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SH/STC/15-309090

1710/TSC FCO 0260/TT-140221/Ser:NU0024

TO: See Distribution

SUBJECT: **NATO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS HANDBOOK (DRAFT FOR USE).**

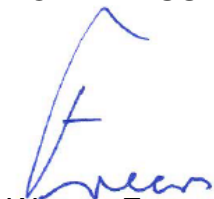
DATE: 19 May 2015

REFERENCES: A. MCM-0085-2010, Military Concept for NATO Strategic Communications, dated August 2010.
B. IMSWM-0051-2011(SD1), NATO Strategic Communications Military Capability Implementation Plan (CIP), dated 21 April 2011.
C. PO (2009) 0141, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, dated 29 September 2009.

1. With the publication of Reference A, there was acknowledgement of the need for dedicated focus on, and capability development within Strategic Communications (StratCom). Reference B tasked ACT to develop a StratCom Handbook in order to improve NATO's capabilities in the Information Environment.
2. The StratCom Handbook describes processes, procedures and tools of StratCom within the military organisation for all levels in order to improve consistent conduct of operations and messaging through the various communication functions in NATO.
3. It provides useful guidelines of NATO StratCom process and creates an accurate understanding of the NATO StratCom Framework to be implemented in the operational planning process, built around the Narrative.
4. The handbook will be released as a "Draft for use" version and will be reviewed after 18 months to take all lessons identified from 2015 exercises and experimentation into account.

5. If you should have any questions, the ACT point of contact is Maj Angelo Arcangeli (angelo.arcangeli@act.nato.int), and the SHAPE point of contact is Wg Cdr Jon Gunther (jonathan.gunther@shape.nato.int).

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ENCLOSURE:

1. NATO Strategic Communications Handbook (Draft for Use).

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ENCLOSURE 1 TO
1710/TSC FCO 0260/TT-140221/Ser:NU0024
DATED 19 MAY 15

NATO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS HANDBOOK (DRAFT FOR USE)

Ver 9.1.21 – 31 March 2015

NATO UNCLASSIFIED

PREFACE

1. Scope

This handbook is an operational level document on NATO Strategic Communications (StratCom). It is a “Draft for Use” document and provides the fundamental principles, techniques, and procedures that are evolving in NATO. This handbook serves as a bridge between the current practices in the field and future processes and techniques. As such, the intent is to inform Commanders, staff, educators and trainers of StratCom for inclusion in the planning, development and implementation of NATO doctrine and training.

2. Content

This handbook outlines current policy, identifies some best practices, and offers some techniques and procedures currently in use or identified as most promising solutions for future missions (in a sense of optimal implementation). It also addresses techniques, procedures, and implications for further development of StratCom related doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities and most importantly, interoperability (DOTMLPFI).

3. Development

Development of this handbook was based on current NATO policy and directives on StratCom, Multinational Publications, approved and emerging joint, multinational, and multi-service procedures; other related NATO directives and Allied Joint Publications (AJP). Additional research involved multinational experimentation and discussions with StratCom Subject Matter Experts (SME), StratCom conferences and working groups, and various related reports, articles and publications.

4. Application

This handbook is not approved doctrine, but is a supplement to current NATO StratCom policy that can assist Commanders and their staffs in planning and executing StratCom related activities. The information herein will assist the Alliance in the development and implementation of doctrine and further identify and amend current NATO practices. It will serve as a pool of good ideas for optimal implementation of StratCom processes, procedures and structures based on specific operational needs. Every mission will be different and therefore will require a tailored adaption of the suggested approach of this handbook.

5. Point of Contact

If there are any questions, concerns, or need for clarification, please contact Maj. Angelo ARCANGELI at angelo.arcangeli@act.nato.int.

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CHAPTER I – UNDERSTANDING STRATCOM

1-1. **Introduction.** NATO is operating in an era where communication is critical to success and the various methods of communication are constantly evolving in rapid and often unpredictable ways that require understanding and flexibility in order to respond effectively. All of the challenges facing NATO have a critical information component, whether it is countering our opponents' use of information, or working to sustain the support of the public through timely and accurate communication. Changes in the global Information Environment (IE) offer both opportunities and threats to NATO as potential adversaries try to exploit this particular area. Responding to contemporary communication challenges will consequently require bold reform of structures, working methods and mind-sets. The information age, with its cheap, accessible and interactive technology can be exploited by competent adversaries to “design” perception to affect a directed reality. Accurate and timely dissemination of information for both kinetic and non-kinetic activities pose particular problems for NATO. NATO StratCom processes and policy must address these issues to ensure the Alliance's success.

1-2. **The Information Environment.** The evolving IE is the virtual and physical space, in which information is received, processed and conveyed; it consists of actors, the information itself and information systems. The actors include leaders, decision-makers, individuals, social entities and organizations. Information systems include the materials and systems employed to collect, apply or disseminate information. The IE itself is where humans and automated systems observe, orient, decide and act upon information and is therefore the principle environment of opinion building and decision-making. Changes over time to the IE have essentially led to a behavioural shift in decision making processes, community organization, and social structures. With the advent of modern technology, particularly social media, an almost limitless amount of information has pervaded society. Today not only political parties, religious organizations and official institutions are mechanisms for change, but now individual influence has become a major factor in effecting change as well. Individuals now have the power to organise movements from the comfort of their home and attract millions of supporters from all over the planet.

a. Understanding the IE is a fundamental component for operations planning, and is particularly important for effective StratCom. The Commander must understand an audience's mind-set and how the environment is perceived before and after the commencement of operations. It requires in depth analysis of the relevant social, political, economic, and communication networks.

b. The diverse nature of StratCom and wide geographic area of its stakeholders, demands innovative working processes and offers opportunities to develop operating practices more in tune with the flat, but highly dynamic network structures found both in information businesses and among potential adversaries. A strong emphasis must be placed on collaborative working through a comprehensive approach, which provides physical and virtual linkages between relevant stakeholders. In addition, coordination and synchronisation of all communication is vital to the delivery of synchronised effects in the IE. This approach also fits with effective use of the decentralised, mission oriented principles of Mission Command and the use of strategic narratives as guiding information strategies/frameworks. Furthermore, all Headquarters (HQs) should ensure

that engagement on StratCom-related issues is established with external organizations and groups which contribute to the delivery of Information effects. There will be a requirement to coordinate NATO Information activities within the Alliance as well as with Non-NATO Entities (NNE) such as International Organizations/Non-Governmental Organizations (IOs/NGOs).

1-3. **NATO and the IE.** Complex crises do not lend themselves to simple definition or analysis. Today's challenges demand a comprehensive approach by the international community, including the coordinated action from an appropriate range of civil and military actors, enabled by the orchestration, coordination and de-confliction of NATO's military and political instruments with the other instruments of power. Based on a fundamental agreement of NATO members and mission partners, national as well as multinational, military and civil instruments should be employed in concert. ***This guidance – a NATO approved StratCom Framework¹ – should provide a narrative for clear and consistent action to create coherence in the IE.*** As NATO's political/military situation evolves for a given situation, a revised strategic guidance could be provided to adjust the planning and execution of information activities accordingly.

1-4. **Operational Lessons Identified in the IE.** Current communication efforts have addressed many significant deficiencies identified in the overall StratCom processes and C2 structures. The most notable specific areas which require improvement include:

- a. Update and/or develop policy and doctrine.
- b. Develop standard processes and procedures for coherent and consistent communication.
- c. Increase capacity to analyse and assess the IE.
- d. The integration of communication into operations planning.
- e. Awareness and sophistication in NATO's use of communication technology (e.g., Social Media).
- f. Empowerment and authority to release information.
- g. Increase volume, pace, capacity and coherence in NATO communication processes accompanied by guidance for forces in theatre.
- h. Reduction of stovepipes throughout all communications functions.
- i. StratCom integration in exercises.

¹ At NAC level the development of an Information Strategy may be considered as strategic politic document in due time

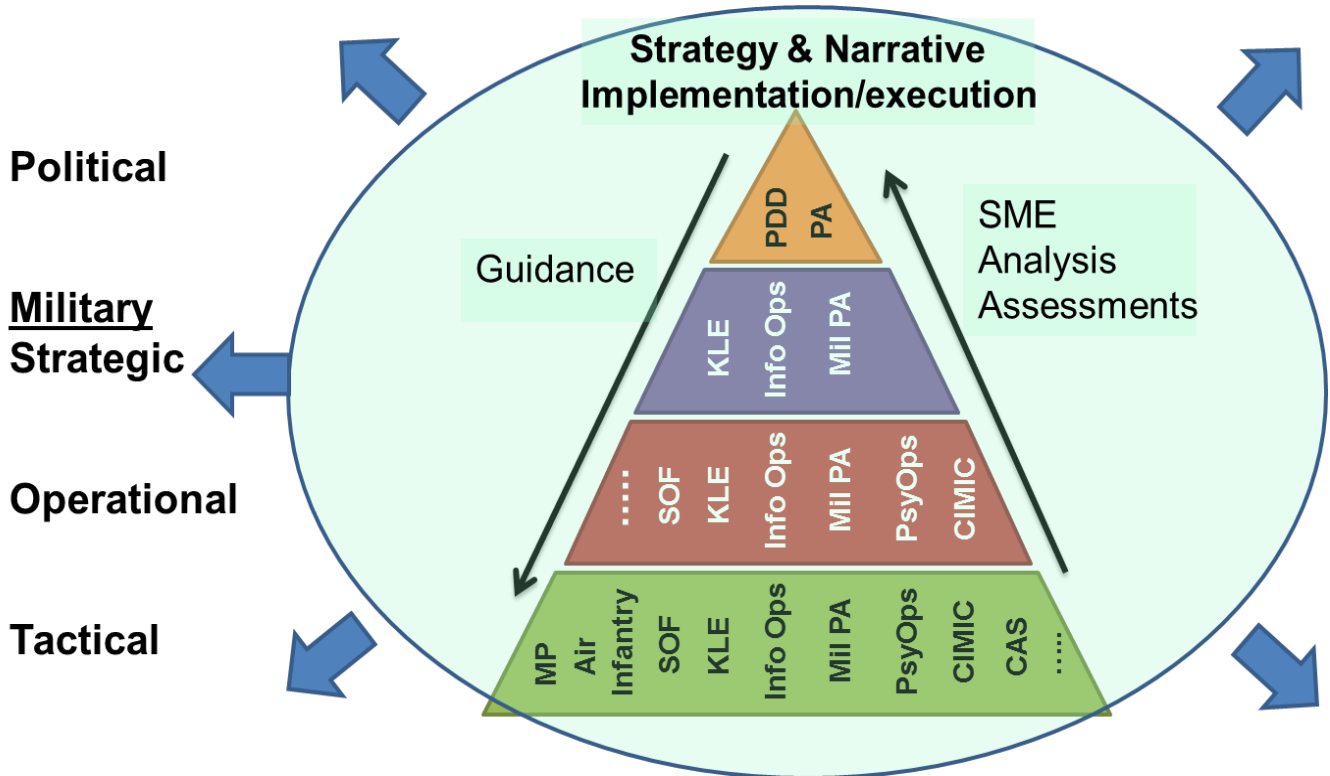
1-5. **NATO Strategic Communications.** NATO StratCom addresses both the changing global security environment and the challenges/opportunities in the IE through close coordination, synchronisation, and collaboration of various communication functions within fire and manoeuvre operations. StratCom, therefore, shall be addressed and incorporated throughout all operational processes. Thus NATO StratCom is defined as:

“The coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities – Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs (PA), Military Public Affairs, Information Operations (Info Ops) and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), as appropriate – in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO’s aims.”²

This is taken to mean the use of vertical interactions between HQs in order to achieve message uniformity and horizontal interactions. Within a headquarters, it should synchronise information activities, lethal and non-lethal, in order to ensure clear, credible and timely messaging aligned with the NATO narrative. These interactions are represented in Figure 1-1. At the operational level, ACO is responsible for synchronising military lethal actions, with non-lethal military and non-military activities. Hence, the ACO StratCom definition is:

“In cooperation with NATO HQ, the coordinated and appropriate use of Military PA, Info Ops and PSYOPS which, in concert with other military actions and following NATO political guidance, advances NATO’s aims and operations.”

² PO (2009)0141, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, dated 29 Sep 09.



- | | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| MP: | Military Police | SOF: | Special Operation Forces |
| KLE: | Key Leader Engagement | InfoOps: | Information Operations |
| Mil PA: | Military Public Affairs | PsyOps: | Psychological Operations |
| CIMIC: | Civil Military Cooperation | CAS: | Close Air Support |
| PDD: | Public Diplomacy Department | PA: | Publics Affairs |

Fig. 1-1 Vertical and Horizontal Information Flow

Each level of the pyramid has very unique capabilities. The political and strategic level provides the over-arching guidance and narrative. The operational and tactical possess to the capabilities and expertise to provide additional assessments and feedback to the higher echelons. They also have the capabilities to plan and coordinate information activities. It is clear that moving up the pyramid is a more complicated and time consuming process where many SMEs must conduct difficult analysis and assessment of the IE in order to build products to deliver to the top level. As an integral part of this process there should be various “coordination boards” that are held at the commands to integrate crucial information. Details of these meetings and boards are covered in section 5-4 illustrating how each contributes to the information and communications process. With all the analysis and assessment of the IE completed, the final products are provided to the top level in order to develop the Information Strategy (IS) and Narrative so the appropriate “guidance” can then be provided to the lower levels.

By recognising the need to develop and enhance communication in the IE, StratCom will play an integral part in the efforts to achieve the Alliance's political and military objectives. NATO's StratCom policy enables the organization to:

- a. Enhance coherence of its communication mechanisms, both civilian and military.
- b. Communicate better with key audiences including international actors and organizations.
- c. Make best use of its resources.
- d. Enhance internal communications.

1-6. **StratCom Purpose, Process and Definitions.** For the purposes of this handbook, the role of StratCom can be best understood by understanding the following working terms and definitions:

- a. **StratCom Purpose.** The purpose of NATO StratCom is to facilitate the coordination between the communication functions throughout all levels, both horizontally and vertically amongst the related disciplines and synchronise them with manoeuvre operations in order to ensure clear, credible, and timely messaging and actions aligned with the NATO Narrative. To ensure the consistency and credibility of themes and messages, NATO StratCom will provide oversight and facilitate interaction and mutual awareness among the various communication functions. Proper integration of all communication functions should be implemented at all levels of policy, planning and execution to develop communication's products throughout any and all operations.
- b. **StratCom Process.** NATO regards StratCom as a process rather than a capability. In this context the role of StratCom is that of "process manager" requiring StratCom supporting staff and structure to ensure the process stays on track. This will involve active participation in planning and setting objectives and effects, removing any barriers to effective cooperation, encouraging strategic and long-term perspectives, assessing performance and seeking to improve both activities and outputs. This staff should therefore consist of trained personnel from the communication functions with a high degree of planning expertise.
- c. **StratCom Mind-set.** NATO also regards StratCom as a mind-set that promotes a broader understanding of communication, which goes beyond traditional media and non-lethal approaches to the achievement of desired effects in the IE. This mind-set must permeate from strategic/operational Commanders down to the tactical level. Staffs should include resident experts in all communication functions to help facilitate understanding and use of the Alliance's narrative, unity of effort, cultural awareness, consistency, credibility and applicability.
- d. **The Communication Functions.** Although consideration of the IE should be at the heart of all planning and execution of all NATO activities, the Alliance has a number of specialised staffs that are specifically tasked with communication planning and

execution and provide support and advice to Alliance leadership and military staffs regarding communication. The StratCom process garners the expertise from these specialist staff elements to better coordinate and integrate communication objectives throughout all NATO processes. For the purposes of this document the term “Communications Functions” will refer to PA, Info Ops, and PSYOPS and at the political/strategic level, Public Diplomacy.

e. **Information Activities.** Information activities are defined as actions designed to affect information and/or information systems. They can be performed by any actor and include protection measures.³

f. **Narratives.** For the use of this document, the term Narrative shall be defined as:

“A concise but comprehensive written statement of an organization’s situation and purpose, which can stand on its own as the principle context to strategic planning directives or be used to support the creation of individual culturally attuned stories that will resonate with particular audiences and foster cohesion within the organization”.⁴

g. **Information Strategy (IS).** The Information Strategy (IS) should provide the basis to tie all instruments of power together to achieve unity of effort. It should include the initial Narrative to ensure coherence and guidance in the progression of strategic level planning and subsequent operational level and below. If implemented at NATO HQ, it may be endorsed by NAC to set clear guidance in advance of any planning and support unified activities of member nations and partners. IS development is not currently employed in NATO HQ.

h. **NATO StratCom Framework.** The StratCom Framework for major operations, missions or activities will be issued by NATO HQ (PDD) to provide top-level D&G for all associated NATO Public Diplomacy, PA, military PA, Info Ops and PSYOPS planning and activities. In the absence of a NATO HQ Framework there will be an ACO level Framework for all operations and missions. The purpose of a framework is to provide overarching guidance common to all in order to generate a 'golden thread' linking top to bottom. For smaller operations, missions or activities subordinate HQs can generate their own frameworks, provided they are coordinated with SHAPE StratCom. This will usually apply to smaller missions and operations of significance to subordinate HQs, but where NATO HQ does not wish to closely engage. Such products will nevertheless fit within NATO HQ’s overarching guidance. Each level of command will then create more specific messaging and implementation plans that are appropriate to their circumstances.⁵

b. **Communication/Implementation Plan.** Will be written by a subordinate command to support appropriate coordination and synchronization of information activities. The communication/implementation plan describes the appropriate implementation

³ MC 0422/5, NATO MILITARY POLICY ON INFORMATION OPERATIONS, Jan 2015

⁴ MNIOE White paper, Narrative Development in Coalition Operations, v. 1.0, 1 Sept 2014

⁵ ACO Directive 95-2

process that is necessary to put the framework into action. Using the framework guidance, specific actions appropriate to different levels of command should be developed to achieve the required effect. This can range from requirements for products and outputs to liaison mechanisms and detailed coordination.

1-7. **Principles.** The following are a list of NATO's StratCom core principles:

a. **Consistent and Coherent.** One strong effect in the IE is that audiences can receive information from all levels of command and/or different sources. Commanders should ensure that StratCom effort put forth a consistent message through NATO's many voices and that information activities are well coordinated according to the IS and Narrative. NATO operations and communication need to be perceived as one voice.

b. **Accurate and Timely.** The impact of communication on operations is often directly proportional to the timeliness and accuracy of the effort or response. Thus, quick planning and precise execution have an effect operations.

c. **Credible.** Planning, coordination and execution of activities must be based on accurate information. Thus, credibility results from an observable, sustained, and consistent pattern of factual words and principled deeds.

d. **Narrative Led.** As a principle, all operations must be conducted with a narrative as the centre piece. This will enable lower levels to act in accordance with the situation while still remaining within the framework of communication guidance.

e. **Leadership Driven.** NATO StratCom is a command responsibility and a command group function⁶. Successful StratCom, integrating words and deeds, begins with leadership's clear intent and guidance be considered in the operational planning process.

f. **Fully Integrated.** The StratCom process aims at coordinated and appropriate information activities to support the creation of desired effects and the achievements of the Commander's objectives. Synchronising words and actions significantly increases the potential to create an accurate understanding of NATO's actions and intentions. The use of force always communicates a message. This adds a variable absent from the political level, where communication is principally conducted through media StratCom considerations must, therefore, be integrated into all operations planning, execution and transition.⁷

g. **Empowering.** In NATO, the authority to communicate has traditionally been restricted to high levels within the command structure. By empowering more of our people to communicate, NATO should ensure that it is the first and best source of information.

⁶ ACO Directive 95-2

⁷ NATO AJP Operational Level Planning AJP 5

h. **Engagement.** Outreach fosters a unity of effort amongst the largest possible number of partners involved in the mission including IOs, GOs and NGOs. Thus StratCom should support overarching engagement planning, preparation and execution.

1-8. **Conflict and Crisis Communication.** Crisis communication at the operational level is a very common endeavour. Often times, Commanders at the operational and tactical level are faced with unexpected incidents that could have very strategic/political effects. Effective StratCom is essential in the management and control of most crises. Crisis communication is very time sensitive, requiring almost immediate response and very detailed coordination amongst all communication functions. It is essential that authority is granted at the lowest level to properly react to the crisis and to mitigate potential damage to NATO's reputation and credibility. In a crisis situation, specific StratCom planning guidance may be absent. In cases like this it is imperative that NATO uses all SMEs at its disposal to develop and implement a plan to mitigate negative effects and achieve the Alliance's goals.

CHAPTER II – ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND COORDINATING MECHANISMS

2-1. **Introduction.** This chapter deals with identifying the roles, responsibilities and the coordination mechanisms that are necessary for successful StratCom to take place. It is important to understand *ALL* the roles and responsibilities throughout the NATO command structure to ensure that all Stakeholders have situation awareness, but more importantly, to understand the key Communications functions and how they affect StratCom throughout all levels⁸.

2-2. Main StratCom Bodies

- a. **North Atlantic Council (NAC).** The North Atlantic Council provides overall guidance and direction to NATO StratCom efforts, as well as mission-specific strategic and political guidance for NATO information activities.
- b. **Secretary General (SecGen).** The Secretary General provides specific direction and guidance on StratCom to all NATO civilian and military bodies and commands on Alliance policy. *The Secretary General is the principal spokesperson for the Alliance.*
- c. **Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy (ASG PDD).** The Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy has the overall responsibility for StratCom on behalf of the Secretary General. The ASG PDD oversees the coordination of all StratCom activities across all NATO civilian and military bodies and commands, and also directs all public diplomacy activities to ensure coordination and synchronisation.
- d. **NATO Spokesperson.** The NATO Spokesperson, on behalf of the SecGen, provides day-to-day direction of all Headquarters media activities, including messaging, and offers guidance to military PA to ensure that all NATO messages and communications are consistent with political direction and decisions.
- e. **Military Committee (MC).** The Military Committee provides overall policy for NATO military PA, Info Ops and PSYOPS, in accordance with political direction and decisions, and consensus military advice to the NAC on StratCom issues.
- f. **Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC).** The Chairman of the Military Committee is the principal military spokesperson for the Alliance on all military issues.
- g. **International Military Staff (IMS) Public Affairs Adviser (PAA).** IMS PAA provides spokesman services for the MC, supports the MC, its Chairman, and the Director IMS on StratCom issues. He facilitates interaction and coordination between the MC, the two Strategic Commands, and the Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) on military PA and StratCom issues.

⁸ See Policy on StratCom, 2009

h. **IMS Information Operations (Info Ops)** the IMS Operations Division is responsible for MC policy on Info Ops and PSYOPS, and facilitates cooperation between NATO's two Strategic Commands and the MC on Info Ops and PSYOPS issues.

i. **Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).** SACEUR provides direction and guidance on StratCom within ACO, in accordance with the overall StratCom direction from the NATO HQ. SACEUR is the principal military spokesperson for current Alliance operations.

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

k. **Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) Chief Strategic Communications (CSC).** Shape CSC is responsible to SACEUR for the development and integration of StratCom planning in support of NATO current operations and ACO activities, in accordance with the overall StratCom direction (IS/Framework) from NATO HQ, for the coordination of military PA, Info Ops and PSYOPS outputs in support of those plans and outputs, and for overseeing the execution of the plans in coordination with NATO HQ and subordinate ACO HQ's.

k. **ACT StratCom.** ACT StratCom is responsible for capability development, training, exercise support, and implementation of emerging StratCom processes. Additionally, ACT has the added role for coordinating the Program of Work (POW) for the StratCom COE.

l. **Joint Forces Commands, Joint Task Forces and Single Service Command (JFC/JTF/SSC).** StratCom coordination and synchronisation occurs at all levels of command and needs to be staffed to reflect this. At Joint and Component level, StratCom Advisors (StratComAD) will be included in the Staff Advisory Group (SAG) that will have direct access to the Commander and the Command Group (CG). Within the following guidelines, subordinate HQs have flexibility over organising information coordination structures and procedures that are appropriate to their circumstances.

2-3. **StratCom Working Relationships.** The following relationships will guide all levels of command to ensure compliance and coherence with the overall direction of StratCom set by NATO HQ:

a. The NAC and SG direct all NATO StratCom, civilian and military.

b. ASG PDD is responsible for the overall coordination of NATO StratCom, civilian and military, within the overall direction set by the NATO and the SecGen. Within NATO HQ, ASG PDD ensures coordinated Communications efforts. The ASG PDD is

responsible for establishing and chairing a standing body that brings together the relevant elements of the information community, including SHAPE, SACT and the IMS, as well as representatives from other NATO divisions. This body will be responsible for operations, planning, and partnerships. On behalf of the NAC, ASG PDD will provide guidance to, and oversee coordination of MC/IMS, ACO and SACT StratCom. ASG PDD is responsible in the creation of the IS supported by ACO, ACT, IMS and the JFCs.

c. SHAPE and ACT StratCom and PAO Chiefs Public Affairs Officer (PAO) will ensure coherence with the overall NATO Strategic Communications effort in their areas of responsibility. Additionally, SHAPE will provide SME support in the development of the overall IS/Framework for PDD. SHAPE will have oversight for all subsequent level communication plans/implementation plan/FRAGOS, etc.

d. JFC Strategic Communications Advisors (StratComAD) will be responsible for the implementation of the overall IS/Framework by creating JFC level communication plans, implementation plans and FRAGOS with SME support from subordinate levels and in conjunction with SHAPE. JFC/JFT StratComADs will encourage subordinate headquarters to create their own implementation plans specifically tailored to their mission and AOR. Approval for subordinate level communication plans rests with the StratComAD with SHAPE acknowledgement.

2-4. **The StratCom Advisor Role.** The StratComAD will develop and institute structures, processes and procedures to facilitate communication coordination and support mission success. It is imperative that the StratComAD work closely with the chief PAO, Info Ops, PSYOPS, Political Advisor (POLAD), Legal Advisor (LEGAD), Gender Advisor (GENAD) and Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC). Since StratCom remains a Command responsibility and a Command Group function, within subordinate HQs, the StratComAD and their staff should provide:

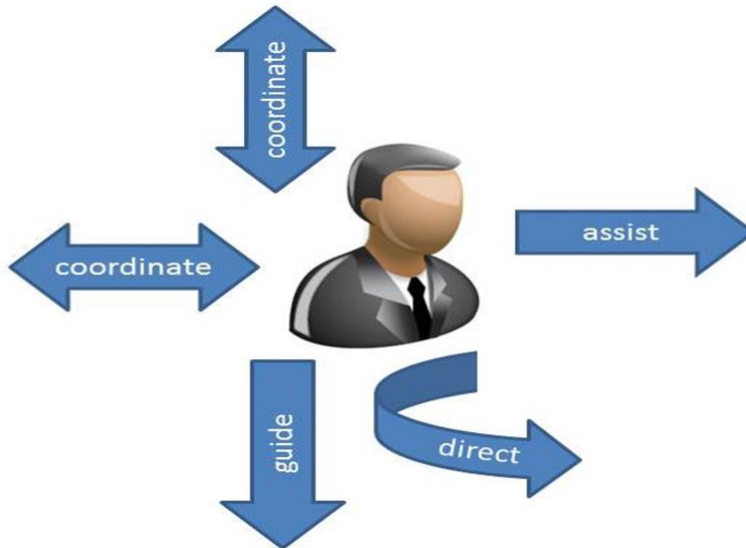


Fig. 2-1 The StratCom Advisor Responsibilities⁹

- a. Advice to Commander for all StratCom matters, primarily responsible for vertical alignment of StratCom related issues.
- b. Provide SME support to OPLAN, IS/Framework, Fragmentation Orders, and any additional planning documents, etc. Should recommend SME personnel from SSC and CORP levels as well.
- c. Facilitate and oversee the horizontal coordination at the JFC/JTF level IOT update the COM and offer advice up and down the chain of command.
- d. Develop a JFC/JTF Communication/Implementation plan based on overall IS/Framework. Additionally, to support and encourage SSC and below level commands to create their own communication/implementation plans as appropriate to align the IS/Framework, the JFC/JTF communications plan to their respective activities.
- e. Keep Commander apprised of shortfalls/gaps or successes IRT StratCom.

⁹ MCDC Concept Ver 1.0

- f. Liaise with other members of the Joint Staff, Staff Advisory Group (SAG) and other higher level StratCom entities and bodies.
- g. Accept and mitigate risk by contributing to the writing of the IS/Framework, the development of the JFC/JTF level Comm plan and the review subsequent level implementation plans/routes.
- h. Coordinate and moderate the group effort of distinct staff functions and capabilities.
- i. Act as an advisory member of the Crisis and Operations Panel .
- j. Contribute to development of campaign CONOPS, OPLAN, branch and sequel Plans, while translating the StratCom Framework for the operational level.
- k. Coordinate with subordinate HQs to ensure StratCom continuity messaging and themes within their communications plans.

2-5. **StratComAD Staff¹⁰ Communication Management Tasks.** The implementation of an integrated approach to communication at a military operational-level HQ is represented by a set tasks listed below that will be necessary for the StratComAD Staff (and additional staff elements) to perform . The StratComAD will have to coordinate all these efforts in order to achieve the added value that is expected from the implementation of this concept. These are recommendations to the Commander in order to help facilitate the coordination.¹¹

- a. **Command and Control.** Communication is a leadership function. Those involved in communication management should be authorised to issue direction and guidance to communication functions, as required to promote their integration with operations analysis, planning, execution and assessment. The Commanders are the lead communicators and champions of integrated communication.
- b. **Analysis of the IE.** Situation awareness is the prerequisite for understanding the IE. It enables the identification of action requirements, opportunities and risks, and provides the baseline for the assessment of effects. Analysis of the IE is a cross-dimensional interdisciplinary continuous task, which needs to be performed by a highly qualified staff. Analysis must be translated, shared and operationalized in order to benefit communication functions as well as planners, assessors and ultimately the Commander.
- c. **Effects Development.** The development of desired effects is a key task that collectively involves assessors and planners. It must be based on a profound understanding of the IE, the mandate and mission objectives, as well as the available capabilities able to create and measure respective effects. The development of effects

¹⁰ StratComAD Staff should consist of Info Ops, PSYOPS, PA, cross functional elements that are trained/experienced in NATO StratCom as well as operational experience and understanding.

¹¹ MCDC Concept Ver 1.0

in the IE needs to be guided from a Commander's perspective and fully integrated with the development of operational effects.

d. **Contribution to Targeting.** All actions, lethal and non-lethal, have an effect on the IE, either in a positive manner by closing the say-do gap, or negatively by contradicting the message to audiences within and outside the Joint Operations Area (JOA). Negative effects from such things as collateral damage, and especially civilian casualties, have the potential to do significant damage to support for the mission. For this reason, the potential effect of actions should be taken into consideration from the outset of the joint targeting cycle. Info Ops and PA staffs should be included at every level of the targeting process.¹²

e. **Activity Planning.** Planning of information activities is a primary task and competence of capabilities that are able to create Information Effects¹³. Planning is conducted by Info Ops through J3/J5 and the Information Activities Coordination Board (IACB)¹⁴ may be coordinated by the StratComAD and his staff. The ultimate responsibility however, to decide on the concrete employment of means and assets resides with the force capabilities that are cognizant, trained and equipped for their specific scope of activities.

f. **Information Activities Integration.** Effective and efficient communication requires harmonisation and synchronisation of Information Activities. Furthermore, activities designed to create Information Effects need to be coordinated with other force activities and manoeuvre operations that, through human perception, affect the IE as well. The Info-Ops-led IACB is considered the best suitable forum for this task. Fully integrated communication will then draw from and promote synergy.

(1) **Communication Engagements.** Direct communication promotes the principles of transparency, credibility and authenticity. Therefore, opportunities for Commanders and senior advisers to directly address audiences should be sought and planned for whenever and wherever possible. In principle, the personal commitment of the senior leadership is the preferred option. Because communication managers are communicators at the same time, the HQ's communication capabilities and functions need to act carefully and in sync to convey the right messages to their colleagues and counterparts.

(2) **Media Communication.** Larger audiences can be best reached by media channels, social media, traditional print, etc. The JFC/JTF disposes of their own media capabilities (such as PA and, PSYOPS) and may also employ public or commercial media by contracting or buying news time and newspaper inserts, by providing selected information at compulsory media events, or through embedded journalists. Once released into the public domain, the original information is no longer under JFC/JTF control. Therefore, in order to sustain the

¹² [Based on: NATO AJP-3.9(B) "Joint Targeting", Study Draft 4 (July 2014), Para 0118]

¹³ AJP 3.10 Information Operations

¹⁴ [Cf. NATO AJP-3.10(A) – "Allied Joint Doctrine for Information Operations", Study Draft 2 (February 2014)]

principles of transparency, credibility and authenticity, media outlets need to be coordinated and documented.¹⁵

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

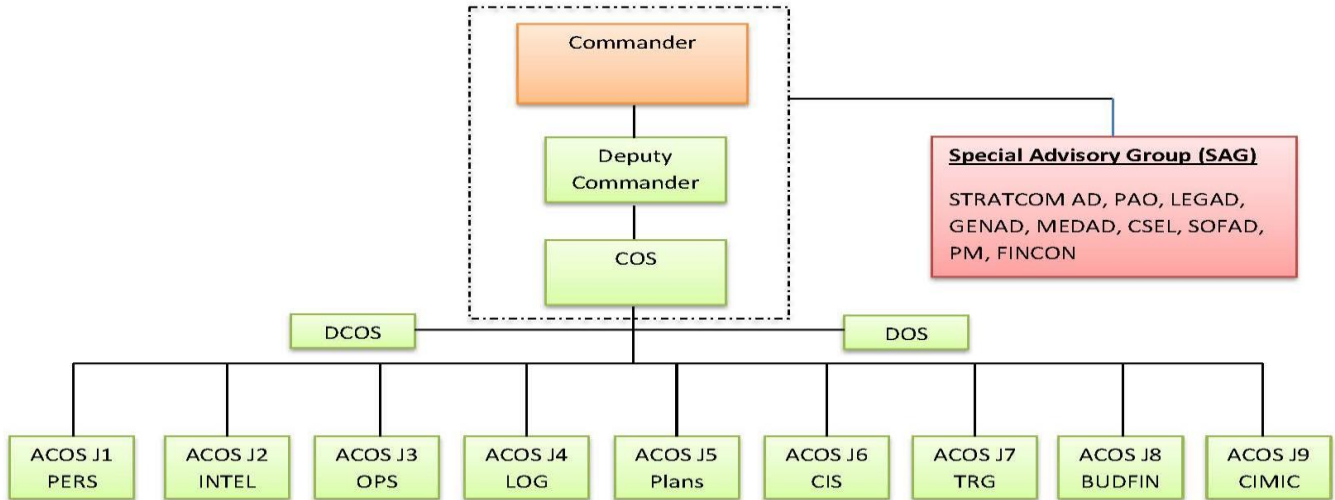
h. **Education and Training.** Integration of communication in all plans and activity, and advancing the new mind-set towards awareness and perception and understanding of the IE, requires the assistance of communication experts during staff processes and working routines as well as general communication training for all (which constitutes a communication management function itself). Internal leadership and staff development programs enhance the abilities of all members of the Command. The entire command, should therefore promote the Narrative, evolve the corporate identity and image of the Command, and in turn contribute to overall mission success.

2.6. **Organizational Structures.** A common organizational model provides “a basic structure through which elements with varied functions can cooperate systematically to accomplish a common mission and directly deliver or support capabilities.”¹⁶ Following are recommended approaches Commanders may utilise in regards to the StratCom positioning. As StratCom is predominately a coordination and advisory function direct access to the Commander is essential.

The first model positions StratCom in the special advisory group (SAG) as the StratComAD, this usually applies at strategic and higher operational levels. In this position strategic supervision can be ensured. The second option puts StratCom as a DCOS while being a member of the SAG. This dual hatted role would satisfy the requirements for an advisor while granting specific functional authority as a DCOS. The third model introduces StratCom as a DCOM where StratCom would have highest possible authority with direct access to the Commander while having the freedom to supervise all StratCom related functions and processes.

¹⁵ MC 411/2.

¹⁶ From MCM-0076-2011 NATO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS MILITARY CAPABILITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (CIP)



Model #1

Fig. 2-2 StratCom Organizational Model #1.

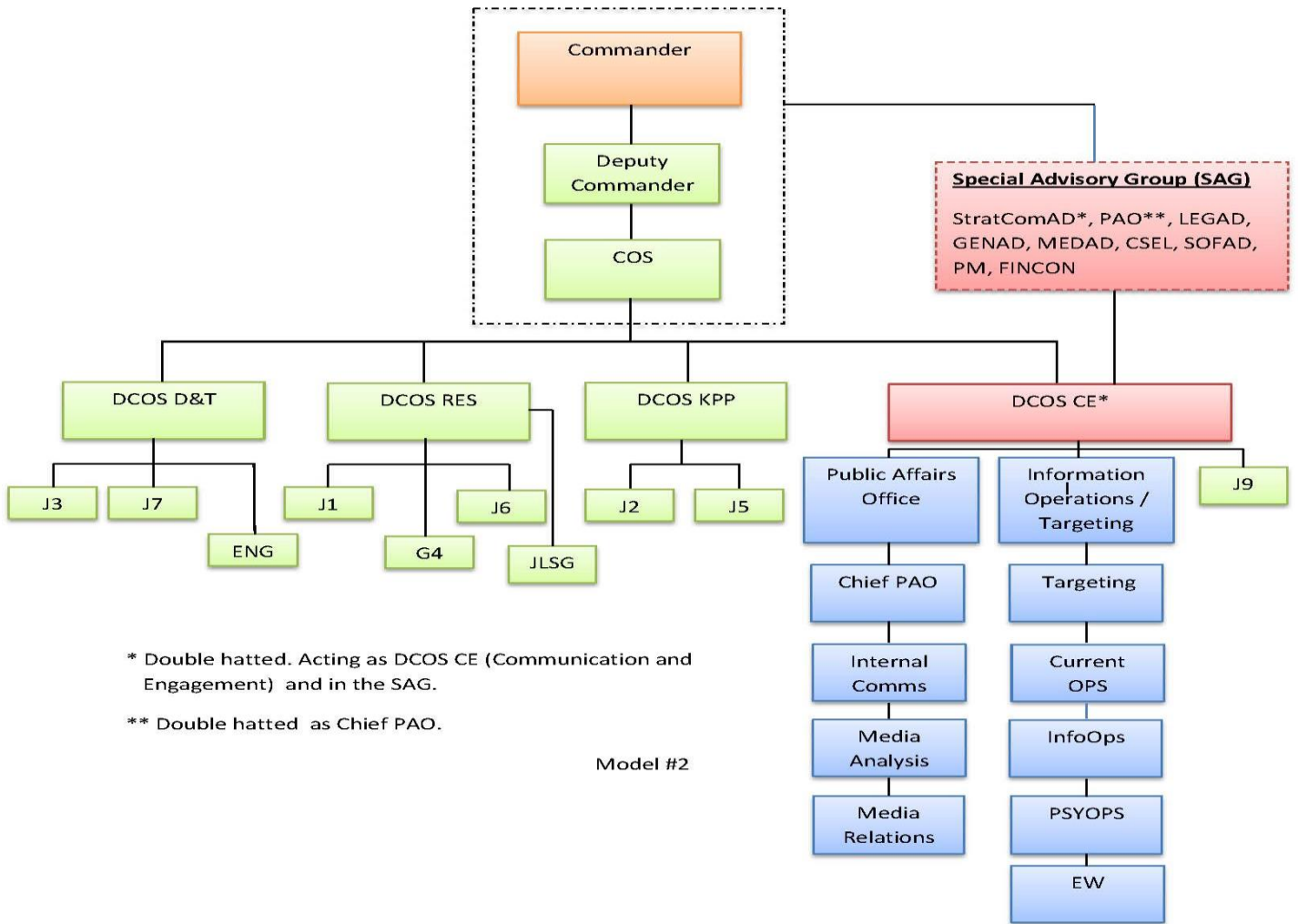
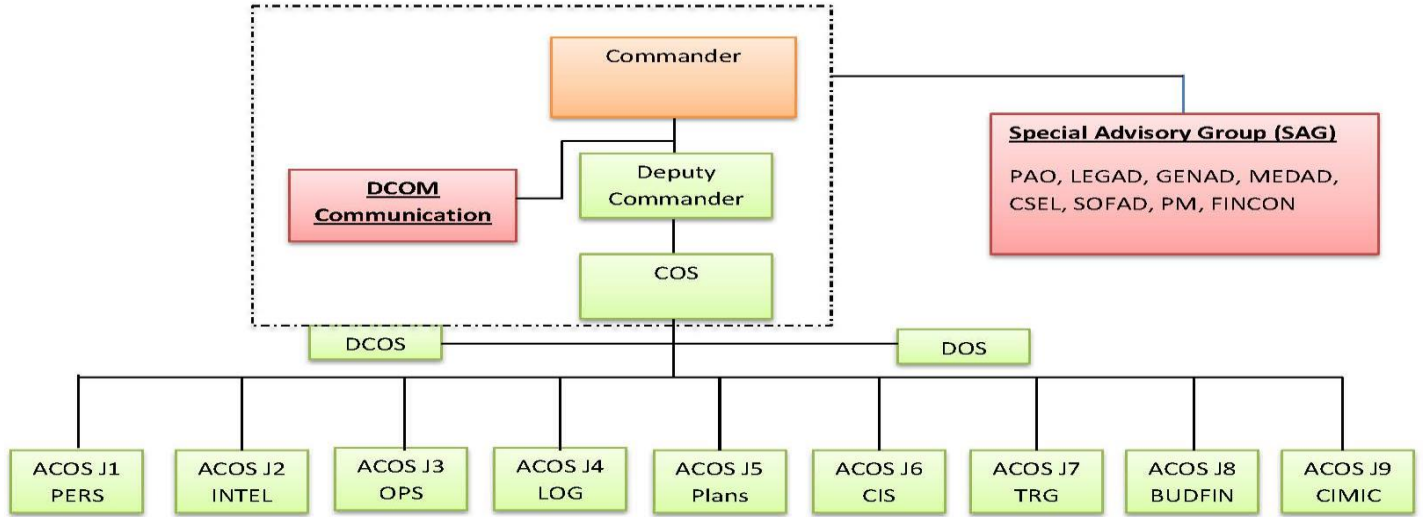


Fig. 2-3 StratCom Organizational Model #2.



Model #3

Fig. 2-4 StratCom Organizational Model #3.

2-7. **Staff Elements**

a. **Initial Organizational Considerations.** Effective StratCom execution relies on different staff processes that traditionally are performed in J2/3/5/9. Therefore coordination of these processes is essential to success. In addition to the StratCom staff element, specially trained Information Analysts for J2 and Information Planners for J3/J5 should be considered. These analysts and planners may come from existing Info Ops functions but would work directly in support of the StratCom element.

b. **Model Comparison.** There is no one ideal solution for all scenarios, but will depend on the the Command's task, mission, and resources. An illustrative comparison of the pros and cons of each model are displayed on Table 1 on the next page.

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Table 2-1

SRL. NO.	Model	Carachetristichs
1.	(1)	The model currently in use in NATO operations, the StratComAD has direct access to the Commander, but does not have formal authroity to task and give direction. He essentially works through boards and meetings in order to achieve consensus and influence planning and operations.
2.	(2)	The second model, or variations on it, is commonly used currently at the operational level. In some cases the Chief PAO and the StratComAD are no longer in the SAG, if that HQ still has one. In those examples the DCOS CE has direct access because of his/her DCOS role, while the Chief PAO retains direct access to the Command Group for PA matters. Alternatively DCOS CE/StratComAD is fully integrated into the Special Advisory Group and has direct tasking authority over the the various communication functions. As shown in the model Chief PAO's place in the SAG gives them direct access to Command Group for PA matters.
3.	(3)	The third model is an experimentaion model derived from evaluations of exersices where most of the structure is unchanged, but as the DCOM Communications, he has direct access to the Commander and tasking authroity acorss all of the staff elements.

c. **Horizontal Coordination Mechanisms.** To ensure synergy between all information activities, the effective coordination of StratCom processes will require specific mechanisms, structures and personnel with assigned responsibility for StratCom implementation. JF/Component and subordinate headquarters' information activities are to be coordinated with, and in support of, SHAPE direction and guidance. Staffs from the various communication and information disciplines can be co-located or in close proximity to improve coordination and collaborative working. Those managing StratCom and chairing information activities coordination boards or similar bodies must have sufficient communication training, experience and seniority to effectively coordinate across the information disciplines. Such bodies should operate under the direct authority of the Command Group. Individuals or bodies with responsibility for StratCom activities should be titled as such. A number of differing titles for conducting what is in effect StratCom have been in use, creating unnecessary confusion. At operational levels, StratCom must ensure that Key Leader Engagement (KLE) is properly coordinated with the overall StratCom effort.

CHAPTER III - HORIZON SCANNING AND PRUDENT THINKING

3-1. **Aim.** The aim of this section is to explain how Commanders develop their understanding of the IE prior to the issuance of any strategic guidance to develop situation awareness and guide future planning efforts. Particular outcomes and products as a result of these steps should include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Comprehensive understanding of the strategic environment, with particular focus on the IE.
- b. Increasing Situation Awareness for potential AOI/AORs.
- c. Identifying and addressing shortfalls within Communication Functions.
- d. Shaping potential planning activities.
- e. Educating the staff on the narrative landscape.

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

a. Horizon Scanning and Prudent thinking requires baseline assessments and initial development of the operational picture must be established, followed by a continuous assessment and analysis of the IE. Communication function elements should initiate this process in conjunction with other staff elements, coordinated by the StratComAD to develop understanding from a range of sources such as:

(1) NATO interests - related to caveats; however these interests may supersede all other regional/political interests.

(2) Political D&G, Resolutions and/or agreements – develop general political landscape

(3) Leadership D&G (SECGEN, SACEUR, Etc.) – Key messages, themes and overall end-state

(4) Assessments (LEGAD, POLAD, GENAD, etc.) – message applicability and legality, constraints, restraints and boundaries

(5) Open source regional reports – J2 Information analysts can, and should pay attention to all forms of open source material. Initial assessment of the IE can be gained by these resources.

(6) Area, historical, cultural, linguistic, anthropological studies and other relevant subjects and topics – to determine audiences, capabilities, sensitivities, communication methods, infrastructure.

(7) General intelligence assessments - specific key personnel & factions, communication/media infrastructure, J2 picture (use of information analysts)

(8) CIMIC and CMI activities - NGO, IO, GO, CMI local actors, IDP/refugee status, etc.

(9) Initial media/social media assessment through coordination with Military PA capabilities and shortfalls, infrastructure, accessibility/penetration, perceptions, opinions online behaviour, online activities and societal groups that use social media.

(10) Lessons Learned – practical identification of all shortfalls and successes in common operational environments.

(11) Network/stakeholder assessment – social, media, cultural networks and stakeholder's¹⁷ identification and description of interests and power base.

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

3-3. Processes, Procedures and Tools

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

(1) Assess political, military, economic and diplomatic activities related to the situation. The StratComAD must align with LEGAD, Cultural Advisor (CULAD), POLAD, GENAD and other staff elements to assess the political and diplomatic efforts of NATO to better understand political objectives and strategies. J2 should be a major enabler in developing understanding in this area. The political negotiation and mandating process is the baseline for later planning products, restraints, constraints and guidance. Assessing this process helps to understand political and political-military level guidance which is in turn a precondition for the planning and later on conduct of consistent communication and action at all levels.

¹⁷ Stakeholder in this context includes relevant groups and entities that have influence or could be affected by operations in the AOI. Examples of a stakeholder could be corporations operating in the AOI, political organisations, religious factions, individuals, outside political/geographic organisations, etc.

(2) Conduct media, stakeholder, network, audience analyses – identify gaps, problems, etc. In horizon scanning and prudent thinking, all communication functions should begin to assess relevant parts of the IE like media, stakeholders/actors, social/human networks and audiences. The resources to do these assessments may be limited at this stage but StratCom staffs should have identified which discipline and staff element can support and provide relevant information. StratCom supports and guides the process to identify the most important and critical information needs.

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

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

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

help populate and regularly update the narrative map. Mapping of existing narratives should be an integral part of the assessment process.

b. **Organizational Issues**

(1) **Identify Shortfalls and Gaps.** Communication functions should conduct a gap analysis and coordinate requirements to avoid duplication. Particular consideration should be the identification of augmentees required in line with Chain of Command responsibility. NATO ACT supports other NATO commands by maintaining an online StratCom portal and database that both can serve as one platform to identify and find trained personnel. The StratCom COE in Riga, Latvia will also support a surge task. (www.stratcomcoe.org). The COMPASS program coordinated by NATO HQ can also provide supplemental manpower during a crisis for StratCom shortfalls.

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

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

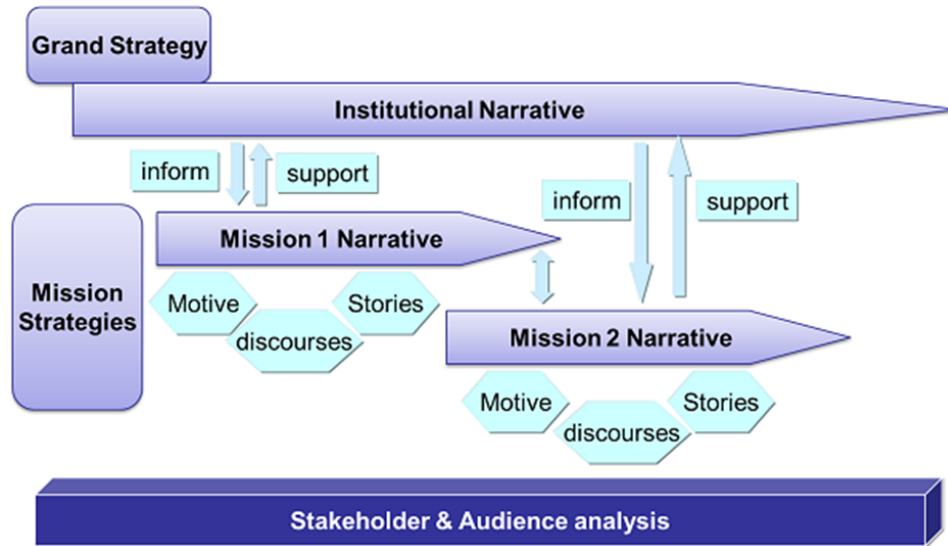


Fig. 3-1 Narrative Hierarchy

3.5. **Characteristics of Narratives**

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

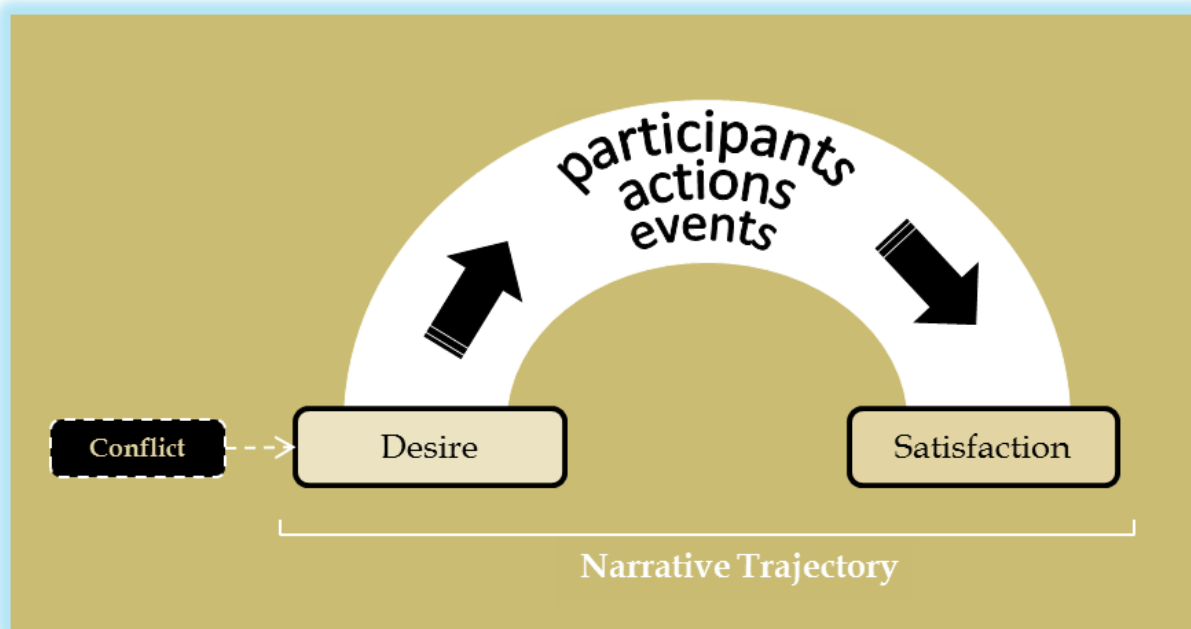


Figure 3-2: Narrative arc

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

contemporary news accounts, and many other elements. Audiences are part of the Narrative Landscape, and the ways they inhabit that landscape affect their understanding of anything introduced into that landscape.

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

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

Stories need to meet expectations and perceptions of the relevant stakeholder groups. The more a story takes into account cultural, personal, role-specific, religious and media-structural expectations, the more tangible and relevant and thus the more understood and expected it becomes. So story communication must be concise, consistent, credible, emotional, connectable, and tactful, much less a complete version of the Narrative.

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

The ISAF Narrative

One narrative to drive all communication efforts

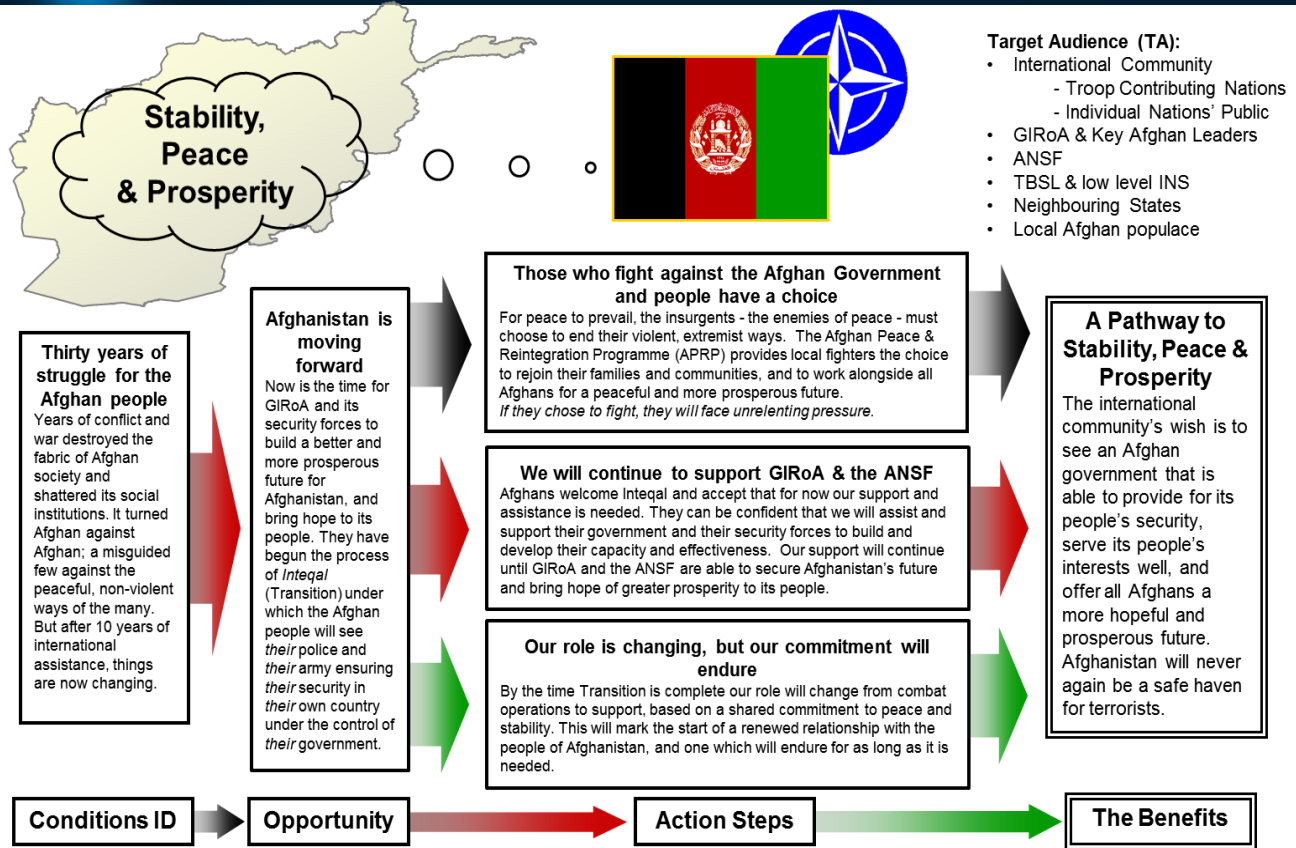



Fig. 3-3 ISAF Narrative Arc example

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

- a. Improved situation awareness/understanding.
- b. Initial assessment framework.
- c. Information gap analysis and mitigation (RFI, PIR).
- d. Network of internal and external experts (linguists, language, cultural, regional, anthropological, etc.).

- e. Initial audience identification.
- f. Vertical, horizontal and external integration and sharing of information.
- g. Develop possible narrative(s).

Successful StratCom results from the complete alignment of words, images and actions to achieve desired objectives. StratCom across all levels is therefore the prime outcome sought to achieve from the integration of everything the Alliance says, shows and does throughout all phases of planning, through mission execution to transition.

CHAPTER IV – PLANNING

4-1. **Aim.** The aim of this chapter is to describe StratCom related processes that should be included in the operational level operations Planning Process (OPP) carried out by designated Joint HQs. The process¹⁸ designed to allow close collaboration between all levels of command during the different phases of the NATO Crisis Management Process (NCMP). This chapter will further develop outputs from horizon scanning and previous prudent thinking and takes into consideration D&G from the political and strategic levels. At the completion of these phases of planning, the following should be accomplished:

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

4-2. **Inputs.** Figure 4-1 describes the strategic and operational level StratCom related inputs to the OPP that enable StratCom outcomes and products to be at the heart of the development of the OPLAN. In addition to these products, direction and guidance will be provided from the political and strategic levels in the form of various publications. Further development of the StratCom Framework/IS should be refined in parallel with the OPP. StratCom planning efforts require the following considerations and inputs:

- a. The initial IS/StratCom Framework with Narrative. See Chapter 1 “Terms and Definitions”.
- b. **SACEUR Guidance.** In Phase 2 of the planning process, SACEUR will support the political-military estimate (PME) by providing a SACEUR’s Strategic Assessment (SSA) and Military Response Options (MROs – phase 3) both integrating StratCom considerations. Pending the decision made by NAC, SACEUR will provide direction and guidance to the operational level through the Strategic Planning Directive (SPD – phase 4a at strategic level) enabling the development of the Concept of Operations (CONOPS – phase 3 and 4 at operational level) . This guidance should include, among others, the following in regards to StratCom:
 - (1) Targeting guidance
 - (2) StratCom specifics
 - (3) PA guidance
 - (4) CMI and inter-agency coordination
 - (5) Involvement of partners (Coalition, NNEs)

¹⁸ MC 0133/4 and COPD Ver. 2.0

The operational level staff should brief the operational Commander on the appreciation and understanding of the SSA and provide operational level advice on the draft Military Response Options (MROs) being developed at SHAPE.

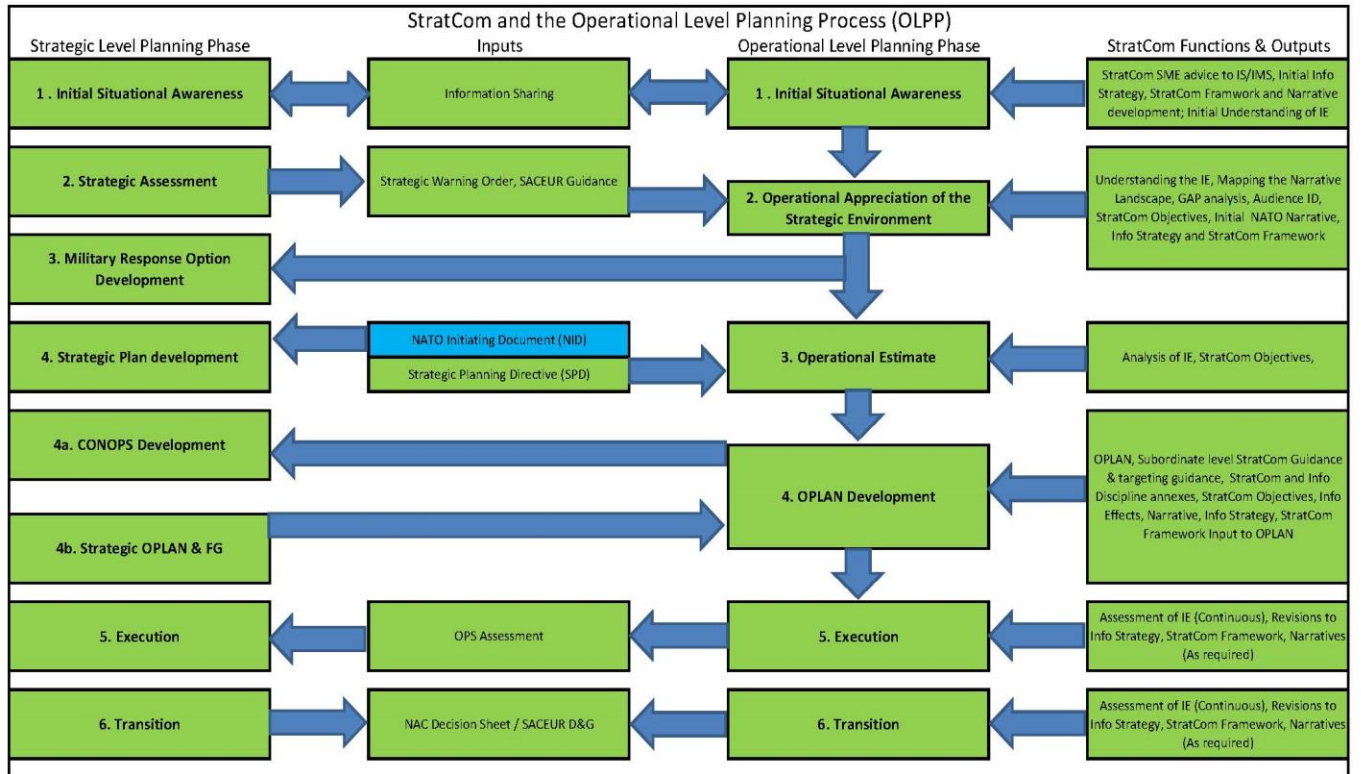


Figure 4-1 StratCom alignment with COPD

c. **NAC Initiating Directive (NID)**¹⁹. The NID is a political directive triggering formal planning within ACO. The NID should contain the desired NATO end state and the strategic, political and military objectives that NATO needs to pursue progress and sustain in order to achieve that desired end state. The formulation of the NID includes a number of intermediate steps where political, military, civil emergency planning, resources and other military considerations are developed by the respective crisis managements committees. In addition, strategic political guidance for the development of strategic communication objectives and related implementation plans will need to be considered, in accordance with NATO StratCom policy. Appropriate elements of such guidance could also be contained in the NID.

d. **Strategic Planning Directive (SPD)**.²⁰ As part of the overall planning process, these documents will be presented during specific phases. The SPD will come during phase 4a of the strategic level planning and will feed into phase 3a of operational level planning.

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

e. **Concept of Operations (CONOPS)**.²¹ The Strategic CONOPS will establish SACEUR's concept for the conduct of a NATO led military operations in concert with non-military and other military efforts. It incorporates the JHQ main operational requirements for the successful conduct of operations. As such, it cannot be finalised without input from the operational level following the Commander's Operational Estimate. This input is normally provided through a submission of a draft operational level CONOPS before submission to the NAC for approval. StratComAD and the communication functions staff should be involved and instrumental in the development of the operational level CONOPS draft. It should be a collaborative effort across the levels to ensure alignment.

4-3. **Processes, Procedures and Tools.** StratCom, working through the communication functions should encourage and facilitate an enduring and sustained approach; ensuring outputs are linked to strategic and operational effects. The JHQ Joint Operations Planning Group (JOPG) will be tasked to deploy a set of highly trained planners to SHAPE to assist the

¹⁹ Ref. Nato Crisis Response System manual (NCRSM), 2014

²⁰ COPD ver 2.0 Chapter III, page 3-57; (3-29)

²¹ COPD ver 2.0 pg 3-52. (3-26)

Strategic Planning Group (SPG), part of the Crisis Action Team (CAT) in the development of all inputs to the planning process. This group should include experienced communication function SMEs (including StratComAD) to ensure that StratCom issues are addressed. These personnel should have been involved with the horizon scanning and prudent thinking to ensure that that experience and knowledge is brought forward into the formal planning process. The following paragraphs discuss various key factors that must be considered in regards to StratCom planning.

a. **Analysis of the IE.** A more focused analysis of the IE should be performed at the Situation Awareness phase¹⁹. It must incorporate all communication functions and build upon existing analysis and assessment capabilities that were initiated in horizon scanning and prudent thinking. The analysis should contribute to the development military considerations to then be transferred to Military Response Options (MROs).

b. **Narratives.** A Narrative as described in Chapter II & III will be developed by NATO HQ, with ACO support, and will be an essential component of the planning process.

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

(1) Develop themes aligned with the core Narrative and operational objectives. They must be regularly monitored, assessed and updated as required.

(2) Identify StratCom opportunities and risks to develop proposals for their exploitation and mitigation. Additionally, to ensure that StratCom is not used as mitigation technique for wider operational risks.

(3) Key audience identification and support to other communication functions in achieving situation awareness and in the development of effects.

¹⁹ ACO COPD V2.0 pg 3-28; Section 3-13 d&e

d. **JFC/SSC HQ StratCom Planning.** Actions guided by themes and messages provide the most powerful StratCom effects. Therefore, the StratComAD should ensure a clear linkage between messages and actions. JFCs should translate and integrate the framework into all aspects of operations planning with a particular eye towards information activities. Additionally, theatre-specific StratCom D&G will be provided on a case-by-case basis through the SUPPLANs and directives. This is accomplished in the operational-level planning process and the battle rhythm, in particular Commander's intent, Coordinating instructions, and respective communication function annexes (if req.), boards, cells and working groups.

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

4-5. **Operational Assessment Development.**²⁰ It is essential to develop the means by which to assess, both objectively and subjectively, the effectiveness of communication elements of the campaign. The following are key elements for considering the development of measuring effects. J5 leads this process, but communication function SMEs should supply inputs and guide the development.

a. **Measuring Progress.** toward mission accomplishment assists Commanders in decision making and adjusting operations to achieve military objectives and reach the end state. Commanders will attempt to influence the behaviour and attitude of the audiences and adversaries, and therefore communications staff will assist in monitoring and engaging with these audiences in order to support the objectives of the command in a measurable way.

b. **Pattern Determination.** In an assessment, Commanders are most interested in patterns; the changes to attributes of a system, task or action. Other factors can include rate of change, periodicity, historic comparison, and statistical analysis. Metrics show change over time and indicators give Commanders a sense of whether they are making progress. However, determining relevant thresholds is often unknown until sufficient measurement has taken place to show a pattern or trend, especially when assessing human behaviour. Therefore an early understanding of baseline behaviour is essential in presenting measurement of progress.

c. **Measuring performance** is the simplest measurement type and helps track what is being transmitting into the IE. For example, tracking completion of key media engagement activities, press releases, and other StratCom related activities helps to

²⁰ NATO Operations Assessment Handbook

determine if the actions are achieving the desired goals. ***MOPs answer the question “did we do things right?”***

d. **Measuring Effectiveness.** Finding substantive and reliable measures of effectiveness in the IE is more difficult than measuring those resulting from traditional means. Some methods that are commonly used to measure effectiveness of communication activities are: content analysis, survey/polling data, expert knowledge, and quantitative data. ***MOEs answer the question “Did we do the right things?”***

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

- a. Stability re-assurance to host nation.
- b. Successes and progress in host nation to international community.
- c. Identification and mitigation of continuing de-stabilizing actors or issues.
- d. NATO member and partner messaging to focus on successes and accomplishments in theatre.

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

a. OPLAN and Communication Functions annexes. It is important that NATO's StratCom objectives and NATO's Narrative are integral to the OPLAN and reflected in the Commander's intent and the operational design. Annexes should be co-ordinated to ensure specialist advice also reflect these considerations and promote cohesive and co-ordinated activity in support of the campaign plan and effects.

b. NATO StratCom Framework and Narrative (Final) provides coherence and facilitates:

(1) The ability to coordinate NATO and coalition forces' information and communication activities with other military actions, to shape the battle space and maximise desired effects on selected audiences.

(2) The ability to coordinate NATO and coalition information activities and communications functions with the efforts of other agencies and partners within the context of a broader NATO strategy.

(3) The ability to develop and disseminate timely and culturally-attuned messages based on the NATO narrative to inform key audiences.

(4) The ability to quickly develop and disseminate information designed to influence approved audiences (PSYOPS).

(5) The ability to document and disseminate information on NATO operations and exercises.

c. **Comprehensive and Continuous Assessment Processes of the IE**

(1) Development and implementation of MOP/MOEs.

(2) The ability to access, produce and maintain updated information and knowledge on the perceptions, attitudes, behaviours and beliefs of audiences.

(3) The ability to access, produce and maintain updated information and knowledge on complex social communication systems and the characteristics of various media agencies.

(4) The ability to detect, monitor, translate and assess the effects of StratCom efforts of other stakeholders (friendly, neutral or adversarial).

(5) The ability to estimate the direct and indirect effects of potential actions and signals on the perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and responses of audiences.

d. **Direction and Guidance to the SSCs.** The collaborative nature of the OPP should ensure that StratCom considerations are aligned and incorporated throughout. As such direction and guidance generated through the development of the OPLAN should present no surprises to subordinate level Commanders and staff.

CHAPTER V – STRATCOM IN MISSION EXECUTION

5-1. **Aim.** The purpose of this chapter is to provide the user with operationally specific information on how to apply processes and procedures to enhance overall Strategic communications efforts and achieve the desired outcomes. The goal is to implement lessons identified/learned from operations, experimentation and training events and to describe processes/procedures.

5-2. **StratCom Application**

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

(1) Internal – Mechanisms in place to coordinate throughout the staff and vertically with higher and subordinate HQ elements. For further detail on coordination and decision meetings and boards see 5-4 below.

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

- (a) Comprehensive Crisis Operations Management Centre (CCOMC)
- (b) StratCom COE
- (c) Academia

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

b. **Integration.** Integration is about orchestrating political and military activities at all levels, vertically and horizontally to deliver the same narrative. For example while NATO HQ focuses on diplomatic activities to enhance coherence of messaging of Nations and NATO, SHAPE may focus on the overall posture of forces and operational or tactical commands will conduct operations using all means. All these activities are supporting each other – orchestrated/integrated – and create a clear and consistent communication effect. The StratComAD will play a vital role at all levels to advise Commanders and senior officials in order to facilitate the coherent message in a

synchronised manner throughout all levels and layers of NATO. The StratCom elements will continuously interact with higher and lower echelon StratCom elements to ensure message consistency throughout the different levels. In the case of an ad hoc event timely response measures are crucial. The StratCom elements should immediately discuss and coordinate appropriate response measures. The StratComAD, along with other staff advisors, will then advise his Commander on these measures. This vertical process ensures timely action and horizontal integration.

c. **Mission Command.** The staff and units must be empowered to engage appropriately. Empowerment of SME's on the staff will enhance the command's messaging and ensure internal and external audience comprehension. Traditional media and internet-based information technologies must be utilised to maximise the impact of this approach. Granted from higher authority upon approval of StratCom Framework and/or subsequent implementation plans. Approval of communication plans at the JFC/Component level shall authorise the respective level for adapting themes, messages, objectives, etc. to fit to the environment. Risk is assumed, and shall be mitigated, through thorough planning and synchronisation of the adapted themes, messages, etc. in accordance with higher level D&G (in particular the IS/StratCom Framework). For instances where there is ambiguity or the issue is in question, adaptations to particular messaging, themes, objectives, etc. shall be brought before the IOWG and decided on in the IACB. The following are necessary for timely communications effects:

(1) **Risk Mitigation.** To ensure timely conduct of activities and release of information, it is essential to provide direct liaison authority (DIRLAUTH) between levels of command for all information activities. Again, the approval of the StratCom Framework and communication plans will be the granting authority for DIRLAUTH. With this authority, communication functions will be able to disseminate important "time sensitive" information activities that will ultimately lead to the principle of timeliness.

(2) **Commanders Intent.** StratComAD needs the authority to direct and approve overarching messaging and themes. Approval process must be quick, timely, and adaptable. Mechanism to implement narrative, to empower "soldiers" to communicate, lower levels to use social media, contingency communication planning should be considered.

5-3. **StratCom within the Battle Rhythm.** The JTF/JFC/SSCs will be responsible to develop implementation/communication plans based on the overall IS and fully integrated with the OLPP (when applicable). It will provide guidance to subsequent levels of command, ensuring vertical alignment throughout NATO. Additionally, they will be responsible to develop and maintain the overall battle rhythm and determine individual StratCom battle rhythm requirements. A deliberate and well-coordinated information flow and battle rhythm is necessary to facilitate the coordination throughout the vertical and horizontal structures. It is essential that a battle rhythm is created and outlined in individual staff SOPs to ensure proper attendance and coordination efforts. The following provide an illustrate example of the makeup and structure of Working Groups (WG) and Boards that promote that coordination.

5-4. **Critical StratCom Related Meetings/Boards.** The normal battle rhythm could contains meetings to support StratCom initiatives, including: Info Activities Working Group (IAWG), StratCom Working Group (SCWG), Joint Assessment Board (JAB) or the Analysis Campaign Assessment Working Group, Joint Coordination Board (JCB), and Info Ops and StratCom Coordination Boards. The process can be managed using a StratCom Synchronisation Matrix. A summary of the WG/CBs are as follows:

a. **Meetings with StratCom Leading**

(1) StratCom Working Group (SCWG)

(a) Preparing the Information Strategy Board (ISB) and feed into the Communications Coordination Board (CCB).

(b) Clarification for the COM/SA guidance to inform the COM.

(2) Communications Coordination Board (CCB). Focus on the conduct and execution of activities. Horizontal coordination and integration of own activities; quick, short term activities, reactions. The IAWG prepares and develops and feeds into the CCB.

(a) Participation: DCOM (chair), StratCom.
AD (lead), J3, J5, J9, PA, Info Ops, PSYOPS, CULAD, GENAD, POLAD, LEGAD

(b) Generic agenda and content (weekly and ad hoc).

(3) Information Strategy Board (ISB)

(a) Vertical (political, long-term, strategic, end state) focus.

(b) Informing the COM of changes in the political domain (incl. informal pol. guidance).

(c) Informing the COM on critical changes within the IE and opportunities to achieve effects in the IE.

(d) Ensuring political guidance is translated into all staff activities planning and execution.

(e) Ensuring higher military guidance is fully integrated.

(f) Ensuring staff effort is in line with COM intent.

(g) Communication support required from the strategic and political level to support operations

(h) Participation. COM (chair), StratComAD (lead), CG Reps (com group), SAG Reps (special advisor group, incl. PA), J Reps (incl. Info Ops & PSYOPS).

(i) Generic agenda and content (monthly):

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

2/ J2&INTEL update.

3/ Update of CG engagement plan.

4/ Provision of comprehensive advice to the COM regarding the mil info & communication activities.

5/ D&G of COM (overall Ops design).

6/ RFI.

b. **Meetings in which to Participate**

(1) **Information Activities Working Group (IAWG).** This working group will contribute to the Information Activities Coordination Board (IACB) and Joint Targeting Working Group (JTWG). It is the primary mechanism for coordinating all information activities and also providing key analysis and assessments with regards to effects. It should consist of one member of the J3 to develop and synchronise the information effects matrix with the Operations Synchronisation matrix.

(2) **Joint Assessment Board (JAB).** This forum is designed to provide feedback to the Commander on campaign progress. StratComAD will advise the COM on effects within the IE and provide options to achieve success.

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

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

(5) **Joint Targeting Working Group (JTWG).** StratComAD and Info Ops rep shall attend for coordination of effects to ensure proposed lethal and non-lethal targets support information effects.

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

c. **Meetings & Boards to Sit-in**

(1) **COM-CCs.** StratComAD to advise as required and to increase understanding and Situation awareness.

(2) **CIMIC-CM.** StratComAD to advise as required and to increase understanding and Situation awareness.

d. **Other Meetings**

(1) **BIM COORD.** Situational update from all other staff functions. StratComAD will provide a situational update to the HQ.

(2) **Commanders Update Meeting (CUB).** StratComAD provides engagement and communication opportunities and 3 month horizon scanning on political and NATO events that may impact the HQ.

(3) **CAT (Crisis Action Team) Meetings**

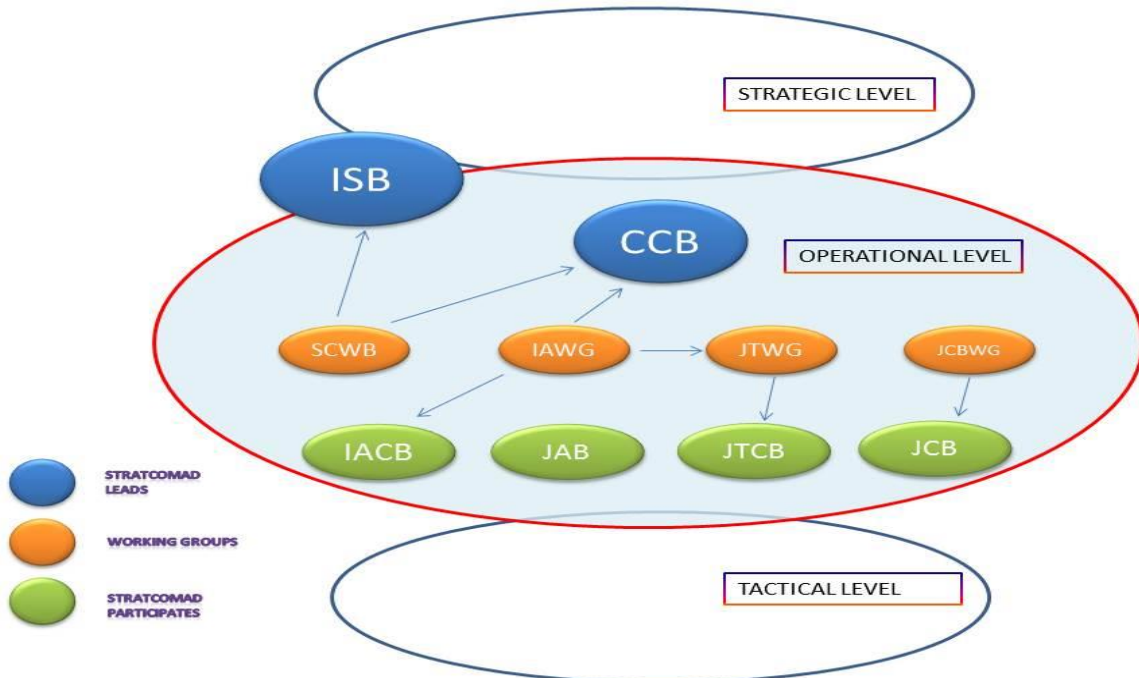


Fig. 5-1 WGs and Boards Connection

5-4. **Collection and Assessment.** These are continuous processes that require refinement and adjustment throughout all phases of the operation. These processes will allow the command to maintain flexibility while enhancing timeliness. During the execution phase it is imperative to initiate the collection and assessment processes outlined in chapters 2 and 3 of this publication in line with COPD process.

5-5. **Communication Channels.** Traditional print, radio and television media continue to be vital, but Internet-based information technologies are increasingly dominant. These technologies are developing in rapid and often unpredictable ways and present conceptual, organizational and resource challenges. These technologies offer potential new ways of engaging with existing and/or new audiences. Particular guidance and recommendations are as follows:

- a. **Face to Face Communication.** Face to face is considered the most influential method of communication. Commanders and senior officials play the vital role in the facilitation/dissemination of messages through their engagement with key leaders of relevant groups and organizations. Face to face communication is not an ad hoc process. Every KLE should be well prepared, organised, conducted and evaluated. Communication experts (Info Ops staffs, psychological profilers, human terrain analysts and cultural advisors) are needed to prepare the Commander. Plans and strategies always have to be prepared and conducted in line with the Narrative and with clear objectives and effects defined. Info Ops doctrinally coordinates all staff elements in order to develop specific information effects in the IE. CIMIC (J9) is usually responsible to coordinate with NNE in the AOR to ensure that there is no duplication of effort.

b. **Social Media.** In the past few years, social media has become increasingly popular. The social media landscape constantly witnesses changes in technology and platforms. For many societal groups, social media is an indispensable part of their daily media consumption. Social media provide multiple venues to communicate, interact, or share different types of content, from text to video, from pictures to geo-location data, etc. Militaries lack a common understanding of social media and its value in military operations. Hence, the military should become familiar with the social media landscape, its users and their interests and ways of communication and how social media can be used as an additional communication channel. As with all other media, it must be addressed in a coordinated manner. Before military actors start communicating on social media channels, a thorough baseline assessment should be conducted. Here, the military needs to gain an understanding of what societal groups are using social media, to what end, how they communicate online and what their interests are and where they are located. But also the infrastructure needs to be assessed. How widespread is internet access, do most people use smartphones for internet access, etc. This baseline assessment then feeds into the overall development of the StratCom Framework/IS that NATO chooses and informs the social media communication aspects.

(1) **Social Media Uses.** Social media uses within a NATO context can broadly be grouped into three aspects:

(a) Social media can be used like a sensor to increase one's situation awareness AOI/AORs.

(b) Social media offer additional channels to communicate. This is the effector function of social media and it can serve multiple purposes. It allows NATO to communicate its message (through the Narrative) and to enter into dialogue with various audiences.

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

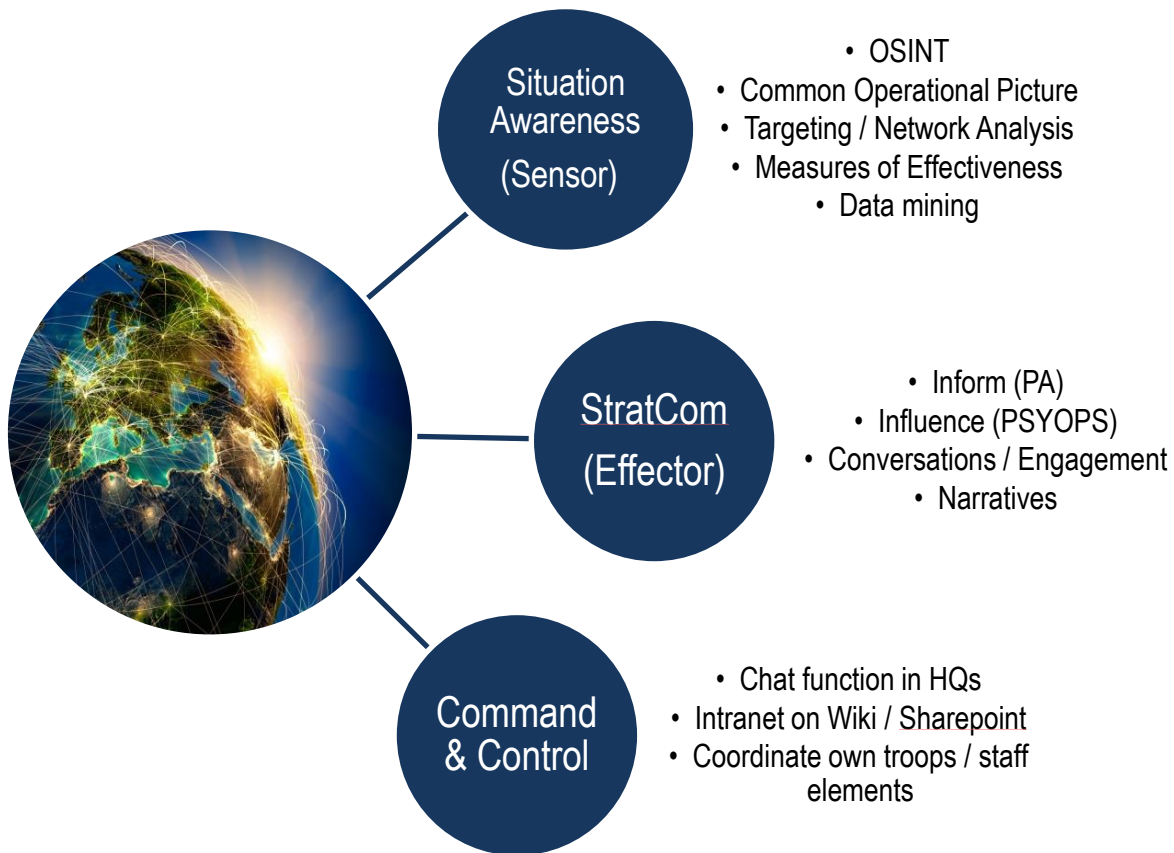


Fig. 5-2 Social Media Uses

(2) **Responsibilities.** Depending on the type of use of social media – as described above – different responsibilities apply. The overall responsibility for using social media as a sensor should lay with NATO Knowledge Development or, in an operational HQ, the J2 branch. The responsibility for the communication aspects of social media, i.e. to use social media as a channel for communication, should be under the overall guidance of the StratComAD. Importantly, the effector use of social media should rest on a thorough social media analysis, as conducted by J2 or a KD cell.

It is imperative that PA effectively coordinates all social media activity with Info Ops and PSYOPS. We recommend an integrated working group to assess, develop and determine mechanisms, delineation of responsibilities and effects desired in the IE for submission to the JCB. In accordance with the ACO DIRECTIVE (AD) 95-3 on Social Media, the Commander has to balance the use of social media by own troops with OPSEC concerns. We highly recommend that all troops and personnel are empowered and trained to talk to online audiences, always bearing in mind the IS and NATO Narratives while adhering to previously developed OPSEC regulations.

(3) **Recommendations/Options**

- (a) Recommend providing restrictions and OPSEC formally to all persons in Command/AOR via code of conduct IRT Social Media²¹.
- (b) OPSEC fully examined in AOR (official use and personal use guidelines – Code of Conduct).
- (c) LEGAD participation is highly recommended in development of Social Media Campaign.
- (d) Pool resources from multiple communication functions for staffing.
 - 1/ StratCom oversight coordinating PA, Info Ops, PSYOPS, etc.
 - 2/ Create a combined team dedicated to social media from PSYOPS, PA, Info Ops or even outsourcing (private contracts).

²¹ See ACO Directive 95-3

CHAPTER VI - EDUCATION AND TRAINING

6-1. **Aim.** The aim of this chapter is to outline the requirements and future applications in regards to Education and Training (E&T). It is crucial that Nations provide qualified personnel to NATO billets.

6-2. **Manning.** Disciplines must be properly resourced IRT manning and budget to ensure that all communication functions are able to complete their core missions and effectively coordinate with other staff elements. NATO billets must be filled with personnel that have the proper level of training and experience commensurate with their functions. Lessons identified have shown that resourcing shortfalls have been noted by the MC on several occasions and little progress has been made to improve on this by commands or Nations.

6-3. **Education & Training.** It is the responsibility of the Commander to ensure that StratCom related billets are properly resourced and staffed. There is an overall responsibility to provide both individual and collective training to meet all PE and CE requirements. NATO can provide many opportunities and resources towards the training of personnel. Additionally, national training schools and courses are available and often open to NATO units. The following are a list of some of the resources available in regards to StratCom and the related communication functions:

a. **The Strategic Communication Training and Assessment Team (STAT)** is a concept (not yet established) that identifies and pools qualified personnel that would support individual and collective level training events.

b. NATO School Oberammergau provides courses specific to the communication functions some of which include:

- (1) Strategic Communications Course STC-ST-300017
- (2) NATO Senior Official Strategic Communications Familiarisation Course STC-ST-3125
- (3) NATO Operational Planners' PSYOPS Course STC-PO-2008
- (4) NATO Public Affairs in Operations Course STC-PA-3044
- (5) Public Affairs Officer Course STC-PA-3001
- (6) NATO Senior Officer Information Operations Orientation Course STC-IO-3016
- (7) International Tactical Info Ops Course STC-IO-2003
- (8) NATO Info Operations Course STC-IO-3019

- c. **Centres of Excellence (COE).** The StratCom COE in Riga, Latvia is an excellent source for individual training and will provide resource support to collective level training. Additionally, it will be a source for doctrine development and overall SME support. There are additional COEs that can provide useful training opportunities and inputs to further StratCom development.
- d. **Mobile Education Training Teams (METT).** Custom tailored training events are available for individual commands to facilitate individual and collective training requirements. ACT StratCom is the Point of Contact to arrange and manage (OPR Function) these courses.
- e. **Distance Learning** available from NATO School as well as national assets to help fulfil individual training requirements. COE will develop and implement Distance Learning courses based on ACT requirements.
- f. **Training and Exercises.** StratCom must be integrated throughout all phases of NATO exercises. NATO exercises must assess the principles as outlined in the body of this document to ensure that the StratCom mind-set is interwoven throughout all collective level training. Ad Hoc training and exercises can be initiated by individual Commanders via computer aided exercise (CAX) or Command Post Exercises (CPX).
- g. **Conduct Training.** Training Courses are identified and found through the NATO ACT Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue (ETOC) (<http://e-itep.act.nato.int/Guest/ETOCindex.aspx>). NATO provides training on PA, Info Ops, and PSYOPS and StratCom. Mobile Education and Training Teams (METT) can be requested at NATO ACT to train specialised staff elements.
- h. **National Sources.** Some nations may provide training to NATO and its partners. Details of accredited courses at these institutions will be distributed by ACT and provided on the ETOC web site.

CHAPTER VII – CONCLUSION

7-1 Communication is the central process in all phases of military operations. NATO StratCom is critical for the Alliance in all current and future activities. StratCom should be incorporated into all phases of operations in an effort to better understand the IE and based on that to provide courses of action for Commanders. StratCom is not a stand-alone process and requires full integration into all operational processes at the outset and synchronization throughout planning, preparation, execution, and assessment to ensure the greatest effect in the IE. Synchronizing words and actions can help NATO close the “say-do gap” and significantly increase the potential to influence intended audiences. Effectively employed StratCom is a force multiplier achieving theatre-strategic and operational level objectives in a manner that might minimise the need, in certain instances, for lethal operations. Past operations demonstrated potential for an improved integration of Info Ops, Public Affairs, and other information disciplines in support of overarching themes, messages, images and actions. NATO has improved in these areas, but much work is still needed to generate a more integrated and synchronised effort. Increased awareness among Commanders and their staffs are imperative to the success of NATO’s current and future operations. The necessity of integrated StratCom has started to permeate into the Command structures and StratCom focused planning considerations are increasingly applied throughout all stages. An integrated approach and increased understanding of the tactics, techniques and procedures through pertinent training should lead to acceptance of doctrine and eventually the StratCom mind-set essential to keep NATO successful well into the future.

7-2. **Draft for Use.** This document as a “Draft for use” will be reviewed after eighteen months taking all LI/LL from the Trident Juncture 15/16 exercise into consideration.

WORKING CHECKLIST FOR STRATCOM PRACTITIONERS

1. Applicability

- a. All Communication Functions.
- b. J2 information analysts, J5 Info planners.

2. Information Gathering

a. General

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

b. Means

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

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

c. **Relationships**

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

- (7) How does the JFC/JTF build partnership capacity and relationships in the long term (build a reservoir of goodwill)?
- (8) What is the appropriate JFC/JTF relationship with competitors, potential adversaries, or adversaries?
- (9) What are the appropriate command, control, coordination, consultation, and support relationships within/beyond the coalition in order to achieve effective StratCom results?
- (10) How does the JFC/JTF connect with those who are critical to the success of the StratCom-related work (e.g., states, non-state entities, populations, private industry, and academia)?

d. **Audience**

- (1) Who are the principle StratCom audiences affecting mission success?
- (2) What is/ the audience(s) status?
 - (a) Ally.
 - (b) Coalition member.
 - (c) Friend.
 - (d) Competitor.
 - (e) Neutral.
 - (f) Adversary.
 - (g) State.
 - (h) Non-state entity.
- (3) What are the partners', stakeholders' and selected audiences' interests, motivations, fears, and attitudes?
- (4) How does the selected audience process information and make decisions?
- (5) How does the JFC/JTF segment key audiences (e.g., opinion makers, shadow audiences, those most vulnerable, and adversaries)?
- (6) How does the JFC/JTF determine which audience segments affect the desired end state most?

e. **Networks**

- (1) What are the audiences' critical networks (formal and informal)?
- (2) How does the JFC/JTF identify and analyse potential communication media and channels?
- (3) How does the JFC/JTF identify physical and social communication networks?
- (4) Does the JFC/JTF and partners understand the competitors, adversary and their operating environment?
- (5) Who else does the competitor or adversary have in its support network?

f. **Language/Culture**

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

g. **Collection**

- (1) How does the JFC/JTF persistently collect, analyse, disseminate, and access all-source external information, adversary StratCom efforts, and capabilities?
- (2) How does the JFC/JTF gain and exploit StratCom-related intelligence derived from the physical, informational, and cognitive dimensions?
- (3) How does the JFC/JTF incorporate information that supports StratCom?
- (4) How does the JFC/JTF collect in-depth information on the perceptions, attitudes, motivations, etc. of a variety of audiences with different linguistic, gender and cultural backgrounds?

(5) How does the JFC/JTF determine and understand adversarial StratCom interests, objectives, capabilities, methods, etc.?

(6) How does the JFC/JTF identify and analyse who else (other than the adversary) is communicating with designated audiences – what they are communicating, why, intent, methods, capabilities, etc.?

(7) How does the JFC/JTF reorient intelligence capability to collect, analyse and disseminate human terrain information (attitudes, perceptions, culture, gender, etc.)?

(8) What are the needs of the JFC/JTF and partners for additional intelligence and information?

(9) What security classification issues affect the sharing as well as protection of intelligence and information?

(10) Do all partners know how to use and act on the intelligence and information once collected and shared?

(11) Can all partners actually read the intelligence and information?

(12) Are the intelligence and information available in a timely way?

(13) How does the JFC/JTF identify other entities that have interests in the AOR, their goals, objectives, level of influence with key audiences, capabilities, and current activities?

(14) Whose StratCom-related work does the JFC/JTF know about that can be exploited?

(15) Who are the key leader's and SME's most credible sources and why?

h. Development

(1) How does the JFC/JTF conceive and coordinate physical actions to influence selected audiences?

(2) How does the JFC/JTF design, produce, and disseminate effective content for each distinct audience in a timely manner?

(3) How do JFC/JTF and partners conceive, produce, coordinate and synchronise messages (physical and informational) across the various StratCom-related capabilities?

i. **Assessment**

- (1) How does the JFC/JTF estimate the direct and indirect effects (outcomes) of potential signals on the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and actions of selected audiences?
- (2) Is there sufficient feedback among the partners in the system?
- (3) How does the JFC/JTF and partners know that the selected audience is listening and attentive?
- (4) How does the JFC/JTF identify and analyse potential unintended effects (outcomes) on primary, secondary and tertiary audiences?
- (5) How does the JFC/JTF develop StratCom-related measures of effectiveness (MOE) and measures of progress (MOP) to ensure they are relevant, measurable, responsive and resourced?

j. **Restraints and Constraints**

- (1) What are the restraints, constraints and barriers that affect StratCom?
- (2) What are the StratCom-related issues affecting the JFC/JTF from outside the system (e.g., historical ties, religious underpinnings, NATO opinion, political oversight, media attention, international attitudes, etc.)?
- (3) What is the JFC/JTF StratCom-related ROE and interaction? (4) How much will StratCom-related activities cost?
- (4) What are the NATO StratCom-related statutes, policies, regulations relating to the JFC/JTF and partners?
- (5) What legal restrictions affect the StratCom effort?
- (6) What are the JFC/JTF internal barriers to StratCom efforts?
- (7) How does the JFC/JTF reduce or eliminate internal barriers?

k. **Risk**

- (1) What are the relevant risks and mitigations means associated with the StratCom-related activities?
- (3) How can the JFC/JTF and partners become deliberate targets of either competitor or adversary StratCom activity?

I. **Information**

- (1) How will the JFC/JTF document JFC/JTF actions and disseminate this information in real or near-real time as required?
- (2) Who needs to know about the JFC/JTF StratCom-related work?

3. **Planning**

a. **General**

- (1) Desired end state?
- (2) What are the facts and assumptions that affect NATO StratCom related activities?
- (3) What are the StratCom-related operational limitations?
- (4) What is the Commander's guidance and intent concerning StratCom?
- (5) What is the JFC's vision and StratCom philosophy?
- (6) What are primary objectives that StratCom can affect for the NATO, JFC/JTF and partners?
- (7) What are the short, medium and long-term objectives that StratCom must address?
- (8) What are the identifiable centres of gravity (partners, neutrals, competitors, adversaries, others and ours), that StratCom can affect?
- (9) How does the JFC/JTF determine StratCom implications of CCIRs?
- (10) What MOPs and MOEs will the JFC/JTF and partners use, are they responsive and sufficiently resourced?
- (11) How does the JFC maintain the perception of keeping his word in this dynamic, complex and chaotic environment?
- (12) How does the JFC/JTF integrate all actions to maximise desired effects?
- (13) What are the outcomes on selected audiences?
- (14) How does the JFC coordinate with NATO Agencies and other organizations?
- (14) What JFC/JTF abilities/values need to be emphasised or de-emphasised?

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- (15) What JFC/JTF behaviour needs to change?
- (16) What audience(s) behaviour(s) needs to change?
- (17) How do key partners organise for StratCom-related work?
- (18) How does the JFC/JTF develop and sustain a proactive and responsive multi-media StratCom capability?
- (19) How does the JFC/JTF perform and integrate StratCom in a comprehensive process in order to seize and maintain the initiative?
- (20) How does the JFC/JTF predict, anticipate, or realise strategic implications of tactical and individual actions?
- (21) How does the JFC/JTF plan and execute StratCom with various NATO agencies, organizations and partners?
- (22) How does the JFC/JTF create, modify and coordinate command, control, supported/supporting relationships and StratCom actions across various NATO Agencies, partners and other organizations?
- (23) How does the JFC/JTF manage a highly decentralised communication effort?
- (24) How does the process verify the right message content, audience, timing, tempo and delivery vehicle?
- (25) How does the JFC/JTF rapidly exploit StratCom opportunities at each level of command?
- (26) What is the JFC/JTF's desired reputation as observed by selected audiences?
- (27) How does the JFC/JTF synchronise actions with messages?
- (28) How does the JFC/JTF coordinate to preclude miscues and misunderstandings?
- (29) How does StratCom assist the JFC/JTF recover from mistakes?
- (30) How is the JFC/JTF going to deal with deliberate deviations from established principles and standards?
- (31) How does the JFC/JTF synchronise lethal and nonlethal targeting efforts?

b. **Relationships**

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(1) How can we leverage JFC/JTF history, partners, and stakeholder past relationships / histories?

(2) Do the JFC/JTF and key partners agree on the StratCom problems/challenges that exist at the theatre-strategic and operational levels?

(3) What are the current roles and responsibilities of partners and stakeholders?

(4) How does the JFC/JTF assimilate new partners in its StratCom-related activities?

c. **Restraints and constraints**

(1) What are the NATO and other partners' policies that affect the StratCom problems/challenges and solution?

(4) How does the JFC/JTF anticipate and empty competitor or adversarial StratCom actions?

d. **Means**

(1) How does the JFC/JTF identify and engage evolving new media?

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

e. **Assessment**

(1) How will the JFC/JTF and partners get feedback and adapt to the changing environment and nature of the StratCom-related work?

(2) How does the JFC/JTF conduct assessment of StratCom-related activities?

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

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

(5) How does the JFC/JTF establish causality?

f. **Risk**

(1) How is the JFC/JTF going to deal with bad news?

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

g. Themes, Messages, Images, and Actions

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

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

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

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

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

(6) What mitigation measures are appropriate?

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

1-4. Plan Review

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

b. How will the JFC conduct a continuous engagement program with selected key audiences?

c. How will the JFC/JTF conduct culturally reliable translation? Will this be sufficient to meet demand?

d. How will the JFC/JTF train personnel to a working proficiency in important languages?

e. How will the JFC/JTF exploit unplanned physical and virtual StratCom engagement opportunities?

f. What audience behaviours are the JFC/JTF and partners planning to reinforce?

g. What audience behaviours are the JFC/JTF and partners planning to change or eliminate?

h. How will the JFC/JTF and partners create necessary feedback loops?

i. How will the JFC/JTF and partners ensure all parties are listening to each other?

- j. What delivery vehicles does the plan use to access desired media for reaching the selected audience?

1-5. Execution

- a. What must the JFC/JTF do more, less, start or stop doing in its StratCom work?
- b. What are the JFC/JTF and partners learning from StratCom-related activities?
- c. Do the JFC/JTF and partners really understand what is happening?
- d. How does the JFC/JTF monitor, measure and assess the effects of friendly messages on intended and unintended audiences in relation to desired outcomes?
- e. What unanticipated StratCom-related questions and challenges are now surfacing?
- f. Are the JFC/JTF and partners continuing the same planned StratCom cycle or performing a completely new assessment and planning effort based on new realities on the ground?
- g. Does the JFC/JTF and partners need to narrow or broaden the scope of StratCom work?
- h. Is there a particular issue that needs more StratCom attention or focus of effort?
- i. What new information has surfaced that should cause a re-evaluation of the plan?
- j. Who else needs to be involved now in the StratCom effort?
- k. What new opportunities are developing for the JFC/JTF and partners?
- l. What JFC/JTF or partner organizational changes could improve conduct of StratCom-related activities?
- m. What is the truth on key issues from the primary audience perspective?

1-6. Transition

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

FORMAT AND GUIDANCE FOR INCLUDING A STRATCOM ANNEX INTO AN OPERATION PLAN²⁵

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

1. Situation

a. General

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

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

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

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

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

²⁵ COPD utilises the following annexes coding: StratCom – Annex SS, PA – Annex TT, Info Ops – Annex UU and PSYOPS – Annex VV.

plans, decisions, and operational effectiveness in task accomplishment; identify their susceptibility to strategic communication messages and actions.

(2) **Information Systems.** Identify primary information and collection systems that support opposing decision makers and their staffs. Summarise intelligence capabilities pertinent to the situation.

c. **Friendly**

d. **Neutrals**

e. **Lines of Operation.** Identify the significant expectations to be coordinated, synchronised, and/or integrated to identify primary responsibilities and mission expectations of the various supporting communication capabilities.

(1) Friendly

(2) Neutral

(3) Adversary

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

3. **Execution**

a. **Concept of Operations**

(1) **Overview.** State the main body Commander's intent for StratCom. Discuss the goal(s) of the StratCom process and provide emphasis on how it contributes to the end-state of the Base Plan. Conceptually explain how combatant commands produce effects that contribute to the accomplishment of NATO objectives for the area of operations (AOR).

(2) **Specific Guidance.** Provide guidance for the various supporting communication capabilities, through subordinate command elements, to ensure coordinated execution of StratCom objectives.

(3) Identify the StratCom objectives to achieve the Commander's intent (possibly included in the NID).

(4) Include the potential the StratCom narrative and themes, subsequent messages, focus topics and desired end state to achieve the StratCom objective(s). These will align to with development of a StratCom Framework.

(5) Provide guidance on audiences who are instrumental in achieving the StratCom objective(s). Associate themes and subsequent messages to each identified audience. Generally associate performance expectations to provide guidance to the various communication capabilities in developing associated

action.

(6) Address themes, subsequent messages, and actions to be **avoided** because of their potential to produce unintended consequences or harmful attitudes and behaviour.

(7) Describe primary adversarial themes and messages directed at friendly audiences in the operational area that oppose NATO StratCom objectives. StratCom objectives should provide guidance for countering or minimising effect of adversary operations.

(8) Relationship to Info Ops and PA. Cross- reference and demonstrate relationships between the effects, audiences, messages, and activities in various enclosures to the main body of the OPLAN. This will include Annex A (Ops), Annex SS (StratCom), Annex TT (PA), Annex UU (Info Ops) and Annex VV (PSYOPS).

(9). Measures of Performance (MOP). Provide expectation as to methods expected for measuring performance, such as intelligence, multidiscipline counterintelligence, security monitoring, and operational feedback. How will StratCom requirements be assessed? Include measurement expectations to ensure the implementation of a selected MOP, by the supporting communication capability, confirms the delivery of the message, to the targeted audience, with the desired end state.

(10) Measures of Effectiveness (MOE). The primary measure of effectiveness in the communication environment is a change in behaviour of the identified target audience that supports an objective. Measure of effectiveness, the result of an implemented “measure of performance,” may be a less stringent opposition to a democratic initiatives and/or an increased willingness to adapt improved humanitarian proposals. Such MOE must have established MOP and may require specialised reporting, incorporated in the Annex OO.

b. **Tasks.** Outline the tasks to be completed and divided into separate subparagraphs by supported and supporting commands and NATO agencies. Each task should be a concise statement encompassing all key actions that subordinate and supporting elements must perform. Assign responsibilities based on capabilities to reach the intended audience(s). Ensure that tasks clearly assign responsibilities, consider support to Public Diplomacy and visual information, address interagency coordination, and provide for guidance on MOE and MOP.

(1) Public Affairs.

(2) Information Operations.

(3) CIMIC or Civil Military Interaction.

(4) Defence Support to Public Diplomacy.

- (5) Visual Information (Combat Camera).
- (6) Subordinate Commands.
- (7) Supporting Combatant Commands.
- (8) Specified Coordination with Higher Headquarters.
 - (a) Non-NATO Entities (NNE).
 - (b) Joint Staff and defence support agencies.
- (9) Other Key Leader Engagements.

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

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

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NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT TOOL, TEMPLATES AND DESCRIPTION

1. **Narrative Framework.** As guidance to the coalition mission the Narrative forms a centrepiece for further military planning and the operational design (Narrative-led operations).²² It forms the starting point and central input for the development and implementation of the IS/StratCom Framework²³.

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

- a. Situational Context.
- b. Narrative Landscape.
- c. Narrative Script.

2. **Development process for Narratives.** Each of the three building blocks can be broken down into a series of steps comprising analysis, testing and refinement activities within a continuous and iterative process. For further guidance see MNIOE White Paper and the 2015 ACT white paper “Implementing Strategic Communications Narratives into the NATO Environment”.

3. The Situational Context

a. The Situational Context analyses the background and context of a (potential) Alliance engagement. It initially anticipates and later outlines purpose, aim and scope of the mission as well as the NATO “desire” for the crisis region. It aims to provide an understanding of the overall crisis situation and its root causes. This understanding must combine the Alliance’s point of view and other actors’ perspectives, including their motives and desires driving their behaviour which will be further analysed in the narrative landscape. A key output from the context analysis is the identification of the most relevant actors and stakeholders to the coalition engagement.

The analysis of the Situational Context is an overarching, not a narrative-specific effort. However, narrative developers will contribute to the overall analysis of the Situational Context from their specific expertise.

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

²³ Ref. MNIOE White Paper: Narrative Development in Coalition Operations Ver 1.0; 20 May 2014.

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

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

Fig.C-1: Template of the Situational Context

4. Narrative Landscape

a. The Narrative Landscape outlines results of the analysis of the IE with a specific focus on the narratives of relevant actors and stakeholders such as Alliance members, conflicting parties and local populace. It addresses the assumed desire and motivation of the considered actors, and their individual satisfactory outcome. Since narratives are considered systems of stories they are analysed regarding existing myths, legends, characters, symbols, and stories. The analysis also compares objective facts and potential aspirations on the (past, present, and future) situation development and the subjective reality perceived by the considered actors and stakeholders (considering tone and language of own and local media). In doing so, it demonstrates the dominant narratives in a particular situation. In order to prepare the development of a sustainable narrative it is important to understand the cultural and situational frame for the interpretation of history and the development of the current situation and events. This addresses the question why and how the interpretation of specific actors leads to respective conclusions, emotions, decisions, and actions and ultimately their behaviour. A key output of this analysis is the identification of commonalities and differences among various effective narratives and their interpretation in terms of events, activities, and any type of communication. Findings from the analysis shape the definition of an overall outcome assumed to be acceptable to the analysed actors and stakeholders (most relevant to the crisis solution) from their perspectives. Understood as a common denominator this overall outcome could indicate the most sustainable crisis resolution

strategy since it focuses upon unifying commonalities, rather than separating cultural differences. This identified overall acceptable outcome should be endorsed by the senior political (or military) leadership prior to further development of the Narrative Script.

b. The Narrative Landscape is captured in Figure C-2 below. This document is highly detailed as analysts are encouraged to describe content within the above steps for all relevant actors without necessarily allocating them a role in the eventual Narrative. This information will be distilled in the production of the Narrative Script.

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

Fig. C-2: Template of Narrative Landscape

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

5. **Narrative Script**

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

b. The Narrative Script template defines the different roles of key actors, distilling information where relevant from the Narrative Landscape.

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

Figure C-3. Template of the Narrative Script

6. **Crafting the Written Narrative**

a. By completing the Narrative framework it is now possible to construct a concise but comprehensive written narrative, which can stand on its own as the principle context to strategic planning directives or be used with the Narrative Script to support the creation of individual culturally attuned stories that will resonate with particular target audiences. Individual nations and coalitions will adopt different perspectives as they

construct their IS. In all cases it is essential that the writer puts himself/herself in the mind of the NATO Commander in writing this narrative, which should conform structurally to the Narrative Arc.

7. Testing the Narrative

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

8. Approval of Narratives

a. It is essential that narratives are approved and endorsed at the highest level in conjunction with the overall IS/StratCom Framework to ensure success of Alliance operations. Specific procedures must be adopted and followed consistently to ensure timely approval of a Narrative. Establishment of the Narrative Working Group as an adjunct to the StratCom Working Group at NATO HQ that is convened as required shepherding the tested narrative through the final approval process.

The complete process of NATO Narrative Development can be found in the 2015 ACT white paper “Implementing Strategic Communications Narratives into the NATO Environment”.

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NATO STRATCOM FRAMEWORK TEMPLATE (CURRENT NATO VERSION IN USE)

1. **Template.** The NATO Stratcom Framework Template includes the following Categories:

a. **Introduction.** This section provides a brief background to the issue providing political and operational context. In a couple of paragraphs this should also outline the future challenges from a StratCom perspective, including audiences.

b. **Aim.** The scope and duration of validity for the StratCom Framework.

c. **StratCom Objectives.** NATO's StratCom objectives for the operation, mission or activity. Objectives will refer and link to the effect we wish to achieve with friendly, neutral and adversary audiences:

(1) This is a matter of judgement, but the number of objectives should not be too large, and ideally no more than five.

(2) Should eventually be attached to the OPLAN as overall Objectives.

2. **StratCom Core Message**

3. Brief core message to underpin the StratCom approach to be adopted. Note this now follows the objectives, reflecting the objectives we are trying to achieve have primacy – as the core message, themes and topics are all in support of attaining the objective(s).

4. **NATO Narrative**

5. **StratCom Themes**

a. The three to six themes which are to be promoted in support of achieving the StratCom objectives. Themes (defined by NATO as “an overarching concept or intention, designed for broad application”) are not messages (defined by NATO as a “narrowly focussed communication directed at a specific audience”). As implied in the NATO definitions themes are intended to identify the key understandings among audiences that NATO's integrated messaging and actions will seek to achieve. Themes are to be promoted to help achieve our StratCom objectives. These themes will, in turn, be reinforced by communications focus topics.

6. **Brevity.** Each theme should be expressible in one or two words, backed by a short explanatory paragraph. Typically (taking ISAF as an example) themes have included **Resolve**,

Realism. Others, for example OUP, have included **Legitimacy** and **Cooperation**, and OAE includes **Deterrence**.

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

a. **Activity Orientated.** Typically a focus topic will show a theme being put into practice. Thus Resolve in ISAF in 2010 could be highlighted by showing the troop surge or increased patrol activity. Cooperation in OUP could be demonstrated by the role of non-NATO contributors.

8. **Coordination.** An overview of the key roles and responsibilities of specified headquarters in delivery of the StratCom approach. The above is a complete StratCom Framework, but additional annexes can be attached as required, concentrating, as highlighted above, on more specific issues and implementation of the objectives, themes, and topics. These can include:

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

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

c. **Risk & Opportunities.** Attached as an annex setting out the key StratCom challenges and opportunities, with appropriate actions for their mitigation or exploitation.

INFORMATION STRATEGY TEMPLATE

NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

NATO HQ
1110 BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
DATE

NATO INFORMATION STRATEGY FOR XXXXX

TO:

SUBJECT:

REFERENCES:

A.

B.

See DISTRIBUTION

1. **Introduction**
2. **Purpose and Scope.** Strategic-political dimension: partner nations and populations, all instruments of power, global perspective.
3. **Narrative Statement.** The assumed desire and motivation of the considered audiences and their individual satisfactory outcome.
4. **Communication Objectives (political level)**
5. **Initial Strategic Assessment of the Information Environment**
6. **Mandate and mission**
7. **Coordination Requirements.** Procedures ref. to NATO partners, information sharing arrangements, dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors.

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(STRATEGIC) COMMUNICATION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TEMPLATE

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

REFERENCES:

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

1. **Introduction**

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

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

2. **Context**

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

4. **Narrative and Information Objectives**

- a. NATO Narrative for XXXX Country (copied from Information strategy (IS))
- b. JFC/JFT Narrative Statement (regional dimension: national contributions, regional powers, military focus; derived from the operational mission)
- c. Information Objectives linked to Military Strategic Objectives
- d. Approved Audiences and Targets (bullet list; amended with caveats, as req.

constraints/restraints)

e. Themes and Master Messages not linked to specific audiences/targets. A general overview

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

6. **Implementation Route (Synopsis)**

a. Milestones and Key Events (milestones=decisive points; key events=important occurrences that happen anyway/periodically, story events that may lead to milestones or result from them)

b. Communication Approach (broad description/summary: mapping of audiences/targets, themes and master messages for each Information Objective; continuous text)

c. JFC/JFC Information Activities (highlight key activities by JFC/JFC HQ actors and Component Commanders, as appropriate)

d. Coordination Requirements (procedures ref. to NATO Command HQs, information sharing arrangements, dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors; coordination JFC/JFC- IO/NGOs/ETC.)

7. **Annexes**

a. Implementation Route Matrix (Mapping of JFC/JFT HQ and CC Actors/Capabilities, Audiences/Targets, Themes and Master Messages for each Information Objective).

b. Evaluation Plan

c. Budget and Finance

ANNEX G TO
ENCLOSURE 1 TO
1710/TSC FCO 0260/TT-140221/Ser:NU
DATED MAY 15

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AJP	Allied Joint Publication
AOR	Area of Responsibility
DIRLAUTH	Direct Liaison Authority
DOTMLPF and	Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership Education, Personnel, and Facilities
EW	Electronic Warfare
HQ	Headquarters
IAWG	Information Activities Working Group
INFO OPS	Information Operations
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
IO	International Organizations
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, And Reconnaissance
JFC	Joint Force Command
JTF	Joint Task Force
JWC	Joint Warfare Centre
LOO	Line of Operations
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPLAN	Operation Plan
OPR	Office of Primary Responsibility
OPSEC	Operations Security
PA	Public Affairs
PAO	Public Affairs Officer
PD	Public Diplomacy
PMESII	Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, And Information
POLAD	Political Advisor
PSYOPS	Psychological Operations
StratCom	Strategic Communications
StratComAD	Strategic Communications Advisor
SCB	Strategic Communications Board
StratComWG	Strategic Communications Working Group
TTP	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures
WG	Working Group

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- a. IMSWM-0051-2011(SD1), NATO Strategic Communications Military Capability Implementation Plan (CIP), dated 21 April 2011.
- b. MC 422/5, NATO Military Policy on Information Operations, January 2015
- c. MC 411/1, NATO Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Policy, July 2003
- d. MC 0457/2, NATO Military Policy on Public Affairs, February 2011
- e. MC 402/2, NATO Military Policy on Psychological Operations, June 2012
- f. MCM-0085-2010 Military Concept for NATO Strategic Communications, August 2010
- g. NATO Policy PO (2009) 0141, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, 29 September 2009.
- h. MC 0133/4, NATO's Operations Planning, Jan 2011

2. NATO Allied Joint Publications

- a. AJP 3.10 NATO Information Operations Doctrine, November 2009
- b. AJP 3.10.1B NATO Psychological Operations Doctrine, September 2014
- c. AJP 5 NATO Operational-level planning Doctrine, June 2013
- d. AJP 9 NATO Civil-Military Co-operation Doctrine, June 2003

3. NATO Directives

- a. ACO Directive (AD) 95-2, ACO Strategic Communications, May 2012
- b. ACO Directive (AD) 95-3, Social Media, 3 December 2009
- c. (3) COPD, Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive – Version 2.0, dated 4 October 2013

4. Other NATO Documents

- a. NATO/ISAF Strategic Communications Framework 2010, 3 Feb 10
- b. Document PO (2010)0169, The Alliance's Strategic Concept, Nov 10
- c. MCM-0076-2011, NATO Strategic Communications Military Capability Implementation Plan (CIP); 20 June 2011
- d. Document C-M (2008) 0029, Proposal on a way ahead on Comprehensive Approach, March 2008
- e. TR-HFM-160 RTO Technical Report: "How to improve your aim: Measuring the effectiveness of activities that influence attitudes and behaviours" August 2011. Final report of Task Groups HFM-160 and HFM-183
- f. IMSM-0093-2011 NATO/ISAF Strategic Communications Framework 2011, 24 February 2011
- g. IMSM 0348-2011, Terms of Reference NATO HQ StratCom Cell, July 2011
- h. Libyan Lessons learned for StratCom – ANNEX 2 to PO (2012)0153
- i. AC 237 – D (2014) 0003 NCRSM, NATO Crisis Response System manual, 2014

5. Other Documents

- a. MNIOE White Paper: Narrative Development in Coalition Operations Ver. 1.0; 20 May 2014
- b. MNIOE White Paper: Applied Concept Analysis and Assessment of the Information Environment Ver.1.0; 30 April 2014

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- c. MCDC StratCom Focus Area – Applied Concept: “Communication Management at the Military Operational Level” (30 September 2014)
- d. MCDC Enclosures to Exercise Viking 2014
- e. MCDC StratCom Focus Area – Guidelines for Decision-Makers: “Approval of communication guidance” Ver. 2.0 (30 September 2014)
- f. US StratCom Commander’s Handbook 2009