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# **Strategic Communication: A Primer**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This paper attempts to address a perceived gap in UK defence thinking which currently has little documentation, on the emerging and cross governmental art of Strategic Communication. After defining the term this paper attempts to locate its utility within the defence community, considering its relationship with Media and Information Operations. The paper notes that at its core, Strategic Communication can only be successful when three processes are clearly understood: the role of strategic communication in campaigning, the actual cognitive process of communication and the empirical analysis of target audiences. The dangers of over-reliance upon polling are considered concurrently. The paper concludes with the place of Strategic Communication within UK military operations, the need for robust measurements of effectiveness and a short assessment of the challenges of emerging and new media.

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# Strategic Communication: A Primer

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## INTRODUCTION

*We typically design physical operations first, then craft supporting information operations to explain our actions. This is the reverse of al-Qaida's approach. For all our professionalism, compared to the enemy's, our public information is an afterthought. In military terms, for al-Qaida the 'main effort' is information; for us, information is a 'supporting effort.*

David Kilcullen,  
*Countering the Terrorist Mentality,  
New Paradigms for 21st Century Conflict*

Post 9/11, Britain's armed forces face difficult challenges. The state on state conflicts which typified the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and which in any future competition for resources cannot be ruled out, appear for now to have been replaced by the challenges of dealing with highly complex instabilities, invariably involving non-state actors, that will require a 'whole-of-government effort to resolve. In this environment, liberal democracies will face increasing difficulties in drawing such operations to a conclusion, unable as they are to utilise their full military capability without reverting to the myth of total war. Most are unwilling to make such a commitment, constrained by domestic and world opinion. Indeed history has shown that public perception can have long term and decisive effect upon the nature and success of foreign policy and military operations. Conveying information messages to specific audiences, in order to affect behavioural change for specific political objectives, may well prove more decisive in future battles than the placement of bullets and bombs upon a target. Neither civilian nor military leaders can afford to take a passive view of public opinion, for in foreign policy in particular it has been shown to constrain and limit action.

In this new security environment, governments in general and defence in particular find themselves called upon to undertake new and different tasks, such as post conflict reconstruction, capacity building and security sector reform – today bundled under the term MASD (military assistance to stability and development), whilst the overall reduction in defence spending and corresponding increase in capital costs present governments with hard choices. As we have seen, some countries, such as New Zealand (which deleted from its air inventory fighter jets and which refocused its Navy to a mainly coast guard rather than expeditionary capability) simply cannot afford the armed forces they either desire or need.

Disturbingly, apparently weaker asymmetric actors seem to be performing increasingly well in their conflicts. Since 1800, stronger actors have defeated their weaker foes by a factor of 2:1. No surprise perhaps. Yet, between 1950 and 2001 weaker actors have significantly improved their performance.<sup>1</sup> The wide availability of cheap weaponry, education and learning and, critically, the use of information as a weapon has empowered and emboldened weaker actors who increasingly seem able to win or at worse force concessions from apparently stronger forces. Thus,

armed forces search for other mechanisms – particularly those of non-kinetic effect – to reduce the requirement for hard power engagement,<sup>2</sup> to deter and to defend.

Our post 9/11 adversaries have proved adept at fusing information with new media, \$100 cameras and remote internet connections, to shape global perceptions and to demoralise and intimidate.<sup>3</sup> Information appears to move around the world in an instant, time and space seemingly collapsed by the speed of the internet. Today's insurgents and terrorists know that opinions can be changed; it is this knowledge that empowers and enables them. It is a lesson that we might usefully learn. Information – its utility, effect and management - should be considered at the very core of future campaigns and operational planning, and done so not in isolation but as a coupled contribution to the whole plan.

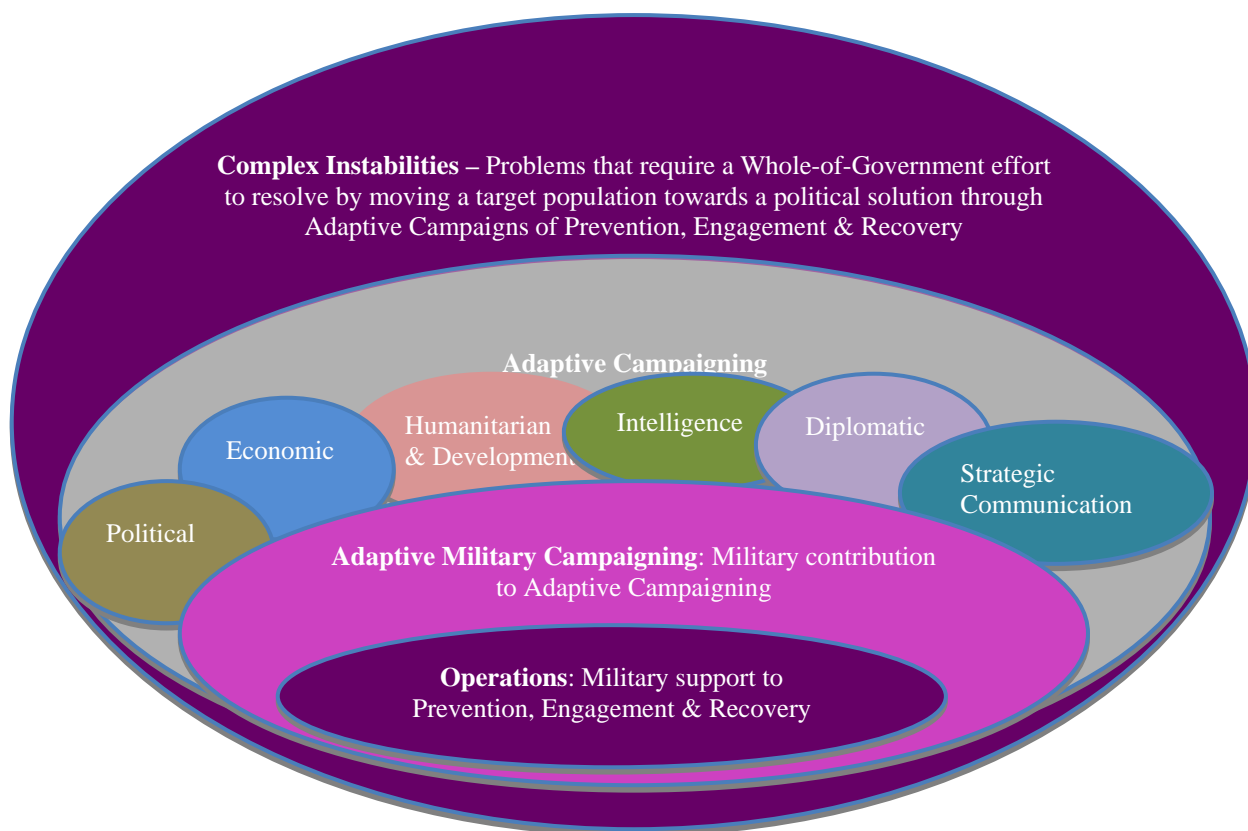
Paradoxically, people are today saturated by raw data. Understanding who is the right audience, gaining and holding its attention are difficulties we share with our adversary. Recent operations have shown that some of the most influential opinion forming outlets fall at either end of a technology spectrum. In Iraq and Afghanistan centuries old mechanisms for discussion and discourse – Shuras and Loya Jirgas - carry great effect whilst at the other end of the spectrum new and emerging media outlets such as blogs and social networking sites can also prove highly effective. Yet opinion is formed not just by words but by perceptions. These are highly complex, conditioned as much by the environment as by the deeds and conduct of the UK and its representatives. Thus, when conveying information we must consider not just technology - but of greater importance - the culture, history and traditions of our intended audiences. We must recognise that in a globalised communication society, audience perceptions will be based not just upon the conduct of the armed forces but upon the conduct, attitudes and policies of the countries and organisations from which they emanate, and from the manner in which these are represented in the global information environment. In short, perception will very often equal reality.

## **ADAPTIVE CAMPAIGNING**

The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom notes that whilst no State directly threatens the UK, there exist a series of diverse and interconnected threats and risks which have the potential to undermine both national and international stability. Global warming, trans-national terrorism and organised crime are but three examples in an increasingly unstable and uncertain world and each must be met by the application of individual or combined national instruments of power: diplomacy, military deployment and economics. The relative weight of effort each instrument must make varies according to circumstances; this means that the military instrument may often not constitute the main effort but act in a subsidiary, or supporting, role to another instrument to deliver an enduring outcome.

Meeting these complex challenges will require agility and innovation. The military contribution will clearly peak during any combat phase but the future size and capabilities of defence forces lends itself to much greater effort being paid to prevention. Emergent threats are at their most adaptable when they are small. This is when they are able to learn rapidly. Conversely this is also when they are at their most vulnerable. Since military forces will always be resource-limited, a central issue in future campaign planning will be the ability to effectively orchestrate, innovate and adapt effort across all arms of government to achieve effect at the right time. We might refer to this as adaptive campaigning. The essential characteristic of an adaptive campaign is that its structure and behaviour should be able to evolve over time and in a way that tends to increase the probability of 'success' through adaptation to the changes in the system, and to the

environment in which it is embedded. An emerging tool in this adaptive campaign process – and one that is increasingly being recognised across western governments – is Strategic Communication. This can be conceptually modelled thus:



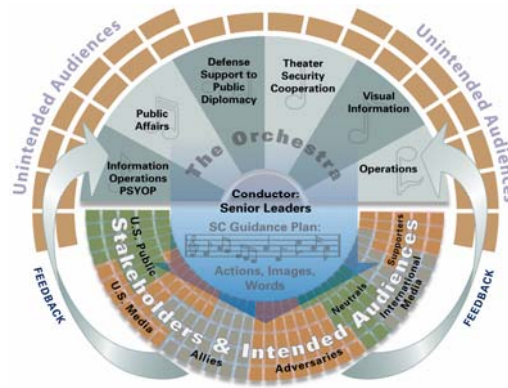
## DEFINITION OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

A comparatively new term, Strategic Communication (not Communications) has yet to receive a standardised UK cross-governmental definition. A proposed definition for use in this document is:

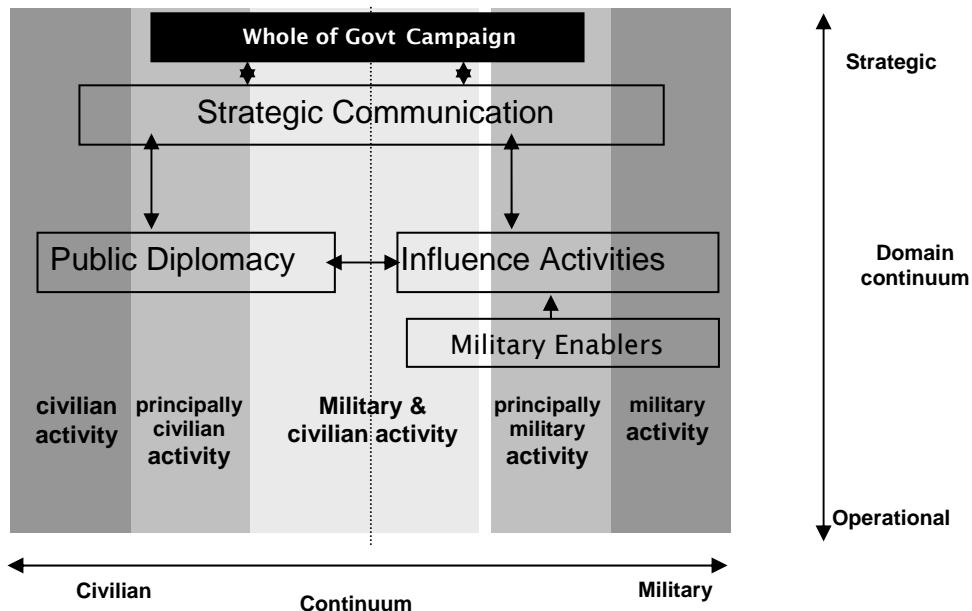
*A systematic series of sustained and coherent activities, conducted across strategic, operational and tactical levels, that enables understanding of target audiences, identifies effective conduits, and develops and promotes ideas and opinions through those conduits to promote and sustain particular types of behaviour.*

This definition emphasises Strategic Communication as a means of changing behaviour and suggests a challenge in both devising means to accomplish it and measures of its success. A helpful way to consider Strategic Communication is as being analogous to an orchestra. The orchestra's conductor is the British government, the musical score is the Strategic Communication plan and the orchestra itself the various communities of practice &/or lines of operation. The music is the narrative.<sup>4</sup> Depending on the effect you seek to achieve, different sections of the orchestra will be used at different times, or with different emphasis.

The tempo of the music will also vary, depending on what effect the conductor desires. This model is used extensively by the US:



Strategists often consider concepts in terms of 'ends, ways and means'. Strategic Communication is a 'way' to change behaviour – which is a desired 'end'. Strategic Communication employs multiple 'means' in that process. The means should be restricted only by the requirement to achieve the desired effect on the target audience. In the US, strategic communication is often regarded as being 80% actions and 20% words<sup>5</sup>. A presumption exists that Strategic Communication is aimed at external audiences. This is incorrect; Strategic Communication is as important to internal audiences as it is to external ones. Strategic Communication is a cross governmental, strategic activity in which the military is but one participant. It should however be an intrinsic part of the overall campaign plan. It typically over-arches traditional civilian public diplomacy activities<sup>6</sup> and traditional military effects.<sup>7</sup> However, there is increasing blurring as the UK evolves its policy. In the operational environment civilian and military practitioners increasingly work together and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) personnel will as likely talk of the influence component of Public Diplomacy as military commanders will speak of their increasing diplomatic role. This is illustrated in the diagram below:





Examples of Strategic Communication include:

- The movement of troops to a particular state of readiness or geographical area.
- Publications about the UK produced by The British Council.
- Voice of America & The BBC World Service.
- UK Counter-terrorism legislation.
- The front page of The Sun newspaper.
- The decision to replace Trident.
- The beheading of hostages, in orange jump suits, by Al-Qaeda.

(Note: Some of these examples are orchestrated by governments, others are not. Depending on the audience a particular Sun newspaper headline, for example, may be construed as being representative or indicative of the UK and therefore seen by some pre-disposed audiences as Strategic Communication).

Strategic Communication is a term often abused. Since the late 1990s the term 'spin' has gained increasing popularity, often used with reference to the distortion, perhaps even manipulation (perceived or otherwise) of information, most infamously in the case of the 'dodgy dossier' upon which the British government's case for the 2003 Iraq war was based. Yet its appearance highlights a real conundrum – what is the correct term for the tools of the new information battle? In the UK military environment we are confident with terms such as Information and Media Operations, whilst in military staff colleges Influence and Persuasion are debated. Civilian academics may speak of Soft Power and Public Diplomacy and cynics might prefer the use of Propaganda. There is a real danger that Strategic Communication is associated negatively with emotive and often inaccurate terms. Such obscuration is unhelpful and mires understanding of a complex and important issue.

The term 'spin' is particularly unhelpful for Strategic Communication should primarily be concerned about geopolitical issues not domestic party policies. Propaganda, however, is a harder accusation to rebut. Historically the word 'propaganda' might have been the term of choice, for in latin its root '*propagare*' means the pinning of fresh shoots of a plant into the earth to reproduce and take on a life of their own, a not unreasonable analogy for promoting and growing news ideas and values. Yet since 1622, when Pope Urban VIII established the *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* (a committee of cardinals dedicated to the spread of Catholicism, at the expense of Protestantism) the term has lost the neutrality of its original Latin meaning and developed as a pejorative term that instinctively implies a process that is sinister, lying and based upon a desire to manipulate. This idea gained further traction from the exposure, in the inter-war years, of the orchestrated lies and political subterfuge that were deliberately employed, on both sides, to influence the outcome of the First World War. Although it was greeted with widespread revulsion, particularly in the popular press, it was also seen as a highly effective method for targeting the enemy. Indeed in his 1963 book '*Techniques of Persuasion: From Propaganda to Brainwashing*' the then Director of the Institute of Psychiatry, Dr James Brown, suggested that inter-war period was seminal to the recognition of the utility of propaganda. Brown wrote that: '*certain fundamental changes in the nature of communication within technically advanced societies, and the methods employed during World War 1 were the effect rather than the cause of wholly new developments in the structure and techniques of the modern state*'.<sup>8</sup>

In short, the widening architecture of popular information – press and wireless – played an increasingly important part in the spread of opinions and the creation of emotional attitudes, and concurrently stimulated the opportunity for and the

development of propaganda. *'Modern Communications [...] have opened up a new world of political processes.'* So wrote HG Wells in the New York Times.<sup>9</sup> But what is propaganda? Definitions abound. Jowett and O'Donnell posit that Propaganda is the: *'deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perception, manipulate cognitions and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist'*.<sup>10</sup> Edward Bernays, in 1928, defined it as the: *'consistent, enduring effort to create or shape events to influence the relations of the public to an enterprise, idea or group'*.<sup>11</sup> Regardless of the definition, in today's contemporary conflicts the term tends to be one attached to the 'enemy' – never to the coalition. There are two fundamental reasons for this. Firstly, the term is uniformly pejorative and conjures up images of Goebbel's Nazi Germany (who once famously declared that: *'We have made the Reich by propaganda'*) and secondly, and of significantly more importance, by definition the propagandist does not engage in genuine argument and debate, rather their answers are determined at the outset. In the internet age, where anyone with a laptop can be a fact checker, such techniques seem doomed to fail. Strategic Communication must be transparent and both reactive and proactive<sup>12</sup>. Thus, propaganda is not a term that is either fulsome enough or historically palatable to carry wide utility today.

A presumption exists that Strategic Communication will be successful. This is incorrect. There will always be groups, normally those with deeply ingrained views, perhaps theological, who will resolutely resist alternative viewpoints. Strategic Communication can also fail because of the absence of either a professional and trained body of practitioners and/or the paucity of adequate training and educational material to support them; across governments and nations, Strategic Communication is still an interpretive function, often based on perceptions of best practice, and not an empirical one.

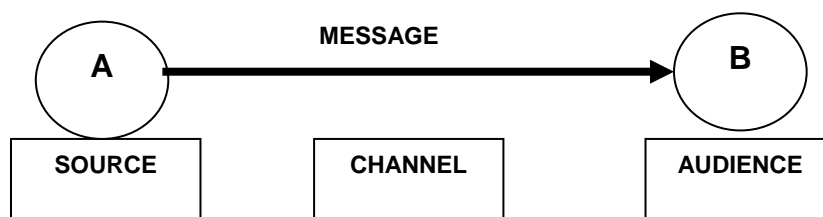
## **WHAT STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IS NOT**

Strategic Communication is not simply media interaction. Neither is it simply a new term for Information Operations. Such thinking actually limits the power of strategic communication to support military operations by over-simplifying its range and activities. Strategic communication is neither advertising nor marketing. The global market place means civilian advertising and marketing companies have incredible reach - increasingly in communities in the developing world,<sup>13</sup> with small disposable incomes. Whilst there is some correlation between the art of commercial persuasion (to purchase products or services) and Strategic Communication, the latter has to be far more sophisticated in its identification of both audience and message. It has to presume that audiences process and interpret messages whereas advertisers can and do assume a passive audience.<sup>14</sup> Neither are the consequences of failed commercial advertising as serious as failed Strategic Communication. One less car sale may be a financial disappointment but the real world consequences of getting a Strategic Communication message wrong, of alienating an audience and possibly provoking them into violent action, far outweigh the largely financial risks of commercial advertising. The commercial sector is helpful in reminding us that the world exists within an environment where influence and persuasion are routine.

## **UNDERSTANDING HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH AUDIENCES**

Across national and international definitions there exists an inherent belief that the process of Strategic Communication will be successful. Yet, academics and practitioners argue that the complexity of the task means that success should actually be considered the exception and not the rule. In part this is due to an

immature understanding of the manner in which communication is undertaken. For strategic communication to have any chance of success, practitioners **must** understand the basic principle of communication. The simplest model of communication is the 'message influence model'<sup>15</sup> which for communication between two parties can be represented as:



This model suggests that a source (A) with ideas, intentions and information translates them into a message, which is transmitted via a channel to a receiver or audience (B). The purpose of the process is to influence the receiver (B) to understand the message in the same way as the source (A) and to subsequently act in a specific manner. This is a highly simplistic model which assumes no outside interference or conditioning of audience (B). A key underlying assumption of this model is that the process of communicating the message to the audience will be successful *unless* there is some interference in the transmission: the message is presumed to be right; it is only the communication's method that might interfere with its effectiveness. Although simple to understand the model does not reflect reality, as the following example illustrates:

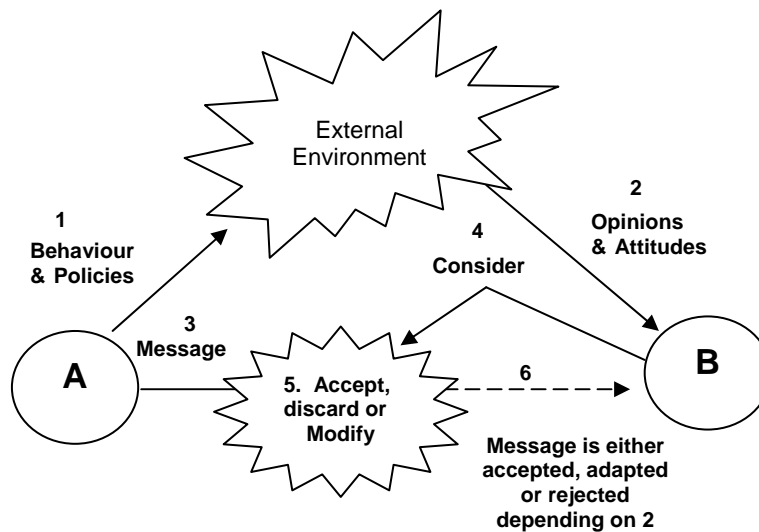
### **In Place of Gunfire, a Rain of Rocks**

**Washington Post**  
**Friday, July 9, 2004**

Such were the headlines in 2004. Coalition forces in Sadr City, Baghdad were facing a daily barrage of rocks from young children. The problem for the Coalition was how to stop it. Patently violence or even the threat of violence against children was not an option yet the stone throwing needed to end. An army Psyops team believed that they had an answer and crafted a series of leaflets which demanded that the children stop throwing stones. The leaflet drop failed.

In this example the messages to stop were interpreted by the children not as a warning but as a sign of their success against the coalition. Thus the message source was self evidently 'the enemy'. The Communications channel (the leaflets) did not resonate with the young children who either could not read or were not minded to read 'adult' leaflets. Indeed, in this example only the intended audience for the message was correctly identified by the Psyops team. Since the messages were received by the children without interference the presumption using the message influence model was that the plan would be successful; clearly a more sophisticated model is needed. A more nuanced understanding is provided by the 'Pragmatic complexity model'<sup>16</sup> which posits that communication is not a simple transmission of messages between two groups but rather is a much complex system arrangement between the sender and the receiver. The model presumes that in any communication the success of A's message depends not only on the message alone but upon what B thinks and does. And what B thinks and does is influenced by A's behaviour and B's expectations, interpretations and attributions with respect to A.

The model assumes that messages are always interpreted within a larger and ongoing communications system and that A and B are therefore locked into a relationship of simultaneous and mutual interdependence. This can be represented by the following diagram:



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

In April 2003 the UK Maritime Component Commander bemoaned the fact that the Arab media would not report the reopening of the Umm Qasr – Basra Express Train after the rebuilding of the railway by the 17th Port and Maritime Regiment. Despite widespread Western media coverage the Arab media refused to attend the facility. At the Commander's request their refusal to attend was analysed. It was found that the Arab media did not regard the rebuilding of one rail line as news worthy, when compared to the collateral damage and loss of Iraqi lives that the invasion had wrought.

This example clearly illustrates that A's message (which was 'the coalition are rebuilding Iraq') was contextualised by the recipient (and intended conduit) against the backdrop of the wider invasion and subsequently discarded. Unfortunately this model raises two further complex issues. The first is that the model presumes B is passive; however in reality B may itself be engaged in attempting to influence A. Thus A's messages may themselves be contextualised by its perceptions of B's actions. This leads to an extremely complex relationship. The second consideration is that if A can understand B's opinions and attitudes (2 in diagram above) in advance, A can prepare its messaging accordingly and thus attempt mollify the effect of step 5, thus creating a stronger message. To address complexities such as this in the operational environment, the US has created Human Terrain Teams (HTT),<sup>17</sup> composed of behavioural scientists and anthropologists – the kernel of a Strategic Communication capability for the command. At this time the UK has no such directly comparable resource although the UK Defence Academy is seeking to develop a Culture Institute that can assist pre-deployment preparation.

## NARRATIVES

An important component in ensuring the coherence of governmental communication themes within the campaign is the Narrative. Narratives may be defined as:

*A thematic and sequenced account that conveys meaning from authors to participants<sup>18</sup> about specific events.*

Narratives are not merely a set of words but, and particularly since 9/11, a more holistic idea sweeping up not just the entire corpus of texts and speeches dealing with a specific event but all the supporting symbolism and imagery. An example is the War on Terror narrative used by the US Government.

This embraces the words and speeches of the US Government and its representatives, the policy documents, laws and legislation drawn up as a result and all the symbolic and emblematic representations of the counter-terrorist campaign, from Ground Zero to Iraq.

Narratives are the foundation of all strategy. They are the organising framework for policy and the definitive reference for how events are to be argued and described. Their purpose is to bind together all of the actions of the government (possibly 'governments') when working in coalitions, and their representatives, under a common understanding. Narratives should provide structure and relevance to the meaning of a particular situation and messaging should never be disconnected from the over arching narrative stream. Narratives must be designed with flexibility in mind so that their essence is not destroyed as messages respond to contemporaneous events. They can be difficult to create since they must have utility not just for the internal and domestic participants, where we may wish to place different emphasis on issues, so called meta-narratives, but also for the adversary, particularly in the creation of counter-narratives. And it is important to remember that there is invariably a counter-narrative which is also competing for attention and resonance.

The best and most successful narratives are those which embrace ideas and terminology that quickly gain resonance with intended audiences. This is known as 'stickiness'<sup>19</sup> of messaging. An example would be the seemingly uninteresting issue of European farming subsidies, which can be enlivened (or made sticky) by the following fact:

You can fly an Australian cow, first class, from Sydney to Brussels and still sell it at below the cost of a cow in the European Union, such are the subsidies that Brussels offers European farmers.

We have seen that the message influence model of communication presumes that audiences are passive receptors who cannot doubt the veracity of the message, is of limited utility. Whilst it may work for die-hard supporters of Al-Qaeda, who have no wish to entertain any alternative point of view, it fails to work for audiences who may have alternative interpretations of events, nuances of history and cultures different to those of the sender, or simply those who are more questioning. If we subscribe to the more complex model then communication is an ongoing narrative process of sense making.<sup>20</sup> Commanders and civilian managers must therefore have an unambiguous understanding of the narrative that accompanies their activities, and the role they have in either supporting that narrative or undermining it, through their actions and words.

The narrative must be understood by all actors, military and civilian, and at all levels, so that their words and actions do not contradict its potency. In an ideal world commanders will be given clear political direction, however, more realistically, politicians may chose to defer direction (public or private) to create political manoeuvre space. Accordingly commanders must be aware of the tensions that narratives can create between organisations - be they UK government departments or international coalitions. Analysis of adversaries' narratives can greatly assist campaign planning in the determination of intent and the identification of individual factions and opinions. This is currently an extremely challenging area of campaign planning.

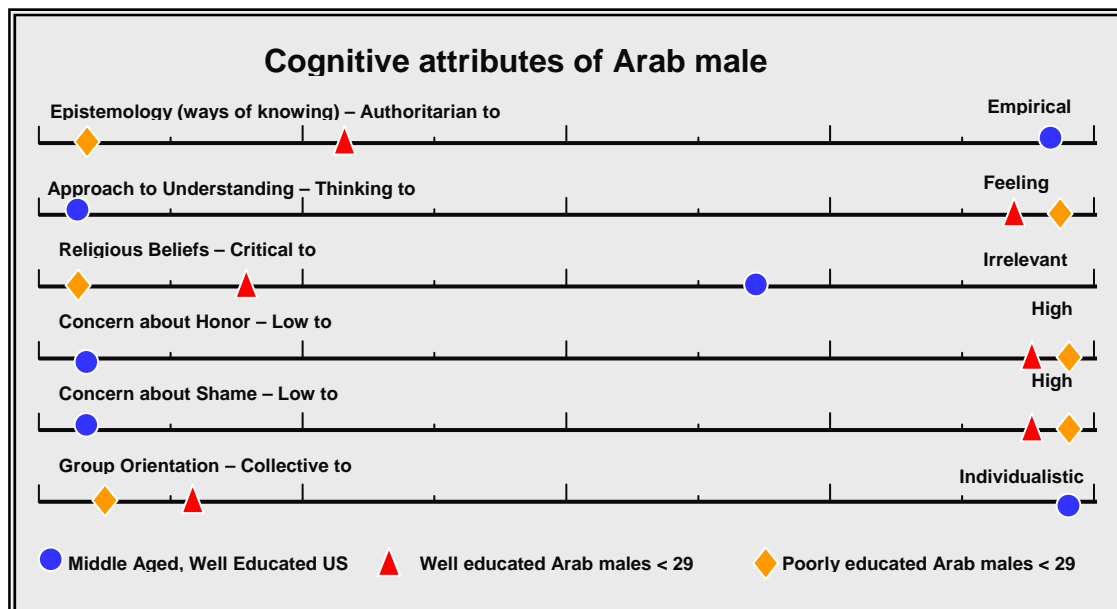
Narratives couple Strategic Communication and physical operations together; neither should be entertained without consideration of the other.

## **THE ASYMMETRY OF COMMUNICATION**

*There is no more complete way to misunderstand a foreign civilization than to see it in terms of one's own civilisation.*

Paul Bohannan, social anthropologist

An urban legend exists that concerns the US car manufacturer Chevrolet. In the 1960s it developed a model that it named the Nova. It was extremely popular and sold widely in the US. Yet the urban legend has us believe that the car never sold in the Spanish speaking world – the reason, supposedly, was because Nova in Spanish sounds just like *no va*, the term for 'does not go'. Thus the 'Chevrolet Does not Go' model did not sell well in South America. Except that it did, for the urban myth is just that – a myth. The myth's storytellers display a key error in comprehension, for they presume that English words and phrases when translated literally carry the same meaning. Yet the Nova / *no va* story does not work, for whilst cars may well 'go' in the English language they do not do so in Spanish. Instead they may *functionar* (function) or *marcher* (march) – terms that in English, when applied to a car, sound faintly ridiculous. Words, it would seem, are important, and so too are their meanings. This is known as the science of pragmatics, or achieving meaning in context. In the Pashto language there is no direct equivalent word for reconciliation, thus interpreters have to make a choice from different available words to establish context. Thus we refer to this problem as the asymmetry of communication and it is perhaps best illustrated in a comparative cognitive survey between Arab men and educated US males:<sup>21</sup>



Although only a subset of the research, the chart is illuminating for it shows that at no point do the cognitive attributes of poorly educated Arab males – whom for convenience we may choose to refer to as the Arab Street – match the attributes of educated Americans – whom for convenience we might refer to as Policy Makers. Thus when Policy Makers articulate what they consider to be a reasoned policy for a particular action their audiences are likely to be swayed more by feeling and emotion than the ‘irrefutable’ reasoning that we in the West might find so compelling. This in no way infers that western culture is superior to that of Arab or Muslim culture, instead it recognises the concept of bounded rationality,<sup>22</sup> irrespective of education. This concept posits that an individual’s actions are driven by a desire to rationalise and make logical decisions but recognises that individuals do not have the capacity to understand everything and that decision making is often limited by time. Thus decisions may not be fully thought through and can be conceived as rational only within limits. Such determinations are normally made with the benefit of hindsight.

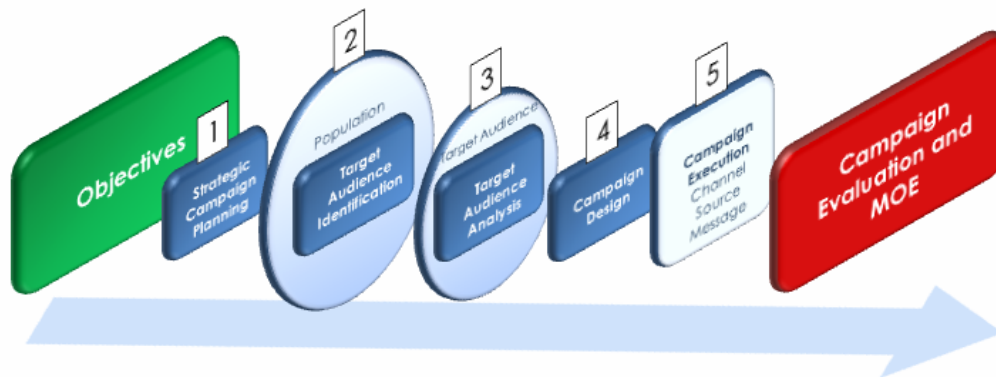
However, a granular understanding of audiences is important because it should directly affect the manner in which we communicate our message. For example, it is clear that in societies where there is no history or understanding of democracy, a message suggesting that terrorism is counter to democracy is unlikely to resonate. But, using the model above it can be seen that honour is of great importance, therefore a subtle readjustment of the message, to read that terrorism is dishonourable, may have more cognitive effect. An example from Iraq illustrates this point.<sup>23</sup>

Key MoD Information strategy messages included reference to ideas of liberation, democracy and freedom. However a telegram from the British Embassy in Damascus noted that such rhetoric was not working, and ‘that Syrians say the Iraqi people do not want to be liberated by foreign soldiers’. Reviewing these strategic messages after the conflict a respected (and US based) Imam noted that: ‘The US should explain that they are followers of Jesus Christ and that they are the sons of Abraham, like all Muslims. They came to the Holy Land, from where Abraham came, to rid the world of Lucifer – Saddam Hussein.’



## TARGET AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

As has been highlighted by the Pragmatic Complexity Model, understanding the prospective audience is a *sine qua non* of the Strategic Communication process. This preparatory phase, which is generically referred to as Target Audience Analysis (TAA), is a highly complex process for which the traditional J1-J8 structure of western armed forces may be ill-equipped. An illustrative example of the complexity of the task is the UK's Behavioural Dynamics Institute (BDi) which models the process – in military terms this would be recognised as the estimate - in six component parts:<sup>24</sup>



>**Stage 1. Strategic Campaign Planning (SCP)**, involves the clarification of the project objectives, the initial research and analysis of the population, its constituent groups, and their relationship to the problem (for instance, violence or extremism). It is the process of identifying which behaviour needs to change in which group of people to yield results that measurably contribute to achieving the strategic objectives (a reduction in non-desired behaviour, for example). Additionally, it is at this stage that one begins to identify specific baseline measures and behavioural foci to comprise the measurement of effectiveness (MOE).

>**Stage 2: Target Audience Identification.** This is the process whereby from the many groups within a given population related to a problem behaviour, one is selected as the most accessible, amenable to influence, and most closely related to the survival of the non desired behaviour. It is towards this audience that the strategic communication campaign will be directed. An example may be a particular individual – a religious leader, a tribal elder, or a group with particular influence – mothers, police officers, etc.

>**Stage 3: Target Audience Analysis.** This is the deep analysis of the identified target audience – those that we believe can affect change - using quantitative and qualitative measures - to develop an intimate understanding of the audience's various characteristics.

>**Stage 4 : Campaign Design.** This stage involves the construction of the message. The campaign design stage specifies the breadth and size of a campaign. It identifies the proper design of a campaign as it pertains to that campaign's channel, source and, importantly, message.

>**Stage 5 Campaign Execution** The campaign execution stage benefits from the previous stages of analysis, development and design, and involves executing the



campaign through the appropriate channel, with the appropriate source, using the correct message.

**>Evaluation:** Following execution of the campaign is the evaluation and MOE Stage, which involves assessment of the effectiveness of the campaign as a whole in bringing about the desired change in behaviour on the part of the target audience and particularly establishing its MOE. This process seeks to establish the characteristics and qualities of an audience and its relationship to any identified problem behaviour before developing and implementing a communication campaign. The underlying communication assumption is that a message stands a better chance of receipt and effect if it has been shaped and delivered in line with a researched and evidence-based analysis of the intended target audience.

As can be seen this is a simplification of a long and extremely technical process. The question is: does it work? The evidence is that it does, and consistently so. A recent US government funded project sought to deter radicalisation in parts of SE Asia. The project deployed the methodology prescribed by the BDi and the result was the identification of audience-based trends and tendencies towards extremism and the development of data-driven Strategic Communication programmes to bring about measurable behavioural change in those audiences. There are others, past and ongoing, which again support this process. The issue for UK forces is how such expertise can be harnessed. The reality is the current ad hoc arrangement for selecting and retaining officers in information appointments, such as media, psychological and information operations, does not allow the generation of the expertise necessary to build such skill sets. Nor does the paucity of educational material that exists at present, and the confusion of Strategic Communication with Influence and Media Operations, assist.

## **TARGET CONDUIT ANALYSIS**

Target Conduit Analysis is defined as the evaluation and utilisation of trusted and credible transmission conduits, ones that carry resonance with the intended audience, for the transmission of messages. Conduits can be traditional media (newspapers, TV, radio), emerging media (the internet, blogs, text messaging), or other communication mechanisms (such as individuals with particular resonance in specific communities). An example of each is shown:

<b>Emerging Media</b>	<b>Traditional Media</b>	<b>Other mechanisms</b>
<p>A 2008 study of Iran's blogosphere reveals that political discussion about the ruling regime is dwarfed in comparison to discussion about Persian poetry. Thus if the West wished to communicate with huge swathes of an educated population this might present a mechanism to do so.</p>	<p>The Al-Jazeera TV station's most popular show, the discussion programme 'The Opposite Direction' regularly commands audiences in excess of 30 million Arabs and its host has become an international star. Compare this with BBC Radio 4 Today programme that reaches an average of 6 million<sup>25</sup>.</p>	<p>Islamic cleric Sheikh Yusef Qaradawi carries huge credibility in the Muslim world. In 2004 he was invited to London by the Mayor to preach to British Muslims of the dangers of terrorism – even though he himself supports suicide bombings in the occupied Palestinian territories.</p>

Of key importance is establishing the credibility of the conduit. In the case of example 3 a decision may have to be taken that the credibility of the conduit outweighs other concerns, in this case support for Palestinian suicide operations. In example 2 we see that the conduit may be entirely unexpected and the messages will need very careful and nuanced crafting to fit the conduit – in this case messaging that presents an alternative narrative to that of the ruling theocracy but does so in the context of Persian poetry. Target conduit analysis is vital to the process since the most carefully and well constructed messages in the world will not be heard if they are transmitted across an in appropriate medium.

## PLACING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AT THE HEART OF OPERATIONS

*'No act of force will ever be decisive: winning the trial of strength will not deliver the will of the people, and at base that is the only true aim of any use of force in our modern conflicts.'*  
General Sir Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force*

At its core Strategic Communication seeks to communicate information that will attract support and influence opinion in specific groups. The term influence has gained increasing traction in military audiences over the last few years. The current military doctrine (JWP3-80) contains a rather elderly definition,<sup>26</sup> one that fails to recognise that the success of non-kinetic effect is amplified by threats of kinetic activity – the carrot and stick analogy. An example from Operation Palliser (Sierra Leone 2000) illustrate this point:

A difficult diplomatic environment, in which the UK was accused of colonial empire-type activities, prevented Royal Navy (RN) Harriers from carrying, let alone deploying, munitions in May 2000. Thus air missions relied on presence and noise to intimidate Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels. A request by the RN to drop bombs on mud flats outside the capital Freetown, for greater effect, was refused by the UK government. Although the flights were initially successful the RUF soon learnt that the 'threat' was actually empty and gradually gained in military confidence until OP Silkman presented a more tangible demonstration of power in Oct 2000.

Thus Influence does not mean the exclusion of hard power, nor is influence focussed solely at an enemy. For the purpose of this paper influence is defined as:

*the application of the correct balance of kinetic and non-kinetic effect to influence the will and ultimately positively affect the behaviour of a target group.*

The application of this balance will vary as the campaign progresses but will range from the power of attraction – encouraging actions based on a willingness to engage, and therefore needing no hard power, through to coercion, the persuasion by use of force or threat. The latter requires careful communication to ensure that the audience understands that the threat is conditional on the target's behaviour. For influence to be successful it has to be placed at the heart of the commander's operational intent – not as a supporting or contributing issue. The following example illustrates this point:

In 2003 the US 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division were conducting search and destroy operations in Al-Anbar province, Iraq. The intrusive house searches, which were not based on specific intelligence, were seeking weaponry and munitions. In the Operational Order the commander tasked his Information Operations (IO) cell to write a mitigating IO strategy for why the operation was necessary. However, senior US Officers in the Coalition Provisional Authority recognised that no sophisticated or clever IO campaign would make these searches palatable to the local population and that the most successful IO would actually make these searches palatable to the local population and that the most successful IO would actually be for the Brigade to not conduct the operations at that particular time.

Changing group behaviour is extremely challenging – especially when it is motivated by deeply held, particularly religious, beliefs. The group's interpretation of their historical, cultural and religious values plays a significant part in determining attitudes and resulting behaviour. In societies where literacy levels are low (and religious adherence high) communities can be highly vulnerable to narratives that are based upon specific interpretations of historical or theological texts. Military forces will face increasingly ideologically motivated adversaries whose value-systems do not readily compare with our own views on the sanctity of life and human rights. These will present considerable challenges to commanders. However, Influence campaigns stand the best chance of success when target audience analysis has been properly undertaken.

The success of influence activities is greatly enhanced when they enjoy the personal involvement of the command since they should be regarded as being integral to military operations, not subsidiary.

## **FLEETING OPPORTUNITIES**

The creation and maintenance of tempo can be the key to operational success. This also applies in the physical and cognitive spheres. Insurgencies are often made up from a complex set of factions – each with their own agendas. These agendas can be diametrically opposed to each other but for convenience they may simmer below the surface. However fault lines can appear and for short periods their actions can create the conditions which, if properly exploited, can help secure tactical and operational momentum. These are referred to as fleeting opportunities and are illustrated by the following example:

Taliban leader Mullah Omar received widespread media coverage when, in 1996, he took Mohammed's shroud out of storage in the shrine of Kharka Sharif in Kandahar, and wore it in a public rally, as a way to identify himself with the Prophet, and give himself legitimacy. However in 2007 there was no coverage of the decision of the elders of Kandahar that he should be stripped of the cloak for his un-Islamic actions. This was a fleeting opportunity.

This indicates the desirability of coupling the Strategic Communication practitioner directly with the chain of command and ensuring that they are of sufficient stature and credibility to join the command decision making process.

## **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND NETWORK MEDIA**

The last ten years has seen a remarkable growth in the range of global information sources and the personal use of social media sites, such as YouTube and Facebook, which enjoy enormous popularity, becoming important and believable news and opinion formers. There is a danger that this new media – often referred to as social or digital media - is viewed as a leisure activity and not an avenue for telling a story or communicating with audiences. Both the social and digital media prefixes are unhelpful. Digital implies 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology, which although forming a huge component of work may erroneously encourage us to overlook age old conduits such as tribal meetings - conduits that in certain operational environments retain great importance. A better appreciation is gained when it is considered as network or peer-to-peer media. This mental shift helps position the internet as a strong, powerful communication tool, and not just a place to while away leisure activity, and allows for older, but nevertheless extremely important, non technology-based communication conduits.

Network media should also generate a note of caution, for lax oversight can render invaluable assistance to our adversaries and their supporters. For example, YouTube videos of British troops celebrating air strikes in Afghanistan have appeared in Salafi Jihadist videos as 'proof' of a war against civilians and against Islam.

The 2008 US presidential election was the first to truly harness the power of the web. Two examples help illustrate the point – both concern the ultimately successful presidential candidate Barack Obama. The first is his mobilisation of the web for recruitment of supporters and backers. Nearly 10 million American voters registered with the Obama campaign, forming what one commentator noted as the 'world's largest focus group'.<sup>27</sup> His political enemies also found the web to be an important tool. By the time of the election over 12m people had downloaded the 'Dear Mr Obama' video made by a former US serviceman in which he explained why he would not vote for Barack Obama. Regardless of political preference the use of new media bypassed the traditional political media and placed Washington media establishments in 'the unusual position of being outsiders on a relationship between a President and his public'.<sup>28</sup>

In 2008 the British Army ran a series of recruiting adverts on TV and on the web. One such advert advertised the position of a female clerk; amongst her operational duties were searching Iraqi women. The searches were shown in detail and viewers invited to log onto the Army website where 'the adventure would continue'. The footage was downloaded by Salafi Jihadist sites and used to show that even women in the British Army were trained to 'defile Islam' and that its act was being used as a positive recruiting tool.

As part of the communications planning process commanders will wish to consider the utility of new media. Banning video cameras and phones in the field of battle may prevent unauthorised release of material to sites such as YouTube but it might also have a serious and detrimental effect upon morale. New media will increasingly present commanders with hard choices – and opportunities for communicating with audiences.

## MEASUREMENTS

Throughout the Strategic Communication process measurements must be taken. Measurements of effectiveness (MOE) have a number of definitions, however it is important to understand that MOE is a scientific process and thus best defined in scientific terms. For the purposes of this paper, MOE can be defined as:

*the difference, or conceptual difference, from a given system state to a desired end state.*

MOE is an important part of the Strategic Communication process and should be undertaken regularly and with great care such that ongoing activities can be recalibrated as circumstances change. MOE can be extremely complex and requires not just an understanding of the desired end state but a clear familiarity with the societal norms for the environment in which operations are being conducted.

In recent years polling has become increasingly important to the determination of attitudes and, subsequently, to the formulation of policy. Chiefly this is because

polling is perceived as being the easiest technique for accessing audience information and as a consequence an entire industry has grown up to support its use. Whilst polling is undeniably useful it should not be considered perfect. Polling is a particularly normal western construct yet in certain societies, where the expression of a personal opinion is either dangerous (for, say, women in Afghanistan) or actually anathema to individuals who traditionally would accede to the views of elders or tribal / group leaders, it is regarded with suspicion and so should its results. Polls can provide an immediate indication of opinion but opinions can change very quickly. The results of polls may therefore not be indicative of the future - particularly in highly dynamic environments.

An August 2008 poll showed that 80% of Basrans professed confidence in the Iraqi security forces to protect them. Yet one major bomb attack would almost certainly reverse that figure. However, the poll was supported by additional evidence that lent greater weight to its findings. Basra had been able to hold its annual poetry festival for the first time in some years, the Basra diaspora were slowly returning to the city and house prices had doubled in just five months.

Thus it is incumbent upon commanders to be circumspect, particularly if the underlying methodology of the poll is not presented alongside the poll results or the results are offered without supporting collateral evidence. A classic BBC comedy programme from the 1980s illustrates the potential difficulties associated with surveys and polling:

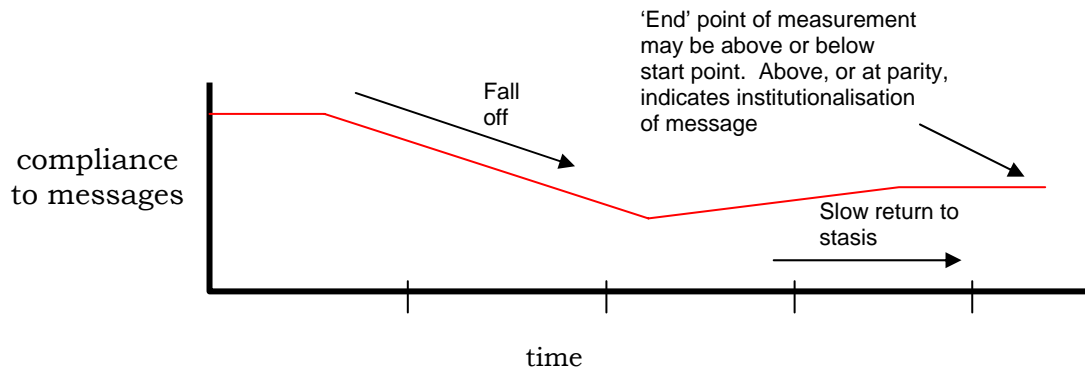
<b>BBC SITCOM Yes Minister 1986 © BBC</b>	
<b><i>Sir Humphrey Appleby, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry for Administrative Affairs demonstrates to the Under Secretary how public surveys can reach opposite conclusions.</i></b>	
Sir Humphrey Appleby	<b>Mr. Woolley, are you worried about the rise in crime among teenagers?</b>
Bernard Woolley	Yes
Sir Humphrey Appleby	<b>Do you think there is lack of discipline and vigorous training in our Comprehensive Schools?</b>
Bernard Woolley	Yes
Sir Humphrey Appleby	<b>Do you think young people welcome some structure and leadership in their lives?</b>
Bernard Woolley	Yes
Sir Humphrey Appleby	<b>Do they respond to a challenge?</b>
Bernard Woolley	Yes
Sir Humphrey Appleby	<b>Might you be in favour of reintroducing National Service?</b>

Bernard Woolley	Yes
Sir Humphrey Appleby	<b>Of course, after all you've said you can't say no to that. On the other hand, the surveys can reach opposite conclusions. Mr. Woolley, are you worried about the danger of war?</b>
Bernard Woolley	Yes
Sir Humphrey Appleby	<b>Are you unhappy about the growth of armaments?</b>
Bernard Woolley	Yes
Sir Humphrey Appleby	<b>Do you think there's a danger in giving young people guns and teaching them how to kill?</b>
Bernard Woolley	Yes.
Sir Humphrey Appleby	<b>Do you think it's wrong to force people to take arms against their will?</b>
Bernard Woolley	Yes.
Sir Humphrey Appleby	<b>Would you oppose the reintroduction of conscription?</b>
Bernard Woolley	Yes.
Sir Humphrey Appleby	<b>There you are, Bernard. The perfectly balanced sample.</b>

It is necessary therefore to develop more nuanced measurements of effectiveness, which may often be very local in nature. Although examples of past MOE can be helpful, doctrine must not be too prescriptive since MOE must emerge from the communication process and is entirely focussed upon the specific audience. MOE can be a nominal such as High, Medium or Low, or it may be more precise such as Yes or No. Regardless, it must be based upon a baseline measurement – the audience's behaviour (or attitude) before the strategic communication process and then again afterwards – how long afterwards itself being an important consideration.

## MEASUREMENTS THROUGH TIME

Strategic Communication is time sensitive. The presumption is that a strategic communication campaign will permanently alter behaviour; however empirical evidence shows that messages normally decay over time. Commanders will therefore need to consider the time period in which their communications are designed to function and, if it is not to become institutionalised (see below) what, if any, campaign will be needed to be run again.



A very few campaigns do become self-perpetuating, which is the desired end state of Strategic Communication, and the messages and themes of the campaign become institutionalised within the existing societal structure. These campaigns are typically ones with no external signature on them.

## SUMMARY

*We must be prepared to pass over to the offensive and not to leave the initiative to the enemy, but to make them defend themselves.*

Christopher Mayew

Address to Cabinet on combating Soviet propaganda

Jan 1948<sup>29</sup>

Strategic Communication is widely misunderstood. At best it is seen by the military as a developing term for media and information operations. At worst it is seen as spin and propaganda. The inarticulacy of both ignore what it is – an extremely powerful tool that may hold the key to the dilemma of 21<sup>st</sup> century conflict, the power of information and opinion and its ability to enable behavioural change. What prompted, for example, 12m people to watch a 3 minute video from a former US soldier on YouTube slating Barack Obama's pans for Iraq? And what was its effect? Why have Al-Qaeda invested such time and resource in their media campaign and how would the war against extremism look if they had not? What role did their information campaign play in prompting educated young British Muslims to strap rucksacks of explosives to their backs and descend to the London Underground? A less directed example of Strategic Communication is the apparent bounce in global polls measuring the popularity of the United States. With no change in policies and the same incumbent US president, the success of Barack Obama in the election campaign saw an almost instantaneous rise in US popularity – based not on tangible policy declarations, and certainly on no orchestrated global information campaign, but on a vague belief, or hope, for change to come.

And yet for all the sophistication of the current information environment, paradoxically these are not new skills, merely ones that we must relearn. The Political Warfare Executive (PWE) of World War 2 employed academics, journalists, scientists, housewives, misfits and reprobates – all possessing a common thread of innovation and an ability to think – to harness their eclectic skills and personalities to fight the Allies' information battle against Nazi Germany. Was it because it was a war of national survival that PWE was accepted, even congratulated whilst the 2007 announcement by the British government of the establishment of the Research, Information and Communication Unit (RICU) was met with such public derision and scorn?. RICU, a trilateral organisation funded and staffed by the Home Office, CLG (Communities & Local Government) and the FCO - the absence of MOD is



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noteworthy - is engaged in countering the messages put out by violent extremists and to strengthening the government's communication with communities and organisations that partner in tackling terrorism. Such initiative should be welcomed. However its remit may actually not be wide enough, for it pre-supposes that all threats are posed by violent extremists – they are not. Who deals with those that seek to change our society and advance their goals by subtlety and guile?

Civilian companies' marketing fast moving consumer items typically spend around 15% of their operating budget on their marketing operation. If we subscribe to Prime Minister Gordon Brown's oft quoted phrase that our current conflicts against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda are 'battles of ideas',<sup>30</sup> and if we accept the premise that the future will see increasing need for innovative techniques not just of engagement but pre-eminently of prevention, then governments may wish to maximise their application of Strategic Communication with a commensurate investment in its resource, education and training.

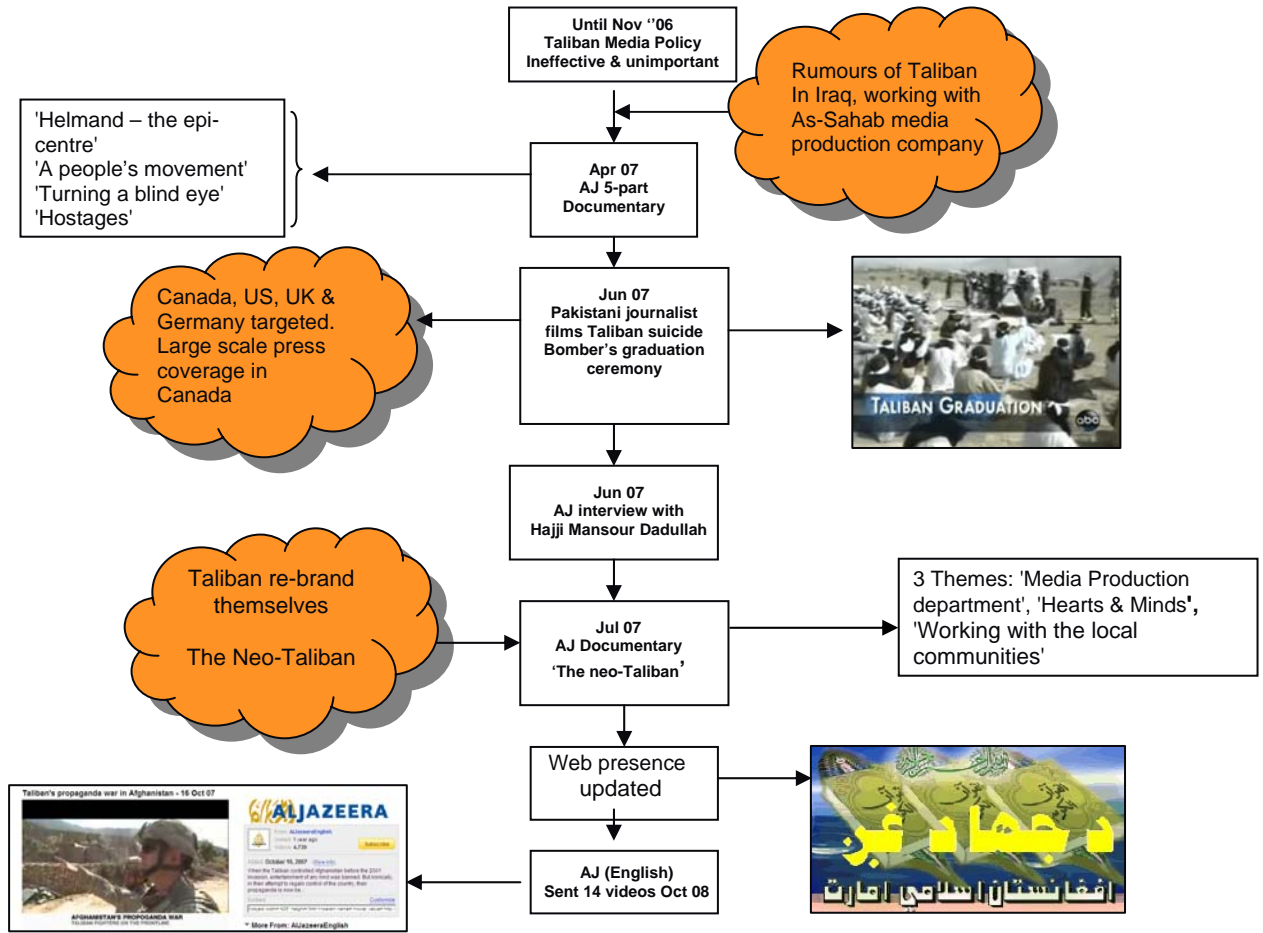
## The Development of the Taliban's Information Strategy 2006-2008

The early years of the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan were not known for their press freedom. Technology was unwelcome, images of human beings considered apostate and world public opinion largely irrelevant. Yet since December 2006 the information environment has unexpectedly become a key component of their campaign, demonstrating both a surprising agility of mind and a developed grasp of the role of information to their heavily outgunned insurgency. This properly began in late 2006 when reports began circulating that the Taliban had sent representatives to Iraq, not to view the insurgency *per se* but instead to learn how Al-Qaeda's video production arm – Al-Sahab – depicted that insurgency to its followers, both through conventional and emerging media.

Early in 2007 the West began to see the results of their education. Videos started appearing on the internet which looked just a little more professional and, of more consequence, were appearing more quickly than previously. By April the Taliban had their very first embedded journalist in place. Al-Jazeera's Pakistan correspondent produced a 5 part series for his multi-million Arab and Islamic audience. One episode was entitled 'The People's Movement' and gave the first indication of a concerted Taliban 'hearts and minds' campaign. In that piece an (alleged) female Afghan doctor declares her support for the Taliban, her burqa conspicuously absent, whilst tribal elders speak with approval of the peace and security that the Taliban had brought. In June 2007 a video of a Taliban suicide graduation ceremony reached the international media and caused consternation in Canadian media in particular, with its assertion that the Taliban could send its suicide bombers to Ottawa and London. Unlikely, but like the female doctor, a fine piece of directed Information Operations. In June the new Taliban commander Mansor Dadullah provided a long and detailed interview with Al-Jazeera and in July 2007 the Taliban announced to the world, again via the conduits of Al-Jazeera and the web, that they have re-branded themselves as 'neo-taliban'. Key in the channel's three part documentary was the filming of the Taliban's media centre; sophisticated video editing equipment, much of it in the English language, being used to churn out the Taliban's message. Throughout 2008 the momentum was maintained and in autumn of that year the Taliban provided Al-Jazeera International (the English language channel) some 14 video tapes of their operations against coalition troops.

A summary of the campaign's development is provided below:

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## Human Terrain Teams

In a bid to understand the cultural dimension of 21<sup>st</sup> Century warfare the US military's Foreign Military Studies Office began the task of establishing and deploying the Human Terrain System (HTS) – five man teams, comprising social scientists and military personnel, who would advise operational and tactical level commanders on cultural awareness shortcomings. It was not a new idea; in the Vietnam war the US military established with the South Vietnamese government a Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support programme (CORDS), designed specifically to 'win hearts and minds'. CORDS was premised on the belief that the war would be won (or lost) not on the battlefield but in the struggle for loyalty of the people.

Such thinking is derived from the work of strategists such as French military officer David Galula who wrote '*Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*' after seeing service in Algeria, Hong Kong, China and Greece. In recent years Galula's book has enjoyed a resurgence in interest, particularly amongst US forces grappling with the issues of Iraq. Central to Galula's writing is the idea of winning the consent of the population:

*Which side gives the best protection, which one threatens the most, which one is most likely to win, these are the criteria governing the population's stand.... Political, social, economic and other reforms, however much they ought to be wanted and popular, are inoperative when offered while the insurgent still controls the population.*

Galula's 1964 book bears a remarkable similarity to the comments contained within the executive summary of a 2007 US Department of Defense report on HTS:

*The local population in the area of conflict – the human terrain – must be considered as a distinct and critical element of the battlespace. Therefore, the Human Terrain Team (HTT) seeks to integrate and apply socio-cultural knowledge of the indigenous population to military operations in support of the commander's objectives. In the words of one HTT member, 'One anthropologist can be much more effective than a B-2 bomber – not winning a war, but creating a peace one Afghan at a time'.*

By 14 April 2007 38 HTS personnel were deployed in Iraq distributed among 5 teams. Of those 8 were social scientists and 13 spoke Arabic. Their deployment was clearly popular and they sought to manage some key issues. First and foremost was to provide commanders with relevant socio-cultural knowledge and understanding, and to extend that further by providing specialists able to help integrate that understanding into the military decision making process. Secondly, and of key importance, the HTS teams sought to minimize the loss of knowledge and local understanding which occurred every time a unit rotated out of theatre. As the DoD report noted,

*That soldiers on their second - or third - tours possess inestimable knowledge about the area in which they are operating is undeniable. Yet, as currently organized, combat brigades do not possess the organic staff capability or assets to organize this knowledge ...Therefore, it is the job of HTTs to take the knowledge these soldiers have gleaned, to examine the information already being gathered on the ground on a daily basis, engage in original research, and consider this information in terms of broader issues from a different*

Strategic Communication: A Primer

*perspective in order to add to the brigade commander's situational awareness of the social, economic, political, cultural and psychological factors at work in the environment.*

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## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> See *How the Weak Win Wars: A theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, Ivan Arreguin Toft, Cambridge Press.
- <sup>2</sup> It is a concept well understood by our adversaries. 'It is obvious that the media war in this century is one of the strongest methods; in fact, its ratio may reach 90% of the total preparation of the battle,' declared Osama Bin Laden in 2002.
- <sup>3</sup> The Taliban have provided the most compelling evidence of this. Since late 2006 their information campaign has grown enormously; where once before the media was seen to be apostate, today it is clearly regarded by the Taliban leadership as an invaluable weapon in their armoury. A summary of the growth of that campaign is provided at Annex A.
- <sup>4</sup> A thematic and sequenced account that conveys meaning from authors to audiences about specific events.
- <sup>5</sup> *The Trouble with Strategic Communication(s)*, Dennis Murphy, *IOSphere*, Winter 2008.
- <sup>6</sup> Such as the British Council, educational and cultural exchanges and the BBC World Service.
- <sup>7</sup> Such as media, psychological and Information operations.
- <sup>8</sup> *Techniques of Persuasion: From Propaganda to Brainwashing*, JAC Brown, Pelican Books, 1964.
- <sup>9</sup> Quoted in *Propaganda*, Edward Bernays, IG Publishing, 2005 reprint from 1928.
- <sup>10</sup> *Propaganda and persuasion*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Garth s Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell.
- <sup>11</sup> *Propaganda*, Edward Bernays, IG Publishing, 2005 reprint from 1928.
- <sup>12</sup> Authors Lasmar & Oliver assess Britain's propaganda output in the Second World War. They noted that it tried to adhere to the truth and note that government insiders say that their emphasis on the mobilisation of truth – so called grey propaganda – was more effective as a means of influencing public opinion than deception – so called black propaganda. *Britain's Secret Propaganda War*, Sutton Press, 1998, Page 36.
- <sup>13</sup> The phenomenal growth of mobile phones in Afghanistan is an example.
- <sup>14</sup> A television advert for a car is inherently a scatter gun approach – the advert reaching a wide spectrum of society defined not by their interest in cars but by their ownership of a television or radio on which to receive the advert.
- <sup>15</sup> This is based upon Shannon & Weaver's *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, 1949. It is used in this paper for illustrative purposes only; Shannon and Weaver's model was not developed with Strategic Communication in mind but to examine interference in telephony. It has subsequently, and perhaps erroneously, become used as a useful illustrative model for Strategic Communication. The criticisms levelled at the model in the Strategic Communication environment do not detract from its original purpose, which remains extant.
- <sup>16</sup> A deliberately simplified derivative of Corman, Trethewey and Goodall's model, *A New Communication Model for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. An understanding of the full model, beyond the scope of this paper, will be essential to the understanding of this process.
- <sup>17</sup> Human Terrain Teams are detailed in Annex B.
- <sup>18</sup> Traditional definitions of narratives refer to audiences, however this implicitly suggests passivity. The use of the word 'participant' recognises the more complex communication model previously described.
- <sup>19</sup> Although its genesis lies in the word 'meme' – a neologism coined in 1976 by Richard Dawkins in *The Selfish Gene*. Stickiness is described in detail in *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell, Back Bay Books.
- <sup>20</sup> *Weapons of Mass Persuasion. Strategic Communication to Combat Violent Extremism*, Corman, Peter Lamb Press.
- <sup>21</sup> *Applied Futures Inc*, Christine A MacNulty, 2006.
- <sup>22</sup> See *Bounded Rationality: The Adaptive Toolbox* by Gerd Gigerenzer, Reinhard Selten, MIT Press, 2002.
- <sup>23</sup> *Losing Arab Hearts and Minds: The Coalition, Al-Jazeera & Muslim Public Opinion*, S Tatham, Hurst & Co, 2006.
- <sup>24</sup> © UK Behavioural Dynamics Institute / Strategic Communications Laboratories Ltd.
- <sup>25</sup> <http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=1&storycode=41784>
- <sup>26</sup> 'An activity whose primary purpose is to influence the will of the enemy through the promotion of targeted messages at specific audiences'.
- <sup>27</sup> 'Obama's wi-fi White House speaks to the YouTube age', *The Observer*, 16 Nov 08.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> *Britain's Secret Propaganda War 1948-1977*, Lashmar & Oliver, 1998.

<sup>30</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/5416268.stm>





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