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<b>14. ABSTRACT</b>  In order for the Regional Combatant Commands (RCCs) to meet national level objectives consistent with the National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Military Strategy (NMS), the RCC must not only be prepared to focus its efforts on “kinetic” operations, but must also tailor its Strategic Communication (SC) efforts to win “hearts and minds” by winning the “war of ideas”. This victory can only be accomplished by the RCC’s ability to employ his soft power capabilities, which includes strategic communication. In order to successfully meet these future SC challenges at the operational level, it is absolutely paramount that RCCs focus their efforts upon three SC enablers – USG policy and interagency coordination, synchronization and planning, and the development of processes that measure effectiveness of SC objectives. This paper will trace the “grass roots” of SC, provide the current definition of key terms under the SC umbrella, and assess why SC is a valid operational mission for the RCC. By analyzing past and current SC efforts by the RCCs, this paper will further assess how U.S. Government (USG) policy and interagency coordination has influenced the RCC’s ability to synchronize the planning and execution of SC activities, along with the RCC’s ability to effectively design mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of its’ SC objectives. This paper will conclude by proposing recommendations for future employment of SC/soft power by the RCCs.					
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Newport, R.I.**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION ENABLERS FOR THE  
REGIONAL COMBATANT COMMANDER**

**by**

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

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

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**23 April 2008**

## **Abstract**

In order for the Regional Combatant Commands (RCCs) to meet national level objectives consistent with the National Security Strategy and National Military Strategy, the RCC must not only be prepared to focus its efforts on “kinetic” operations, but must also tailor its Strategic Communication (SC) efforts to win “hearts and minds” by winning the “war of ideas”. This victory can only be accomplished by the RCC’s ability to employ its soft power capabilities, which includes strategic communication. In order to successfully meet these future SC challenges at the operational level, it is absolutely paramount that RCCs focus their efforts upon three SC enablers – U.S. Government (USG) policy and interagency coordination, synchronization and planning, and the development of processes that measure effectiveness of SC objectives. This paper will trace the “grass roots” of SC, provide the current definition of key terms under the SC umbrella, and assess why SC is a valid operational mission for the RCC. By analyzing past and current SC efforts by the RCCs, this paper will further assess how USG policy and interagency coordination has influenced the RCC’s ability to synchronize the planning and execution of SC activities, along with the RCC’s ability to effectively design mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of its’ SC objectives. This paper will conclude by proposing recommendations for future employment of SC/soft power by the RCCs.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In an increasingly globalized world driven by information collection and dissemination, a nation's ability to communicate its policies and ideas across the breadth of international opinion and perception has become a strategic necessity. Even after expending a large amount of energy and resources, the United States has struggled since 11 September 2001 to develop a positive image at home and in the international community. The 2004 Defense Science Board (DSB) identified a number of problems – lack of controlled direction, poor interagency collaboration and coordination, and an overall lack of synchronization across the United States Government (USG). The 2004 task force further concluded that U.S. strategic communication (SC) must be transformed. “America’s negative image in world opinion and diminished ability to persuade are consequences of factors other than failure to implement communications strategies. Interests collide. Leadership counts. Policies matter. Mistakes dismay our friends and provide enemies with unintentional assistance. Strategic communication is not *the* problem, but it is *a* problem.”<sup>1</sup> Although the significance of SC has been introduced at the national level, it is at the theater level and below where Regional Combatant Commands (RCCs) use SC to shape their area of operations in time and space.

## **THESIS**

In order for the RCCs to meet national level objectives consistent with the National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Military Strategy (NMS), the RCC must not only be

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, September 2004), 2.

prepared to focus its efforts on “kinetic” operations, but must also tailor his SC efforts to win “hearts and minds” by winning the “war of ideas”. This victory can only be accomplished by the RCC’s ability to employ its soft power capabilities, which includes strategic communication. In order to successfully meet these future SC challenges at the operational level, it is absolutely paramount that RCCs focus their efforts upon three SC enablers – USG policy and interagency coordination, synchronization and planning, and the development of processes that measure effectiveness of SC objectives<sup>2</sup>.

This paper will trace the “grass roots” of SC, provide the current definition of key terms under the SC umbrella, and assess why SC is a valid operational mission for the RCC. By analyzing past and current SC efforts by the RCCs, this paper will further assess how USG policy and interagency coordination has influenced the RCC’s ability to synchronize the planning and execution of SC activities, along with the RCC’s ability to effectively design mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of its’ SC objectives. This paper will conclude by proposing recommendations for future employment of SC/soft power by the RCCs.

### **BACKGROUND/DEFINITION OF TERMS**

*The use of precisely defined terms is critical in any profession. It is no less important in the military, and the U.S. Armed Forces are no exception.*

-- Milan Vego

Following the events of 11 September 2001, it is generally recognized that the USG and Department of Defense (DoD) have “failed to recognize their critical weaknesses in both

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen P. Perkins and Gary T. Scott, “Enabling Strategic Communication at the Combatant Commands”, *IO Sphere* (Spring 2006), 26. Paper author gives Perkins and Scott credit for the original idea of developing their seven principles for enabling SC at the joint operational level.

responding to the Islamist extremists' dominance of global information environment and seizing the initiative from them in the 'strategic communication' campaign in the War on Terrorism (WOT).”<sup>3</sup> Before analyzing how to effectively employ SC to meet these challenges at the operational level, it is important to understand the “grass roots” of SC, as well as defining the key terms that fall under the SC umbrella.

Beginning in early 2004 with the release of a report by the DSB, shortcomings in meeting SC challenges in the WOT were emphasized for the first time. As a result of the report, it was clear that there would be a renewed focus on strategic communications, with further indications that the DoD would play an integral role in meeting future national level SC objectives. The task force concluded that “strategic communication must be transformed with a strength of purpose that matches our commitment to diplomacy, defense, intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security.”<sup>4</sup>

With this renewed focus, the DSB report influenced the DoD to further emphasize the importance of SC in their February 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). The 2006 QDR “sought to provide a broader range of military options for the President and new capabilities needed by Combatant Commanders (CCDRs) to confront asymmetric threats.”<sup>5</sup> In identifying these new Combatant Command capabilities, the QDR identified SC as one of its five “areas of particular emphasis” focused on “reorienting the Department’s capabilities

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<sup>3</sup> Robert L. Perry, “The Organization is Flat: An Integrated Model for Strategic Communication Within the Combatant Command, *Navy War College Department of Joint Military Operations* (5 November 2007), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, *Report of the Defense Science Board (DSB) Task Force on Strategic Communication* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, December 2007), 2.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, February 2006), 1.

to be more agile in this time of war, to prepare for wider asymmetric challenges and to hedge against uncertainty over the next 20 years.”<sup>6</sup>

The QDR also stated that the DoD “must instill communication assessments into its culture, developing programs, plans, policy, information and themes to support CCDRs that reflect the U.S. Government’s overall strategic objectives.”<sup>7</sup> With this momentum, the DoD released a supporting QDR Strategic Communication Execution Roadmap which further focused DoD efforts in streamlining the concept of SC. This roadmap effort formally defined strategic communications as:

*“Focused U.S. government efforts to understand and engage key audiences in order to create, strengthen or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of national interests and policies through the use of coordinated themes, plans, programs, and products integrated with the actions of all elements of national power.”*<sup>8</sup>

The roadmap implies the increasing importance of “Information” in respect to the other elements of national power, and concludes that effective SC is a product of close cooperation between its “primary supporting capabilities” of DoD’s Public Affairs (PA), Defense Support to Public Diplomacy (DSPD), and aspects of Information Operations (IO), principally Psychological Operations (PSYOPS).<sup>9</sup> In order to completely understand these three components of SC and to establish the foundation for this paper, formal definition of each is required.

Public Affairs is defined as:

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Strategic Communication Execution Roadmap* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, February 2006), 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

*“Those public information, command information, and community relations activities directed toward both the external and internal publics with interest in Department of Defense.”<sup>10</sup>*

The second component of SC is Defense Support to Public Diplomacy. Public Diplomacy (PD) is defined as:

*“Those overt international information activities of the USG designed to promote U.S. foreign policy objectives by seeking to understand, inform, and influence foreign audiences and opinion makers and by broadening the dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad.”<sup>11</sup>*

Finally, SC includes Information Operations which is a DoD term used to include the integrated employment of the core capabilities of Electronic Warfare, Computer Network Operations, Military Deception, Operations Security, and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS).<sup>12</sup> Of these core capabilities, PSYOPS is one of the more important SC capabilities for the CCDR, and is defined as:

*“Military activities that use selected information and indicators to influence the attitudes and behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals in support of military and national security objectives.”<sup>13</sup>*

Although PA, DSPD, and IO are nested under the SC umbrella and serve as the principal means by which “CCDRs engage key audiences through the use of coordinated information, themes, plans and programs”, it is also important to ensure that the “distinction between PA, DSPD and IO remain clear so as not to diminish their effectiveness.” “In support of strategic communication, IO and DSPD efforts are focused on foreign audiences,

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<sup>10</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 (Washington DC: CJCS, 17 September 2006), x.

<sup>11</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Information Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-13 (Washington DC: CJCS, 13 February 2006), II-10.

<sup>12</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operation Planning*, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0 (Washington DC: CJCS, 29 September 2006), GL-12.

<sup>13</sup> *Defense Science Board (DSB) Task Force on Strategic Communication* (September 2004), 13.

while PA has both a foreign and domestic focus.”<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, it should also be noted that a “necessary” tension may exist when working to synchronize the PA and IO lanes of responsibility, since PA is “charged with informing the public with factual, truthful information, while IO and PSYOP seek to influence their audiences to change perceptions or behavior”.<sup>15</sup>

### **BUT WHY NOT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE?**<sup>16</sup>

*Combatant Commander participation is essential in developing a strategic communication plan that conveys U.S. intent and objectives, and ensures the success of the plan by countering adversary disinformation and misinformation. Such strategic communication can help avoid conflict or deescalate tensions among adversaries.*

-- 2004 National Military Strategy

Nearly four years ago, the 2004 National Military Strategy (NMS) articulated the need for “CCDR participation in developing strategic communication plans.” Since receiving that implied task, the RCCs have taken the initiative to transform and in some cases build from scratch their respective SC diplomacy and information capabilities. “One question that does arise, however, is whether such diplomatic and informational efforts are or should be a fundamental part of the RCC mission.”<sup>17</sup> In attempting to answer that question, the argument can be made that “strategic communication”, as the name itself implies, belongs at the strategic level, not at the operational level. After all, the Department of State (DoS) has been designated the lead agency for SC, and perhaps it is the State Department, not the RCC, who should have the sole responsibility to handle the mission of diplomacy coordination and information management across all the Departments. Although this

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<sup>14</sup> Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Enclosure B to Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES) Volume 1. CJCSM 3122.01A* (Washington, DC: 6 December 2007), 18.

<sup>15</sup> Pamela Keeton and Mark McCann, “Information Operations, STRATCOM, and Public Affairs”, *The U.S. Army Professional Writing Collection*, (February 2006), 3.

<sup>16</sup> Heath D. Bohlen. “Strategic Communication and the Geographic Combatant Commander: Using Principles of War to Win Peace”, *Navy War College Department of Joint Military Operations* (10 May 2007), 5. Paper author gives credit to LCDR Bohlen for his original idea in creating the counterargument (Why the GCCs?)

<sup>17</sup> Bohlen, 5.

argument possesses some merit, it also has some clear flaws when assessing the larger national picture.

First, although the State Department has the overall lead for SC, it lacks the resources, opportunities, and capability to effectively lead the SC effort on its own. Despite the fact that the 2007 DSB SC task force recommended a significant budget increase in the State Department's public diplomacy programs, a review of the current 2009 budget magnifies the large variance between DoS and DoD budget authorizations. The State Department's annual budget is only 7.4 % of the DoD budget, \$38.3 billion compared to \$515.4 billion, respectively.<sup>18</sup>

Second, as the WOT and prior experience have taught us, it is very difficult to draw a line in the sand which distinctly separates the traditional role of military action (CCDR) from the role of diplomacy (DoS). Due to the military's ability and propensity to deploy in support of missions around the world, military forces are generally more exposed to "face to face" encounters, and thus SC opportunities, with foreign citizens, militaries, and even governments than are the State Department. This concept is unlikely to change due to the military's traditional role of deployment and the State Department's budget and personnel constraints, further reinforcing the requirement for our "uniformed" personnel to exercise their "soft power" diplomatic skills. General Zinni, former CENTCOM Commander and pioneer for CCDR's diplomacy efforts may have said it best:

*"During my time as a CINC, I was asked to carry out presidential and other diplomatic missions that would normally have fallen to the diplomats. I'm sure such things frustrated the State Department, but I don't think they disapproved. In fact, they were very supportive.*

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<sup>18</sup> Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government: Fiscal Year 2009* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy09/pdf/budget/defense.pdf> (accessed 12 April 08).

*It was more a case of 'Well, if we can't do it, at least somebody is taking care of it.' If it's the CINCs, then God bless them."<sup>19</sup>*

In short, the SC mission cannot be in the sole purview of the State Department; for it is a valid and necessary mission for the RCC, and the responsibility must be shared accordingly. At the operational level, it is the RCC, not the State Department, that is the linchpin that ties together tactical and national level strategic communication. When an RCC is empowered to execute SC at the operational level, then its' themes and messages will flow efficiently up and down the chain, all the way from the "strategic corporal" to the President of the United States.

In order for the RCCs to successfully meet future SC challenges at the operational level, their efforts must focus on three SC enablers – USG policy and interagency coordination, synchronization and planning, and the development of processes to measure effectiveness of SC objectives.

### **USG POLICY AND INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AS SC ENABLERS**

*Combatant Commanders should harness all strategic communication capabilities, including public affairs, public diplomacy (military support to public diplomacy and military diplomacy) and information operations, and work with the interagency to implement a synergistic strategic communication effort.*

-- 2006 National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism

For RCCs to successfully implement SC, a prerequisite is the complete understanding of the USG's policy in dealing with a specific regional objective. RCCs do not require the specific "solution set" from our USG officials in Washington, but simply require broad, overarching guidance and direction which must start from the top. As the Defense Science Board Task Force points out, "nothing shapes U.S. policies and global perceptions of U.S.

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<sup>19</sup> Tom Clancy and Tony Zinni, "CENTCOM"; Chapter 6 in *Battle Ready*, 319.

foreign and national security objectives more powerfully than the President's statements and actions."<sup>20</sup> It should be noted, however, that the CCDR also has the obligation to challenge politicians and respective civilian authorities to ensure that policy is clearly articulated from its onset.

Although receiving clear USG guidance in support of an RCC's regional objective is vital to success, it is equally necessary for RCCs to work closely with the interagency community. As an example, in 2006, the Joint Information Operations Center (JIOC) hosted a strategic communications seminar in conjunction with key government officials including U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) and the Joint Special Operations University. The goal of the seminar was to develop long-term SC themes in concert with the USG position on Cuba.<sup>21</sup> During the seminar, the importance of the interagency process was validated by State Department officials ensuring that the working group's recommendations stayed in line with the overall USG policy on Cuba.<sup>22</sup> As a result, "the USSOUTHCOM is now assured of a thoroughly vetted and unified Department of State and Department of Defense Strategic Communication approach to advance long-term U.S. interests in Central America."<sup>23</sup>

Another example of USSOUTHCOM's efforts to build partnerships and SC capability is reflected in the 2007 USSOUTHCOM posture statement presented by Admiral Stavridis. In his statement to Congress, Admiral Stavridis highlighted the successful efforts in the 2006 exercise *Fuerzas Aliadas Humanitarian*. This exercise brought together 21 nations from the Caribbean and Central America to focus on regional cooperation and

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<sup>20</sup> *Defense Science Board (DSB) Task Force on Strategic Communication* (September 2004), 3.

<sup>21</sup> Perkins and Scott, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

information sharing to prepare for humanitarian and disaster relief operations. Fourteen military, government (i.e. USAID), and non-government regional agencies participated in the exercise – a major step toward capacity building and information sharing.<sup>24</sup> This example reinforces the point of how a CCDR’s Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP) can enhance trust and long-term “soft power” SC capability through effective relationship-building between interagencies and foreign nations.

The positive impact of a unified RCC-interagency relationship is further addressed in the 2007 DSB on Strategic Communication. The report highlights how U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), working closely with the Open Source Center and Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) representatives, currently plans and operates its SC in the information environment through a “strategic effects” cell in Baghdad to perform a regionally focused media analysis and response center in Qatar.<sup>25</sup>

As illustrated by these three examples, the partnerships existing between the RCCs and interagencies create the necessary synergy to support the NSS and NMS, along with tying in specific public affairs, public diplomacy, and information operations messages and themes for dissemination within the RCC’s AOR.

### **SYNCHRONIZATION AND PLANNING AS AN SC ENABLER**

*Changes in the global information environment require the Department of Defense (DoD), in conjunction with other U.S. Government (USG) agencies, to implement more deliberate and well-developed Strategic Communication processes.*

-- QDR Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communication

The synchronization and effective planning between the USG, interagency, and RCCs will ensure that SC planners at all levels understand both the national-level and regional

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<sup>24</sup> James G. Stavridis, *SOUTHCOM Posture Statement Before the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress* (March 21-22, 2007), 19.

<sup>25</sup> *Defense Science Board (DSB) Task Force on Strategic Communication* (December 2007), 8.

objectives. Within the RCCs, the synchronization and planning process must remain flexible, but it must clearly define responsibilities for the various components falling under the SC umbrella (PA, DSPD, IO). This synchronization is a critical SC enabler that ensures each component “understands how to best bring their unique experience and insights into the overall planning process.”<sup>26</sup>

In U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) for example, the CCDR has facilitated unity of command by re-organizing his SC and information activities around a concept called *Operation Assured Voice*, which has a combined RCC information operations and public affairs cell reporting directly to the Chief of Staff. By creating language-friendly websites focused particularly on the Balkans and North Africa, *Operation Assured Voice* has successfully integrated its PA and IO components to shape the environment in support of the CCDR’s TSCP.<sup>27</sup>

Sarah Nagelmann, Director of SC in USSOUTHCOM, takes a slightly different organizational approach than USEUCOM. In USSOUTHCOM, the information operations component has retained its operational integrity by falling under the J3.<sup>28</sup> Despite the fact that true “unity of command” does not exist under the SC umbrella, Nagelmann contends that “unity of effort” is maintained across the components of PA, DSPD, and IO. Nagelmann states that “a healthy dialogue exists between SC and IO functions” as a result of the close working relationship between her SC office and the USSOUTHCOM J3.<sup>29</sup>

Although not an RCC by definition, United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has also produced both unity of command and unity of effort by developing an

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<sup>26</sup> Perkins and Scott, 28.

<sup>27</sup> *Defense Science Board (DSB) Task Force on Strategic Communication* (December 2007), 8.

<sup>28</sup> Sarah Nagelmann, USSOUTHCOM Director of Strategic Communications. Telephone call with author, 3 April 2008.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

“SC structure more like a matrixed organization that synchronizes SC along the horizontal lines of operation (LOO),” said Director of Strategic Communication T.L. McCreary.<sup>30</sup> McCreary further adds that SC focuses on “centralized planning and synchronization and dispersed implementation within the lines of operation to maintain consistency of efforts.”<sup>31</sup> The matrixed structure has two sides which “reflect the left and right sides of the brain,” McCreary commented.<sup>32</sup> First, “the left side, which includes public affairs and the CCDR speechwriters, represents organizational communication; they tell the SOCOM story to the U.S. public, Congress, and the DoD. Second, the right side, which includes PSYOPS, diplomacy, etc., represents the WOT and communicates more broadly to the internal SOCOM audience with what are doing and why we are doing it.”<sup>33</sup>

Closely nested with an RCC’s ability to synchronize SC efforts is the ability to develop an integrated plan that delivers an effective, coordinated theme or message within a respective RCC AOR. A prime example of meeting the aforementioned intent was the efforts of the United States Pacific Command’s (USPACOM) Influence Working Group (PIWG) in their response to the Asian Tsunami back in December 2004 (*Operation Unified Assistance*). Utilizing the concept of centralized control with decentralized execution, the PIWG brought together a group of regional and cultural experts from the PACOM J5 directorate, along with public affairs and public diplomacy representatives, and Joint Information Operations Center (JIOC) personnel to work PIWG SC issues.<sup>34</sup> The end result of the PIWG’s pre-established planning efforts was the ability to “develop themes and

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<sup>30</sup> Information obtained from an interview conducted by Mr. William Perry with USSOCOM Director of Strategic Communication T.L. McCreary (SES and RDML,USN [Retired]. Information was cited from Perry’s “The Organization is Flat: An Integrated Model for Strategic Communication Within the Combatant Command:, *Navy War College Department of Joint Military Operations* (5 November 2007), 20.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Perkins and Scott, 28.

messages – including those to avoid – regarding the safe deliverance of humanitarian aid and disaster relief supplies to displaced peoples”<sup>35</sup> affected by the Tsunami. These critical messages were successfully delivered in the form of leaflets and broadcasts, greatly enhancing a strategic communication victory for USPACOM and the United States.

### **ANALYSIS/MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS AS AN SC ENABLER**

*So many strategic communication plans flounder because the implementers, thrilled with having developed and ‘sold’ the plan, are completely consumed with execution – but then end up not doing what is the most important single step: measuring results.*

-- Admiral James G. Stavridis, Commander, USSOUTHCOM

The requirement for clear USG guidance, interagency involvement and synchronization of planning efforts are all prerequisites for the RCC’s ability to successfully meet SC operational objectives. However, as Admiral Stavridis implies above, the RCC’s ability to analyze and meticulously measure the results of its SC efforts is the most “important single step”, and is arguably the most difficult challenge of the three SC enablers. Joint Publication 3.0 *Joint Operations* defines a measure of effectiveness (MOE) as “a criterion used to assess changes in the system behavior, capability, or operational environment that is tied to measuring the attainment of an end state, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect.”<sup>36</sup> The word “criterion” in this definition can be interpreted as “human standards of judgment”, as CCDRs must rely on the ingenuity of their SC experts to remove or mitigate subjective analysis through standard judgment to translate effects into clear, articulate metrics. Sarah Nagelmann, USSOUTHCOM SC Director fully understands this challenge and states, “When beating the assessment drum, we {RCCs} tend

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, GL-22.

to make decisions based on qualitative data or gut instinct. Instead, we should be making our SC decisions based on quantitative data.”<sup>37</sup>

Although there is no established analysis and MOE template for SC, there are several means of collecting and using data to help in the creation of measurable metrics. In USSOUTHCOM, Admiral Stavridis highlights three of the more crucial means of doing so at the RCC level. First, he advocates information collection from polling by reputable local firms, and backing up those polls with an international polling firm. Second, he recommends contacting individual trusted and sensible interlocutors for candid assessments. Third, his SC team collects data by monitoring articles in journals and newspapers, and by sampling web content, including blogs.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps the best illustration of a comprehensive Combatant Command analysis process resides in USEUCOM’s Strategic Effects and Communication Council (SECC). USEUCOM’s IO Chief (J39) uses the SECC (which meets twice a month) to “propose guidance and attain decisions on how to orchestrate and synchronize strategic objectives with theater Influence Activities and Operations.”<sup>39</sup> Using this process in close coordination with the interagency (primarily the DoS), the SECC is able to develop a “detailed strategy-to-task linkage which helps define and validate strategic effects as it relates to USEUCOM’s TSCP.”<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the SECC process “leverages its superb regional and cultural expertise resident in their J8 and with other in-theater analysis sources, to accurately

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<sup>37</sup> Nagelmann, telephone call 3 Apr 2008.

<sup>38</sup> James G. Stavridis “Strategic Communication and National Security”, *Joint Force Quarterly* (Issue 46, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, 2007), 6. These three concepts are ideas from Admiral Stavridis.

<sup>39</sup> Perkins and Scott, 29.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

determine and measure the effectiveness of its SC actions, and decide what adjustments are required to optimize the desired strategic effects.”<sup>41</sup>

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Since the release of the 2004 DSB report on SC, the Combatant Commands have made considerable progress with operational level SC as a result of operational leadership, initiative, and internal SC reorganization efforts. There is, however, still significant room for improvement. The following recommendations provide suggestions for how CCDRs might further enhance the SC enablers of USG policy and interagency involvement, synchronization and planning, and analyzing SC efforts in terms of measures of effectiveness.

First, as discussed earlier, a prerequisite for successful SC at the operational level is the importance of clear, coherent USG policy and interagency involvement. Since SC is a collaborative team effort that extends from the “strategic corporal” to the President, the USG should consider extending the concept of the Goldwater-Nichols initiative to the interagency, primarily the DoS. Although this initiative would be above the purview of DoD, the positive impacts of a Goldwater-Nichols initiative to increase interagency resources, opportunities and capability would better synthesize all the elements of national power, directly impacting the CCDR’s abilities to meet SC objectives at the operational level.

Second, as Admiral Stavridis states, “For a combatant commander, the place to ‘organize’ strategic communication is at the operational level.”<sup>42</sup> A recommendation to help reinforce this point is to add SC as the seventh distinct operational function to JP 3-0

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>42</sup> Stavridis, “Strategic Communication and National Security”, 6.

*Operational Planning.* With the recent renewed interest in SC across all spectrums of strategic and operational leadership, it seems only fitting that SC, a CCDR's operational "non-kinetic" fires, be included as a completely separate operational function within the framework of our joint doctrine. This recommendation is further reinforced by Newt Gingrich, an advocate of SC, who has written, "SC in a real-time worldwide information system is a branch of the art of war comparable to logistics or intelligence. It will require staffing, education and practicing at about the same level as intelligence or logistics to be successful."<sup>43</sup> Inclusion of SC as the seventh distinct operational function will emphasize the importance of SC at the operational level, and will in turn create renewed emphasis and a positive "domino effect" for the CCDR's SC training program and resource allocation decisions.

Third, the CCDR might consider a change in "mindset" by taking more of an "offensive" SC approach against the adversary in the WOT when dealing with international and regional media. In other words, the CCDR might better utilize his three components of SC (PA, DSPD, IO) in a manner that aims to "demonize the enemy"<sup>44</sup> with media outlets, rather than spending all of his time trying to "maintain or restore" the image of his own forces. Although taking a "defensive" approach in maintaining a positive image of U.S. forces when bad things happen in a CCDR's AOR is still important (i.e. Abu Ghraib), taking an "offensive approach" by "demonizing the enemy" may be a more effective way to maintain/ improve the legitimacy and perception of U.S. forces in the WOT. In simplest terms, by focusing less on making "yourself" look good, focus instead on making the "adversary" look bad through media outlets (in a manner similar to a political campaign). As

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>44</sup> Marc A. Genest, Naval War College Professor. Discussion on 26 February 2008. Professor Genest uses the phrase "demonizing the enemy".

a result, regional and international audiences are more likely to oppose actions of enemy terrorists, and will in turn be more likely to support U.S. and CCDR efforts in the WOT.

The final recommendation is broad in nature, but is a call for all RCCs to maintain their focus on the powerful effects that “soft power” actions can have on creating a positive perception for U.S. forces. Employing “soft power” through “non-kinetic” fires will be difficult to execute if our operational forces limit their focus to the traditional, kinetic type force that service cultures and tradition continue to embrace as the number one reason why our military exists.

More specifically, with U.S. African Command’s (USAFRICOM) current focus on building partnership capability through interagency collaboration, the CCDR has a tremendous opportunity to use SC to “shape” the perception of USAFRICOM by focusing his intentions, objectives, and MOE with “soft power”. Examples include utilization of the hospital ships Comfort and Mercy, keeping a low profile on the continent by using Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), and working hand in hand with Regional Integration Teams (RITs) to build nation capacity within the USAFRICOM AOR.

### **CONCLUSION**

*I believe strongly in the need for collaboration, coordination, and horizontal integration of our actions and words within both the Department and the Interagency, and I realize this process of communication integration will require a long term commitment and sustained effort on the part of the Department of Defense.*

-- Captain Hal Pittman, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

Although USG, DoD and DoS are continually improving their SC efforts and capability, Islamist extremists remain committed to dominating the information environment, further affecting our nation’s ability to win the “war of ideas”. As our nation

transitions into its fifth year in the WOT, it is critical that RCCs continue to expand upon their traditional role of “kinetic operations” by coordinating and synchronizing SC efforts (including PA, DSPD, and IO) at the operational level. In the words of President Bush, “ ... this war will not be won by force of arms alone. We must defeat the terrorists on the battlefield, and we must also defeat them in the battle of ideas.”<sup>45</sup> In order to achieve its SC objectives, it is paramount that RCCs focus their efforts upon the three SC enablers discussed in this paper – coordination of USG policy and interagency, synchronization and planning, and the development of processes that measure effectiveness of operational SC objectives.

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<sup>45</sup> President, Remarks at Hughes Swearing-In Ceremony, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (12 September 2005), 1366-1369.

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