commands Update;
- 7/ JTFHQ (Chief StratCom, POLAD, PAO, J3 Effects & Influence) Update;

8/ Chief StratCom D&G.

b. Meetings in which to Advise the Commander and Staff;

(1) Information Activities Working Group (IAWG). The IAWG is the primary mechanism for coordinating information activities and also providing key analysis and assessments with regards to effects. This WG contributes to the Information Activities Coordination Board (IACB) and Joint Targeting Working Group (JTWG). It should consist of one member of the J3 to develop and synchronize the Information Effects Matrix with the Operations Synchronization Matrix. The IAWG is more narrowly focused on current operations and receives D&G from the CCWG and StratCom Coordination VTC;

(2) Joint Assessment Board (JAB). This forum is designed to provide feedback to the Commander on campaign progress. Chief StratCom advises the Commander on effects within the IE and provide options to achieve success;

(3) Joint Coordination Board (JCB) is the periodic decision making forum for mid-term operations. The JCB provides a scheduled opportunity for the Chief StratCom to provide a StratCom update to recommend information initiatives, updates to the IE, and to receive D&G from the Commander. The Chief StratCom provides the potential communication effects on audiences resulting from options that are presented to the Commander;

(4) Joint Coordination Board Working Group (JCBWG) acts as a clearing house and agrees on options to be presented to the Commander at the JCB. Chief StratCom has an active role in ensuring that options being discussed take into account potential communication effects, and provides recommendations on whether actions should be taken forward or suspended;

(5) Joint Targeting Working Group (JTWG). StratCom, Info Ops, PSYOPS, and PAO representatives shall attend for coordination of effects, ensuring proposed kinetic and non-kinetic targets support information effects. The StratCom representative focuses on how targets will affect friendly, neutral, and adversary audiences in support of the current campaign;

(6) Joint Targeting Coordination Board (JTCB). Chief StratCom, during the decision brief, is to ensure that the chairperson understands the implications for effects in the IE.

c. Meetings and Boards to Sit In

(1) Commanders Update Meeting (CUB). Chief StratCom provides engagement and communication opportunities, and three-month horizon scanning on political and NATO events that may impact the HQ. The Chief StratCom also provides an assessment on the current campaign and advises on the StratCom implications of future operations;

(2) Crisis Action Team (CAT) Meetings. The CAT is convened in response to a major incident or significant environmental, tactical, or operational event likely to have a significant impact on the conduct of the operation or mission. The CAT is normally led by J3/J35 with membership drawn from across the J Divisions and SAG. Once convened, the Chief StratCom provides StratCom advice, direction, and support through all stages of planning and crisis response execution;

(3) Business Information Management (BIM) Coordination Meeting. Situational update from all other staff functions. Chief StratCom provides a situational update to the HQ;

**5-6 StratCom Frameworks.** StratCom Frameworks are the primary tool used by NATO to provide top-level D&G for all communication capability and information staff functions planning and activities. StratCom Frameworks are designed to provide overall guidance to all communication activities, generating a consistent approach that links NATO communication from top to bottom. In this manner, Frameworks enable centralized communication planning with decentralized execution. Prior to issuing a StratCom Framework, it must be approved by higher HQ, coordinated laterally with involved nations and supporting organizations, and when possible, lower echelons to ensure operational feasibility.

While the content of each framework is dependent on the requirements of Alliance activities, the format should generally be the same; a template for a StratCom Framework can be found in [Annex C](#) of this document. Some additional considerations:

- a. When developing a StratCom Framework at the ACO level and below, care must be taken to “nest” the document within existing StratCom guidance. Annually, NATO HQ and ACO produce general frameworks to guide communication activities for significant Alliance events (e.g. exercises, activities, etc.). For example, StratCom guidance for an Alliance activity undertaken by a JFC with the intent to deter an adversary should use the NATO HQ Defence and Deterrence Framework and the annual ACO Framework, at a minimum, to inform the JFC Framework;
- b. To the greatest extent possible, StratCom Frameworks should be unclassified documents, allowing rapid, unencumbered dissemination to the lowest levels possible. If the document must be classified, consider putting classified information in an annex that may be sent via separate channels;
- c. Extant frameworks are available on the SHAPE classified portal or by contacting SHAPE StratCom (contact information found in [Annex K](#)).

**5-7 Assessment and Risk Analysis.** These are continuous processes that require refinement and adjustment throughout all phases of Alliance activities. These processes allow the command to assess progress, understand risk, and maintain flexibility, while enhancing timeliness.

- a. **General Considerations.** While StratCom at all levels of command requires consistency of all modes of communication, there are differences. For example, between strategic levels and the operational levels, and below. At the NATO HQ/SHAPE levels, words (primarily spoken, but also written) are the most tangible/most immediate output – since early in the planning process there may be no forces acting in the JOA and, during execution, forces are more directly under operational-level – and subordinate - control. This means that, at strategic levels, first and foremost, StratCom must ensure that all offices that create effects are harmonized. At the operational level, words and deeds are both tangible outputs, so the

harmonization of words and deeds is as important as ensuring consistency within the communication capability and information staff functions;

b. **Assessment.** During the execution phase, it is imperative to continue (or initiate) the IE and assessment processes described in Chapters 2 and 3, in line with COPD processes. When designing MOPs, the promulgation of a consistent, understandable, credible, “verbal” narrative may be the essence of the StratCom requirement at the strategic level (early in the operation), but not at the operational level, which needs to more specifically address the “deeds” as well as the words;

(1) Assessment of the IE is a requirement for planning and supports full integration of activities designed to inform and/or influence audiences. Critical information requirements relate to understanding and knowledge of culture, attitudes, beliefs, trends, stakeholders, audiences, and evolving technical communication in a timely manner;

(2) By fusing digital media analysis with open source information and classified analysis, the assessment mechanism shall contribute to situational awareness and Indicators and Warnings. The development and monitoring of indicators in combination with emerging research tools and trend analysis further enhances NATO’s situational awareness in the IE;

(3) The assessment of the IE supports the development of centre of gravity, critical vulnerabilities, critical requirements of actors, and requirements for all communication capability and information staff functions;

(4) The IE is saturated by propaganda activities that potentially influence attitudes and behaviors of audiences. The assessment mechanism must be capable of monitoring and analyzing relevant propaganda with potential impact on Alliance activities;

(5) A system of systems analysis approach delivers information needed for effective StratCom planning and execution and be fully integrated into overarching intelligence and knowledge management systems. It harnesses expertise in the following areas:

- (a) INTEL/J2, Information Fusion;
- (b) PSYOPS, Mil-PA, and Info Ops;
- (c) Traditional and digital media analysis;
- (d) Information Technology;
- (e) Audience analysis;
- (f) Political Science, International Relations;
- (g) Social Science, culture;
- (h) Communication, language and literature;



- (i) Marketing;
- (j) Special regional knowledge.

(6) IE assessments should establish a network with NATO Nations, partners, and other organizations to collect, store, and process relevant information. National assessment assets may contribute to the mechanism in a reach-back capacity, as appropriate;

(7) Integral to the effective assessment of the IE is broad and timely distribution to ensure products are shared with all relevant stakeholders, within the NATO Military Authorities, NATO HQ, and NATO Nations;

(8) To the maximum extent possible, IE assessments shall utilize existing organizations, systems, and resources across the NCS and NFS, ensuring gaps are identified and duplication of effort is eliminated.

c. **Risk Analysis.** To provide the advice required on the impact to the IE of potential acts (or omissions) to the Commander and Staff in boards and WGs (described in paragraph 5-5.b), it is necessary to evaluate the degree and likelihood of impact and, potentially, to identify and evaluate mitigations. Essentially, at the operational level, the StratCom staff needs to consider NATO's Narrative for the activity, the proposed actions, and identify for each action:

- (1) How does this align with the Narrative?
- (2) If misaligned, what other operational benefits does it bring/negative outcomes does it avoid?
- (3) What is the Narrative-cost/operational-benefit balance?
- (4) Thus, is it beneficial to execute the action?
- (5) If not, can the negative impact on the Narrative protected in some other way or should the advice be for the proposed action to be deleted?

Finally, in certain cases the practitioner should assess whether it is necessary to amend or repair the Narrative to align with the actions executed. This is generally undesirable, as there is a risk to credibility, although there may be a greater risk if the Narrative appears incoherent with actions taken or the evolving reality on the ground.

**5-8 Communication Channels.** While traditional print, radio, and television media continue to be vital, digital media is increasingly dominant. This technology developed rapidly and in unpredictable ways. Digital media presents NATO with conceptual, organizational, and resource challenges. This medium introduced new ways of engaging with existing and/or new audiences. StratCom staff, on behalf of the Commander, must understand the full impact of this evolution and maintain proper coordination on how the HQ will leverage digital media for communication in conjunction with traditional media. StratCom does not execute communication, but coordinates the methods of communication leveraged by the HQ staff and therefore, must understand the resources, the staff functions, and their role in various aspects of communication.

a. **Media Relations.** Activities designed to provide information through all mass communication means to NATO audiences. Commanders and staffs, through their PAOs, should be prepared to, for example: respond to media inquiries; issue statements; conduct briefings and interviews; arrange for access to permanent and operational units; and distribute information including imagery, all as a means to develop relations with the purveyors and the consumers of news;

b. **Digital Media.** Digital media can be used as a sensor to evaluate NATO's position in the IE. It is not used as an effector unless supported by activity, as NATO is careful to maintain its credibility through truth-telling. Mil-PA uses digital media to inform and PSYOPS uses digital media to influence, but both are based in fact and truth, as seen through the lens of NATO. Adversaries are using sophisticated techniques without any legal or ethical boundaries. These groups use digital to increase confusion and/or diminish the value of the truth. "Bad" actors continually develop new, sophisticated methods of influence and public opinion manipulation while digital media platforms and security services play catch-up in countering them. NATO forces require improved analysis of the IE and are looking to current work for tools that provide real-time analysis and alerting capabilities, to gain improved awareness of events and emerging trends that could impact the Alliance. Digital media provides multiple venues to communicate, interact, or share different types of content, from text and video, to pictures and geo-location data, etc.:

(1) **Digital Media Uses.** Digital media uses within a NATO context broadly covers these aspects:

- (a) Digital media can be used as a sensor to increase one's situational awareness in the AOI/AOR;
- (b) Digital media offer additional channels to communicate;
- (c) The enhancement of the credibility of the coalition;
- (d) The ability to reinforce social developments and changes;
- (e) The potential to counter and prevent misinformation and rumors.

(2) Digital media can also support Command Control (C2) within NATO. Modern information and communication services, such as chat functions are already prominent in various HQs. In this regard, digital media can also help improve information sharing among NATO troops and staff elements. Similarly, digital media platforms could improve collaborative planning and other HQ activities, and enhance dialogue with NGOs and coalition partners.

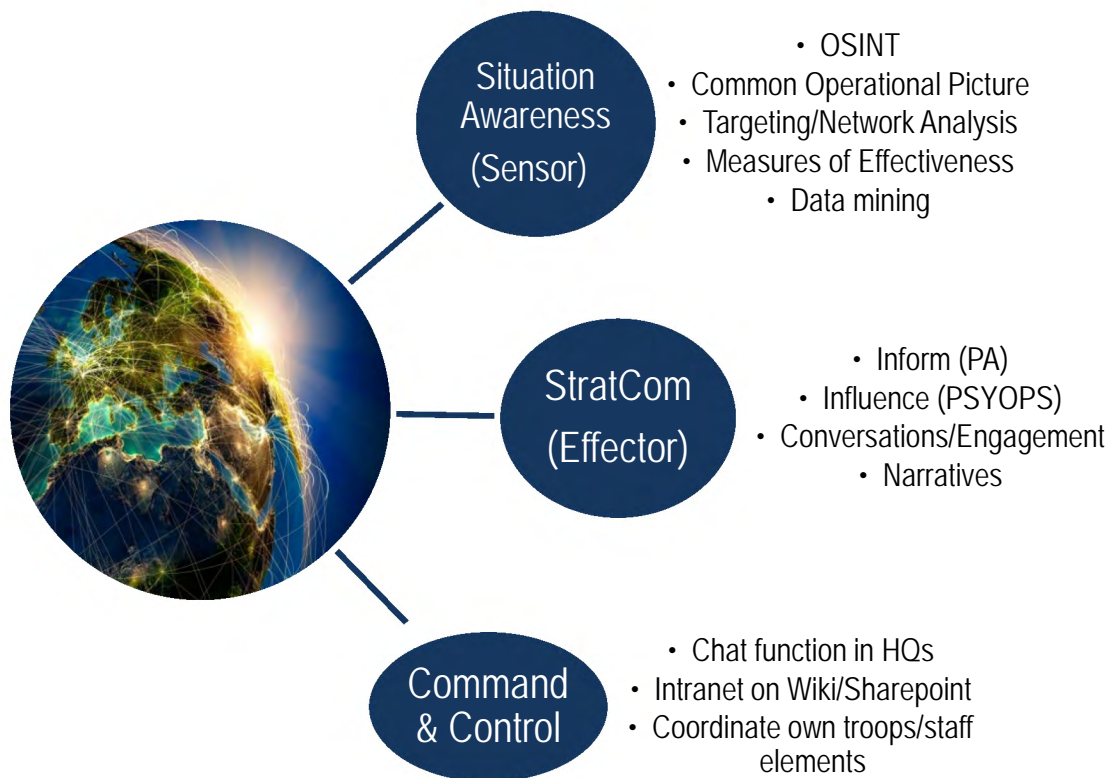
(3) **Staff Process.** On the staff, there could be a number of offices working the challenges digital media presents. It is important for the StratCom practitioner to understand the various roles in order ensure maximum effectiveness and limit redundancy. If thought of in terms of an OODA Loop<sup>18</sup>:

- (a) **Observe** is the function of Info Ops;

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<sup>18</sup> Developed by military strategist and United States Air Force Colonel John Boyd

- (b) **Orient** would be the function of StratCom;
- (c) **Decide** has multiple possible offices (Mil-PA, StratCom, and PSYOPS);
- (d) **Act** would be Mil-PA in peacetime and joined by PSYOPS during NAC-approved operations.



*Figure 5-1: Digital Media Uses*

- (4) **Responsibilities.** Depending on the use of digital media – as described above – different responsibilities apply. The overall responsibility for using digital media as a sensor is a collaborative effort between J2, and the communication capability and information staff functions. The responsibility for the communication aspects of social media (i.e. to use social media for communication), should be Mil-PA, or PSYOPS with NAC-approved audiences, within the guidance of the StratCom Framework.
- (5) It is imperative that Mil-PA effectively coordinates all of its digital media activity with Info Ops and PSYOPS. The CCWG should assess, develop and determine mechanisms, delineation of responsibilities and effects desired in the IE to provide guidance to the Commander. The Commander has to balance the use of social media by own troops with OPSEC concerns. It is highly- recommended that all troops and personnel are empowered and trained to talk to online audiences, always bearing in mind the NATO Narratives while adhering to existing OPSEC regulations;
- (6) **Recommendations/Options.**
  - (a) Pool resources from multiple communication capability and information staff functions for staffing to create a combined team dedicated to digital

media from PSYOPS, Mil-PA, Info Ops, or even outsourcing (private contracts);

(b) Ensure SAG participation in development of Digital Media Campaign;

(c) Provide restrictions and OPSEC formally to all persons in Command/AOR via code of conduct in regards to Digital Media<sup>19</sup>;

(d) For additional information regarding digital media, reference the ACO/ACT Digital Media Management Guide available on the ACO homepage at: <https://shape.nato.int/aco--act-digital-media-management-guide>.

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<sup>19</sup> See ACO Directive (AD) 95-3, Social Media, Dec 2009

## CHAPTER 6: ENGAGEMENTS

6-1 **Aim.** This chapter provides a StratCom perspective on how to plan for and conduct engagement activities. It is primarily focused on the engagements conducted by the senior leadership within NATO HQs; however, many of the principles apply equally to engagements conducted at a lower level. Moreover, a significant amount of engagement activity also occurs in Alliance activities. Specific “in-theatre” procedures have been developed for these environments; therefore, this chapter is intended to complement, rather than replace, that guidance. It must be noted that there is no NATO-agreed definition of the term “Engagement” and that the content of this chapter is not limited to, or restricted by, the definition of the terms Key Leader Engagement (KLE) and Soldier Level Engagement (SLE), as contained in AJP 3.10<sup>20</sup>.

6-2 **Purpose.** Engagement, particularly by senior leaders, can make a significant contribution to the shaping of the environment and achieving effects especially if their engagements are thoroughly planned, executed, and followed-up on. A cornerstone of effective engagement is a robust engagement strategy involving a “whole of enterprise” approach, where the interests of staff functions across the HQ are fully taken into account. In the context of this chapter, engagers are generally HQ Commanders, COSs and their deputies, senior communicators, and designated senior staff officers (members of the respective CG).

6-3 **Principles.** Successful engagement activity is highly-dependent on the following:

- a. **Pre-Planned.** Pre-planning is essential to maximize the effectiveness of each activity. The need to de-conflict the calendars of senior personnel means that most engagements are deliberate, pre-planned events, but even the more dynamic “engagements of opportunity” should contain an element of pre-planning. More specifically, while the time and place of the engagement may not have been forecast, the subjects to be discussed with a broad range of individual(s) should be part of an overall engagement strategy and plan. This means that the outlook for engagement must be long-term and enduring, and may include effects that requiring sustained engagement over a number of years;
- b. **Effects-Based.** Successful engagements have a purpose tied to strategic objectives, ideally with measurable outcomes. In most situations, engagements are linked with messaging derived from StratCom frameworks providing specific messaging;
- c. **Targeted.** Individuals (key leaders, influencers, decision makers) selected for engagement and the personnel chosen to engage with them should be carefully selected based on their abilities, influence, access, and reciprocity. Events such as DV days or any other event involving larger numbers of people should be as pre-planned as possible by viewing attendance lists and identifying key personnel in advance;
- d. **Integrated and coordinated.** Engagement must be undertaken as a “whole of enterprise” function involving multiple disciplines across the HQ. One single engagement may have impacts in intelligence, Mil-PA, StratCom, planning, logistical, protocol, and many other domains. It is critical all engagement stakeholders present their information requirements during the planning process and a feedback system is in place to inform current understandings and future planning for the entire HQ;

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<sup>20</sup> AJP3.10, Allied Joint Doctrine for Information Operations

- e. **One-to-One.** Engagements should be conducted in a one-to-one manner, though not necessarily face-to-face. In an ideal situation, the engager would meet the engagee in a personal environment where non-verbal communication can be used to assist in transmitting and interpreting messages. However, engagements may also occur over the telephone, via social media or e-mail, or by any other means. In such circumstances, the delivery should be such that the engagee feels as though they are being spoken to personally (and not just the recipient of, for example, an email intended for a mass audience). Regardless of the manner in which the communication is conducted, the engagement should occur in a way that reinforces and moves forward the mutual relationship and encourages trust and cooperation;
- f. **Proactive and Forward-Looking.** Engagement planners should seek opportunities, both on and beyond the horizon, to effectively employ engagers. In addition to regular office calls, exercises, and visits, strategic engagements can be planned for in the margins of conferences, during visits to troops in the field, and in virtually any other situation;
- g. **Networked.** Engagement activities reflect upon NATO as well as on the individual HQ conducting the engagement. To this end, it is essential that all engagement activities are synchronized both horizontally and vertically; not just to de-conflict the time of the event but also to ensure that the content/discussion topics and post event feedback are shared and mutually supporting. The establishment of an engagement network is essential to this process. Since engagement activities are such an important part of routine activity for all HQs, this network must exist in peacetime as well as crisis to ensure full coherence.

#### 6-4 Roles and Responsibilities

- a. A successful engagement program requires a robust support structure that is led at an appropriate level and receives adequate attention from the HQ staff. Ideally, engagement is executed by an organization within a HQ that fuses information operators, communicators, and support functions in one entity;
- b. The CG provides D&G to support engagement activities, likely through frequent meetings that should be included in the HQ battle rhythm;
- c. An Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) should be nominated for each engagement. The decision regarding who is most appropriate to be the OPR depends upon the structure of the HQ and, most importantly, the nature of the engagement for which they are to be responsible. OPRs should, therefore, be selected based on their expertise with the engagement's relevant issues (e.g., if the engagement concerns access to supply lines, a J4 staff officer would be a likely OPR). OPRs' responsibilities include, but are not limited to, coordinating the pre-engagement package, pre-briefing the engager (if required), production of post-meeting minutes (PMM), providing updates of the engagee's biographical data, tracking follow-up actions resulting from the meeting, and recommending future engagement activities;
- d. Within each HQ there should be a focal point for the planning and coordination of all engagement activities. Ideally, this would be some form of Engagement Cell, with one or more personnel responsible for creating an annual engagement plan and for the synchronization, coordination, and integration of engagement activities internally to the HQ, and also vertically and horizontally. It is understood that not all HQs are structured to support an Engagement Cell; however, the steadily increasing emphasis on engagement activities at all levels and need for

coordination between HQs should justify the creation of such a cell, or, at minimum, the nomination of an individual whose primary role is engagement;

e. **Engagement Steering Committee or Working Group.** Within each HQ, a staff working-level meeting/forum<sup>21</sup> is required where stakeholders within the HQ can meet and discuss long, medium, and short-term engagement planning and activity. The intent being to make recommendations concerning the prioritized content of specific engagements and the level at which they should be conducted. The group would also to make recommendations about additional engagements that should be planned (i.e., to conduct gap analysis).

The composition of this meeting should include, but is not limited to, representatives from StratCom, Mil-PA, Intelligence, Protocol, POLAD's office, Civil Military Affairs and the outer office staff of the CG, and other senior personnel.

A CG-level meeting is also required during which the recommendations from the working-level meeting can be briefed and appropriate D&G given. Existing StratCom meetings such as the CCWG and/or ISB could be used to achieve this.

**6-5 Engagement Products.** The nature of the products required to manage the engagement process largely depends upon the structure of the HQ and the number of personnel involved in the process. The following is necessary for an effective engagement program.

a. **Engagement Strategy.** Sets out the long-term aim for engagement activity. It may be broken down into countries or groups of countries and should direct who the primary and secondary engagers are and with whom they will engage. Such an Engagement Strategy is equally applicable at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels and to ensure coherence, should be nested within the Strategy of the higher HQ;

b. **Engagement Plan.** Provides more detail concerning exactly how the strategy should be delivered. It is unlikely to state exact dates for engagements to occur, but may give a desired time period based on numerous factors such as the desired frequency of engagement (taken from the Engagement Strategy), the date of last engagement, current events, etc. The Engagement Plan should also rely on synchronization with the activities of other HQs to ensure de-confliction;

c. **Engagement Matrix.** Provides an overview, in spreadsheet form, of exactly when engagements are going to occur as well as a historical record of what has happened previously and when. The intent being to track "when are we going to meet x?" or "when did we last meet x?" Additionally, a Delegated Engagement Authorities Matrix is required for subordinate HQs.

**6-6 Engagement Process.** Although no two engagements are the same, a general process should precede and follow each engagement event:

a. A potential engagement may be instigated reactively or proactively. For example, by the receipt of an invitation to an event such as an exercise DV day; or more

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<sup>21</sup> At JFC Brunssum, this is the Engagement Steering Committee (ESC). At JFC Naples, it is the Engagement Working Group (EWG).

proactively by following up an engagement opportunity recommended by the HQ staff, from the desire of engager, or from a deliberate Engagement Plan;

b. The potential engagement, with as much information as possible, should then pass to the working-level engagement group who will recommend an engager and discussion topics based on current effects, StratCom themes, desired outcomes and any other pertinent factors;

c. The CG gives D&G in response to working-level recommendations;

d. An OPR is designated in accordance with extant HQ procedures. The OPR then leads the development of an engagement package that contains information such as biographies, details and minutes of previous meetings, background information on likely topics to be discussed (by both sides), and any other info pertinent to that activity;

e. During the course of the engagement, a designated individual should be used to take notes and, subsequently, to prepare PMM and to provide appropriate feedback to the HQ following engagement activity. It is understood that a note-taker will not always be present and in these circumstances the engager should be requested to provide as much feedback as possible;

f. Noting the sensitivities surrounding certain engagements, the Engagement Cell should share PMM with other relevant HQ offices, archive them, and refine the Engagement Plan appropriately.

## 6-7 **Additional Considerations**

a. **Social Media and Correspondence.** As appropriate, social media and correspondence (email or physical) should be leveraged for engagement potential, as it is personal, one-to-one communication capable of transmitting a StratCom message;

b. Social media provides an ideal platform for the communication of strategic messages. Social media posts allow direct one-to-one communication, but in a manner allowing messages to be broadly transmitted;

c. **Relationship Management.** Throughout the engagement process, care should be taken to maintain and bolster not only personal relationships, but the relationship between the engagee and the HQ through periodic contact (social media, telephone, e-mail, etc.). The engagement relationship should be designed in a manner allowing a designated engager's successor to continue the personal relationship.

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ANNEX A TO  
ENCLOSURE 1 TO  
SH/COMS/SAG STC/DC/17-318235  
1710/TSC FCO 0240/TT-170782/Ser:NUXXXX  
DATED SEP 17

## WORKING CHECKLIST FOR STRATCOM PRACTITIONERS

### 1 **Applicability.**

- a. All StratCom practitioners;
- b. J2 information analysts, J5 Info planners.

### 2 **Information Gathering.**

#### a. **General;**

- (1) Who are the stakeholders other than partners?
- (2) How does the Commander model, simulate, and anticipate human behaviour (individual and group) and response?
- (3) How does the Commander detect, analyze, and respond to incoming messages?
- (4) How do the Commander and partners make sure that information is flowing freely?
- (5) How does the Commander build an integrated and synchronized StratCom approach?
- (6) How does the Commander decentralize StratCom at each level within parameters established by higher authority (Communication Strategy/StratCom Framework)?
- (7) How does the Command anticipate direct and indirect effects (outcomes) of messages on intended audiences?
- (8) How does the Command evaluate products from processes and technologies (polling, focus groups, modelling and simulation)?

#### b. **Means;**

- (1) How does the Commander selectively access, override or exploit communication channels?
- (2) What StratCom-related capabilities are available for this operation or operate in the AO?
  - (a) JTF;

- (b) Interagency;
  - (c) Coalition;
  - (d) Other partners;
  - (e) Adversary;
  - (f) Others.
- (3) How does the Commander communicate into denied areas?
- (4) How does the Commander identify the right communication conduits and then access those conduits?
- (5) How will the Commander embed and provide support to media representatives?
- (6) How does the Commander identify, gain and maintain contact/access to key audiences?
- (7) How does the Command use alternative ways to communicate in addition to language, such as visual images?
- (8) How are the Command and its partners connected to the external environment?
- (9) How are the Command and its partners influencing the environment, the larger external systems?
- (10) What communication-related opportunities are the Command and its partners creating for the near future?

c. **Relationships;**

- (1) Which interagency, foreign partner or stakeholders have long-standing and favourable relationships with the Commander/Command?
- (2) Who may become stakeholders and partners later on, how and why?
- (3) How does the Commander nurture relationships with potential stakeholders and partners in a deliberate manner and in a pending/actual crisis?
- (4) How does the Command seek/choose partners for the communication-related effort?
- (5) How does the Command assist each partner?
- (6) How do the Command and its partners learn to trust each other more?

(7) How does the Command build partnership capacity and relationships in the long-term (build a reservoir of goodwill)?

(8) What is the appropriate Command relationship with competitors, potential adversaries, or adversaries?

(9) What are the appropriate command, control, coordination, consultation, and support relationships within/beyond the coalition in order to achieve effective StratCom effects?

(10) How does the Command connect with those who are critical to the success of the StratCom-related work (e.g., states, non-state entities, populations, private industry, and academia)?

d. **Audience;**

(1) Who are the principle audiences affecting mission success?

(2) What is the audience(s) status?

(a) Ally;

(b) Coalition member;

(c) Friend;

(d) Competitor;

(e) Neutral;

(f) Adversary;

(g) State;

(h) Non-state entity.

(3) What are the partners,' stakeholders,' and selected audiences' interests, motivations, fears, and attitudes?

(4) How does the selected audience process information and make decisions?

(5) How does the Command segment key audiences (e.g., opinion makers, shadow audiences, those most vulnerable, and adversaries)?

(6) How does the Command determine which audience segments affect the desired end state most?

e. **Networks;**

(1) What are the audiences' critical networks (formal and informal)?

- (2) How does the Command identify and analyze potential communication media and channels?
- (3) How does the Command identify physical and social communication networks?
- (4) Does the Command and its partners understand the competitors, adversary and their operating environment?
- (5) Who else does the competitor or adversary have in its support network?

f. **Language/Culture;**

- (1) How does the Command identify and gain access to qualified personnel who can provide cultural awareness, language and alternative skills not existing in the Command?
- (2) What languages do the Command and its partners need for effective communication?
- (3) How does the Command acquire local and regional cultural/language/gender expertise to join the team?
- (4) How does the Command form analytical communities of interest (cultural anthropologists, linguists, local academics, sociologists, economists, religious and gender experts, etc.) to assist in StratCom-related activities via reach-back?

g. **Collection;**

- (1) How does the Command persistently collect, analyze, disseminate, and access all-source external information, adversary StratCom efforts, and capabilities?
- (2) How does the Command gain and exploit communication-related intelligence derived from the physical, informational, and cognitive dimensions?
- (3) How does the Command incorporate information that supports StratCom?
- (4) How does the Command collect in-depth information on the perceptions, attitudes, motivations, etc., of a variety of audiences with different linguistic, gender and cultural backgrounds?
- (5) How does the Command determine and understand adversarial StratCom interests, objectives, capabilities, methods, etc.?
- (6) How does the Command identify and analyze who else (other than the adversary) is communicating with designated audiences – what they are communicating, why, intent, methods, capabilities, etc.?

- (7) How does the Command re-orient intelligence capability to collect, analyze, and disseminate human terrain information (attitudes, perceptions, culture, gender, etc.)?
- (8) What are the needs of the Command and its partners for additional intelligence and information?
- (9) What security classification issues affect the sharing and protection of intelligence and information?
- (10) Do all partners know how to use and act on the intelligence and information once collected and shared?
- (11) Can all partners actually read the intelligence and information?
- (12) Are the intelligence and information available in a timely way?
- (13) How does the Command identify other entities that have interests in the AOR, their goals, objectives, level of influence with key audiences, capabilities, and current activities?
- (14) What other StratCom-related work does the Command know about that can be exploited?
- (15) Who are the key leaders and SMEs most credible sources and why?

h. **Development;**

- (1) How does the Command conceive and coordinate physical actions to influence selected audiences?
- (2) How does the Command design, produce, and disseminate effective content for each distinct audience in a timely manner?
- (3) How do the Command and its partners conceive, produce, coordinate, and synchronize messages (physical and informational) across the various StratCom-related capabilities?

i. **Assessment;**

- (1) How does the Command estimate the direct and indirect effects (outcomes) of potential signals on the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and actions of selected audiences?
- (2) Is there sufficient feedback among the partners in the system?
- (3) How does the Command and its partners know that the selected audience is listening and attentive?
- (4) How does the Command identify and analyze potential unintended effects (outcomes) on primary, secondary and tertiary audiences?

(5) How does the Command develop communication measures of effectiveness (MOE) and measures of progress (MOP) to ensure they are relevant, measurable, responsive and resourced?

j. **Restraints and Constraints;**

(1) What are the restraints, constraints, and barriers that affect StratCom?

(2) What are the issues affecting the Command from outside the system (e.g., historical ties, religious underpinnings, NATO opinion, political oversight, media attention, international attitudes, etc.)?

(3) What is the Command communication ROE and interaction?

(4) How much will communication activities cost?

(5) What are the NATO StratCom-related statutes, policies, regulations relating to the Command and its partners?

(6) What are the Command's internal barriers to StratCom efforts?

(7) How does the Command reduce or eliminate internal barriers?

k. **Risk;**

(1) What are the relevant risks and mitigations means associated with the communication activities?

(2) How can the Command and its partners become deliberate targets of either competitor or adversary StratCom activity?

l. **Information**

(1) How will the Command document its actions and disseminate this information in real or near-real time as required?

(2) Who needs to know about the Command communication-related work?

3 **Planning.**

a. **General;**

(1) Desired end state?

(2) What are the facts and assumptions that affect NATO StratCom-related activities?

(3) What are the StratCom-related operational limitations?

(4) What is the Commander's guidance and intent concerning StratCom?

- (5) What is the Commander's vision and StratCom philosophy?
- (6) What are primary objectives that StratCom can affect for the NATO, the Command, and partners?
- (7) What are the short, medium and long-term objectives that StratCom must address?
- (8) What are the identifiable Centers of Gravity (partners, neutrals, competitors, adversaries, others and ours), that StratCom can affect?
- (9) How does the Command determine StratCom implications of CCIRs?
- (10) What MOPs and MOEs will the Command and its partners use, are they responsive and sufficiently resourced?
- (11) How does the Commander maintain credibility in a dynamic, complex, and chaotic environment?
- (12) How does the Command integrate all actions to maximize desired effects?
- (13) What are the outcomes on selected audiences?
- (14) How does the Commander coordinate with NATO Agencies and other organizations?
- (15) What Command abilities/values need to be emphasized or de-emphasized?
- (16) What Command behaviour needs to change?
- (17) What audience(s) behaviour(s) needs to change?
- (18) How do key partners organize for StratCom-related work?
- (19) How does the Command develop and sustain a proactive and responsive multi-media capability?
- (20) How does the Command perform and integrate StratCom in a comprehensive process in order to seize and maintain the initiative?
- (21) How does the Command predict, anticipate, or realize strategic implications of tactical and individual actions?
- (22) How does the Command plan and execute StratCom with various NATO agencies, organizations and partners?
- (23) How does the Command create, modify and coordinate command, control, supported/supporting relationships and StratCom actions across various NATO Agencies, partners and other organizations?



- (24) How does the Command manage a highly decentralized communication effort?
- (25) How does the process verify the right message content, audience, timing, tempo, and delivery vehicle?
- (26) How does the Command rapidly exploit StratCom opportunities at each level?
- (27) What is the Command's desired reputation as observed by selected audiences?
- (28) How does the Command synchronize actions with messages?
- (29) How does the Command coordinate to preclude miscues and misunderstandings?
- (30) How does StratCom assist the Command recover from mistakes?
- (31) How is the Command going to deal with deliberate deviations from established principles and standards?
- (32) How does the Command synchronize kinetic and non-kinetic targeting efforts?

b. **Relationships;**

- (1) How can we leverage Command history, partners, and stakeholder past relationships/histories?
- (2) Do the Command and key partners agree on the StratCom problems/challenges that exist at the theatre-strategic and operational levels?
- (3) What are the current roles and responsibilities of partners and stakeholders?
- (4) How does the Command assimilate new partners in its StratCom-related activities?

c. **Restraints and constraints;**

- (1) What are the NATO and other partners' policies that affect the StratCom problems/challenges and solution?
- (2) How does the Command anticipate and pre-empt competitor or adversarial StratCom actions?

d. **Means;**

- (1) How does the Command identify and engage evolving media channels?

(2) How does the Command reach back or consult across various NATO agencies, organizations and partners?

e. **Assessment;**

(1) How will the Command and its partners get feedback and adapt to the changing environment?

(2) How does the Command conduct assessment of StratCom-related activities?

(3) Are the MOEs and MOPs relevant, measurable, responsive and adequately resourced?

(4) Are progress measurement resources synchronized and processes in place to utilize and share the information?

(5) How does the Command establish causality?

f. **Risk;**

(1) How is the Command going to deal with bad news?

(2) How does the Command pre-test signals to evaluate effectiveness prior to sending?

g. **Themes, Messages, Images, and Actions**

(1) What are the key strategic and operational themes?

(2) What are the main messages to support each theme?

(3) What are the primary images to support each message?

(4) What issues are at risk of opening the “say-do” gap for internal stakeholders?

(5) What issues are at risk of widening the “say-do” gap for external stakeholders?

(6) What mitigation measures are appropriate?

(7) Which media choices and sources are best suited as vehicles for each message?

4 **Plan Review.**

a. Are StratCom MOPs and MOEs relevant, measurable, responsive, and resourced?

- b. How will the Command conduct a continuous engagement program with selected key audiences?
- c. How will the Command conduct culturally reliable translation? Will this be sufficient to meet demand?
- d. How will the Command train personnel to a working proficiency in important languages?
- e. How will the Command exploit unplanned physical and virtual engagement opportunities?
- f. What audience behaviours are the Command and its partners planning to reinforce?
- g. What audience behaviours are the Command and its partners planning to change or eliminate?
- h. How will the Command and its partners create necessary feedback loops?
- i. How will the Command and its partners ensure all parties are listening to each other?
- j. What delivery vehicles does the plan use to access desired media for reaching the selected audience?

**5 Execution.**

- a. Do the Command and its partners really understand what is happening?
- b. How does the Command monitor, measure and assess the effects of friendly messages on intended and unintended audiences in relation to desired outcomes?
- c. What unanticipated StratCom-related questions and challenges are now surfacing?
- d. Are the Command and its partners continuing the same planned StratCom cycle or performing a completely new assessment and planning effort based on new realities on the ground?
- e. Do the Command and its partners need to narrow or broaden the scope of StratCom work?
- f. Is there a particular issue that needs more attention or focus of effort?
- g. What new information has surfaced that should cause a re-evaluation of the plan?
- h. Who else needs to be involved now in the StratCom effort?
- i. What new opportunities are developing for the Command and its partners?

- j. What Command or partner organizational changes could improve conduct of StratCom-related activities?
- k. What is the truth on key issues from the primary audience perspective?

**6 Transition**

- a. What is the nature of the transition (mission accomplishment, cease fire, etc.)
- b. What are the reputational risks that opponents messaging for redeployment being coordinated among TCN?
- c. What is the likely impact of NATO's legacy?
- d. What are the stated policies for redeployment to which NATO must adhere?

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ANNEX B TO  
ENCLOSURE 1 TO  
SH/COMS/SAG STC/DC/17-3182535  
1710/TSC FCO 0240/TT-170782/Ser:NUXXXX  
DATED SEP 17

## NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT TOOL, TEMPLATES, AND DESCRIPTION

1 **Narrative Framework.** As guidance to the coalition mission the Narrative forms a centerpiece for further military planning (Narrative-led operations).<sup>22</sup> It forms the starting point and central input for the development and implementation of the NATO Communications Strategy/StratCom Framework.

- a. The Narrative framework is a structural guideline for describing and analyzing the problem area of a potential Alliance engagement. It should be used at the earliest stage of the political process. As such, it serves as an instrument for initial strategic planning in support of political level decision-making and action. It consists of three building blocks:
- b. Situational Context;
- c. Narrative Landscape;
- d. Narrative Script.

2 **Development process for Narratives.** Each of the three building blocks can be broken down into a series of steps comprising analysis, testing and refinement activities within a continuous and iterative process. For further guidance, see Multi-National Information Operations Experiment (MNIOE) White Paper on Narrative Development in Coalition Operations<sup>23</sup> and the 2015 ACT white paper “Implementing Strategic Communications Narratives into the NATO Environment.”

3 The Situational Context.

- a. The Situational Context analyzes the background and context of a (potential) Alliance engagement. It initially anticipates and later outlines purpose, aim and scope of the mission as well as the NATO “desire” for the crisis region. It aims to provide an understanding of the overall crisis situation and its root causes. This understanding must combine the Alliance’s point of view and other actors’ perspectives, including their motives and desires driving their behaviour which will be further analyzed in the narrative landscape. A key output from the context analysis is the identification of the most relevant actors and stakeholders to the coalition engagement;
- b. The analysis of the Situational Context is an overarching, not a narrative-specific effort. However, narrative developers will contribute to the overall analysis of the Situational Context from their specific expertise;

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas Elkjer Nissen: Narrative Led Operations, Militært Tidsskrift, Volume 141, Number 4, pages 67-77, January 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Ref. MNIOE White Paper: Narrative Development in Coalition Operations Ver 1.0; 1 Sep 2014.

- c. The template below demonstrates how consideration of the above steps of the Situational Context leads to the statement of the coalition's desire as the first building block of the Narrative Framework.

1. Background & Context
2. Purpose
3. Aim
4. Scope
5. Interest & Benefit
a. individual coalition contributors
b. regional & local groups
c. others
6. General & Overarching potential Impacts
a. positive
b. negative
c. others
7. Coalition Desire

*Figure B-1: Template of the Situational Context*

#### 4 Narrative Landscape.

- a. The Narrative landscape outlines results of the analysis of the IE with a specific focus on the narratives of relevant actors and stakeholders such as Alliance members, conflicting parties and local populace. It addresses the assumed desire and motivation of the considered actors, and their individual satisfactory outcome. Since narratives are considered systems of stories they are analyzed regarding existing myths, legends, characters, symbols, and stories. The analysis also compares objective facts and potential aspirations on the (past, present, and future) situation development and the subjective reality perceived by the considered actors and stakeholders (considering tone and language of own and local media). In doing so, it demonstrates the dominant narratives in a particular situation. In order to prepare the development of a sustainable narrative it is important to understand the cultural and situational frame for the interpretation of history and the development of the current situation and events. This addresses the question why and how the interpretation of specific actors leads to respective conclusions, emotions, decisions, and actions and ultimately their behaviour. A key output of this analysis is the identification of commonalities and differences among various effective narratives and their interpretation in terms of events, activities, and any type of communication. Findings from the analysis shape the definition of an overall outcome assumed to be acceptable to the analyzed actors and stakeholders (most relevant to the crisis solution) from their perspectives. Understood as a common denominator this overall outcome could indicate the most sustainable crisis resolution strategy since it focuses upon unifying commonalities, rather than separating cultural differences. This identified overall acceptable outcome should be endorsed by the senior political (or military) leadership prior to further development of the Narrative Script.
- b. The Narrative landscape is captured in Figure B-2 below. This document is highly detailed as analysts are encouraged to describe content within the above steps for all relevant actors without necessarily allocating them a role in the eventual Narrative. This information will be distilled in the production of the Narrative Script.

Conflict Description							
Groups	Desire & Motivation	Individual Satisfactory	Myths, Legends, Characters, Symbols, Stories	Reality and/ or Other Facts	Tone' & Language of (own) Media	Tone' & Language of (local) Media	Overall Acceptabel Outcome
Coalition Partners							
Conflicting Parties							
Local Populace							
Other Stakeholders							

*Figure B-2: Template of Narrative Landscape*

- c. To properly complete the Narrative landscape, a better understanding of the actors, audiences and stakeholders connected to the situation/operation must be accomplished. We can determine the most impactful stakeholders by performing a Stakeholder Analysis. First a list of potential audiences or stakeholders is created. Next, each of the relevant actors and stakeholders are placed according their essentiality for achieving the Alliance's desire as well as how motivated they are in supporting the organization to achieve its goal. Larger bubbles represent larger groups, while smaller bubbles represent small groups or individuals. This schematic, combined with the subsequent table sections in the Narrative Landscape template will help determine susceptibility of the stakeholders, assign roles to the individual stakeholders, and prepare if one or several actors need to be considered opponents.

## 5 Narrative Script

- a. Purpose. The Narrative landscape is a collective description of different actors, their backgrounds and their place in the overall acceptable outcome. The Narrative Script allocates the roles that the Alliance wishes each actor to perform and the behaviour it wants them to show in the achievement of this outcome. This definition of roles is comparable to the description of characters in a script such as for a movie, TV-series, stage play or novel. In addition to reflecting the coalition's idea of actor's roles, the Narrative Script further defines how their related responsibilities and action patterns should be fulfilled. In other words, the defined roles are accompanied by actors' objectives and activities. The Narrative Script serves as plot or blue print for storytelling. By taking the most relevant findings from the Narrative landscape it connects conflict and desire to collective satisfaction (endorsed overall acceptable outcome) across the Narrative Arc in a format which can then be used to craft a written Narrative.
- b. The Narrative Script template defines the different roles of key actors, distilling information where relevant from the Narrative Landscape.



[Conflict Description]					
Actor	Role	Desire	Motivation	Individual Satisfactory Outcome	
	Owner/ Action Agent				[Overall Acceptable Outcome]
	Supporter				
	...				
	Opponent				
[Description of the most favourable option]					

*Figure B-3: Template of the Narrative Script*

**6 Crafting the Written Narrative.** By completing the Narrative framework it is now possible to construct a concise but comprehensive written narrative, which can stand on its own as the principle context to Strategic Planning Directives or be used with the Narrative Script to support the creation of individual culturally attuned stories that will resonate with particular target audiences. Individual nations and coalitions will adopt different perspectives as they construct their Communication Strategies. In all cases it is essential that the writer puts himself/herself in the mind of the NATO Commander in writing this narrative, which should conform structurally to the Narrative Arc.

**7 Testing the Narrative.** The next step once the draft is completed is the testing of the written narrative. Testing assesses elements of the draft narrative prior to final approval and should be conducted by a separate internal team, and includes testing environments such as exercises, table-tops, and issue or domain-specific review workshops or “Red Teaming”. Ultimately, in an operational environment, testing can be done internally or through traditional NATO StratCom assessment methods. It is an essential element of narrative creation to ensure the narrative can be understood and accepted by NATO members whilst resonating with appropriate audiences and stakeholders. As the situation evolves testing ensures that the narrative also remains consistent with emerging political guidance.

**8 Approval of Narratives.** It is essential that narratives are approved and endorsed at the highest level in conjunction with the overall Communication Strategy/StratCom Framework to ensure success of Alliance operations. Specific procedures must be adopted and followed consistently to ensure timely approval of a Narrative. Establishment of the Narrative WG as an adjunct to the StratCom WG is required shepherding the tested narrative through the final approval process.

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ANNEX C TO  
ENCLOSURE 1 TO  
SH/COMS/SAG STC/DC/17-318235  
1710/TSC FCO 0240/TT-170782/Ser:NUXXXX  
DATED SEP 17

## NATO STRATCOM FRAMEWORK TEMPLATE

REFERENCES: A. PO(2009)0141, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, dated 29 Sep 09.  
B. ACO Directive 095-002, ACO Strategic Communications, dated 21 May 12.  
C. SH/SAG/STC/AM/17-316337, SHAPE/ACO Strategic Communications Framework, dated 12 Feb 17

1 **Introduction.** In this section, provide a brief background to the issue providing the political and operational context in a couple of paragraphs. This section should also outline the future challenges from a StratCom perspective and include a short discussion regarding audiences.

In the **REFERENCES** section, automatically include A and B as they are the foundation for NATO and ACO StratCom policy. Include other higher HQs' StratCom Frameworks as well that provide the "nest" for the framework being written. Likewise, consider using political-strategic documents such as summit communiques that provide specific direction to NATO's action.

Recommend prior to writing a StratCom Framework, references A and B should be reviewed along with extant frameworks available from SHAPE StratCom.

2 **Aim.** Define the purpose and duration of validity for the StratCom Framework. Generally the purpose of the Framework should outline why a framework is being written; it could be as simple as to "guiding communication efforts" related to an activity or for a specific communication purpose. The duration of validity may be time or activity bound or simply until superseded by additional, or higher level, guidance.

3 **StratCom Objectives.** StratCom objectives focus on communication outcomes that will be achieved through a combination of words and actions taken together. These objectives will refer and link to the effect we wish to achieve with friendly, neutral and adversary audiences:

- a. StratCom Objectives should be limited in number, generally no more than four or five;
- b. StratCom Objectives should be tied to the OPLAN as overall objectives;
- c. Many example Objectives contain the following language, "maintain awareness, sustain support, encourage or discourage, convince, demonstrate."

4 **Narrative and/or StratCom Core Message.** A brief Narrative Statement as a result of a systematic assessment of the IE. Or if no Narrative could be agreed, a brief core message to underpin the StratCom approach to be adopted. Note: This follows the objectives section as the objectives (what is being achieved) has primacy – the core message, themes, and topics are all developed in support of attaining the objectives. Example core messages: "With the active support of NATO and other members of the International Community, Afghanistan continues to develop and take the necessary decisions to determine its own future." "Securing our Future and our Values Together."

5 **StratCom Themes.** Generally three to six themes should be identified which are to be promoted in support of achieving the StratCom objectives. Themes as defined by NATO are overarching concepts or intentions, are designed for broad application, and differ from messages that are narrowly focused communication directed at a specific audience. Themes are to be promoted to help achieve StratCom objectives and will in turn be reinforced by communication focus topics.

- a. Themes should be brief and expressible in one or two words then backed by a short explanatory paragraph;
- b. An example theme from ref c. “DETER & DEFEND – NATO is a defensive Alliance and seeks to avoid confrontation and conflict, first by demonstrating its capability to deter potential adversaries and second, if deterrence fails, to defeat any opponent;”
- c. Additional examples of themes in use include “Legitimacy and Cooperation, Resolve, Transparency and Credibility, Projecting Stability.”

6 **Focus Topics.** Focus topics provide further guidance on the scope of communication activities, products, and programs. They are designed to complement StratCom Themes and to identify specific activities and/or calendar events around which focused StratCom action should be considered.

- a. Activity-Orientated. Typically a focus topic will show a theme being put into practice;
- b. In the case of the example at paragraph 5b above, the following non-exhaustive list would be logical focus topics that would highlight and exemplify the Deter & Defend theme: “Cyber Defense, Countering Hybrid Threats, Relations with Russia, Readiness Action Plan;”
- c. The following is an example taken from SHAPE’s monthly StratCom Themes:
  - (1) “Theme: Collective Defence and Deterrence;
  - (2) Focus Topic: eFP Battle Groups Activating. NATO is enhancing its forward presence in the eastern part of the Alliance and forces from six Alliance nations are already partially manning three of four planned battle groups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. These units are purely defensive in nature, proportionate to the threat, and their deployment is being conducted openly and transparently to avoid any misunderstandings or accidents. Their presence exemplifies the unity and commitment of all NATO’s nations.”

7 **Coordination.** An overview of the key roles and responsibilities of HQ tasked to participate in the delivery of StratCom Framework-related communication activities. Coordination should include upward, lateral and subordinate efforts and include follow up actions.

8 **Additional Annexes.** Annexes can be attached as required to cover specific issues, task implementation of the framework and cover specific objectives, themes or topics. Some examples include:

- a. **Implementation Plan.** Using the framework guidance, specific actions appropriate to different levels of command should be developed to achieve the required effect. This can range from requirements for products and outputs to liaison mechanisms, detailed coordination, and specific metrics, benchmarks and follow up actions;

- b. **Key Messages.** Although key messages will usually be issued at the time of framework dissemination, they are likely to change in response to developments, whereas the themes and focus topics are unlikely to change in the short term. Periodic revision and re-issue of the Key Messages, or the development of a mission-specific Rolling-Brief, will ensure all stakeholders have up-to-date messaging available;

9 **Risk and Opportunities.** An annex setting out the key StratCom challenges and opportunities can be attached that defines appropriate actions for their mitigation or exploitation.

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ANNEX D TO  
ENCLOSURE 1 TO  
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1710/TSC FCO 0240/TT-170782/Ser:NXXXXX  
DATED SEP 17

## FORMAT/GUIDANCE FOR INCLUDING A STRATCOM ANNEX INTO AN OPERATION PLAN<sup>25</sup>

### STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

#### 1 Situation

##### a. General;

(1) Higher-Level Guidance. Provide summary of NATO objectives and guidance relevant to the area of operations that effect the communication environment;

(2) StratCom Overview. Provide the StratCom Framework overview of the environment, outlining the overall objective of executing the strategic communication process through coordinating, synchronizing and integrating the supporting communication activities;

(3) Country/Regional Perspective. Provide an overview to the country or region's perspective to the operation outlined in the main body and as described through the NATO StratCom Framework. Identify potential effects, develop theatre specific messages, themes and objectives to be included in overall NATO framework and subsequent level implementation plans (StratCom Annex).

b. **Enemy.** Adversary or Competitor Perspective. Identify primary opposing perspectives in the area of responsibility that will compete against NATO strategic communication efforts. Categorize the perspectives in descriptive subparagraphs as either an "obstacle" or a "constraint" to implementation of the StratCom objectives. Perspectives listed should not normally repeat supporting communication capability and information staff functions, but the significant obstacle or constraint requiring coordination, synchronization, or integration through the strategic communication process;

(1) Opposing Audiences. Identify adversarial audiences/key decision makers and support activities who contribute to the establishment of obstacles and constraints through their influence of planning guidance, key policy decisions, and operational execution of their strategy. These key decision makers direct the development or allocation of resources to execute course of action that may be contrary to NATO and JFC/JFT objectives. Identify groups that can influence plans, decisions, and operational effectiveness in

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<sup>25</sup> COPD utilizes the following annex coding: StratCom – Annex SS, PA – Annex TT, Info Ops – Annex UU and PSYOPS – Annex VV.

task accomplishment; identify their susceptibility to strategic communication messages and actions;

- (2) **Information Systems.** Identify primary information and collection systems that support opposing decision makers and their staffs. Summarize intelligence capabilities pertinent to the situation.
- c. **Friendly.** Partner Perspectives. Identify perspectives in the area of responsibility that will support, amplify, and/or compliment NATO strategic communication efforts. Identify those audiences and the information systems they use. Specific details regarding collaborative efforts should be expanded upon in the lines of operation and coordination sections below.
- d. **Neutral.** Identify neutral perspectives in the area of responsibility. Identify those audiences and the information systems they use. Specific details regarding outreach and potential collaborative efforts should be expanded upon in the lines of operation and coordination sections below.
- e. **Lines of Operation.** Identify the significant expectations to be coordinated, synchronized, and/or integrated to identify primary responsibilities and mission expectations of the various supporting communication capabilities.
  - (1) Friendly;
  - (2) Neutral;
  - (3) Adversary.

2 **Mission.** Refer to the Main Body of the OPLAN.

3 Execution

- a. Concept of Operations;
  - (1) Overview. State the main body Commander's Intent for StratCom. Discuss the goal(s) of the StratCom process and provide emphasis on how it contributes to the end-state of the Base Plan. Conceptually explain how combatant commands produce effects that contribute to the accomplishment of NATO objectives for the AOR;
  - (2) Specific Guidance. Provide guidance for the various communication capability and information staff functions, through subordinate command elements, to ensure coordinated execution of StratCom objectives;
  - (3) Identify the StratCom objectives to achieve the Commander's Intent (possibly included in the NID);
  - (4) Include the potential StratCom narrative and themes, subsequent messages, focus topics and desired end state to achieve the StratCom objective(s). These will align to with development of a StratCom Framework;

- (5) Provide guidance on audiences who are instrumental in achieving the StratCom objective(s). Associate themes and subsequent messages to each identified audience. Generally associate performance expectations to provide guidance to the various communication capability and information staff functions in developing associated action;
  - (6) Address themes, subsequent messages, and actions to be avoided because of their potential to produce unintended consequences or harmful attitudes and behavior;
  - (7) Describe primary adversarial themes and messages directed at friendly audiences in the operational area that oppose NATO StratCom objectives. StratCom objectives should provide guidance for countering or minimizing effect of adversary operations;
  - (8) Relationship between PSYOPS, Info Ops, and PA. Cross-reference and demonstrate relationships between the effects, audiences, messages, and activities in various enclosures to the main body of the OPLAN. This will include Annex A (Ops), Annex SS (StratCom), Annex TT (PA), Annex UU (Info Ops) and Annex VV (PSYOPS);
  - (9) Measures of Performance (MOP). Provide expectation as to methods expected for measuring performance, such as intelligence, multi-discipline counterintelligence, security monitoring, and operational feedback. How will StratCom requirements be assessed? Include measurement expectations to ensure the implementation of a selected MOP, by the supporting communication capability, confirms the delivery of the message, to the targeted audience, with the desired end state;
  - (10) Measures of Effectiveness (MOE). The primary measure of effectiveness in the communication environment is a change in behaviour of the identified target audience that supports an objective. Measure of effectiveness, the result of an implemented "measure of performance," may be a less stringent opposition to a democratic initiatives and/or an increased willingness to adapt improved humanitarian proposals. Such MOE must have established MOP and may require specialized reporting, incorporated in the Annex OO.
- b. **Tasks.** Outline the tasks to be completed and divided into separate subparagraphs by supported and supporting commands and NATO agencies. Each task should be a concise statement encompassing all key actions that subordinate and supporting elements must perform. Assign responsibilities based on capabilities to reach the intended audience(s). Ensure that tasks clearly assign responsibilities, consider support to Public Diplomacy and visual information, address interagency coordination, and provide for guidance on MOE and MOP;
- (1) Public Affairs;
  - (2) Information Operations;
  - (3) CIMIC or Civil Military Interaction;



- (4) Defence Support to Public Diplomacy;
- (5) Visual Information (Combat Camera);
- (6) Subordinate Commands;
- (7) Supporting Combatant Commands;
- (8) Specified Coordination with higher HQs;
  - (a) Non-NATO Entities (NNE);
  - (b) Joint Staff and defence support agencies.
- (9) Other Key Leader Engagements.

c. **Coordinating Instructions.** List the instructions applicable to the entire command or two or more elements of the command that are necessary for proper coordination of the operation but are not appropriate for inclusion in a particular annex. Explain terms pertaining to the timing of StratCom execution and deployments. Also explain other operational terms required to lend clarity to the implementation of StratCom throughout the AOR but are not defined in Joint Staff publications.

- 4 **Administrative and Logistics.** Provide a statement of the administrative and logistic arrangements applicable to StratCom not covered in the main body.
- 5 **Command and Control.** Refer to appropriate sections of OPLAN C2.

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## STRATCOM ALIGNMENT WITH COPD

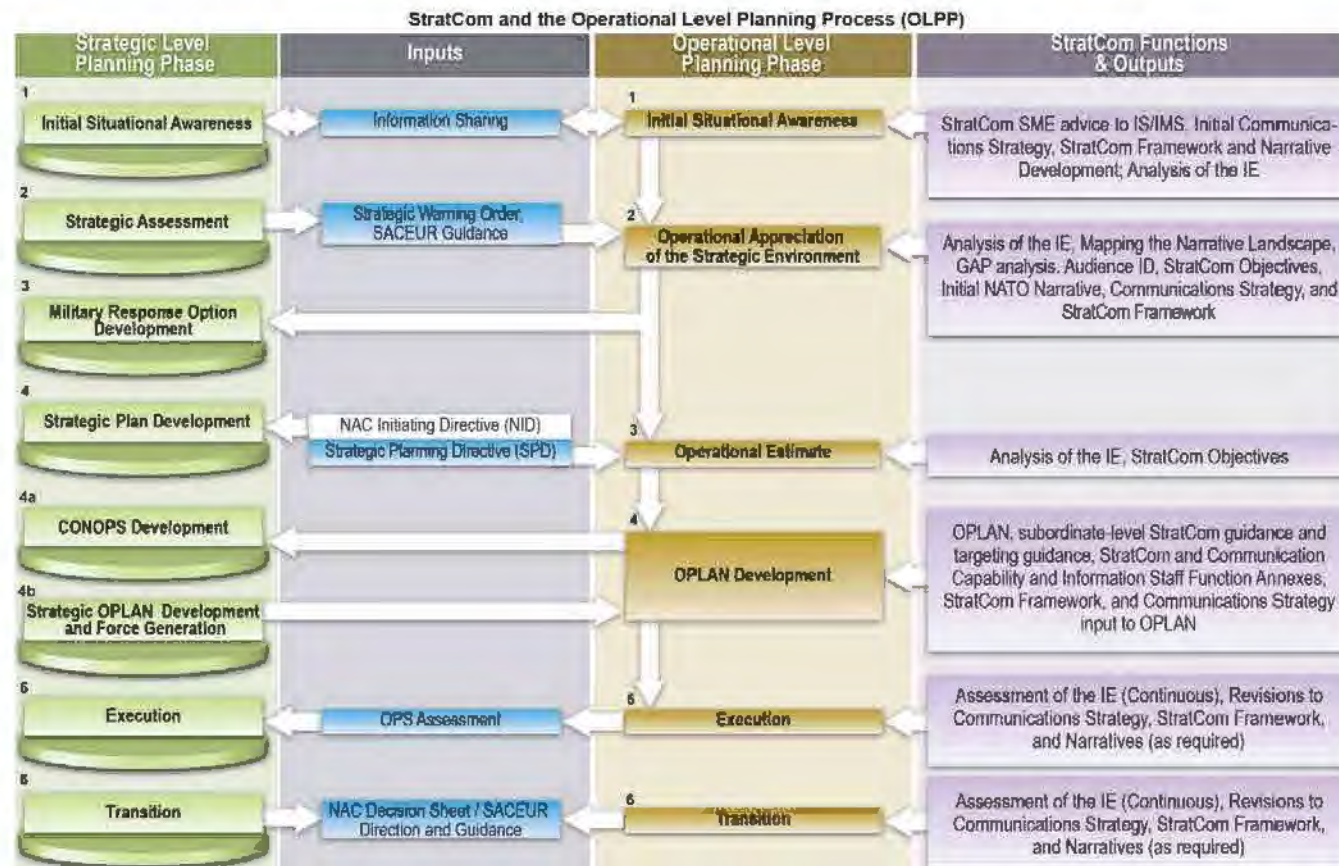


Figure E-1: StratCom Alignment with COPD

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## OASIS CAMPAIGN PLANNING<sup>24</sup>



The purpose of this guide is to ensure that all government communications are effective, efficient and evaluated.

### Who is it for?

It is for all government communications professionals, regardless of discipline or organisation.

### When should it be used?

It applies to every kind of planned communication/campaign, from the most effective way to put out news via press/digital at no cost, to large scale multi-million pound behaviour change campaigns.

### How should it be used?

This guide will help you develop your plan and inform your thinking. The time it takes to develop a campaign plan varies greatly. For press/digital campaigns, your plan may take a few hours, while for long term behaviour change campaigns the audience analysis alone may take weeks.

"In 2014/15 we will continue to deliver excellent communications aligned to the government's priorities to build a stronger, more competitive economy and a fairer society. Our campaigns will further improve the lives of people and communities the UK and support the effective operation of our public services, including via new and improved digital transactions. We will be ready to deliver responsive and informative communications in times of emergency and crises and we will support efforts to enhance the UK's reputation."

-2014/15 Government Communications Plan

### What is a campaign?

A campaign is a planned sequence of communications and interactions that uses a compelling narrative over time to deliver a defined and measurable outcome.

All government communications should be viewed in the context of a wider campaign i.e. what do we want to achieve and where does it fit in? This way we can ensure that all our work links to a clear objective and we can evaluate the impact of everything we do.

## OASIS

OASIS is a series of steps that can help bring order and clarity to planning campaigns, which can sometimes be a complicated and challenging process. The aim is to help make the planning process simpler and easier to remember.



### Objectives:

Set out what the communications activity is intending to achieve. Start with the policy aim and develop communications objectives that will deliver this. Include the role that communication will contribute to achieving the policy aim and the role that individual activities or channels will play in meeting the communications objective. Objectives should be achievable, measurable - expressed numerically where possible, focused on outcomes not outputs and related to changing attitudes and/or behaviour.

- How to develop the right objectives: <https://gcn.civilservice.gov.uk/blog/2014/04/22/gcs-evaluation-guidance-standards/>

Figure F-1: A Guide to OASIS Campaign Planning

<sup>24</sup> Source: [UK Government Communication Service](#)



### Audience insight:

Who is the campaign aimed at? Do you need to change or influence their attitudes and behaviours to help you achieve your objective? Understanding your audience is critical to an effective campaign. Use your own commissioned research, data from elsewhere in government or publically available information. If you are working on a large-scale project, you should look at academic theories of behaviour.

- Behavioural insights simplified: <https://gcn.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Writing-a-communication-strategy-GCS-Guide.pdf>
- Overview of different behaviour change theories: <https://gcn.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/commongood-behaviourchange.pdf>

### Strategy/Idea:

Use the insight to set out your approach including any theories that you will apply. You will also need to cover proposition/messaging; channels; and partners/influencers. Map the audience journey and design communications relevant to different stages of the journey. Where possible test or pilot your approach to assess its effectiveness.

### Implementation:

Once you have defined your approach set out how you will deliver your communications and what tactics you will use. Develop a clear plan that allocates resources and sets out the timescales for delivery. Bring influencers and partners on board to increase impact and use low cost approaches where possible; particularly PR and partnerships.

### Scoring/Evaluation:

You should monitor outputs and outcomes throughout your campaign and evaluate at once it is complete. This will allow you to make minor adjustments to the implementation if necessary (you may want to allocate budget to do this). Use formal and informal approaches to measure and evaluate. Set intermediate outcomes, or proxy measures, where final outcomes are not immediately available.

- Detailed guidance on evaluating communications: [https://gcn.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/GCN-Evaluation-Book\\_v6.pdf](https://gcn.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/GCN-Evaluation-Book_v6.pdf)

### Inspiration

Examples of great campaigns can be found in the Government Communications Plan 2014/15.

### Free resources

#### Tools to help you write your plan

- **GCN Guides** <https://gcn.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance>  
A range of practical guides written by Government Communicators including guidance on Evaluation, Partnerships, Customer Journey Mapping, how to write a communication strategy and much more.
- **campaignstrategy.org**: free ideas and tools to help you develop your campaign

#### Tools to help you gather audience insight

- **ONS** <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/index.html>: A wealth of data (including Census data) that can be browsed by theme or alphabetically
- **Newspaper Society** <http://www.newspapersoc.org.uk/>: about regional media (see facts on the homepage and FAQ's on Our Services).
- **OFCOM the communications regulator** <http://media.ofcom.gov.uk/facts/> includes ownership and usage figures for television, digital radio and landline/mobile phones.
- **Cabinet Office Behavioural Insight Team** <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/behavioural-insights-team>
- Evaluation Specialists work in the GCS **Shared Communication Service** and are on hand to provide advice, support and practical help in developing evaluation plans and reports. Contact the team: [ERGEvaluation@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ERGEvaluation@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk)

#### Tools to help you measure the effectiveness of your campaign activity

**Survey Monkey** - [www.surveymonkey.com/](http://www.surveymonkey.com/): free online survey tool: send surveys, polls, questionnaires, customer feedback, market research, access to survey questions and professional templates and a guide to analysing results.

#### Online analytics tools

- **Google Alerts** <http://www.google.co.uk/alerts> (use to monitor specific content on the web)
- **Google Blog Search** <http://www.google.co.uk/blogsearch> (search for content within blogs)
- **Netvibes** <http://www.netvibes.com/en> (create a dashboard of all your online content)
- **Google Analytics** <http://www.google.co.uk/analytics/> (monitor usage of your website)
- **Hootsuite** <https://hootsuite.com/> (monitor content across all social media)
- **Simply Measured**: <http://simplymeasured.com/free-social-media-tools#> (Free social media reports)
- **Facebook Insights** <http://www.facebook.com/help/383440231709627/> (monitor usage of your facebook page)

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TEMPLATE

JFC/JFT (STRATEGIC) COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR XXXX OPERATIONS IN XXXX COUNTRY

### REFERENCES:

- A. OPLAN (Annexes)
- B. Strategic Planning Directive (SPD)
- C. SACEUR's Guidance
- D. Resolutions & Agreements
- E. Narrative Development for XXXX Country

### 1 Introduction

2 **Purpose and Scope.** Operational level, national contingents, JFC/JFC, CCs, regional perspective.

- a. Custodian and Customers (Commander JFC/JFC; JFC/JFC, CCs);
- b. Review and Approval (periodical and event-driven; SACEUR approval- not: JFC!).

### 3 Context

- a. Assessment of the IE (synopsis);
- b. Mandate and Mission (summary of UNSCRs; Commander JFC/JFC mission);
- c. Military Strategic Objectives (from SACEUR and JFC/JFC planning).

### 4 Narrative and Information Objectives

- a. Narrative for XXXX Country;
- b. JFC/JFT Narrative Statement (regional dimension: national contributions, regional powers, military focus; derived from the operational mission);
- c. Information Objectives linked to Military Strategic Objectives;
- d. Approved Audiences and Targets (bullet list; amended with caveats, as required constraints/restraints);
- e. Themes and Master Messages not linked to specific audiences/targets. A general overview.

5 **Potential Actors and Capabilities.** Operational and CC level, as appropriate, military focus, JFC/JFT HQ and CC actors.

6 **Implementation Route (Synopsis)**

- a. Milestones and Key Events (milestones=decisive points; key events=important occurrences that happen anyway/periodically, story events that may lead to milestones or result from them);
- b. Communication Approach (broad description/summary: mapping of audiences/targets, themes and master messages for each Information Objective; continuous text);
- c. JFC/JFC Information Activities (highlight key activities by JFC/JFC HQ actors and Component Commanders, as appropriate);
- d. Coordination Requirements (procedures ref. to NATO Command HQs, information sharing arrangements, dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors; coordination JFC/JFC- IO/NGOs/ETC.).

7 **Annexes**

- a. Implementation Route Matrix (Mapping of JFC/JFT HQ and CC Actors/Capabilities, Audiences/Targets, Themes and Master Messages for each Information Objective);
- b. Evaluation Plan;
- c. Budget and Finance.

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## REFERENCES

The following primary references are noted in the NATO Strategic Communication Handbook.

- 1 NATO Military Committee Documents.
  - a. IMSWM-0051-2011(SD1), NATO Strategic Communications Military Capability Implementation Plan (CIP), 21 April 2011;
  - b. MC 422/5, NATO Military Policy on Information Operations, February 2015;
  - c. MC 0411/2, NATO Military Policy on Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), April 2014;
  - d. MC 0457/2, NATO Military Policy on Public Affairs, February 2011;
  - e. MC 402/2, NATO Military Policy on Psychological Operations, June 2012;
  - f. MCM-0085-2010 Military Concept for NATO Strategic Communications, August 2010 ;
  - g. NATO Policy PO (2009) 0141, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, 29 September 2009.
  - h. Revised Fifth Draft MC 0628 NATO Military Policy on Strategic Communications, June 2017;
  - i. MC 0133/4, NATO's Operations Planning, January 2011.
- 2 NATO Allied Joint Publications
  - a. AJP 3.10 NATO Information Operations Doctrine, December 2015;
  - b. AJP 3.10.1B NATO Psychological Operations Doctrine, September 2014;
  - c. AJP 5 NATO Operational-level planning Doctrine, June 2013;
  - d. AJP 9 NATO Civil-Military Co-operation Doctrine, June 2003.
- 3 NATO Directives
  - a. ACO Directive (AD) 95-2, ACO Strategic Communications, May 2012;
  - b. ACO Directive (AD) 95-3, Social Media, 3 December 2009;
  - c. COPD, Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive – Version 2.0, dated 4 October 2013.



4 Other NATO Documents

- a. NATO/ISAF Strategic Communications Framework 2010, 3 February 2010;
- b. Document PO (2010)0169, The Alliance's Strategic Concept, November 2010;
- c. Document C-M (2008) 0029, Proposal on a way ahead on Comprehensive Approach, March 2008;
- d. TR-HFM-160 RTO Technical Report: "How to improve your aim: Measuring the effectiveness of activities that influence attitudes and behaviours" August 2011. Final report of Task Groups HFM-160 and HFM-183;
- e. IMSM-0093-2011 NATO/ISAF Strategic Communications Framework 2011, 24 February 2011.
- f. IMSM 0348-2011, Terms of Reference NATO HQ StratCom Cell, July 2011;
- g. Libyan Lessons learned for StratCom – ANNEX 2 to PO (2012)0153;
- h. AC 237 – D (2014) 0003 NCRSM, NATO Crisis Response System manual, 2014.

5 Other Documents

- a. MCDL Military Strategic Communication in Coalition Operations, A Practitioners Handbook, Draft for Use, Version 1.1, 10 March 2017;
- b. MNIOE White Paper: Narrative Development in Coalition Operations Ver. 1.0; 1 September 2014;
- c. MNIOE White Paper: Applied Concept Analysis and Assessment of the Information Environment Ver.1.0; 30 April 2014;
- d. MCDL StratCom Focus Area – Applied Concept: "Communication Management at the Military Operational Level" (30 September 2014);
- e. MCDL Enclosures to Exercise Viking 2014;
- f. MCDL StratCom Focus Area – Guidelines for Decision-Makers: "Approval of communication guidance" Ver. 2.0 (30 September 2014);
- g. HQ SACT StratCom Capability After Action Report, TRJE 15 Phase IIIB, 11 January 2015;
- h. HQ SACT StratCom Capability After Action Report, TRJE 2016, 5 December 2016.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Acronym/Term	Definition
AJP	Allied Joint Publication
ACO	Allied Command Operations
AOI	Area of Interest
AOR	Area of Responsibility
BIM	Business Information Management
CAT	Crisis Action Team
CAX	Computer-Aided Exercise
CCIR	Commander's Critical Information Requirements
Chief StratCom	Chief of Strategic Communication
CIMIC	Civil Military Cooperation. A joint function comprising a set of capabilities integral to supporting the achievement of mission objectives and enabling NATO commands to participate effectively in a broad spectrum of civil-military interaction with diverse non-military actors.
CMI	Civil Military Interaction
C2	Command and Control
CCWG	Communication Coordination Working Group
CG	Command Group
COE	Centre of Excellence
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
COPD	Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive
COS	Chief of Staff
CPOE	Comprehensive Preparation of the Operational Environment
CPX	Command Post Exercise
CUB	Commanders Update Meeting
D&G	Direction and Guidance
DIRLAUTH	Direct Liaison Authority
DOTMLPFI	Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities, Interoperability
DV	Distinguished Visitor
EW	Electronic Warfare
FRAGOS	Fragmentation Orders
GENAD	Gender Advisor
GO	Governmental Organization
HQ	Headquarters
IACB	Information Activities Coordination Board
IAWG	Information Activities Working Group
IE	Information Environment
IGO	International Governmental Organization
Info Ops	A staff function to analyze, plan, assess, and integrate information activities to create desired effects on the will, understanding, and capability of adversaries, potential adversaries, and NAC approved

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	audiences, in support of Alliance mission objectives.
IO	International Organization
ISB	Information Strategy Board
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, And Reconnaissance
JAB	Joint Assessment Board
JCB	Joint Coordination Board
JCBWG	Joint Coordination Board Working Group
JFC	Joint Force Command
JHQ	Joint Headquarters
JOA	Joint Operations Area
JOPG	Joint Operations Planning Group
JTCB	Joint Targeting Coordination Board
JTF	Joint Task Force
JTWG	Joint Targeting Working Group
JWC	Joint Warfare Centre
LIVEX	Live Exercise
LOO	Line of Operations
Mil-PA	The function responsible to promote NATO's military aims and objectives to audiences in order to enhance awareness and understanding of military aspects of the Alliance. This includes planning and conducting external and internal communications, and community relations. Military PA at each level of command directly supports the commander and may not therefore be further delegated or subordinated to other staff functions.
MNIOE	Multi-National Information Operations Experiment
MOE	Measure of Effectiveness
MOP	Measure of Performance
MPC	Main Planning Conference
MRO	Military Response Options
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NCS	NATO Command Structure
NFS	NATO Force Structure
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNE	Non-NATO Entities
OODA Loop	Observe, Orient, Decide, Act. The decision cycle applied to the combat operations process, often at the strategic level in military operations.
OPLAN	Operation Plan
OPR	Office of Primary Responsibility
OPSEC	Operations Security
PA/PAO	Public Affairs/Public Affairs Officer
PD	Public Diplomacy
PMESII	Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, and Information
PMM	Post-Meeting Minutes
POLAD	Political Advisor
PSYOPS	Planned psychological activities in peace, crisis, and war directed to enemy, friendly, and neutral audiences in order to influence attitudes and behaviour affecting the achievement of political and military objectives. They include Strategic Psychological Activities, Psychological Consolidation Activities, Battlefield Psychological Activities, and Peace Support Psychological Activities.

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ROE	Rules of Engagement
RFI	Request for Information
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SACT	Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
SAG	Staff/Special Advisory Group
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SSA	SACEUR Strategic Assessment
SSC	Single Service Command
StratCom	Strategic Communication. The integration of communication capabilities and information staff function with other military activities, in order to understand and shape the Information Environment, in support of NATO aims and objectives.
SPD	Strategic Planning Directive
SCWG	Strategic Communication Working Group
TTP	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures
TCN	Troop Contributing Nation
VTC	Video Teleconference
WG	Working Group

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## NATO STRATCOM POINTS OF CONTACT

### **Supreme Headquarter Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE):**

Chief StratCom, +32-6544-4513  
StratCom Staff Officer, +32-6544-3776

### **Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT):**

StratCom Branch Head, +1-757-747-3745  
Chief PAO, +1-757-747-3817  
StratCom Staff Officer, +1-757-747-4246

### **1GNC:**

Public Affairs Office, +49 251 506 2092  
Mobile, +49 151 1204 1363

### **ARRC (Joint Fires and Influence Branch):**

HQ ARRC Info Ops, +44-1452-718-820  
HQ ARRC PSYOPS NCO, +44-1452-718-5230

### **HQ MARCOM:**

StratCom Advisor, +44-1923-956905

### **HQ MNCNE:**

Public Affairs Office, +48 91 444 5900

### **HQ MNDSE:**

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