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Public Affairs Capacity Building: A Soft Tool For Combatant Commanders

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.

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31 October 2008

Abstract

Public Affairs Capacity Building: A Soft Tool for Combatant Commanders

Public affairs capacity building is a valuable soft component of the Combatant Commander's Theater Campaign Plan that builds habitual relationships, fosters transparency, and enhances the ability to shape the AOR. A network of powerful public communication nodes enhances the collective ability of regional militaries to coordinate the best approaches to communicating publicly to various audiences in peace or crisis. This paper examines the soft power application of public affairs capacity building, and the resultant cultivation of a public affairs social network through the lens of social network theory (nodes and ties), then extending that network's value to broader multinational relationships and peer to peer relationships with U.S. Governmental agencies in the region.

INTRODUCTION

The Defense Department of the United States is a powerful force for shaping the global security environment. The Regional Combatant Commanders form the framework for integrating these shaping efforts. They each shape their theater strategic environments “toward deterring major conflicts, precluding major instability from arising, enhancing the governance or military capacity of partner countries, or preparing for catastrophic events”.¹ How Combatant Commanders do this in their Area of Responsibility (AOR) requires the implementation of traditional military power, or hard power, in concert with soft power. Soft power efforts leverage the more attractive elements of national power, rather than the coercive elements of hard power.² While the majority of the soft power capability of the United States does not reside in the Department of Defense, when it comes to enhancing the governance or military capacity of partner countries, or preparing for catastrophic events, the Regional Combatant Commanders have pockets of in-house soft power at their disposal.³

The Public Affairs Officers (PAOs) assigned to the Regional Combatant Command (RCC) headquarters actively communicate and engage in the soft power arena.⁴ They can also serve as a cadre of exportable professionals capable of building the capacity of partner nations to conduct public affairs in the global information environment. Public affairs capacity building is a valuable soft component of the Combatant Commander’s Theater Campaign Plan that builds habitual relationships, fosters transparency, and enhances the ability to shape the AOR.

Integrating public communication across a region is more than just delivering the U.S. message to our partners. It requires building habitual relationships with partner nation public

¹ Department of Defense, Guidance for the Employment of the Force 2008-2010. May 2008. 1

² Joseph S. Nye, Jr. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* New York, N.Y.: Public Affairs 2004. 5

³ Nye, 18-21

⁴ Author served as the PACOM Media Officer, and SMEE participant from 2004-2007

affairs officers by sharing best practices to establish enduring public communication nodes around the region. A network of powerful public communication nodes enhances the collective ability of regional militaries to coordinate the best approaches to communicating publicly to various audiences in peace or crisis.

This paper examines the soft power application of public affairs capacity building, by analyzing the success of Pacific Command's program of Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEEs), conferences, and other activities that enhance partner public affairs. It examines the value of the resultant public affairs social network through the lens of social network theory (nodes and ties), then extending that network's value to broader multinational relationships and peer to peer relationships with U.S. Governmental agencies in the region. Also, how social network analysis presents a comprehensive method to measure the effectiveness of the network, a key to future funding and implantation of similar programs at other RCCs.

Theater Campaign Plans

The application of soft power from a regional combatant command headquarters is a growing requirement in the current conflicts facing the United States. Defense Secretary Robert Gates has recognized that hard military power is needed in the war on terror or what he terms "a prolonged, world-wide irregular campaign"⁵ that involves a contest between the forces of violent extremism and moderation. Secretary Gates also notes that "we cannot kill or capture our way to victory. Where possible, kinetic operations should be subordinate to measures to promote better governance, economic programs to spur development, and efforts to address the grievances

⁵ Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense (address, National Defense University, Washington D.C. 29 September 2008)

among the discontented from which the terrorists recruit.”⁶ Clearly there is a role for soft power in this fight.

Combatant commanders seek to “defuse strategic problems before they become crisis and resolve crises before they reach a critical stage requiring large-scale military operations.”⁷ The means to approach these ends are mostly accomplished by steady-state shaping activities that set the conditions for success in the event military operations become necessary.⁸ These means include Strategic Communication, alliances and partnerships, and security cooperation. These are the combatant commander’s soft tools to shape the region in concert with national policy.

The most recent Guidance for the Employment of the Force 2008-2010 document introduces the concept of a Theater Campaign Plan, to enable Regional Combatant Commanders to consider strategic ends while they formulate their means.⁹

Theater Campaign Plans are the motive force for linking steady-state shaping activities to current operations and contingency plans. They ensure that the various steady-state shaping or “Phase 0” components of a combatant command’s contingency plans are integrated with each other as well as the command’s Theater Security Cooperation planning and shaping activities.¹⁰ The integrating function of the Theater Campaign Plan seeks to bring about a coherent and balanced approach to achieving the strategic end states for the RCC.

Public Affairs is a powerful capability to enhance steady-state shaping activities and is already integrated in all phases of a combatant command plans.¹¹ PAOs coordinate the combatant command’s internal and external communications, ensuring they are aligned with

⁶ Gates (address, National Defense University, Washington D.C. 29 September 2008)

⁷ Guidance for the Employment of the Force 2008-2010, 1

⁸ Guidance for the Employment of the Force 2008-2010, 2

⁹ Guidance for the Employment of the Force 2008-2010, 5-6

¹⁰ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations Planning*, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 26 December 2006). IV-34, 35, 36

¹¹ Guidance for the Employment of the Force 2008-2010, 34

national policy and public diplomacy efforts in the region. PAOs at regional combatant commands are experienced officers, normally with 3 or 4 previous assignments in public affairs. The U.S. military's practice of public affairs reflects the attractive, democratic values of transparency, honesty, and a military subservient to the citizens.¹² Partner nations respect these traits, and value the experience American PAOs gain from the broader, international scope and tempo of U.S. military public affairs.¹³ Individual PAOs at the COCOM headquarters or forward in the AOR are subject matter experts in public affairs, and can be soft power force multipliers and essential elements to Theater Campaign Plans.

DISCUSSION – The Pacific Command Model for Public Affairs Capacity Building

Pacific Command (PACOM) Commanders have effectively leveraged soft elements within their headquarters forward in the AOR. Addressing one of these elements in 2002, Admiral Fargo gave his director of public affairs a single regional imperative ... “set the public conditions for operational success” ... without this, the commander viewed that PACOM operations were not likely to succeed.¹⁴

PACOM recognized that future Joint Staff deployment orders were likely to continue to span the full Range of Military Operations (ROMO)¹⁵, these deployments were also likely involve coalitions or the combined participation of partner nations.¹⁶ Thus, setting the public

¹² Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Public Affairs*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-61 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 9 May 2005).

¹³ PACOM After action comments from Malaysia SMEE held in Kuala Lumpur in April 2004, PACOM J01PA, Camp H.M. Smith, HI.

¹⁴ Adm (ret) Thomas Fargo, e-mail to author, 21 October 2008

¹⁵ Ann E. Story and Aryea Gottlieb, *Beyond the Range of Military Operations*, Joint Forces Quarterly 1995

¹⁶ Thomas P.M Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map* (New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2004), 336

conditions for operational success in the region would depend on combined public communications, through, by and with our partners.¹⁷

Setting the public conditions for operational success had two dimensions: U.S. public support, and regional public support. Military public affairs seeks to inform the U.S. domestic audience with timely and accurate information.¹⁸ The individual service Public Affairs headquarters do an excellent job connecting the operational forces with the U.S. public¹⁹. An example of this is how the Navy facilitated outstanding internal and external media coverage of Operation Unified Assistance (OUA), the multinational response to the 2004-2005 Indian Ocean Tsunami. The Navy's rapid transfer of images and video of the initial relief operations from the waters off Northern Sumatra framed the story and facilitated the overall success of the operation. From the Pentagon these products were quickly distributed to national media outlets, not yet in place to cover the early stages of the relief operations.²⁰

The service Public Affairs effort allowed the Public Affairs effort at PACOM to focus on the regional media and regional public support. PACOM was in the best position to deliver the combined message through, by and with their partners. PACOM wanted the local PAOs to communicate with the Indonesian citizens and other regional audiences about the operation. This situation required the public condition setting that PACOM's public affairs capacity-building efforts under the Theater Security Cooperation program was designed to enable.²¹

¹⁷ MGen David P. Fridovich and Fred Krawchuck, *The Special Operations Forces Indirect Approach*. Joint Forces Quarterly, issue 44, 1st quarter 2007. National Defense University Press, available at http://www.ndu.edu/inss/press/jfq_pages/editions/i44/9.pdf, accessed on 15 October 2008. 25

¹⁸ Joint Publication 3-61, I-3

¹⁹ Capt (ret) John Singley, former Director of Public Affairs at PACOM, e-mail message to author, 21 September 2008

²⁰ Lt Timothy Tow, former Visual Information Officer on *USS Abraham Lincoln* "HA/DR Panel" (presentation, Navy Worldwide PA/VI Training Symposium, National Conference Center, Leesburg, VA, 4 Jun 2007)

²¹ John Singley, *Operation Unified Assistance: Public Affairs Critical Elements*. Air War College, Maxwell AFB, TX. 1 February 2006

The Public Affairs SMEE

There is a varied nature to how partner nations in the Pacific conduct public affairs. For ease of explanation, every nation conducts public affairs in a particular way with some commonalities – PACOM found that most partner nations in the region conducted primarily domestic public affairs, mostly focused around population centers (capitols), with rigid hierarchical controls for information release. The PAO imperative of “timely and accurate information flow” can be relative in some Pacific cultures, but the basic understanding of why it is important to conduct transparent military public affairs existed in most cases.²² The intent of the PACOM PAO trainers was not to Americanize the way partner militaries conducted public affairs and cultural idiosyncrasies were embraced where practical. In many cases the tactics, techniques and procedures of U.S. PAOs would not resonate with a partner nation audience. Instead, PACOM focused on the “best practices” that would enable commonality in the conduct of public affairs in a combined operation.

PACOM conducted its capacity building through a series of Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEE). SMEEs are conversations, they depend on each side listening and learning through a two-way dialogue. “In some AORs, like PACOM, the SMEE model is much more effective than Title 10 training,”²³ the two-way nature of the SMEE allows the host to “have face” and not feel as though they are being talked down to by superiors. For the U.S. side, by listening there are great gains in cultural understanding, and appreciation for the nature of the information environment in a given country or region.²⁴

Combatant Command PAOs develop understanding of the communication cultures and information environment of the countries in their AOR through persistent presence. The SMEEs

²² Joint Publication 3-61, I-3

²³ Capt (ret) John Singley, telephone call with author, 4 September 2008

²⁴ Ibid

brought PAOs out from the headquarters and into the AOR. Thus the PACOM PAO SMEEs did three things:

1. They developed broad and deep cultural communication understanding and knowledge of the information environment.
2. They enable the host to conduct credible, “through, by and with” communication activities.
3. They built relationships, and fostered the growth of an enduring social network.

Between 2002 and 2007 SMEEs were conducted in these countries:

- Indonesia (3)
- Republic of the Philippines (6)
- Singapore (3) – including regional public affairs symposium
- Malaysia (3)
- Thailand (2)
- Vietnam (1)
- Mongolia (1)²⁵

SMEEs were also conducted in conjunction with bilateral and multilateral exercises like Ulchi Focus Lens (Korea) and Cobra Gold 2004 (Thailand, et al). In addition, PACOM hosted two capacity building visits to the United States. These tours demonstrated for PAOs from Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, the nature of the U.S. information environment at PACOM, the Pentagon, and CNN Center in Atlanta.

PACOM made some assumptions in the formulation of the SMEE program. First, successful combined operations would require combined engagement in the regional and global

²⁵ Singley, e-mail

information environment. Then, that partner nation governments would embrace the democratic practice of public affairs and the transparency and trust it fosters. As James Madison, First Amendment architect said, “A popular government, without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy or perhaps both.”²⁶

Changing the Picture

If Madison’s maxim alone did not convince partner nations, PACOM was left to ask the following question. With some level of existing PAO capability, what stake do partner nations have in increasing their capacity to conduct public affairs in a broader information environment? One approach was the concept of “changing the picture”.²⁷ Partner nation militaries recognize they likely have a stake in changing the picture in their own countries, or region. Whether it was working to change domestic perceptions of the military or broader regional and global perceptions of that country’s operations, or combined operations, they connected with this idea.

PACOM also urged partner nations to recognize that conducting public affairs in the global media environment was becoming an operational imperative. It is simply no longer acceptable for any progressive nation to ignore the realities of the international media.²⁸

Adversaries will likely use international media continuously to their advantage. This has been proven by Al Qaeda, with the calculated use of media with the exploitation of the ambush of 4 U.S. contractors in Fallujah, Iraq in April 2004,²⁹ as well as in several other premeditated attacks on U.S. and coalition members. The real time reach of international media is increasing its effectiveness as a true weapon of modern warfare. The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006,

²⁶ James Madison, Letter to W.T. Barry 4 August 1822, *Epilogue: Securing the Republic* (<http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders>) Accessed on 23 September 2008.

²⁷ Tom Plate, “Changing the Picture”, (presentation, PACOM Public Affairs Symposium, Honolulu, HI 15 August 2004)

²⁸ *International Public Information (IPI)/PDD 68* (30 April 1999), <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd-68.html>

²⁹ Dick Crowell, *Hung on the Old Bridge like Slaughtered Sheep*. Naval War College, Newport, R.I. 4

showed that an open society like Israel, who must retain the principles of public information can be held victim to principle; while a closed sect like Hezbollah can retain almost total control of the daily message, twisting the truth, or blatant misinforming by utilizing powerful journalistic and propaganda mechanisms to gain an advantage.³⁰ Any combined operations with the United States will likely involve very active public affairs, through, by and with host nation PAOs.

Operation Unified Assistance: SMEE proof of concept

PACOM had headquarters PAOs in Jakarta and Bangkok within hours of the Indian Ocean Tsunami.³¹ Coincidentally, international media was descending on the region, rabid for a story: What were the governments in and out of the region going to do to mitigate suffering of those who were affected? The first phone calls made were to partner PAOs in Indonesia's military (TNI), and to other partner PAOs across the region. These contacts were cultivated through PACOM's SMEE program. These relationships and this communication network were critical to "changing the picture"³² in the eyes of the international community, that a multinational coalition was forming to respond to those in need.

On December 27th, 2004, as the USS Lincoln Carrier Strike Group was transiting to Northern Sumatra, international media were broadcasting the comments from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Jan Egeland, that "It is beyond me why we are so stingy. Really, Christmas time should remind many Western countries at least, how rich we have become. There are several donors who are less generous than before in a growing world economy."³³ Egeland's comments painted a global picture that the more wealthy nations needed

³⁰ Marvin Kalb *The Israeli—Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict*, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. 28 February 2007

³¹ Bruce A. Elleman, *Waves of Hope: the U.S. Navy's Response to the Tsunami in Northern Indonesia*, Newport Papers 28. Newport, RI: Naval War College Press. 62

³² Plate, "Changing the Picture"

³³ Elleman, *Waves of Hope: the U.S. Navy's Response to the Tsunami in Northern Indonesia*, 21

to do more in response. American and Indonesian leaders wanted to change that picture. As the first U.S. C-130 aircraft arrived in Indonesia to ferry relief supplies to northern Sumatra, senior representatives from both governments held a large media event at Halim Air Base in Jakarta. The images that dominated international media reflected the combined nature of the relief effort, with Indonesian faces in front, and western faces behind. Soon, the picture of slow response was transposed to pictures of U.S. Navy Helicopters and World Food Program transports enabling the Indonesian government to mitigate suffering in the country. These images stayed on the front pages of local, regional and international papers for weeks.

All of this was accomplished through, by and with the Public Affairs apparatus of the Government of Indonesia, and the TNI in Jakarta, as well as partner PAOs in other regional capitols. As international media flooded into the devastated parts of Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka, partner PAOs found themselves communicating their own government's response, as well as the supporting efforts of the combined forces.

The value and future potential of public affairs capacity building was manifest to PACOM PAOs and Admiral Fargo in the wake of Operation Unified Assistance.³⁴ Sharing best practices and the passing of a few business cards with partner PAOs over the previous months or years enabled a highly successful “changing of the picture” at the strategic level.³⁵

ANALYSIS – The PAO Social Network: results of building relationships

The basis of public affairs capacity building is the forming of relationships. These relationships, the cultivation of business contacts and habitual interaction rapidly establishes a living PAO Social Network. Public affairs SMEEs are in a sense a huge networking session. Networking events are particularly important to PAOs, because PAOs succeed by cultivating and

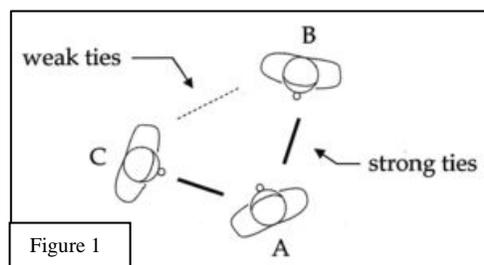
³⁴ Fargo, telephone call

³⁵ Adm Gary Roughead Chief of Naval Operations, before the House Armed Services Committee on *The Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* 13 December 2007.

managing valuable social networks both internal and external to the military ... it is a vital function. Viewing the cultivation of relationships developed in public affairs SMEEs through the lens of the PAO Social Network gives one a structured framework to understand and evaluate the value of public affairs capacity building.

The Node: Joint Doctrine defines a node as an element of a system that represents a person, place or thing.³⁶ According to an article in *Wired* magazine called *The Connectors*, “In a social network, a node is the person whose PDA runneth over with people they met once on an airplane.”³⁷ With each SMEE, new nodes are added to the network. Partner Public Affairs Officers are the nodes and with recurring SMEEs each node becomes a more capable element in the network.

The Ties: Ties are what connect the nodes together. Ties can be strong or weak. It is important to understand the value of weak ties to a social network. In 1973, sociologist Mark Granovetter noted that it was the weak ties that were the most valuable to individuals in a social network.³⁸ Granovetter claims



that our strong ties connect us with close friends, in this case partner PAOs, and form the initial structure of the social network. The weak ties are subsequent relationships we have with people outside our social networks. In Figure 1, node C has a strong tie with node A, node A has a strong tie with node B.³⁹ The weak tie exists between node C and B, connected through node A. We may not utilize weak ties often, but we utilize them in certain unique situations to help us

³⁶ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 26 December 2006), GL-20.

³⁷ “The Connectors,” *Wired*, November 2003

³⁸ Granovetter, Mark. *The Strength of Weak Ties*, *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol 78, No. 6 (May 1973), 1360-1380.

³⁹ Figure 1 - Weak Ties Model, found at <http://www.kremweblog.nl>, accessed September 2008

with things our strong ties cannot.⁴⁰ Weak ties may be better sources to reach beyond what the network knows. Because they start outside a group, weak ties bring critical external information to a node or group. There are many more weak ties in social networks than strong ones, so cultivating many strong ties yields even more weak ties, better connecting us to a wider world.⁴¹ A node, with many strong ties is called a Hub.⁴²

The PAO Social Network can become a valuable resource for the combatant command Public Affairs staff. Still, the combatant command PAOs must keep the network alive by active preservation of the existing ties, while growing the reach of the network. This is called cultivating the PAO Social Network.⁴³ Suggestions for cultivating the PAO social network are increased multilateral interaction, and extending the social network to other U.S. government efforts in the region.

First, the combatant command can expand the multilateral nature of the communication across the network. Initial SMEE contact with the partner nations will likely be bilateral. As bilateral nodes enter the network with U.S. PAOs, they will likely find themselves instantly connected to multilateral partners, perhaps even those on the periphery of their given region. The value of the strong and weak ties gained by working with multilateral nodes quickly becomes apparent.

Next, extend the network to include the public affairs practitioners in other U.S. Government departments in the region, particularly the Department of State. At PACOM, PAO SMEEs in Pacific partner nations are conducted in close coordination with the Country Team at

⁴⁰ Andrew McAfee. *The Ties that Find*. Harvard Business School, Harvard University. (Weblog. <http://blog.hbs.edu/faculty/amcafee>)

⁴¹ Mark Granovetter, *The Impact of Social Structure on Economic Outcomes*. Journal of Economics Perspectives. Vol 19, No. 1 Winter 2005. 33

⁴² "The Connectors"

⁴³ George C. Fraser, *Click: Ten Truths for Building Extraordinary Relationships*, (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill 2008. 89

the U.S. Embassy. Embassy Public Affairs sections are invited to attend the SMEEs and many of the Public Affairs counselors attend the Regional Public Affairs symposia held by PACOM. Theater Campaign Plan end states are related to the Mission Strategic Plans (MSPs) of regional embassies.⁴⁴ MSPs outline the intended goals, priority initiatives, and performance indicators with targets for a given country team. An MSP may have a provision for increasing transparency of government institutions like the military for a given country, for which PACOM PAO SMEEs are an excellent fit. The conduct of public affairs capacity building, in this case, embodies Defense Support for Public Diplomacy.⁴⁵ In Operation Unified Assistance, interagency PAOs provided PACOM with the contact information for the public affairs director at the UNHCR. At her request, PACOM began to provide Jan Egeland's office the latest public affairs guidance for the response efforts. This information was directly reflected in several of Egeland's subsequent interviews and speeches, "The U.S. military assets are really worth weight in gold now because the helicopters and the airplanes and their capacity to make fresh water and so on really adds to the enormous efforts from all of the nongovernmental organizations, the U.N. agencies and so on."⁴⁶ This is a clear case for expanding the PAO social network, where a weak tie to the UNHCR PAO from a State Department PAO, helped PACOM change the picture.

RECOMMENDATIONS - How success should look

A network analysis of the PAO Social Network can be used to determine the effectiveness or health of the public affairs capacity building, as well as the measures of effectiveness each node can have on an audience.

⁴⁴ Mission Strategic Plan Parameters <http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/dosstrat/2007/html/82982.htm>

⁴⁵ JP 3-0 Glossary. Those activities and measures taken by the Department of Defense components to support and facilitate public diplomacy efforts of the United States Government.

⁴⁶ *Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace*. Fox News. 2 January 2005

The communicative nature of public affairs lends itself to the formation of social networks. Coupling that with today's technology makes PAO social network analysis much easier, an observer can see the network, and track the performance of the nodes. To evaluate the effectiveness of the capacity for partners to communicate publically is to recognize the scope of the network, and the actions of the nodes. This structured evaluation helps to determine if the program is meeting the Theater Security Cooperation objectives.

In order to keep the social network alive, the members of the network must actively cultivate the network.⁴⁷ To do this, combatant command PAOs should consider adopting a web-based social networking application to keep public affairs SMEE participants linked.

Web 2.0, referring to a second-generation of Internet-based services—such as social networking sites, weblogs, and other communication tools, makes the architecture of a social network even more tangible.⁴⁸ The popular social networking site *Facebook*⁴⁹ is an example of how technology can frame for users and observers the nature and scope of a social network. In *Facebook*, a user has “friends” who have access to your page or a 2-dimensional representation of the nodes in your network. Visiting a friend's pages will show the friends of a friend ...the user's weak ties. Activity on *Facebook* is broadcast to all friends, when a user posts a picture, makes a comment or sends a message. *Facebook* is a tangible, living social network.⁵⁰

A similar application could enable the cultivation of a PAO social network, as well as provide discrete information from nodes to evaluate the effect of the PAO SMEE program. It may not be *Facebook*, but there are applications that can be tailored to suit particular requirements. This web-based tool should enable the practice of combined and multinational

⁴⁷ “The Connectors”

⁴⁸ Internet Ad Glossary available at www.2020systems.com

⁴⁹ www.facebook.com

public affairs, with all the information, lessons learned and support material available for users, as well as provide usable information on the Nodes, Hubs and Ties. Action on the network is broadcast to all users in the same fashion as *Facebook*.

By growing the capacity of nodes, and empowering them to become hubs will eventually lead to quantifiable network data. The amount of media coverage one node is getting in a combined exercise, or the amount of peer to peer information from a node will localize where the most capable nodes and hubs are and where to focus more capacity building to assist nodes that may need help. Then based on this “public communication traffic” around a node, more in-depth study may be applied ... perhaps focused polling with that node’s audience.

One of the most difficult aspects of evaluating public affairs capacity building is determining the measures of effectiveness (MOE) achieved on an audience. In fact, to obtain complete MOE is beyond the capacity of any non-clairvoyant person to harness. The Defense Department often looks too soon to audiences to determine MOE, when it is the sender or the information environment that a regional combatant command can influence much more readily.

A successful measure of public affairs capacity building is a network of host nation PAOs that are poised to deliver combined public affairs messages that can shape the information environment to set public conditions for operational success. Credible local PAOs, communicating with other locals is a way to build enduring trust. If the Combatant Commander now has credible host nation capacity to conduct combined public affairs where he previously did not, it is a move in the positive direction for his steady-state shaping of the region. Using the “Rheostat Warfare” metaphor, public affairs capacity building moves the dial incrementally, but it takes time and effort to determine results.⁵¹

⁵¹ Gen David Petraeus, "Rheostat Warfare:" An Interview With Gen. David Petraeus. By Austin Bay at www.humanevents.com accessed on 26 October 2008

To evaluate the effectiveness of a given node on an audience one needs to evaluate the capacity it has to send a message that resonates effectively with the audience. Additional understanding of the information environment will help tailor efforts to put the right face, at the right place to deliver an effective message for a given situation. This is the value of using technology as a tangible way to best manage and employ a PAO Social Network.

Funding PAO capacity building activities involves a competition for scarce resources.⁵² Quantifiable data is critical to get Theater Security Cooperation activities funded. At a Regional Combatant Command, there can be up to 30 sources of funding regulated by various authorities and guidelines are required to implement GCC security cooperation strategies.⁵³ With the development of Theater Campaign Plans, perhaps greater attention will be paid to the streamlining of funding for the various TSC activities in a region.⁵⁴ In the end, sending a small team of PAOs to a partner nation capitol to conduct a week-long SMEE is a cost effective component on the Security Cooperation balance sheet.

Counter-argument

Regional Public Affairs capacity building might better be conducted by the Joint Public Affairs Support Element (JPASE), from U.S. Joint Forces Command. As a capable trainer for joint public affairs, JPASE is best suited to conduct public affairs capacity building with regional partners.⁵⁵ While JPASE is a credible cadre of Public Affairs professionals that are rapid responders and regionally aligned, using them to conduct regional capacity building would

⁵² Gregory J. Dyekman, "Security Cooperation: A Key to the Challenges of the 21st Century" U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA November 2007.

⁵³ Gen James L. Jones, "U.S. European Command Posture," Statement of General James L. Jones Commander, U.S. European Command U.S. Marine Corps, Senate Armed Services Committee, March 7, 2006, pp. 16-17, available from armed-services.senate.gov, accessed on 6 Oct 2008.

⁵⁴ Guidance for the Employment of the Force 2008-2010. 38, 158

⁵⁵ U.S. Joint Forces Command, *New JPASE sets the pace for joint military public affairs*. 18 January 2006, available at <http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2006/pa011806.htm>, accessed on 12 October 2008

degrade the overarching intent and value of the public affairs SMEE to the regional participants that live in the AOR full-time. It is the trust and the network between the regional combatant command and partner PAOs that create the enduring value. When JPASE leaves, they return to Suffolk, VA until the next contingency. JPASE is not the force for cultivating enduring relationships. Although, inviting JPASE members to attend regional public affairs SMEEs as observers, would likely add value.

CONCLUSIONS

Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead stated, “While we have consistently proven that we can surge materiel and people anywhere in the world in times of crisis, the one thing we cannot surge is trust.”⁵⁶ It is through the formulation of habitual relationships that trust is built, not through episodic approaches. Regional Combatant Commands have valuable soft tools at their disposal. The concept of public affairs capacity building is only one of these tools, yet it is a powerful force multiplier when it comes to combined operations in the global information environment. As John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, of the RAND Corporation argue, “In the information age, ‘cooperative’ advantages will become increasingly important. Moreover, societies that improve their abilities to cooperate with friends and allies may also gain competitive advantages against rivals.”⁵⁷ Building partner nation public affairs capacity, coupled with the establishment and cultivation of a tangible PAO Social Network can greatly enhance the Combatant Commander’s ability to keep his region at Phase 0.

⁵⁶ Adm Gary Roughead, Chief of Naval Operations, before the House Armed Services Committee on *The Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* 13 December 2007.

⁵⁷ Nye, 20

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