

# SOLLIMS SAMPLER

Targeting Peace & Stability Operations Lessons & Best Practices

## Strategic Communication / Messaging in Peace & Stability Operations

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**PM SOI**

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## FOREWORD

Welcome to the November 2016 edition of the Stability Operations Lessons Learned and Information Management System (SOLLIMS) “Sampler” – **Strategic Communication / Messaging in Peace & Stability Operations.**

The general structure of the “Sampler” includes (1) an [Introduction](#) that provides an operational or doctrinal perspective for the content, (2) the Sampler “[Quick Look](#)” that provides a short description of the topics included within the Sampler and a link to the full text, (3) the primary, topic-focused Stability Operations (SO)-related [Lesson Report](#), and (4) links to [additional references, reports, and articles](#) that are either related to the “focus” topic or that address current, real-world, SO-related challenges.

This lessons-learned compendium contains just a sample – thus the title of “Sampler” – of the observations, insights, and lessons related to **Strategic Communication / Messaging in Peace & Stability Operations** available in the SOLLIMS data repository. These lessons are worth sharing with military commanders and their staffs, as well as with civilian practitioners having a Stability Operations-related mission/function – those currently deployed on stability operations, those planning to deploy, the institutional Army, the Joint community, policy-makers, and other international civilian and military leaders at the national and theater level.

Lesson Format. Each lesson is provided in the following standard format:

- Title/Topic
- Observation
- Discussion
- Recommendation
- Implications (optional)
- Event Description

The “Event Description” section provides context in that it identifies the source or event from which the lesson was developed. Occasionally you may also see a “Comments” section within a lesson. This is used by the author to provide related information or additional personal perspective.

You will also note that a number is displayed in parentheses next to the title of each lesson. This number is hyper-linked to the actual lesson within the SOLLIMS database; click on the highlighted number to display the SOLLIMS data and to access any attachments (references, images, files) that are included with this lesson. Note, you must have an account and be logged into SOLLIMS in order to display the SOLLIMS data entry and access/download attachments.

If you have not registered in SOLLIMS, the links in the reports will take you to the login or the registration page. Take a brief moment to register for an account in order to take advantage of the many features of SOLLIMS and to access the stability operations related products referenced in the report.

We encourage you to take the time to provide us with your perspective on any given lesson in this report or on the overall value of the “Sampler” as a reference for you and your unit/organization. By using the “Perspectives” text entry box that is found at the end of each lesson – seen when you open the lesson in your browser – you can enter your own personal comments on the lesson. We welcome your input, and we encourage you to become a regular contributor.

At PKSOI we continually strive to improve the services and products we provide the global stability operations community. We invite you to use our website at [ <http://pksoi.army.mil> ] and the many functions of the SOLLIMS online environment [ <https://sollims.pksoi.org> ] to help us identify issues and resolve problems. We welcome your comments and insights!

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**Djibouti, 3 August 2016. Abdulhalim Rijaal, U.S. Department of State program manager for East Africa, discusses challenges, lessons learned and strategies with African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) members during the East Africa Public Information Officers (PIOs) Conference. 35 PIOs from partner nations were in attendance. Topics of discussion ranged from countering violent extremism to effectively leveraging social media as a communications platform in Somalia. (Photo by Staff Sergeant Benjamin Raughton, U.S. Air Force)**

## INTRODUCTION

This SOLLIMS Sampler showcases the value of **Strategic Communication / Messaging in Peace & Stability Operations**. Along with a selection of thought-provoking lessons, this Sampler provides an extensive list of **references, reports, and articles** (see pages [36-38](#)) that can serve as a “toolkit” for leaders, planners, and practitioners. Among the many resources, you’ll find the following:

- [“Communication Strategy and Synchronization,”](#) Joint Staff J7 Deployable Training Division (DTD), May 2016
- [“Joint Doctrine Note 2-13, Commander’s Communication Synchronization,”](#) Joint Staff, 16 December 2013
- [“JP 3-13 Information Operations,”](#) Joint Staff, 20 November 2014
- [“JP 3-13.2 Military Information Support Operations,”](#) Joint Staff, 21 November 2014
- [“JP 3-61 Public Affairs,”](#) Joint Staff, 19 August 2016
- [“Narrative and CIMIC: Understanding Military Activities through the Eyes of the Local Population,”](#) Andrée Mulder, CCOE CIMIC Messenger, May 2013
- [“Strategic Communication in Counter Terrorism: Target Audience Analysis, Measures of Effect and Counter Narrative,”](#) seminar report, NATO Center of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism (COE DAT) Seminar, 4-5 June 2014
- [“Strategic Communication: A Political and Operational Prerequisite for Successful Peace Operations,”](#) Robert Gordon and Peter Loge, Int’l Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations (*‘Challenges Forum’*), November 2015

The abovementioned *‘Challenges Forum’* paper points out the need for greater attention to strategic communication and messaging in peace & stability ops:

***New and social media, the diffusion of mobile technology and the speed of communication have recently driven home both the perils and promise of powerful rhetoric. At the same time ... those who engage in the difficult and dangerous work of making, keeping and building peace are faced with the need to justify their approach to a, sometimes skeptical, audience of the public, press and policymakers. In these increasingly hostile and complex environments, it is perhaps more important than ever ... to be able to communicate strategically with both local and international audiences.***

This issue of the SOLLIMS Sampler not only echoes that need – to prioritize strategic communication / messaging when working in complex environments – but also highlights challenges and approaches from operations across the globe (Eastern Europe, West Africa, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines) and then draws out suggestions/considerations for use in future operations. Those key points/ideas are summarized in the Conclusion paragraph on pages [33-35](#).

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## “QUICK LOOK” (Preview of the Lessons)

Click on [\[Read More ...\]](#) to go to full lesson.

- US Army Europe’s (USAREUR’s) coupling of the strategic maneuver/force positioning end-state and the information operations end-state offers a model for applying communication strategy in future stability operations. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- During the December 2009 to December 2010 timeframe in Iraq, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division found that repetitious delivery of messages was key to successful execution of information operations. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- Messaging was a key component of a successful multi-faceted approach used to influence the population of Sulu, Philippines, to support counterinsurgency operations against the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) during the 2005-2006 timeframe. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- The NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) gained maximum effects with information operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina through command emphasis on: (1) information dissemination (to inform the media), (2) information linkages (to facilitate interaction among specialists/staffs), and (3) regularly scheduled information coordination meetings (to develop synergy with civilian/intergovernmental organizations). [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- Strategic messaging by intervening forces during information operations is fundamental for their overall success. Peacekeepers / stability operations personnel must use strategic messaging to inform host nation (HN) civilians and the HN government about their intentions/objectives and the improvements being made. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- The impact of “new media” on military operations should not be underestimated. ... Two case studies of recent conflicts/operations involving the Israeli Defense Forces provide excellent examples of how this “new media” can be employed, as well as potentially countered. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- Military Information Support Operations (MISO) contributed to the success of operations conducted by USAFRICOM and NATO against the Gadhafi regime in Libya in 2011; however, personnel issues and information-sharing constraints hindered planning, coordination, and synchronization of MISO activities. [\[Read More ...\]](#)
- “Combined” media interviews (held with State Department, USAID, and DoD representatives), deployed military Public Affairs “enablers,” and focused rear detachment support were the key elements of Public Affairs success during Operation United Assistance (OUA) – the USAFRICOM response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, in support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) (Sep 2014 - Mar 2015). [\[Read More ...\]](#)

1 November 2016

## **SUBJECT: Strategic Communication / Messaging in Peace & Stability Operations**

### **1. GENERAL**

Strategic communication / messaging has proven to be a key enabler for the conduct of peace and stability operations. Recent operations that have borne this out include: Operation Atlantic Resolve (Eastern Europe), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) (Afghanistan), Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P), Operation Joint Endeavor (Bosnia-Herzegovina), the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Liberia (UNMIL), Operations Odyssey Dawn and Unified Protector (OOD/OUP) (Libya), and Operation United Assistance (OUA) (West Africa).

This lesson report provides lessons from those operations – covering a range of issues, such as planning, execution, coordination, evaluation, tracking, and partnering.

### **2. LESSONS**

#### **a. TOPIC. Setting the Stage for a Successful Communication Strategy – Operation Atlantic Resolve (Lesson #2489)**

##### **Observation.**

USAREUR's coupling of the strategic maneuver/force positioning (UJTL ST 1.3) end-state and the information operations (UJTL ST 5.5) end-state offers a model for applying communication strategy in future stability operations.

[NOTE: UJTL ST = Universal Joint Task List, Strategic Theater, task #]

##### **Discussion.**

The USAREUR Order for Operation Atlantic Resolve, issued 18 April 2014, included end-states for strategic maneuver/force positioning and for information operations – owing to the efforts of the USAREUR public affairs personnel involved in the planning process. They insisted that the information operations end-state be included in the order, coupled with the maneuver/force positioning end-state, and the USAREUR Commander fully supported that concept. (Note

the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> sentences of the End-State sub-paragraph of the Commander's Intent paragraph of the USAREUR Order.)

“End-State. **U.S. demonstrates its airborne capability and resolve to defend NATO allies and partner nations.** The U.S. is prepared for future training, exercises, and operations. **Key audiences are informed of U.S. commitment to our allies and partner nations** without provoking undesired Russian response.”

Within 48 hours of the order's publication, USAREUR deployed a 6-member team of public affairs personnel to Poland, and the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade deployed 3 public affairs personnel – three days ahead of the airborne forces (600 personnel) from the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade. The USAREUR Public Affairs Office in Germany continued to plan and coordinate activities, while the forward-deployed civil affairs personnel in Poland made the most of their available time to accomplish myriad tasks. Their combined efforts included: coordinating with host nation defense officials, with U.S. country teams in 4 nations (Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia), and with international media; facilitating coverage of the impending arrival of the airborne forces; scheduling senior leader engagements with the media; and, planning for the timely release of official imagery and news stories that would assure the public of the transparency of Defense Department activities.

“One of the most important things we did was acknowledge early on that there was going to be a heavy public affairs component to it, and get the capabilities we needed on the ground in the Baltics and in Poland” – Lieutenant General Campbell, USAREUR Commander (during Operation Atlantic Resolve)

Moreover, USAREUR public affairs personnel helped shape the execution of the maneuver plan. Originally, the plan had called for the airborne forces to jump in at night. However, public affairs personnel requested that this plan be changed so that the media could actually see the arriving forces and take pictures & hold live broadcasts during daylight. USAREUR then changed the plan from night airborne operations to daytime air-land operations – maximizing opportunities for the media to take pictures, provide news coverage, and reinforce the desired message of U.S. and host nation soldiers standing shoulder-to-shoulder. Also, USAREUR's plan had called for 4 simultaneous arrival ceremonies – U.S. forces landing and linking up with host nation partner militaries in the 4 countries. However, public affairs personnel argued against what would seem like “one big splash” (held in one day) – which could easily be forgotten by the public shortly thereafter. They argued instead for staggering the arrivals over the course of 5 days. Again, USAREUR changed the plan to benefit media coverage, and the forward-deployed public affairs personnel split up into teams – ensuring comprehensive coverage at the 4 different ceremonies.



The news stories and accompanying imagery made the front pages of *The Wall Street Journal*, *International New York Times*, and *USA Today* weekend edition, and ceremonies were broadcast live by *CNN* and by host nation television stations. An initial report to higher headquarters from the USAREUR Public Affairs Officer read, “[Ministry of Defense] and Embassy media experts assess that the coverage is positive and message of assurance and U.S. commitment are well received by public.” According to Sean Gallup, *Germany News for Getty Images*, “I would say the visual impression the events created was that the U.S. had sent a serious military unit but was not pursuing a confrontation [with Russia].” Of note, one of Lithuania’s largest daily publications, *Lietuvos rytas*, reported: “About the arrival of the U.S. troops, we celebrate one small victory today. The trample of American boots on Lithuanian ground is the most beautiful music, as is the rumble of NATO fighter jets flying over Vilnius. This is how our freedom sounds.” Indeed, USAREUR and its public affairs team had achieved the desired end-state of ensuring “key audiences are informed of U.S. commitment to our allies and partner nations without provoking undesired Russian response.”

### **Recommendation.**

The USAREUR Public Affairs Officer serving in Operation Atlantic Resolve offers the following recommendations:

**1. Public affairs personnel should be an integral part of the staff estimate.**

During the staff estimate process for USAREUR Operation Atlantic Resolve, identifying the decisive nature of public affairs activities, and alerting the commander to that fact, laid the foundation for mission accomplishment. End-states for information operations should be developed – tied to other desired end-states.

**2. Public affairs personnel need to conduct thorough planning of public affairs activities.**

Meticulous planning by the USAREUR public affairs team allowed forward-deployed personnel to execute without hesitation. This included early and regular engagement with U.S. Embassy and U.S. EUCOM personnel to ensure interagency accord and sharing of information and resources.

**3. “Public affairs” should be no different than any other operational capability that the commander has at his disposal – continuously a part of the evolving planning process.**

During Operation Atlantic Resolve, the integration of public affairs with the staff allowed for last-minute planning adjustments that avoided costly mistakes.

**4. Public affairs personnel should work to ensure “a seat at the table” for missions.**

It is critical that public affairs leaders demonstrate they can be trusted to accomplish the mission. They, and their people, must train and practice their

craft so that when the unexpected happens, they are trusted members of the team.

5. Public affairs leaders should **encourage initiative by public affairs personnel** as part of Mission Command. Leaders should trust their public affairs noncommissioned officers and civilian public affairs experts. The plan for Operation Atlantic Resolve could not have been implemented without allowing members of the team to take initiative and think independently. Waiting on decisions or explicit guidance from leadership would have cost time when every hour was valuable.

6. Additionally, the article notes that according to "[Joint Doctrine Note 2-13, Commander's Communication Synchronization](#)," the requirement "to include communication goals and objectives in the commander's intent and to have a communication approach/strategy that ensures unity of themes, objectives, and messages among key activities" is now a part of Joint planning operations; however, no such planning mechanism exists in Army doctrine. The Army should consider dove-tailing this concept into Army doctrine – i.e., **ensure that a communication strategy with an information operations end-state is a part of the Army's planning process.**

### **Implications.**

If public affairs inputs and development of a communication strategy are not included in the staff estimate and planning process, then overall mission accomplishment might be hindered – as certain key audiences might not receive important messages supportive of the mission.

### **Event Description.**

This lesson is based on the article, "[Operation Atlantic Resolve: A Case Study in Effective Communication Strategy](#)," by Jesse Granger, published in Military Review, January-February 2015.



## **b. TOPIC. Repetitive Messaging for Successful Information Operations (Lesson #2488)**

### **Observation.**

During the December 2009 to December 2010 timeframe in Iraq, 1st Armored Division found that repetitious delivery of messages was key to successful execution of Information Operations (IO).

## **Discussion.**

To fulfill the aim of repetitive messaging in IO, 1st Armored Division made a concerted effort to overcome four pitfalls identified by one of its senior officers:

- (1) Too many IO themes and messages.
- (2) Too little time dedicated to disseminating them.
- (3) Little or no unity of effort when delivering messages.
- (4) Lack of processes or feedback mechanisms to ensure that messages are being delivered accurately, routinely, and repetitiously.

Actions taken to address each of these pitfalls are discussed below:

(1) IO Themes and Messages. 1st Armored Division initially developed an IO plan around 5 themes and 6-8 supporting messages per theme, which meant disseminating 30-40 supporting messages to several different audiences. However, the Division quickly learned that based upon the finite number of dissemination options available, it could not gain sufficient repetition to achieve desired IO effects. Therefore, the Division took two actions to reduce the messaging requirements. First, it prioritized the themes that it wanted the Division leadership and units to focus on – reducing the number from 5 to 3. Then, the Division reviewed the supporting messages for each of these themes and selected the best 2-4 messages per theme that would resonate with the target audiences. By taking this approach, the Division reduced its messaging requirements from 40 down to 12, thus creating a condition that allowed it to reach target audiences multiple times with its limited dissemination assets.

(2) Time Spent Disseminating the Messages. 1st Armored Division found that in order to reach its target audiences multiple times with the key themes and messages, it had to deliver them over a period of months – not days or weeks. The Division used its full complement of delivery assets – senior leader engagements with key Iraqi officials, press engagements, billboard and handbill advertisements, radio spots on local stations, television commercials, and various other means. For each of the 3 key themes, supporting messages were delivered multiple times by different means of delivery so that the target audience was getting the information from various directions. For example, when the 1st Armored Division was seeking to enhance the image of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in the eyes of Iraqi citizens, it would ensure that key leaders included supporting messages for this theme in their conversations with Iraqi officials. The Division would also incorporate these same supporting messages depicting ISF security successes in handbills and billboard advertisements, as well as radio and television advertisements that aired several times a day across multiple radio and TV stations. After several months' time spent on this effort, 1st

Armored Division had a high level of confidence that the target audiences' belief system and attitudes had been affected.

(3) Unity of Effort. To facilitate unity of effort for IO, 1st Armored Division stood up a Communications Strategy (COMSTRAT) Working Group. This group was comprised of members from the Division IO section, Civil-Military Operations section, Public Affairs Office, and Military Information Support Operations section. The Division Commander assigned a flag officer to chair its sessions, which were held weekly. The primary purpose of the weekly meeting was to synchronize IO activities across all units in the Division. Key agenda items included: assessments of the quality of the messages, when to change or update messages, when to transition from one theme to another, synchronization of IO activities and assets, and organizational compliance with message delivery. At the conclusion of each meeting, the Division was able to ensure that all of its IO assets were being employed in a coordinated and synchronized manner designed to achieve message saturation with target audiences.

(4) Feedback Loop. Initially many subordinate units of the Division did not give sufficient priority to IO. To address this shortcoming, the Division created a set of detailed feedback mechanisms designed to track the execution of IO tasks by subordinate units, as well as by divisional staff sections. Each week, the COMSTRAT Working Group would review a series of IO activity performance measures that units/sections were required to execute. Examples of these measures included: feedback from all every brigades on the monthly press conference they were required to hold; confirmation that handbills with specific messages were delivered to their intended audiences and billboard advertisements were displayed in the intended areas; confirmation that senior leaders had conducted key leader engagements with the right people, the right messages, and the right frequency; and, confirmation that IO measures were taken to discredit insurgent groups that had caused civilian casualties by their recent actions. These feedback mechanisms ensured that all subordinate units were prioritizing execution of their IO activities in accordance with the Division Commander's guidance.

### **Recommendation.**

1. Limit the number of IO themes and messages.
2. Allocate sufficient time to deliver messages – i.e., months.
3. Establish a system / working group to ensure unity of effort for IO – such as the Communications Strategy Working Group.
4. Develop feedback mechanisms to track the delivery of messages by subordinate units.

## **Implications.**

If a command does not focus on the repetitious delivery of messages to the intended audiences – optimized through a handful of themes/messages, a significant investment in time, a working group focused on IO unity of effort, and feedback mechanisms – then the command might fail to adequately influence the attitudes and behaviors of those audiences, with potential adverse effects for the overall stability mission.

## **Event Description.**

This lesson is based on the article "[Information Operations: From Good to Great](#)," by Brigadier General Ralph O. Baker, U.S. Army, published in Military Review, July-August 2011.



### **c. TOPIC. Messaging as part of Multi-Faceted Approach in Sulu, Philippines (Lesson #2500)**

#### **Observation.**

Messaging was a key component of a successful multi-faceted approach used to influence the population of Sulu, Philippines, to support counterinsurgency operations against the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) during the 2005-2006 timeframe.

#### **Discussion.**

During Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P), Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) counterparts utilized a multi-faceted approach to influence the population of Sulu, Philippines – consisting of partnered civil action programs, exhaustive message dissemination across multiple media, and information-gathering activities through engagement and building trust with the local populace. This approach succeeded in winning the hearts and minds of the local population, set the stage for selective military actions against the ASG, and served as a model for successful operations in other areas of the Philippines, such as Basilan and Central Mindanao.

In 2005, prior to initiation of the partnered “influence operations” (conducted by JSOTF-P and the AFP), the vast majority of the population on Sulu was openly hostile to the AFP. In 2004 and early 2005, the AFP had conducted unilateral conventional operations against insurgents in Sulu, but these operations severely

alienated the population – to the point where many locals joined civil militias and actively resisted AFP efforts.

Beginning in October 2005, “influence operations” became the principal line-of-effort (LOE) for JSTOF-P and the AFP in Sulu – with an emphasis on messaging. The AFP, accompanied by U.S. Special Forces and PSYOP teams, disseminated messages through an array of local and wide-area messaging actions in an effort to sway the attitudes and behaviors of the local population and build community support. Influence messages delivered by AFP elements (with U.S. SOF personnel) in local communities were reinforced by the PSYOP teams that employed broader-reaching media (radio, television, and text messaging) – to create a massing effect of influence messages. Messaging activities were coupled with civil-military engagements: medical clinics, veterinary clinics, and engineering/infrastructure projects. After a period of six months, a 180-degree change in local attitudes and behaviors seemed to be underway – based on assessments from JSOTF-P personnel on the ground.

Provision of medical assistance and security on one particular occasion – in the aftermath of an ASG IED attack – was particularly noteworthy for winning hearts and minds. In August 2006 an ASG commander ordered an IED attack on the local co-op in Jolo City, which had refused to give in to ASG extortion efforts. The attack resulted in 12 casualties, all of whom were Muslim Filipinos. Shortly after the attack, AFP and U.S. forces rushed to the scene and provided medical aid and local security. Also, the JSOTF-P PSYOP detachment quickly developed products/messages to spread criticism of the ASG and to convey images of the AFP and U.S. forces aiding the bombing victims. Additional products/messages were developed and disseminated – demonizing the ASG actions and their JI “puppeteers” as cowardly and self-serving. As a result of this incident and the follow-on actions/messaging, various local leaders/communicators called on villagers to stop or resist supporting insurgents, and religious leaders also began to openly speak out against the ASG and their JI associates.

Following the Jolo co-op bombing incident, JSOTF-P and AFP partners expanded their activities to influence and aid the population of Sulu. U.S and AFP medical personnel visited an increasing number of villages to conduct medical, dental, and veterinary civil action programs. During one particular medical assistance visit, an ASG faction operating in a neighboring village was preparing an IED attack against the AFP and U.S. personnel conducting the visit. However, when an ASG leader whose family resided near the village heard of the planned attack, he intervened and cancelled it. As reported by AFP personnel and community leaders afterwards, the ASG leader’s family and his soldiers’ families were participating in the visit / receiving medical assistance, and he wanted no hostile interference. The ASG leader was reportedly concerned about the safety of his family, and he also believed that an attack would prevent future medical assistance visits.

Several weeks after the Jolo co-op bombing incident, the AFP began plans / preparation for a major AFP offensive against ASG safe havens on Sulu. To support this upcoming operation, JSOTF-P and PYSOPS teams conducted operations to disrupt support to the ASG and JI, as well as to prevent them from fleeing Sulu. This effort began with dissemination of “rewards for justice” products/ messages through multiple dissemination media. These messages factually documented past ASG/JI-orchestrated atrocities against Muslim Filipinos, called out ASG/JI extortion tactics, and sought local support in locating ASG/JI leadership. The multimedia campaign balanced the hard-hitting anti-ASG/JI messages with “Mindanao Peace” themes – advertising the positive effects of resisting the terrorists and of “allowing good things to happen.” Additionally, the PSYOP teams surged disruption messaging through informal social networks, key communicator engagements, text messaging, print, and other actions – creating the belief that the AFP and U.S forces were postured to capture ASG personnel if they moved toward their former safe havens in Central Mindanao. (It was later determined that this messaging was effective: ASG/JI leaders were informed by their own people not to flee to Central Mindanao because the AFP and U.S. forces were expecting them.)

When AFP combat operations commenced on Sulu, villages that had actively resisted the AFP just 12 months earlier either stayed out of the fight or actively provided information to aid the AFP’s assault against ASG enclaves. Numerous villages outside the combat area refused to support the ASG – their inhabitants resisted calls from the ASG to fight the AFP, and they likewise reported ASG movements to the AFP. This lack of support by surrounding villages served to disrupt the ASG’s withdrawal plans. In a few days’ time, the AFP was able to overrun several ASG strongholds. Additionally, certain JI cells lost influence and became isolated within the Butig Mountains.

These successful “influence operations” served as a model that was duplicated over the next four years to address other insurgent problems in Eastern Sulu, Basilan, and Central Mindanao. Once again, where local communities had previously resisted the AFP’s access to their areas, the multi-faceted approach – consisting of partnered civil action programs, exhaustive message dissemination across multiple media, and information-gathering activities through engagement and building trust with the local populace – increasingly improved access and acceptance, and led to operational successes against insurgent groups.

### **Recommendation.**

Planners should consider the multi-faceted approach successfully employed in the Southern Philippines – partnered civil action programs, exhaustive message dissemination across multiple media, and information-gathering activities through engagement and building trust with the local populace – to influence local populations in support of host nation security forces and against the influence of insurgent groups.

## **Implications.**

Unless there is a robust information/messaging campaign that convinces the populace of the benefits of siding with the host nation government/security forces and their partners, and unless there are actions being taken to show such benefits – particularly provision of a safe and secure environment (against bombings, shootings, kidnappings, extortion, etc.) at the local level and provision of health/medical services, veterinary services, etc. for villages in remote areas – and unless trust is built with the local populace through engagement, dialogue, and information-sharing, then insurgent groups and their affiliates will continue to exert and expand control.

## **Event Description.**

This lesson is based on “[Influence Operations and the Human Domain](#),” by Thomas M. Scanzillo and Edward M. Lopacienski, Center on Irregular Warfare and Armed Groups (CIWAG) case study, US Naval War College, 25 March 2015.

## **Comments.**

A related lesson is “[Light Footprint and Whole-of-Government Approach – The Southern Philippines](#),” SOLLIMS lesson 911, 24 September 2012.



## **d. TOPIC. Successful Information Campaign through Attention to Coordination and Information Flow (Lesson #2501)**

### **Observation.**

The NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) gained maximum effects with information operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina through command emphasis on: (1) information dissemination (to inform the media), (2) information linkages (to facilitate interaction among information specialists/ staffs), and (3) regularly scheduled information coordination meetings (to develop synergy with civilian/ intergovernmental organizations). Owing to this emphasis, IFOR’s information operations were highly successful in communicating IFOR’s intentions, abilities, and resolve to the local population groups and former warring factions (FWF).

### **Discussion.**

Information operations significantly contributed to mission accomplishment for IFOR during Operation Joint Endeavor in Bosnia-Herzegovina (December 1995 - December 1996). IFOR extensively employed information activities to deter the



FWF from violating stipulations of the Dayton Agreement and from attacking NATO's troops. IFOR also used information activities to convince the local population that a brighter future was ahead if they supported full compliance with the Dayton Agreement.

Providing IFOR's target audiences – especially the international media – with complete, accurate, and timely information was a key element of IFOR's information campaign, designed to gain and maintain credibility among the populace. According to Captain Van Dyke, USN, IFOR Chief Public Information Officer (PIO), the IFOR Commander believed that in an open and transparent operation such as IFOR (with multinational forces, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, and media involved), "if we [IFOR] know, they [the media] know." Under these circumstances, disseminating complete information – including bad news and mistakes – as quickly as possible was an absolute requirement.

The aim of disseminating complete, timely, and accurate information was supported by several internal (IFOR) arrangements:

- A functional "chain of information" that linked Public Information / Public Affairs personnel throughout the area of operation. This chain/connectivity sped up information flow – allowing Public Information specialists to have knowledge of the latest developments and to continuously provide the media with timely information.

- Integration of Public Information and PSYOP personnel with other staffs – namely G/J2 (Intelligence) and G/J3 (Operations). This integration/interaction facilitated synchronization among staffs with regard to the Commander's intent for messaging, planning, and tracking of information activities.

The Integration of the Public Information and PSYOP personnel into the command and control structure throughout the force made it possible for Commander IFOR (COMIFOR) and other commanders to effectively use their information tools in support of objectives and operations. In a number of high-profile incidents, IFOR relied on these information tools to influence the behavior of local actors / FWFs without having to resort to the use of force. In summer 1996, for example, a Serb policeman had fired a warning shot at an IFOR soldier and had ordered his own policemen to surround him – as he tried to prevent IFOR from detaining him. In response, COMIFOR approved an information plan developed by the staff (consisting of press statements and information products/messages) designed to gradually build public pressure on local Serb leaders to oust the chief of police – which they eventually did. In another example, certain local Serb leaders had refused to allow IFOR troops to inspect an ammunition depot in Han Pisejak. In response, based on his staff's recommendation, COMIFOR instructed IFOR Public Information specialists/spokespersons to convey the message that all NGOs should pull out of the Serb area because IFOR was about to use lethal force to inspect the depot – with the aim of getting

this message to Serb leaders and persuading them to change their stance. After a few days, the Serb leaders allowed IFOR to carry out the inspection of the ammunition depot.

Besides information dissemination (to the media) and linkages/integration of staff sections (the information specialists/staffs, G2 and G3), extensive coordination of information activities was another major enabler of IFOR's information campaign. NATO quickly put systems into place to ensure that close coordination took place on a daily/weekly basis – i.e., establishing specific groups/meetings to address the information strategy, policies, plans, and activities. These meetings were:

- The Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) Information Coordination Group (ICG). Every morning, the Commander ARRC (COMARRC) chaired this ICG meeting, attended by the ARRC's chief of staff, political advisor, media advisor, spokesmen, chief PIO, G3, and G5 (Civil Affairs), along with the IFOR Chief PIO and Deputy Commander of Combined Joint IFOR Information Campaign Task Force (DCOMCJIICTF). At each meeting, the ICG decided which messages to put forward and chose the delivery system (media and/or PSYOP) and timing of the delivery. Typically, the ICG worked on a 1-day to 1-week horizon.

- The ARRC Perception Group meeting. Every Friday, the ARRC chief PIO chaired this meeting. Participants were the ARRC media advisor, spokesman, G3, and G5, along with DCOMCJIICTF. Attendees reviewed trends in media coverage. They produced an information matrix (weekly) summarizing information activities throughout theater. Attendees determined key issues/topics to discuss with the media and when to meet with them. The group worked on a 2- to 4-week horizon.

- The ARRC Crisis Planning Group. This group met as "crises" emerged (such as the Han Pisejak incident) – to conduct contingency planning. This meeting brought Public Information and PSYOP planners into the operational planning process as early as possible.

Coordination also took place with the major civilian organizations that were working in Bosnia-Herzegovina to facilitate implementation of various aspects of the Dayton Agreement. In particular, IFOR established common activities and coordination mechanisms with the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina (UNMIBH), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Coordination mechanisms included the following:

- The "daily combined briefing." In early spring 1996, the OHR, UNHCR, UNMIBH, and OSCE agreed to brief the press daily in conjunction with IFOR. IFOR chaired the session. The IFOR Sarajevo press center soon became the focal point for dissemination of information about all efforts in Bosnia-

Herzegovina. The intergovernmental bodies (the OHR, UNHCR, UNMIBH, and OSCE) and IFOR presented a united, common front for Dayton Agreement implementation. After several months, in mid-May 1996, civilian agencies began to chair the daily briefing, three times a week.

- The pre-briefing meeting. Before the “daily combined briefing” took place, spokesmen from IFOR and the civilian agencies held a pre-briefing meeting. At this meeting, each spokesman presented what information he had and what he intended to say at the combined briefing / press conference. The spokesmen then decided what information to release and in what order. The pre-briefing meeting allowed for sharing and comparing information. This meeting helped reduce inaccuracies, and in some cases, de-conflict sensitive issues.

- The Joint Information Coordination Committee (JICC) meeting. Every week, IFOR and ARRC Public Information officers, Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) staff, CJIICTF reps, and the major international organizations’ spokesmen (from OHR, UNHCR, UNMIBH, and OSCE) met at the IFOR Sarajevo press center. The JICC meeting provided a formal forum for these information/ communication players to inform each other of current activities and future plans. The JICC also allowed participants to ensure that their messages did not conflict with one another. During the JICC meetings, IFOR sought to foster a unified message and synergy among the participating organizations – with exceptional results. According to Captain Van Dyke:

“During these meetings, everyone shared their latest Public Information plans and activities, striving to eliminate any potential conflicts in public policies which the former warring factions could then exploit. The corporate experience of the civilian agency spokespersons, and the close personal and professional cooperation that grew between them and IFOR spokespersons, were invaluable to our overall information operations. In return, the civilian agencies benefited greatly from our extensive support agreements.”

The DCOMCJIICTF expressed similar sentiment: “The JICC was critical in enabling the international community to speak with one voice on controversial issues such as war criminals, mass graves, and repatriation.”

Overall, coordination with the major civilian/intergovernmental organizations was a major contributing factor to IFOR’s successful information campaign – along with the deliberate actions/systems put into place to ensure timely, accurate information dissemination (to the media) and continuous teamwork among staffs on information tools/messaging.

### **Recommendation.**

The US/Coalition force involved in any stability operation should:

1. Emphasize dissemination of complete, timely, and accurate information to the public. Systems/procedures linking Public Information officers / PAOs throughout the area of operations can facilitate achievement of this aim.
2. Ensure that information specialists/staffs are closely integrated with the G/J2 (Intelligence) and G/J3 (Operations) staffs, and that they are all in synch with the Commander's intent for messaging. This integration will facilitate information sharing on the latest developments, as well as staff planning and collaboration with regard to information activities.
3. Establish coordination mechanisms with civilian/intergovernmental agencies (that are also involved in messaging) – to contribute to a comprehensive approach with “unity of effort” in messaging.

### **Implications.**

Unless there is command emphasis on efficient information flow/dissemination and comprehensive staff coordination (internal and external) to support information operations, then efforts to influence local population groups and other intended audiences may fall short – due to lateness, inaccuracies, and inconsistencies – to the detriment of the overall stability operation.

### **Event Description.**

This lesson is based on “Information Activities,” by Pascale Combelles Siegel, in “[Lessons from Bosnia: the IFOR Experience](#),” published by the DoD Command and Control Research Program (CCRP) and the National Defense University (NDU), February 2004.



## **e. TOPIC. Strategic Messaging in Information Operations (Lesson #874)**

### **Observation.**

Strategic messaging by intervening forces during information operations (IO) is fundamental for their overall success. Peacekeepers/stability operations personnel must use strategic messaging to inform host nation (HN) civilians and the HN government about their intentions/objectives and the improvements being made. Ultimately, this will help intervening forces improve relations, extend reach, and build public support for the HN government.

## **Discussion.**

An analytical review of recent publications on IOs during stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan indicates a critical need for the effective use of strategic messaging during the initial phases of peacekeeping/stability operations. For example, during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), al Qaeda accused the U.S. of waging a war against Islam, and it was important to counter this message. In 2007, the U.S. was able to develop and send palatable strategic messages to influence Sunnis and Shi'a extremists. The new strategic messages helped "win the hearts and minds" of Iraqis.

One of the challenges of IOs is that insurgents tend to have a deeper understanding of the culture and local needs of the HN civilians. Thus, the insurgents can often offer a narrative that might appeal to the interests of the HN civilians. As alluded to in the preceding paragraph, during OIF, al Qaeda was initially able to turn elements of the Iraqi population against the U.S. by exploiting fears that the West was at war with Islam. In addition to adding 130,000 more troops to Iraq during the surge, the U.S. refocused the operation's strategic message. The U.S. defined objectives that were aligned with local Iraqi interests. Namely, the U.S. promised not to prosecute low- to mid-level Iraqi insurgents. Also, the U.S. helped the Iraqi government gain legitimacy by training its military forces to police themselves. Additionally, the U.S. sent a strong signal to the Iraqis that the U.S. was committed to Iraq's stability. Iraqis responded, and by late 2007 the country was considerably more stable.

Similar to pre-surge OIF, U.S./coalition force strategic messaging in Afghanistan has struggled to win widespread support among the Afghan population. Two main objectives of the U.S./coalition forces in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) have been to: 1) dismantle an al Qaeda stronghold, thereby providing security to Afghans and preventing the country from becoming a safe haven for terrorists to plan future attacks, and 2) to stabilize Afghanistan through bolstering a semi-democratic government and providing economic opportunities, ultimately to improve the Afghans' quality of life. The latter objective is part of a concerted effort to "win the hearts and minds" of Afghans, thus enervating the influence of extremist elements. Unfortunately, the U.S./coalition forces have been unable to persuade many Afghans to side with the U.S.-backed central government.

In addition to the strategic messaging challenges in Afghanistan, the U.S./coalition forces' strategic messaging in Pakistan has been unable to generate widespread support among the Pakistani population. Pakistanis tended to oppose the U.S./coalition forces use of airstrikes against the Taliban and the use of Pakistani military bases and transit routes for supplying NATO's mission in Afghanistan. Consequently, the approval rating of the U.S./coalition forces in Pakistan was tied for last among all nations. The abysmal approval rating of the U.S. was partially due to coalition forces' strategic messaging conflicting with Pakistan's Islamic values. During early years, the U.S./coalition forces had not

effectively distinguished between what Pakistan considers Pakistani Taliban members vice Taliban extremists. This hampered the U.S./coalition forces' ability to fight Afghan Taliban members who crossed the border to Pakistan.

Although strategic messaging largely failed during the early years of conflict in Afghanistan, the international community was able to effectively use strategic messaging in a different region/Liberia, to buttress support of the new government after the civil war. In Liberia, the UN/ international forces incorporated development projects in strategic communication – legitimizing the new regime in messaging by emphasizing the importance of the Liberian government's role in nominating and implementing the projects. Citing "Liberian-led" efforts helped to generate enthusiasm and support for the new government.

### **Recommendation.**

To improve strategic messaging during IOs, the U.S./coalition forces should: 1) send clear and consistent messages to the HN, 2) operate with the whole-of-government, and 3) respect cultural norms.

1. The U.S. must be prepared to counter insurgents' strategic messaging with clear and consistent strategic messaging. For example, the U.S. failed to offer a compelling strategic message to Iraqis before the surge. During the surge, the U.S. was able to align its strategic messaging with the interests of the Iraqi people. The new strategic message helped act as a catalyst for the Sunni Awakening. During future peacekeeping/stability operations, the U.S./coalition forces should try to anticipate enemy combatants' strategic messages and prepare potential responses/counters. The Department of State (DoS) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) are best positioned to promote strategic messages that pertain to economic development and governance. The Department of Defense (DoD) should be the primary intermediary with the HN on strategic messaging that pertains to security. Although agencies will focus on the strategic message that most closely aligns with their skill sets, they must still be able to explain the other agencies' intentions/objectives. Moreover, in the event that an agency accidentally undermines the strategic messaging of a different department, it is important to acknowledge the mistake quickly. The political fallout of being caught lying outweighs the fallout of admitting the mistake from the onset.

2. During IOs, the U.S./coalition forces must support the strategic messages with actions. Namely, if the U.S./coalition forces strategic message promises to improve the quality of life for HN civilians, then USAID, private development agencies, the U.S./coalition-supported HN government, and the DoS must be prepared to implement development projects at the local level – even in potentially dangerous areas. If the U.S./coalition forces fail to meet their promises, it undermines HN civilians' confidence in the mission. The IO in

Liberia was successful in part because UN/international forces were able to meet the expectations of the local HN population.

3. The U.S./coalition forces must try to work within the culture of the HN. The U.S./coalition forces must tailor some policies to meet the needs and interests of the locals in the district in which they are working. To overcome insurgents' asymmetric information advantages (i.e., insurgents will likely understand the HN culture better than peacekeepers/stability operations personnel), the U.S./coalition forces should partner with the HN government. The HN government can help overcome the cultural information gap between the HN civilians and U.S./coalition forces. For example, strategic messaging in Liberia was more effective because the international community involved Liberian government members and placed them at the forefront of development projects. They were better suited to address local concerns than foreign stability operations personnel.

### **Event Description.**

This lesson is based on the following references:

- 1) "[The Accidental Guerilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One](#)," David Kilcullen, Oxford University Press, 2009.
- 2) "[Political and Military Components of the Surge in Iraq](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 808, 18 May 2012.
- 3) "[Operation Moshtarak Lessons Learned](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 644, 2 June 2010.
- 4) "[Observations from COIN Emersion Course with Pakistan at Fort Leavenworth, 1-10 Nov 2010](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 692, 4 January 2011.
- 5) "[The man with no plan for Pakistan](#)," Sadanand Dhume, American Enterprise Institute, 28 June 2012.
- 6) "[The "Essentials" of Transition](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 867, 13 July 2012.
- 7) "[Failure of the Top-Down Approach in Afghanistan](#)," SOLLIMS Lesson 775, 28 December 2011.



## **f. TOPIC. Leveraging "New Media" (Lesson #675)**

### **Observation.**

The impact of "new media" on military operations should not be underestimated. "New media" – which encompasses internet bloggers, online websites, cell phones, iPods, 24/7 cable news, call-in radio/television programs, etc. – is characterized by easy access, user-friendliness, and global reach. Its user-friendliness allows unconventional forces/adversaries to use and manipulate a wide array of current/new technologies for the purpose of generating favorable publicity and recruiting supporters. The public often has immediate access to news and information and may be rapidly influenced by what the unconventional forces/adversaries are sending. Two case studies of recent conflicts involving the Israeli Defense Forces provide excellent examples of how this "new media" can be employed, as well as potentially countered. These examples may portend wider applications for future military operations (including stability operations), for which the U.S. military and its allies should be prepared.

### **Discussion.**

"New media" played a significant role in two recent conflicts involving the Israeli Defense Forces – the Second Lebanon War (summer 2006) and Operation Cast Lead (late 2007 – early 2008). In the first conflict, Israel seemed ill prepared for the extensive use of "new media" and suffered accordingly. In the second, Israel was far better prepared and had corresponding success in its operations.

Key enablers for the "new media" were: journalists (and how they were used and/or controlled), 24/7 television networks, communities of interest on the internet, and "digital multimodality." "Digital multimodality" refers to the practice of re-packaging/resending information – content produced in one form of media can be easily and rapidly edited and repackaged, then transmitted in real time across many different forms of media.

Turning to the first case, the spark behind the "Second Lebanon War" was the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers in July 2006, inside of Israel, across the Lebanese border. In response, the Israeli Defense Forces quickly launched a rescue attempt, however, that effort did not succeed. Soon thereafter, Israel undertook a massive air campaign, quickly followed by a ground campaign, across southern Lebanon.

Throughout the conflict, numerous players – the Israeli Defense Forces, Israeli civilians, Hezbollah, Lebanese civilians, and the press – employed a number of current information technologies around the clock to disseminate information, and to gain and influence audiences – with wide-scale use of the internet, videos, digital photos, cellular networks, and satellite television.



Hezbollah, in a way that seems almost second nature to this group, effectively used, manipulated, and controlled information – primarily using photographs, videos, and internet channels to garner regional support. At times the incidents were staged, and the photos/images were altered (to convey inaccurate, but desired, news themes), and then released/posted/disseminated. Also, Hezbollah smartly maintained very tight control over where journalists were allowed to go within their areas of operation, and what they were allowed to see. Hezbollah thereby often set/influenced the agendas and the storylines for international media.

Hezbollah was quick to use current/new technologies in other ways as well to affect both combat and strategic operations. Hezbollah employed near-real-time internet press accounts as "open-source intelligence" – to help them determine where their rockets had landed on Israeli soil, and how accurate they were. It is also possible that Hezbollah used Google Earth, in some cases, for targeting purposes – to help plot locations of rocket attacks, and to increase accuracy of the attacks.

At the strategic level, Hezbollah used its own satellite television station, Al Manar, to reach some 200 million viewers in the region. It was able to achieve tremendous effects on a broad/regional audience. For example, within minutes of striking the Israeli naval destroyer "Hanit" with missiles, Hezbollah's secretary general, Hassan Nasrallah, called in "live" to Al Manar to announce the strike. Al Manar not only covered the missile launch, but also provided the footage to other regional media and subsequently to YouTube.

Hezbollah's information operations directly focused on gaining trust and sympathy for its cause at all levels. Hezbollah portrayed the Israeli military operations as a disproportionate use of force against itself and against the Lebanese civilian population – especially after "only" two Israeli soldiers had been kidnapped. Israel provided no countervailing view, allowing Hezbollah to drive perceptions that could be/were more universally accepted as "truth." Any successes of the Israeli Defense Forces were shown by Hezbollah as victimizing the Lebanese civilians, and any successes of Hezbollah were portrayed as justified, heroic retaliations.

After only 33 days of hostilities, even though the Israeli Defense Forces had made far greater military gains than their adversary, Israel was losing/had lost the upper hand – due to a "perception of Israeli failure" that had been disseminated (by Hezbollah and its supporters) to various audiences: domestic, regional, and international. A ceasefire was declared at the 33-day mark, and Hezbollah immediately declared victory.

The second case study – Operation Cast Lead – shows much of the same employment of "new media," but this time with Israel learning from earlier short-falls and turning the tables in information warfare. After Hamas had violated/

broken a ceasefire agreement in December 2008, Israel embarked on an offensive with the purpose of putting an end to persistent Hamas-directed, Gaza-based missile attacks against southern Israel. In late December, Israel launched a furious air attack that struck 50 targets in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

Israel, avoiding mistakes made in the "Second Lebanon War," undertook a massive information campaign in Operation Cast Lead - extensively utilizing "new media." One Israeli newspaper actually ran a headline stating: "On the Front Line of Gaza's War 2.0." Israel had, in fact, rapidly employed various web 2.0 applications in its information operations – including blogs, YouTube, and Facebook – to disseminate news, themes, and messages about the conflict.

Israel had postured itself well to implement this information campaign – months in the making. After examining the "Second Lebanon War" (through a special study group, the "Winograd Commission"), Israel decided to establish an information and propaganda organization – the National Information Directorate. Its purpose was to provide direction and coordination in the sphere of information, so that relevant bodies could present a unified, clear, and consistent message and so that government spokespersons could speak with a single voice. Also, the directorate was chartered to initiate information campaigns and programs.

Two days after commencement of the airstrikes, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) launched their own YouTube channel, the "IDF Spokesperson's Unit." This channel soon became the second most subscribed channel worldwide. The 46 videos posted on the channel attracted more than 6.5 million views. These videos showed Israeli military vehicles moving into attack positions, precision airstrikes against Hamas rocket-launching facilities, video logs by IDF spokespersons, various instances of humanitarian assistance being rendered by the IDF, and other positive, professional-looking images.

Hamas also established its own YouTube channels. It attempted to claim various atrocities against civilians and to paint enormous death tolls. Some Gaza residents also supported the Hamas' information effort with tweets, updated blogs, and cell phones transmissions of messages/photos of destruction caused by the Israeli attacks. Hamas' efforts, however, were much slower to develop than those of Israel, and they were not nearly as extensive.

When the UN Security Council called for an "immediate cease fire" in Gaza, on 8 January 2009, Israel continued to use "new media" and to disseminate information – to buy time as it continued to prosecute the fight. Israel kept up the fire on its postings/bloggings/broadcasting – always framing attacks in Gaza in a positive light (e.g., that rocket facilities were being destroyed, that targeting was precise, that lives were being saved, that aid was being rendered, etc.). Its spokespersons were purposefully vague with regard to aims and timelines. In so

doing, audiences were not inclined to think that they force was excessive nor timelines surpassed.

Although both of the case studies just discussed were conflict situations – vice stability operations – their conduct undoubtedly has applications for stability operations – where ex-combatants and adversarial parties also have access to "new media" – and can thereby rapidly and broadly convey messages to target various audiences/populations.

### **Recommendation.**

1. Leaders and planners of future military operations – to include stability operations – should not fail to understand "new media," and should not fail to use "new media." Otherwise they could run the risk of falling behind adversarial use (of "new media") and thereby lose the support of indigenous populations and regional groups.

2. Leaders and planners should recognize that the strategy and tactics employed by Hezbollah might be copied by other groups in future military operations. Information operations utilizing "new media" were vigorously pursued by Hezbollah both at the strategic level – to disseminate themes and garner regional and global supporters – and at the tactical level – to gain information/intelligence, to share it, and to direct operations.

3. Leaders and planners should look at ways to counter "new media" technologies and techniques used by adversarial groups in future military operations – to include stability operations.

4. Leaders and those serving abroad should monitor host nation and international media to see/hear what is being broadcast about military operations and the environment, and they should consider taking steps to ensure that reliable information news is being provided to indigenous populations – through means at their disposal, as well as through external support that may be leveraged.

5. The military should continuously re-address information operations in its doctrine, due to the continuously changing nature of information technologies, and the importance of information dissemination to the furtherance of strategic objectives.

### **Implications.**

If leaders disregard the importance of "new media" and the power of information dissemination, then an adversarial group that actively pursues it may negatively influence indigenous (and regional) populations – to the possible detriment of U.S. interests in stability operations.

If leaders are to proactively tell their own story, and are to counter adversarial propaganda, "new media" must be understood, resources must be made available, and themes should be planned, coordinated, and consistent.

### **Event Description.**

This lesson is based on the article "[Learning to Leverage New Media: The Israeli Defense Forces in Recent Conflicts](#)," by Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell IV (U.S. Army), Mr. Dennis M. Murphy, and Mr. Anton Menning, in *Military Review*, May-June 2009.



## **g. TOPIC. Military Information Support Operations (MISO) in Libya (Lesson #1255)**

### **Observation.**

Military Information Support Operations (MISO) contributed to the success of operations conducted by USAFRICOM and NATO against the Gadhafi regime in Libya in 2011; however, personnel issues and information-sharing constraints hindered planning, coordination, and synchronization of MISO activities.

### **Discussion.**

In February 2011, a small MISO Support Element (MSE) and **Commando Solo** – an aerial platform for broadcast media/messaging – deployed to Europe to support the non-combatant evacuation operation of third country nationals out of Libya. Over the course of the next eight months, however, their work expanded to include disseminating messages in support of humanitarian assistance, law of land warfare, non-interference, and the protection of civilians (PoC). The MSE and Commando Solo disseminated more than 50 messages throughout the 12 days of lethal activity during Operation Odyssey Dawn (21 March - 1 April 2011), and an additional 200 messages during the seven months of Operation Unified Protector (1 April - 31 October 2011).

On several occasions, owing to the effects of MISO, the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) was able to gain the attention of the Gadhafi regime and its supporters – causing them to expend time and energy responding to MISO messaging. The Gadhafi regime/supporters resorted to actions such as developing press releases, radio messages, and website postings in direct response to the MISO messages, in an effort to contradict them and to avoid losing supporters. Most significantly, a correlative relationship can be shown between Commando Solo messaging and the fall of certain regime strongholds,

namely: Misratah, Tripoli, Sirte, and Bani Walide. Each of these cities was deliberately targeted by Commando Solo messaging, in conjunction with CJTF lethal activities. As a result, Transitional National Council Forces (the forces that were fighting against the Gadhafi regime) were not only able to capture these cities, but in some cases, they did so with very little regime opposition.

Although MISO contributed to the success of the Libyan campaign, the following personnel-related issues and information-sharing constraints hindered MISO operations:

1) As the Libyan crisis situation was evolving, the [6th Military Information Support Operations Battalion](#) identified the need to send a unit representative to USAFRICOM to contribute to its ongoing planning efforts. The battalion generated an order and deployed a MISO planner to USAFRICOM without an approved Request For Forces (RFF). This battalion-driven (bottom-up) process was fairly time-consuming and was not fast enough, nor comprehensive enough, to get MISO assets fully integrated into USAFRICOM's Joint Planning Team, Targeting Cell, and Humanitarian Working Group during the planning period. The one MISO planner was able to ensure that 11 MISO messages were broadcast on the first day that the JTF conducted a lethal attack/bombing mission. However, had the MISO battalion been able to deploy additional planners or liaison officers to USAFRICOM early during the planning period, then the initial series of MISO messages would have been much more comprehensive and better synchronized within the overall campaign plan to help achieve desired effects.

2) When the center of U.S. operations shifted from USAFRICOM to NATO's CJTF headquarters at Joint Forces Command Naples, two MISO personnel deployed to the CJTF and worked within its Joint Effects Management Cell (JEMC). These two personnel were fully qualified in MISO/PSYOP, but they did not possess Electronic Warfare (EW) expertise/qualification. The CJTF's EW officer was from Spain. Relevant intelligence (Commando Solo/MISO-related) that could have supported EW efforts was classified "Five Eyes," which meant that the Spanish EW officer could not have access to it, and he therefore could not coordinate and synchronize the information/frequencies needed. (NOTE: "Five Eyes" information was releasable to only Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United States, and Great Britain.) Since the U.S. MISO personnel did not have expertise/background in the EW specialty, they were not in a position to overcome the problem caused by the information-sharing constraint.

3) Joint Forces Command Naples had an authorization for a U.S. field grade PSYOP officer; however, that billet was unfilled and there was no U.S. PSYOP officer on station. As the Libyan crisis evolved, and as the transition from USAFRICOM to the NATO CJTF took place, that billet remained unfilled. The PSYOP Chief within the CJTF JEMC was an Italian PSYOP officer. Like the Spanish EW officer, he was handicapped by the information-sharing (classifica-

tion) constraint, and he could not be "read on" to the capabilities of Commando Solo. The two U.S. MISO/PSYOP personnel (one captain, one NCO) who deployed to the JEMC could not coordinate with the Italian PYSOP Chief (a major) because of the classification level, yet they were able to go above him and coordinate actions with the JEMC Chief (a British major). Had there been a U.S. field grade officer on site, filling the authorized Joint billet, this awkward situation would not have emerged. Moreover, he could have been working the crisis planning actions from the outset.

### **Recommendation.**

1. Continue to utilize MISO in support of stability operations – to help influence the attitudes/behaviors of the local populace in support of U.S./coalition operations, and to affect/impact the decision-making of opposition leaders/groups/supporters.
2. Combatant Commanders should request MISO and Commando Solo assets early on during crisis/contingency planning – and incorporate these personnel into appropriate staffs/teams such as the Joint Planning Team, Targeting Cell, and Humanitarian Working Group.
3. The U.S. Army should afford EW and Deception training opportunities for MISO/PSYOP officers and non-commissioned officers, allowing them to become holistic practitioners of information operations (IO).
4. The U.S. Army should endeavor to fill Joint MISO/PSYOP billets, such as the one at Joint Forces Command Naples. When there is an unfilled billet at a Joint or Combatant Command during a crisis/contingency planning situation, the U.S. Army should quickly fill the void with a temporary fill.
5. Department of Defense/Combatant Commanders should consider making exceptions to information-sharing constraints (classification and releasability determinations) to support planning and conduct of operations. For example, expanding releasability of "Five Eyes" to NATO members to support a NATO operation.

### **Implications.**

If the aforementioned issues and recommendations are not addressed, then IO effects will not be maximized during the course of future operations/campaigns, due to deficiencies in planning, coordination, and synchronization.

### **Event Description.**

This lesson is based on "[Military Information Support to Contingency Operations in Libya](#)," by CPT Geoffrey Childs, Special Warfare magazine, Jan-Mar 2013.

## Comments.

Related references and links:

- 1) [6th Military Information Support Operations Battalion](#), GlobalSecurity.org.
- 2) [4th Military Information Support Operations Group](#), Military.com.
- 3) [EC-130J Commando Solo III](#), Military.com.
- 4) [JP 3-13.2 Military Information Support Operations](#),” Joint Staff, 21 November 2014
- 5) Operation Odyssey Dawn (OOD) and Operation Unified Protector (OUP) document collection, SOLLIMS USAFRICOM portal, [Special Reports and Papers - Africa](#).
- 6) [Strategic Messaging in Information Operations](#), SOLLIMS Lesson 874, 6 August 2012.



## **h. TOPIC. Public Affairs Support for Operation United Assistance (Lesson #2321)**

### Observation.

"Combined" media interviews (held with State Department, USAID, and DoD representatives), deployed military Public Affairs "enablers," and focused rear detachment support were the key elements of Public Affairs success during Operation United Assistance (OUA) – the U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, in support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) (Sep 2014 - Mar 2015).

### Discussion.

"Combined" Media Interviews. During the first several days of operations, Joint Forces Command-Operation United Assistance (JFC-OUA) had only four Public Affairs personnel [from [U.S. Army Africa Command \(USARAF\)](#)] on the ground in Liberia: one planner, one Public Affairs officer, one photo-journalist, and one combat camera specialist. Initially flooded with media requests for interviews, these few JFC-OUA personnel found a way to manage media activities through conducting close coordination with the Public Affairs offices of the [U.S. Embassy \(Monrovia\)](#), [USAID](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), and [U.S. Public](#)

[Health Service](#). An early decision was made that the three primary USG agencies (DoD/JFC-OUA, State Department/U.S. Embassy, and USAID) would all conduct media interviews together. This decision proved to be a powerful tool that enabled the "team" to field questions according to areas of expertise and portray a "whole-of- government" approach to the audiences. Furthermore, it allowed the relatively small number of available Public Affairs personnel to leverage one another's capabilities and develop a manageable short-term planning & execution timeline of media events.

[Deployed Public Affairs "Enablers."](#) Two weeks into the operation, a Joint Public Affairs Support Element (JPASE) deployed to Liberia to support JFC-OUA. The JPASE worked for the JFC, but also aided the State Department/U.S. Embassy and USAID in developing a long-range schedule of Public Affairs events, which added predictability to key leaders' calendars, and impacted the narrative to reflect a "whole-of-government" approach into media reporting. The JPASE was a key contributor for attaining successful media relations in Liberia. Its arrival marked a positive shift in the communication environment, overcoming early negative local media reports that were often based on suspicions and rumors. The JPASE accomplished this by scheduling a series of key leader interviews that were open to local and international press – with messages that calmed unfounded fears and educated the public about Ebola. Besides this JPASE "enabler", once the [101st Airborne Division](#) was identified as the follow-on force (to replace USARAF personnel), a Request for Forces (RFF) was submitted to deploy a Mobile Public Affairs Detachment (MPAD) to meet the needs of the 101st and an estimated increase in Public Affairs requirements. However, DoD did not resource the MPAD, but instead sourced a Public Affairs Detachment (PAD) (with slightly less resources) to support the 101st. The PAD arrived approximately three weeks after the USARAF-to-101st transition, but ultimately provided an enduring capability that developed command information products and contributed to media relations efforts. Overall, these JPASE and PAD "enablers" greatly enhanced the deployed force's capability and credibility; they also helped the local, U.S., and international media gain accurate information to report.

[Focused Rear Detachment Support.](#) The USARAF rear detachment Public Affairs team in Italy was a key component for successful Public Affairs operations, doing a great deal of 'behind the scenes' work in support of the forward deployed force and other stakeholders. This rear detachment team proved to be vital for coordinating Public Affairs actions between the forward deployed JFC-OUA, USAFRICOM, U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), Army Public Affairs, Army National Guard, DoD Public Affairs, the Joint Staff, the 101st Airborne Division, and III Corps Public Affairs. The USARAF rear detachment Public Affairs team continuously monitored the media environment, coordinated Public Affairs operations/actions, developed products, gained clearance for the products to be released, and helped disseminate them. Also, a single document produced by the rear detachment Public Affairs team which



tracked the status of these Public Affairs actions on a daily basis was invaluable for providing situational awareness to all stakeholders and for sustaining successful Public Affairs support throughout OUA.

### **Recommendation.**

During Foreign Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (FHA/DR) missions:

1. Public Affairs teams / leaders from the State Department, USAID, and DoD (i.e., the GCC's lead Service Component Command or Joint Forces Command) should consider conducting media interviews together. This would allow the limited number of Public Affairs professionals on the ground to leverage one another's capabilities, enable the combined team to field questions according to areas of expertise, and portray a "whole of government" approach to the audience.
2. The GCC and its designated lead Service Component Command should coordinate for "enablers" to support the Public Affairs effort, such as a Joint Public Affairs Support Element (JPASE) and Public Affairs Detachment (PAD) [or Mobile PAD (MPAD)].
3. The rear detachment of the lead Service Component Command should support the forward element with a daily report that tracks the status of: the media environment, Public Affairs operations/actions, product development, product clearance (for release), and product dissemination.

### **Implications.**

Without a "whole-of-government" Public Affairs team effort, without key "enablers" such as the JPASE and PAD/MPAD, and without dedicated rear detachment support, the forward-deployed Public Affairs military personnel will be hard-pressed to meet the extensive demands of the U.S., international, and host nation media on a high-visibility FHA/DR mission such as OUA.

### **Event Description.**

This lesson is based on the article "Communicating Ebola: Lessons in Public Affairs Contingency Operations While Setting the Theater in an Expeditionary Environment," by COL David P. Doherty and Michael P. Whetston, Chapter 2 of "[Operation United Assistance Setting the Theater: Creating Conditions for Success in West Africa](#)," CALL Newsletter 15-09, June 2015.

### **Comments.**

Related references:

- 1) "[Ebola: Accurate Information Prevents Rumours and Panic](#)," by Perpetual Crentsil, Policy Note 5/2015, The Nordic Africa Institute, 7 April 2015.
- 2) "[International Ebola Response and Preparedness](#)," Lead Inspector General for Operation United Assistance (DoD) (in conjunction with IGs of USAID, DOS, and HHS), 31 March 2015. See section on "Supporting Public Outreach and Communications" on page 62.



### **3. CONCLUSION**

Recent peace, stability, and humanitarian operations – in Europe, West Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan, and the Philippines – illustrate the importance of strategic communication and messaging. Key suggestions/recommendations from lessons within this compendium include the following:

- The U.S. military/Joint force involved in any stability operation should:
  - Emphasize dissemination of complete, timely, and accurate information to the public (host nation populace, media, international audience, etc.). Systems/procedures linking Public Information / Public Affairs personnel throughout the area of operations can facilitate achievement of this aim.
  - Ensure that information specialists/staffs are closely integrated with the J2 (Intelligence) and J3 (Operations) staffs, and that they are all in synch with the Commander's intent for messaging. This integration will facilitate information sharing on the latest developments, as well as staff planning and collaboration with regard to information activities.
  - Establish coordination mechanisms with civilian/intergovernmental agencies (that are also involved in messaging) – mechanisms such as the Communications Strategy Working Group (discussed on [page 11](#)) or the Commander's Communication Synchronization Working Group (shown in [Annex C](#)) – to contribute to a "comprehensive approach" and "unity of effort" in messaging.
  - Ensure that MISO and Public Affairs personnel are an integral part of the planning process / staff estimate. Incorporate these personnel into appropriate staffs/teams, such as the Joint Planning Team, Targeting Cell, and Humanitarian Working Group.

- Consider making exceptions to information-sharing constraints (classification and releasability determinations) to support planning and conduct of operations.
  - Develop end-states for information operations – tied to other desired end-states.
  - Allocate sufficient time to deliver messages – i.e., months.
  - Limit the number of IO themes and messages.
  - Develop feedback mechanisms to track the delivery of messages by subordinate units.
  - Be prepared to counter messaging from spoiler groups. Try to anticipate their messages, and then develop potential responses to have on hand to quickly and effectively counter the messaging from spoiler groups. Develop ways to counter their technologies and techniques as well.
  - Monitor host nation and international media to see/hear what is being broadcast about military operations and other recent developments in the area. As necessary, take steps to ensure that reliable information/news is being provided to indigenous populations.
- The U.S./Coalition (military and civilian partners) involved in any stability operation should:
    - Work within the culture of the host nation – partnering with the host nation government on strategic messaging.
    - Support the strategic messaging with actions that convey resolve/commitment.
- During Foreign Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (FHA/DR) missions:
    - Public Affairs teams / leaders from the State Department, USAID, and DoD (i.e., GCC's lead Service Component Command or Joint Forces Command) should consider conducting media interviews together. This would allow the limited number of Public Affairs professionals on the ground to leverage one another's capabilities, enable the combined team to field questions according to areas of expertise, and portray a "whole-of-government" approach to the audience.
    - The GCC and its designated lead Service Component Command should coordinate for "enablers" to support the Public Affairs effort,

such as a Joint Public Affairs Support Element (JPASE) and Public Affairs Detachment (PAD) [or Mobile PAD (MPAD)].

- The rear detachment of the lead Service Component Command should support the forward element with a daily report that tracks the status of: the media environment, Public Affairs operations/ actions, product development, product clearance (for release), and product dissemination.
- The U.S. military should continuously address information operations and MISO, not only in planning/estimates, but also in doctrine updates, due to continuously changing information technologies, availability, and usage.

Through wider dissemination of the aforementioned lessons/recommendations and especially their inclusion in contingency and operational planning, significant impacts can be made with regard to conveying messages, influencing target audiences, and countering spoiler groups during the course of future peace and stability operations.

#### **4. PKSOI Points of Contact**

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## Annex A. References, Reports, and Articles

[Ensure you are logged in to SOLLIMS to access these items.]

### Doctrine

- [“Joint Doctrine Note 2-13, Commander’s Communication Synchronization,”](#) Joint Staff, 16 December 2013
- [“JP 3-07 Stability,”](#) Joint Staff, 3 August 2016
- [“JP 3-07.3 Peace Operations,”](#) Joint Staff, 1 August 2012
- [“JP 3-13 Information Operations,”](#) Joint Staff, 20 November 2014
- [“JP 3-13.2 Military Information Support Operations,”](#) Joint Staff, 21 November 2014
- [“JP 3-61 Public Affairs,”](#) Joint Staff, 19 August 2016

### Fact Sheets

- [“Fact Sheet: Essential Function 8 – Maintain Internal and External Strategic Communication Capability,”](#) Resolute Support mission – Afghanistan

### Focus Papers, Studies, Monographs

- [“Communication Strategy and Synchronization,”](#) Joint Staff J7 DTD, May 2016
- [“Decade of War, Volume I: Enduring Lessons from the Past Decade of Operations,”](#) Joint Staff J7 JCOA, 15 June 2012 [See “Lesson Three: Battle for the Narrative”]
- [“U.S. Governmental Information Operations and Strategic Communications: A Discredited Tool or User Failure? Implications for Future Conflict,”](#) Dr. Steve Tatham, Strategic Studies Institute, 3 December 2013

### Newsletters

- [“CALL Newsletter 09-11: Media Relations,”](#) Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), December 2008

### Presentations

- [“Strategic Communications,”](#) Nick Birnback, UN DPKO-DFS Public Affairs, 17 April 2015

## **Reports, Papers, Articles**

- [“6<sup>th</sup> MISB\(A\)’S Essential Role in the SOCEUR AOR,”](#) CPT Nick Israel and CPT Albert Finochiarro, Special Warfare, January-June 2016
- [“Communication Breakdown: Unraveling the Islamic State’s Media Efforts,”](#) Daniel Milton, Combating Terrorism Center (CTC), 10 October 2016
- [“Communication in Civil-Military Cooperation,”](#) Jaroslaw Aniola, March 2007
- [“Countering the Narrative: Understanding Terrorist’s Influence and Tactics, Analyzing Opportunities for Intervention, and Delegitimizing the Attraction to Extremism,”](#) Jordan Isham and Lorand Bodo, Small Wars Journal, 16 August 2016
- [“Effective Strategic Communication in Countering Radicalism in Indonesia,”](#) Irfan Abubakar, Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, 25 January 2016
- [“Mastering the Narrative: Counterterrorism Strategic Communication and the United Nations,”](#) Naureen Chowdhury Fink and Jack Barclay, Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation (CGCC), February 2013
- [“Military Information in Peace Keeping Missions: Argentina’s Experience in Haiti,”](#) Commander Julio J. Franco, 30 April 2009
- [“Narrative and CIMIC: Understanding Military Activities through the Eyes of the Local Population,”](#) Andrée Mulder, CCOE CIMIC Messenger, May 2013
- [“New Technology and the Prevention of Violence and Conflict,”](#) Francesco Mancini and Marie O’Reilly, Stability: International Journal of Security & Development, 29 October 2013
- [“Non-Linear Warfare in Ukraine: The Critical Role of Information Operations and Special Operations,”](#) Bret Perry, Small Wars Journal, 14 August 2016
- [“Putin’s Information Warfare in Ukraine: Soviet Origins of Russia’s Hybrid Warfare,”](#) Maria Snegovaya, Institute for the Study of War, September 2015
- [“To Respond or Not to Respond: Addressing Adversarial Propaganda,”](#) Lt. Col. Jesse McIntyre III, U.S. Army, Retired, in Military Review, May-June 2016
- [“The Role of Online/Social Media in Countering Violent Extremism in East Africa,”](#) William Avis, GSDRC, University of Birmingham, UK, June 2016
- [“Russian ‘New Generation’ Warfare: Theory, Practice, and Lessons for U.S. Strategists,”](#) Nicholas Fedyk, Small Wars Journal, 25 August 2016

- [“Strategic Communications – East and South,”](#) European Union Institute for Security Studies, 29 July 2016
- [“Strategic Communication: A Political and Operational Prerequisite for Successful Peace Operations,”](#) Robert Gordon and Peter Loge, International Forum for the Challenges of Peace Operations, November 2015
- [“Twenty-First Century Information Warfare and the Third Offset Strategy,”](#) James R. McGrath, Joint Force Quarterly 82, 1 July 2016

### **Resource Guides**

- [“Communication and Complex Emergencies: A Resource Guide,”](#) Australian Civil-Military Centre, 5 August 2014

### **Seminar and Workshop Reports**

- [“Strategic Communication in Counter Terrorism: Target Audience Analysis, Measures of Effect and Counter Narrative,”](#) seminar report, NATO Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism (COE DAT) Seminar, 4-5 June 2014
- [“Strategic Communications for the New Era of Peace Operations,”](#) workshop report, Challenges Forum Workshop, 23 June 2015



Photo is from Resolute Support (RS) News, [“Fact Sheet: Essential Function 8 – Maintain Internal and External Strategic Communication Capability.”](#)

## **Annex B. Key Points on Strategic Communication**

### **What is Strategic Communication?**

- Communications activities guided by overarching plan
- Key audiences identified
- Desired outcomes agreed
- Master narrative agreed
- Messaging channels selected
- Products aligned for consistent messaging
- Constant evaluation with data to adjust strategy

### **What does it mean for the mission?**

- Builds support
- Establishes identity
- Dispels misconceptions
- Facilitates mandate implementation
- Protects UN personnel
- Provides enhanced situational awareness

### **Why does it matter?**

- Helps prevent spoilers
- Keeps peace/stability operation relevant in 24-hour news cycle
- Engages key audiences
- Enhances image of peace/stability operation
- Timely responses to negative press and emerging issues
- Harmonizes messages across communications platforms

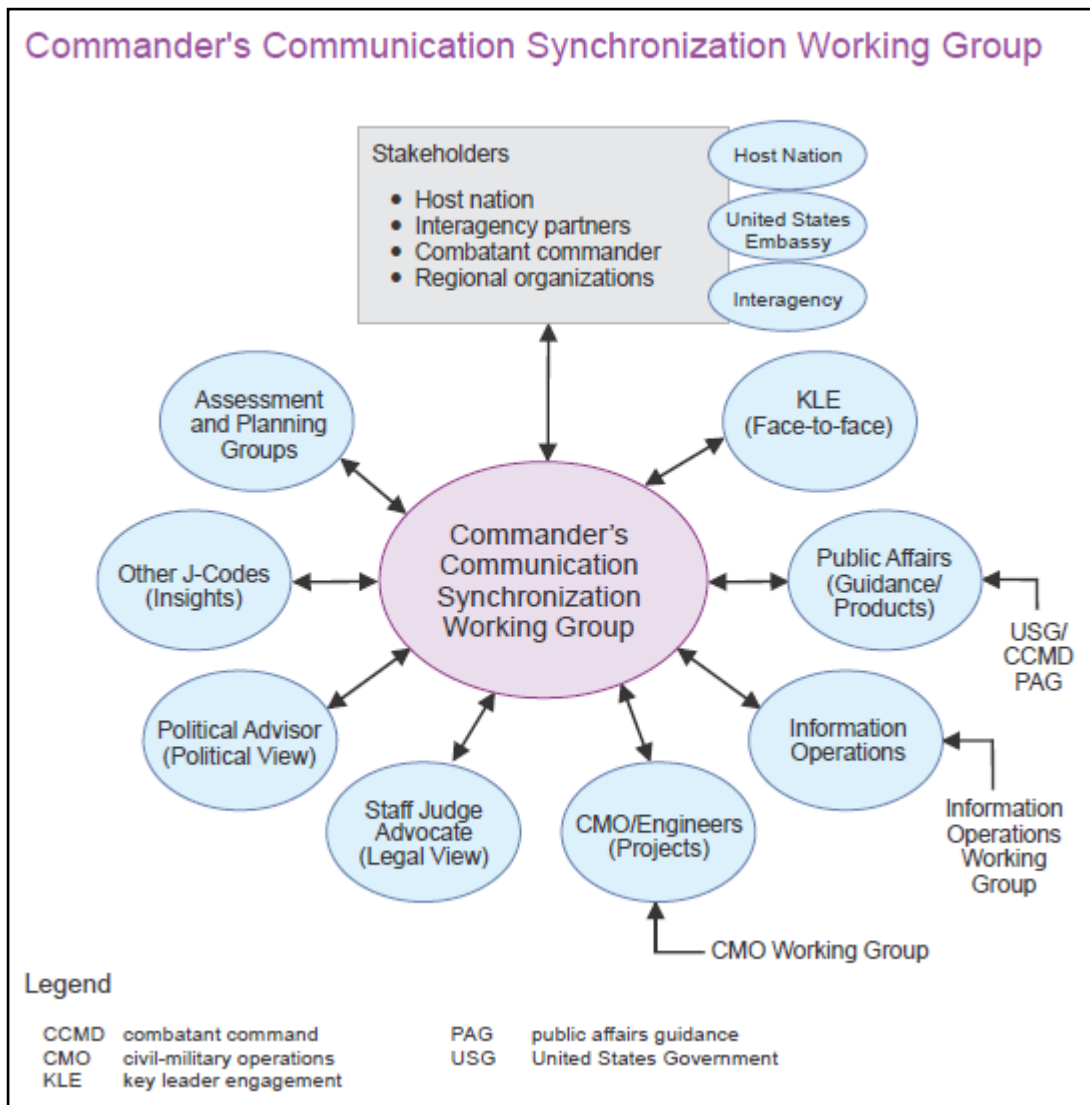


Source: "[Strategic Communications](#)," Nick Birnback, UN DPKO-DFS, 17 Apr 2015.



## Annex C. Commander's Communication Synchronization Working Group

The Commander's Communication Synchronization Working Group (CCSWG) serves as the cross-functional conduit to develop, synchronize, implement, and consolidate assessments on a command-approved, communication synchronization approach designed to support operations and command objectives. The themes, messages, and actions are coordinated with various staff organizations, agencies, and units that will execute the plan, once approved by the commander.



Source: "[Joint Doctrine Note 2-13, Commander's Communication Synchronization](#)," Joint Staff, 16 December 2013.

## **Annex D. Insights and Best Practices – Communication Strategy and Synchronization**

### **Communication Strategy**

- The greatest utility of the communication strategy falls within the future planning horizon – sharing the Commander’s identification of military objectives, the operational approach, the narrative and overarching themes, and Commander’s intent for the synchronization of words, actions, and images.
- The communication strategy for an operation contains at least the narrative, themes, messages, visual products, supporting activities, and key audiences. It normally clarifies the key leader and staff element responsibilities for overall lead within the HQ for communications. The Commander may designate a Deputy Commander with authority for oversight and also identify a staff lead – often a staff element in the J3 (either the J35 or the J3IO) or the Public Affairs officer as the staff OPR for communication synchronization.
- A communication strategy includes required authorities, permissions, and capabilities.

### **Communication Synchronization**

- Integrate communication targeting processes as part of the HQ targeting function.
- Clarify staff lead for communications.
- Use mission type orders to speed execution. Recognize that an operational-level synchronization matrix cannot and should not attempt to synchronize all efforts down to tactical level: this impinges agility at echelon.
- Use fragmentary orders (FRAGOs) to direct tasks in execution.

### **Engagement**

- Have patience developing relationships and trust before attempting to inform or influence.
- Leverage the Intelligence Community (IC) to map relevant networks to focus planning and targeting of engagements.
- Establish a dedicated engagement cell, preferably in the J3IO to orchestrate engagement.
- Develop clear processes within a targeting methodology for engagement.
- Delineate “spheres of influence” to reduce engagement fratricide.
- Plan engagements and frequency of touches to prevent “engagement-overload” of key partners.
- Be proactive in identifying and developing new engagement “targets” to support the mission.
- Be sensitive to engage U.S. audiences solely in the educate and inform role.
- Decentralize detailed engagement planning and execution. Leverage the Commander’s Action Group (CAG).
- Record and report engagements to support assessment and subsequent engagement planning.

## **Assessment**

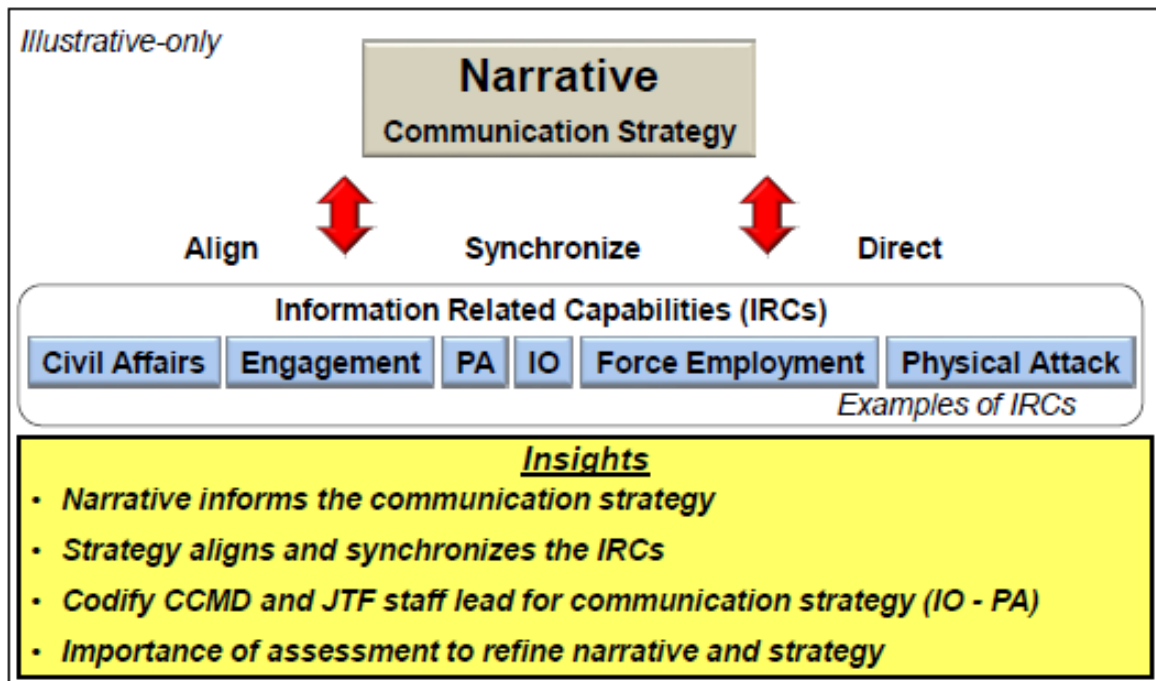
- Use Commander’s guidance to focus assessment.
- Recognize the need for operational patience in the nonlethal area to produce desired effects.
- Plan for assessment, including determination of Measures of Performance (MOPs) and Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs) and collection means.
- Use information-centric Commander’s Critical Information Requirements (CCIR) to prioritize monitoring, collection, analysis, and assessment to enrich guidance and sharpen direction.
- Leverage other partners, HQs, agencies such as DIA, and private organizations. They have unique expertise and perspectives.
- Codify responsibilities for information environment-focused assessments as part of the overall assessment process. Gain efficiencies through leveraging other capabilities resident in the HQ (e.g., operations research analysts and contracting experts).
- Use caution when determining cause and effect. Recognize the risk in drawing erroneous conclusions particularly in the case of human behavior, attitudes, and perception. Provide confidence levels of the assessments and potential risk of implementing recommendations.
- Assess the effects of adversary communications on the mission and operations and recommend how to counter those effects.
- An effective way to assess the open source media environment is the acronym "ABC" (Accuracy, Balance, and Context). This provides a better understanding of current media trends and of actions the Commander may opt to take in response to media trends or activity.
- Guard against the tendency to immediately trumpet success.
- Anticipate likely adversary actions and gain response-and-release authorities to rapidly respond in the “battle of the narrative.”

## **HQ Organization**

- Ensure there are clear approval processes for the narrative, themes, and messages. Codify who approves and in what venue/decision board.
- The entire staff has a role within the communication realm to support the Commander. See chart below for a simplified depiction.

<b>Staff Responsibilities</b>	
<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Potential Key Players</b>
Understanding the environment	J2, J3IO, J5, PA, IC, POLAD
Developing the narrative	J5, J9, J3IO, PA, POLAD
Leveraging all capabilities	J3, J3IO, PA, JFE, J9
Assessing effects	J2, J3, J3IO, J5, J8, J9, PA

- A communication-related working group (WG) integrated with the targeting process and linked to a decision board enables effective synchronization.
- Leverage a near and current-term synchronizing process to integrate communications processes in both targeting and on the JOC floor. This will help ensure actions match words and avoid what some call "effects fratricide."
- Designate an Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) for communication.
- Assign staff responsibility for planning, coordinating, preparing, monitoring, post-engagement debriefs, database structure, recording, dissemination, and follow-up actions.
- Integrate the planners, targeting office, CAG, J9, and Foreign Policy Advisor.
- Establish and coordinate release authorities and responsibilities early on to speed the response in crisis situations.
- Decentralize communication-related actions where possible to achieve agility while recognizing the likelihood of limited decentralized authorities.



Source: "[Communication Strategy and Synchronization](#)," Joint Staff J7 DTD, May 2016.

## **Annex E. Resolute Support (RS) Fact Sheet: Essential Function 8 (EF 8) – Maintain Internal and External Strategic Communication Capability**

Overview: Afghanistan still faces threats from insurgents. With these threats, it is critical that governmental organizations, such as the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense, can clearly speak to the Afghan people with one voice on critical subjects such as public safety, activities of security forces and also government activities. The Resolute Support Mission, through EF8, seeks to train, advise and assist our Afghan partners in speaking with one consistent voice, both within their own organizations and out to the people of Afghanistan. Afghan communication capabilities continue to improve but there are still challenges. Our efforts focus is on bridging gaps and overcoming challenges to improved communications within the ASI and Afghan National Security Forces while continuing to reinforce successes and look for those opportunities to improve. The structure built to support this effort follows:

EF 8.1: Public Affairs & Strategic Communication – These efforts, collectively, combine government relations, media communication, issue management, corporate and social responsibility, information dissemination and strategic communication advice. Within this context, message coordination, public affairs operations and responsiveness between various Afghan ministries are all improving. Major reasons for this improvement are the Government Media Information Center and the Cross Ministry News Desk.

- The Government Media Information Center provides improved capability to coordinate, produce and distribute accurate and timely information products to all end users. Further, it provides interagency and donor coordination, training for Afghan communicators and press briefing and meeting facilities to government departments and international stakeholders.
- The Cross Ministry News Desk is a crucial component of improving communication as it employs representatives from the Ministries of Defense and Interior, the National Directorate of Security and the Independent Directorate of Local Governance. These representatives coordinate and disseminate press releases and official statements about security force activities to their respective departments, thus aligning communication and messaging.

However, even with these two organizations running and providing a crucial location and structure for current and future communication needs, training and capacity building for public affairs specialists, staff and spokespersons is still required. The standard Afghan centralized approach to managing information is one factor in previous senior Afghan leaders avoiding engagement with media, but training can help change that legacy and cultural mindset.

EF 8.2: Information Operations & Afghan Information Dissemination Operation/ Special Information Forces – is a concerted effort at countering and disrupting enemy communication through messaging (billboards, leaflets, radio and TV spots) at the national level and at the Corps and Ministry of Defense levels. Consistent messaging and countering of enemy propaganda is crucial to building the trust and confidence of the Afghan people in the justice system and government institutions.

Summary: The desired end state is to see institutions like the Ministries of Defense and Interior to consistently speak with one voice. Accomplishing this goal will instill support and confidence in the Afghan people and counter insurgent messaging. The Afghan institutions are not there yet, but are making great strides and progress in streamlining communication, training new communicators and countering enemy messaging.

Source: <http://www.rs.nato.int/article/rs-news/rsm-essential-function-8-strategic-communication.html>



**Kabul, Afghanistan (11 November 2014). 19 Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers were recognized by Major General Kurt Fuller, the ISAF Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, and by Major General Shahzada, the Deputy Commander of ANA Ground Forces Command, at a graduation ceremony, 5 November 2014. The soldiers completed the Afghan Information Dissemination Operations (AIDO) course, a program that teaches the principles of messaging. (Text and photo by Lieutenant Michael J. Fallon, ISAF Headquarters.)**

**Annex F. Previously Published SOLLIMS Samplers**  
(available in [SOLLIMS library](#))

- **Stabilization and Transition (Aug 2016)**
- **Investing in Training for, and during, Peace and Stability Operations (Jun 2016)**
- **Building Stable Governance (Mar 2016)**
- **Shifts in United Nations Peacekeeping (Feb 2016)**
- **Foreign Humanitarian Assistance: Concepts, Principles and Applications (Dec 2015)**
- **Foreign Humanitarian Assistance [Foreign Disaster Relief] (Sep 2015)**
- **Cross-Cutting Guidelines for Stability Operations (Jul 2015)**
- **Lessons on Stability Operations from USAWC Students (May 2015)**
- **Security Sector Reform (Feb 2015)**
- **Reconstruction and Development (Nov 2014)**
- **Women, Peace and Security (Aug 2014)**
- **Lessons on Stability Operations from USAWC Students (Jul 2014)**
- **Overcoming “Challenges & Spoilers” with “Unity & Resolve” (Apr 2014)**
- **Improving Host Nation Security through Police Forces (Jan 2014)**
- **Key Enablers for Peacekeeping & Stability Operations (Oct 2013)**
- **Lessons On Stability Operations from USAWC Students (Aug 2013)**
- **Multinational Operations (Jul 2013)**
- **Leadership in Stability Operations: Understanding / Engaging the People (Apr 2013)**
- **Protection of Civilians (Jan 2013)**
- **Medical Assistance / Health Services (Oct 2012)**
- **Reconciliation (Jul 2012)**
- **Civ-Mil Cooperation (Apr 2012)**
- **Building Capacity (Jan 2012)**
- **Ministerial Advising (Oct 2011)**
- **Fighting Corruption (Apr 2011)**
- **Economic Stabilization (Jan 2011)**
- **Transition to Local Governance (Oct 2010)**
- **Rule of Law and Legitimacy (Jul 2010)**
- **Protection of Civilians in Peacekeeping (Jun 2010)**

# SOLLIMS SAMPLER

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