

# Strategy Research Project

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION: A DEPARTMENTAL TRANSFORMATION

BY

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# USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

## **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION: A DEPARTMENTAL TRANSFORMATION**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The ability to communicate U.S. government and U.S. military policy and purpose is vital in today's information environment. Since 2002, when U.S. military forces have been actively engaged in multiple regions of the world, the worldwide perception of U.S. image has consistently declined. This paper reviews the capabilities gap between existing organizational structure of the DoD Strategic Communication (SC) enterprise, and the nation's requirements for communication strategies. Its premise is that there is no effective single advocate or department with the responsibility, capability, and the authority to ensure an effective strategic communication enterprise. The creation of an Under Secretary of Defense for Strategic Communication, or USD (SC), and the departmental transformation, where all elements of SC (IO, PA, and DSPD) fall under the USD (SC). The new organization would then have the clear leadership necessary to set strategic vision and guidance, set priorities, and allocates resources to ensure that DOD goals and objectives are achieved in support of USG policy and objectives.



## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION: A DEPARTMENTAL TRANSFORMATION

Strategic communication is a dynamic process with responsibility held by those at the highest levels of government—the President and senior government leaders...But to do so requires a commitment not yet seen, though some steps have been taken to improve the nation's capability. What is needed is a transformation supported by resources and strength of purpose that matches the nation's commitment to defense, intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security.

—Defense Science Board (DSB) Task Force on Strategic Communication<sup>1</sup>

The ability to communicate U.S. government and U.S. military policy and purpose is vital in today's information environment. We are at a precipice in the battle of the information environment. Since 2002, when U.S. military forces have been actively engaged in multiple regions of the world, the worldwide perception of U.S. image has consistently declined. According to the January 2008 Defense Science Board Report on Strategic Communication, "The United States faces continuing decay in support for U.S. policy and rising anti-Americanism, which challenges national interests."<sup>2</sup> Additionally, according to the 2009 Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project, since the election President Obama, "it reveals the Muslim world remains largely immune to Obamamania. In predominantly Muslim nations, widespread concerns about American policy and American power linger."<sup>3</sup> More than a year into the current administration, there are still extensive anti-American feelings throughout the world.

This paper reviews the capabilities gap between existing organizational structure of the DoD Strategic Communication (SC) enterprise, and the nation's requirements for communication strategies. Its premise is that effective strategic communication strategies can influence the nation's effectiveness in today's military

operations/activities, and that the nation cannot execute strategies appropriate to national goals without a transformed resourcing of the SC enterprise.

Strategic Communication activities are vital to achieving America's strategic goals and interests. Effective use of the national elements of power synchronizes diplomatic, informational, military and economic tools in such a way that actions and words work together to achieve the nation's goal and advance its interests. Currently within the DoD, there is no effective single advocate or department with the responsibility, capability, and the authority to ensure this. Admiral Michael Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Staff (CJCS), has noted, "We hurt ourselves more when our words don't align with our actions. Our enemies regularly monitor the news to discern coalition and American intent as weighed against the efforts of our forces. When they find a "say-do" gap -- such as Abu Ghraib -- they drive a truck right through it. So should we, quite frankly."<sup>4</sup>

In his article about Strategic Communication, the CJCS identified that SC is needed not only to communicate about current and future policies and activities, but to influence development of those policies and activities with a realistic consideration of how they are to be communicated. "In fact, I would argue that most strategic communication problems are not communication problems at all. They are policy and execution problems," wrote Mullen.<sup>5</sup> The capabilities gap is not just a DoD problem; it is an issue that permeates the U.S. Government (USG) as well. U.S. Representatives Adam Smith and Mac Thornberry echoed this view in early March 2010 when they invited other members of the U.S. House of Representatives to join the newly created Strategic Communications and Public Diplomacy Caucus<sup>6</sup> to tackle the issue at the

USG level: “The caucus seeks to raise awareness of the challenges facing strategic communication and public diplomacy and provide multiple perspectives on proposed solutions.”<sup>7</sup>

In January 2008, the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication called for a level of change and commitment that has yet to be seen.<sup>8</sup> That view was reinforced by Mr Price Floyd, the acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, ASD (PA), and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, PDASD, when he said, “When it comes to SC capability, we are weak, the Department of State is weak, and the National Security Staff is weak. None of us can adequately get the job done.”<sup>9</sup>

#### Strategic Communication and DoD Objectives

Only recently has Strategic Communication been officially defined. The October 2009 update of Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, the Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, defines SC as “focused United States Government processes and efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen or preserve conditions favorable to advance national interests and objectives through the use of coordinated information, themes, plans, programs, and actions synchronized with other elements of national power.”<sup>10</sup>

A December 2009 DoD report to Congress further details that the SC process is designed to synchronize SC efforts to achieve one or more of the following:

- Improve U.S. credibility and legitimacy;
- Weaken an adversary's credibility and legitimacy;
- Convince selected audiences to take specific actions that support U.S. or international objectives;

- Cause a competitor or adversary to take (or refrain from taking) specific actions.<sup>11</sup>

Within DoD, strategic communication supports USG and DoD policy goals. DoD agencies, Geographic Combatant Commanders and the Services find guidance for Strategic Communication in the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and the National Military Strategy. These documents are augmented with additional policy guidance from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, OUSD (P), to develop Theater Campaign Plans (TCP) that describe how the Combatant Commander intends to conduct operations and activities - including shaping and influence programs - in support of national and DoD objectives , and DoD Guidance for Employment of the Force.<sup>12</sup>

The significant role of strategic communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is related as much to the global information environment, characterized by many voices competing for the attention of virtually-connected publics worldwide, as it is to the increase in U.S. military activities worldwide. Within DoD, senior leaders recognize the importance and the mandate to integrate strategic communication with military strategies; experience shows that the DoD will not win our current conflict, or any future conflicts characterized within the irregular warfare umbrella, by kinetic means alone. In his Afghanistan assessment, General Stanley McChrystal, Commander, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Commander U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) stated: "Many describe the conflict in Afghanistan as a war of ideas, which I believe to be true. However, this is a 'deeds-based' information environment where perceptions derive from actions. We will win by matching our actions with our words."<sup>13</sup>

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, as well, believes a non-kinetic solution is vital. “Over the long term, we cannot kill or capture our way to victory .... Non-military efforts – these tools of persuasion and inspiration – were indispensable to the outcome of the defining ideological struggle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,” he said. “I believe that they are just as indispensable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – and maybe more so.”<sup>14</sup>

The Defense Department must, additionally, synchronize its actions and communication with other members of the interagency community to support national objectives throughout the world, not just in our combat zones. The 2008 DSB Report on SC articulates this point:

Strategic communication is essential to the successful use of all persuasive, cooperative, and coercive instruments of national power. It can amplify or diminish their effects. It is necessary long before, during, and after armed conflict. It can help prevent or limit conflict. It is central to the formulation and implementation of strategies, and it must be treated accordingly.<sup>15</sup>

#### Strategic Communication and DoD Organization and Responsibilities

Effective Strategic Communication activities within DoD require an effective organizational structure that is capable of providing the needed vision, guidance, resources and leadership. Three major related areas comprise the Strategic Communication organization within DoD today: Public Affairs (PA), Information Operations (IO), and Defense Support to Public Diplomacy (DSPD).<sup>16</sup>

Three different departmental directors within DoD have exclusive oversight of each these related functional responsibilities: Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, or ASD (PA), Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, USD (P), and the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, USD (I). While each has a unique set of

responsibilities and lines of coordination, those roles have evolved within and between the SC organizations in recent years.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, the ASD (PA), is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense for all communication activities including but not exclusively, public liaison, media relations, and public affairs. The department is the public face of DoD, and plans, coordinates, and executes media engagements, speeches, talking points, and other messaging for the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Office of the Secretary of Defense principals. Its staff plans, coordinates and approves DoD public affairs guidance for the services, combatant commands, and other DoD components.<sup>17</sup> The ASD (PA) also oversees the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Joint Communication, the ODASD (JC). That office is primarily responsible for long-range SC communication planning and communication proponency within the joint force.<sup>18</sup>

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the USD (P), is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense for all matters on the formulation of national security and defense policy and the integration and oversight of DoD policy and plans. In that role, the USD (P) is responsible for ensuring that strategic communication is integrated into policy decisions, and that the strategic communication process is integrated into DoD long-term policy planning. This integration occurs through documents such as the National Defense Strategy, Guidance for Employment of the Force (GEF), and Combatant Command contingency plans.<sup>19</sup>

Within the Office of the USD (P) there was, until recently, a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Defense Support to Public Diplomacy. The Obama

administration's new USD (P), Michele A. Flournoy, disbanded the office due to reports indicating the office was providing guidance that did not meet DoD standards for accuracy and transparency.<sup>20</sup> The responsibilities for public diplomacy were transferred to regional offices with OSD(P).<sup>21</sup> Similarly, oversight of Psychological Operations (PSYOP) activities was transferred to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities, ASD (SO/LIC&IC).<sup>22</sup>

Subsequently she created a new entity, the Global Strategic Engagement Team, to coordinate SC activities within USD (P). The December 2009 DoD Report on Strategic Communication to Congress explained the change:

Experience proved, however, that a DASD-level office was not an effective means for ensuring high-level attention to improving policy-driven strategic communication, and in March 2009 that office was disestablished. Recognizing that effective strategic communication requires high-level advice and coordination, USD(P) appointed a senior advisor with responsibility for global strategic engagement within the OUSD(P) front office in April 2009, and shortly thereafter established the OUSD(P) Global Strategic Engagement Team (GSET). This team reports directly to USD(P) and is tasked with facilitating the strategic communication process within OUSD(P) and liaising with other DoD components as appropriate.<sup>23</sup>

The GSET, led by senior advisor Rosa Brooks, coordinates all SC activities within the OUSD (P). She also is the primary SC liaison between the OUSD (P) and the rest of the DoD SC enterprise. Additionally, she represents the OUSD (P) at SC interagency meetings, along with representatives from OASD (PA) and OUSD (I), and other elements as required.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, the USD (I), is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense for Information Operations (IO). Information Operations is "the integrated employment of the core capabilities of Electronic Warfare, Computer Network Operations, Psychological Operations, Military Deception and

Operations Security in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities, to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp adversarial human and automated decision-making while protecting our own.<sup>24</sup> The USD (I) exercises authority for IO (minus policy implications of the employment of PSYOP) in coordination with USD (P) and other OSD offices.<sup>25</sup>

Though not on the “policy” side of the DoD SC enterprise, and part of the three key drivers of the DoD SC enterprise, the Joint Staff (JS) is still an important element. The JS coordinates SC related products and advises senior leaders on SC matters from a military perspective as well provides guidance to the combatant commands and services. Key players include: the J-3 (Current Operations Directorate) with IO and PSYOP experts; the J-5 (Plans and Policy Directorate), with responsibility to coordinate and plan strategic guidance and participation in the DoD and interagency SC process; and the CJCS Public Affairs Office, which coordinates with OASD (PA) and communicates policy guidance to the Services and Combatant Commands.<sup>26</sup>

The three separate DoD departments that are key drivers within the SC enterprise lack a single vision and unity of effort. There is no overarching strategic leadership that sets strategic vision, sets priorities, allocates resources, or provides strategic guidance to ensure that DOD goals and objectives are achieved. As pointed out in the 2008 Defense Science Board on Strategic Communication, “Strategic communication requires sustained senior leadership .... These leaders must have authority as well as responsibility -- authorities to establish priorities, assign operational responsibilities, transfer funds, and concur in senior personnel appointments.”<sup>27</sup>

The 2009 DoD Report on Strategic Communication communicates a contrasting position, however, championing coordination across disparate DoD organizations engaged in strategic communication processes.

After struggling to define strategic communication and develop effective coordination processes for much of the past decade, there is now substantial consensus within DoD about the value of viewing strategic communication fundamentally as a process, rather than a collection of capabilities and activities. Conceptualizing strategic communication as a process has allowed DoD to focus on ensuring effective coordination among DoD components, and to identify needed supporting capabilities, instead of designing and resourcing elaborate new structures and organizations.<sup>28</sup>

#### Strategic Communication Evolution in DoD.

The past decade has indeed been a struggle to create and maintain the position that SC is a “process” across a large organization like the DoD. Developing an effective SC coordination process has been characterized by attempts to create an SC process, yet without true commitment and resources from senior DoD leadership. Nonetheless, DoD maintains the view that SC is a process that no changes, organizational or leadership, are necessary at this time.<sup>29</sup> Despite the emphasis on SC in the last decade, DOD has not produced an official directive or instruction on SC or is there SC doctrine to educate and guide the DoD SC enterprise.<sup>30</sup>

In 2005, Rear Admiral Frank Thorp was assigned duties as the first Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Joint Communication, DASD (JC), in an effort to shape department-wide communications doctrine, organization, and training for the joint force.<sup>31</sup> The DASD (JC) had two missions: to integrate communication including future

communication planning within the DoD, and to act as the joint strategic communication proponent, helping to ensure that DoD communicators are properly organized, trained, and equipped to support the joint war-fighter.<sup>32</sup> Soon after, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) reflected the office's challenge:

The QDR identified capability gaps in each of the primary supporting capabilities of Public Affairs, Defense Support to Public Diplomacy, Military Diplomacy and Information Operations, including Psychological Operations. To close those gaps, the Department will focus on properly organizing, training, equipping and resourcing the key communication capabilities.<sup>33</sup>

As a direct result of the QDR, the Strategic Communications Roadmap was developed to institutionalize strategic communication across the Department. The first objective was to institutionalize a DoD process by which principles of Strategic Communication are incorporated in the development of policy formulation, planning and execution. A second was to define roles, responsibilities and relationships, and develop doctrine for Strategic Communication and its primary communication supporting capabilities: Public Affairs, aspects of Information Operations (principally PSYOP), Visual Information, and the DoD activities of Military Diplomacy and Defense Support to Public Diplomacy. A third priority was to properly resource Military Departments and combatant commands to organize, train, and equip DoD's primary communication supporting capabilities.<sup>34</sup>

On August 25, 2006, the Deputy Secretary of Defense established a Strategic Communication Integration Group (SCIG) and SC Secretariat under the DASD (JC).<sup>35</sup> These offices were tasked with ensuring that communication plans and concepts from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commanders, and the Military Departments were coordinated and synchronized. A SCIG Executive

Committee, or EXCOM, provided senior leadership for the Department's strategic communication initiatives and direction and oversight of the SCIG. The EXCOM was co-chaired by the USD (P), ASD (PA), and the Director of the Joint Staff, but membership included senior representatives from the services, and some of the combatant commands.<sup>36</sup>

The results of these efforts were by far the most aggressive that DoD had undertaken. Yet, they ultimately failed due to internal disputes and ultimately a lack of leadership. When the SCIG's charter was about to be renewed, the CJCS, Admiral Michael Mullen, defended the renewal of the SCIG in a memorandum to the Deputy Secretary of Defense. Although the Chairman suggested renewal, he recommended midcourse corrections: appoint an accountable leader, repurpose the SCIG, and restructure the EXCOM.<sup>37</sup>

Admiral Mullen clearly expressed the need for a single element to lead the SC effort and be central point of contact for SC within DoD. He clearly vocalized his frustrations with the SCIG and the EXCOM, and their inability to get the job done.<sup>38</sup> Certainly this was not lost on the Deputy and the Secretary of Defense when they deliberated and decided not to renew the charter, thus allowing the SCIG, and associated efforts -- EXCOM, Secretariat, SC Roadmap, etc.-- to expire on March 1, 2008.<sup>39</sup>

### Assessing Effectiveness

For years, interested parties in and out of government have assessed the organization, processes and effectiveness of DoD attempt to synchronize communication in order to gain ground in the information environment in order to help

its war fighters win the nation's wars and support U.S. national goals. Those who recognize the significant role of SC have registered deep concern.

Ambassador Brian Carlson, the DoS-DoD Liaison from 2008-2010, offered a unique "outsider" perspective on the current DoD SC structure, noting, "that an SC organizational transformation is necessary, that someone should be put in charge, that all elements of SC -- DSPD, PA, IO minus technical aspects of IO -- should fall under an Under Secretary of Defense for Strategic Communication." That Under Secretary would then provide the strategic vision, guidance and specifically -- the leadership that the DoD SC enterprise is currently lacking.<sup>40</sup>

The Bush Administration years were marked by instances where departmental allegiance overrode furthering of DoD SC capabilities. According to various sources, instances of turf battles between the departments occurred as new initiatives were coordinated or instituted. That attempts to slow down staffing actions to disrupt or directly halt initiatives occurred.<sup>41</sup> The disbandment of the Office of Strategic Influence (OSI) could be considered a clear example. Indications were that the ASD (PA) felt its territory was being infringed upon by the OSI, consequently, the ASD (PA) was alleged to have leaked information to the press with the intention of having the OSI disbanded. The Secretary of Defense felt intense pressure from media and ultimately dissolved the OSI.<sup>42</sup>

DoD's SC enterprise is still vulnerable to gridlock. Mr. Floyd described the current organizational arrangement as, "better than it ever has been, but still ineffective and personality-based without adequate leadership and direction." Floyd continued, "The way to long-term stability is an organizational transformation, with all elements of

Strategic Communication falling under a single department and leader, an Under Secretary. We are all just playing nice; ultimately, someone has to be put in charge.”<sup>43</sup> Ambassador Carlson echoed the assessment when he said, “Counting on everyone’s goodwill is not a prescription for the long-term...you need to have someone who is in charge.”<sup>44</sup>

The office of the DASD (JC) still exists, yet the position remains unfilled. Recently Mr. James Swartout, a political appointee, was selected as the Director of Joint Communication and runs the ODASD (JC). His office with a small staff of planners is the single area within DoD that does long-range SC planning, and is the joint SC proponent. The office has also has taken a more active role in the coordination of SC plans within the combatant commands, OSD, and the interagency community. The Afghanistan Strategic Communication Plan is a good example of effective DoD-wide SC planning. But issues remain.

Every Combatant Command has some sort of SC office or cell – all are staffed and operate differently. Some commands send SC plans to OSD through their J-5 Plans and Policy offices and some send them through their SC offices. They then reach either OUSD (P) or the ODASD (JC) for coordination. This then creates a situation where some plans may be coordinated in a timely manner, some may not. But ultimately they should be brought to the newly established Global Engagement Strategy Coordination Committee for departmental and possibly interagency coordination.<sup>45</sup>

The GESCC was established in June 2009 when the OUSD (P) and OASD (PA) re-missioned an informal information sharing body known as the Information Coordinating Committee (ICC). It expanded the membership and is evolving into the

central body for facilitating the strategic communication integrating process. This informal body meets bi-weekly to identify emerging issues, exchanges information on key issues, and facilitates information sharing and de-confliction of DoD communication activities.<sup>46</sup> The 2009 DOD report to Congress states:

The GESCC brings a more robust audience to coordinate DoD SC issues. The GESCC is co-chaired by OUSD(P) and OASD(PA), and brings together all of the key DoD offices mentioned above (OUSD(P), OASD(PA), OUSD(I), Joint Staff). Other regular GESCC attendees include representatives from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology & Logistics. Other DoD offices, including Combatant Command representatives, are invited to participate in GESCC meetings as appropriate, as are representatives of other USG agencies, such as the State Department, Open Source Center, the National Security Staff, and the National Counterterrorism Center. GESCC representatives participate in the NSC's regular interagency policy committee meetings on strategic communication and global engagement, and also work closely with the State Department's Global Strategic Engagement Center.<sup>47</sup>

Comparing the GESCC and the now-defunct SCIG, Mr. Floyd, articulated the same crucial issue that Admiral Mullen had identified when recommending the renewal of the SCIG. "You need to appoint a leader."<sup>48</sup> When discussing how effectively GSECC conducts business, Mr. Floyd said:

Though you now have all the players around the table, business is still based on personalities, usually in an informal ad-hoc way...it's all personality-based and that, national security should not be based on some PDASD knowing some guy at State or a COCOM. It should be based on a formal process that is codified and with an organization chart that works and is not purely based on personalities ... but, fully knowing that one of the best ways to get things done is through relationships that have been developed through common interests, training or exercises.<sup>49</sup>

Redundant, stove-piped representation from DoD departments and agencies with no singular leadership element complicates effective coordination between DoD and other federal agencies. Despite all the players at the table with the GESCC,<sup>50</sup> DoD tends to be over-represented in interagency coordination, since there is no single point

of contact for all DoD SC-related issues. When an interagency SC meeting is held, all the major departments within DoD are present at the meeting as well. As Mr. James Swartout, Director of Joint Communication, commented, “At an SC interagency meeting, it is not uncommon for DoD to have twelve or so people in attendance.” He believes this is because each department wants to know what is going on. He contends, “Other departments or agencies may have only one or two representatives each, and DoD is over represented.”<sup>51</sup> Additionally, he states, “Because we have no single point of entry, and our informal process is based on personalities, it’s frustrating sometimes because the NSC or DoS will go straight to certain people or the COCOMs, leaving us out, and we find out information after the fact.”<sup>52</sup>

#### Strategic Communication and External Assessment of DoD Capabilities

The USG’s and DOD’s inability to communicate effectively with regard to strategic communication has been exceedingly noted in numerous studies and reports. Dr. Christopher Paul, a social scientist and expert in strategic communications at the RAND Corporation, produced a report titled, *Whither Strategic Communications? A survey of Current Proposals and Recommendations*. The survey reviews the recommendations and suggested improvements for strategic communication and public diplomacy compiled from 36 selected documents and more than a dozen interviews with stakeholders and subject-matter experts on SC.<sup>53</sup>

The four common key themes were these: a call for leadership; demand for increased resources for strategic communication and public diplomacy; a call for a clear definition of an overall strategy; and the need for better coordination and organizational changes (or additions).<sup>54</sup> These four common key themes apply as much to DoD as to the USG.

The 2006 and the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Reviews (QDR) both discuss the need to improve and strengthen the SC capabilities within DoD.<sup>55</sup> The 2006 QDR clearly states that, “Victory in the long war ultimately depends on strategic communication by the United States and its international partners.”<sup>56</sup>

The Defense Science Board has also studied the subject of SC quite extensively; three major reports were released: 2001, 2004 and 2008. Their key lingering issues, some of which have been discussed already, are articulated in the DSB 2008 report:

Nevertheless, the task force finds reasons for continued concern. Positive changes within organizations are real, but they depend to a considerable extent on the skills and imagination of current leaders. These changes must be evaluated, and those that work should be institutionalized. Resistance from traditional organizational cultures continues. Resources for strategic communication have increased, but they fall substantially short of national needs.

This task force’s primary concern is that fundamental transformation in strategic communication has not occurred at the strategic and interagency level.<sup>57</sup>

In the last few years, the realization that SC should be playing a pivotal role in bolstering U.S. image abroad, as well as being a key element to winning our current conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq has become clear to Congress. In the National Defense Authorization Acts for fiscal years 2009 and 2010, Congress voiced concerns about current efforts and have required the President as well as the DoD to compile reports on their SC efforts. For example, in section 1055 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2009, PL110-417, Congress required the President of the United States to produce by December 31, 2009, a comprehensive interagency strategy for public diplomacy and strategic communication with priority communication support to foreign policy objectives.<sup>58</sup>

This report, released in March 2010, broadly describes USG SC efforts as essential to sustaining global legitimacy and supporting our policy aims, that it's a shared responsibility across the USG, and how it has initiated an effort to review military programs that would be better conducted by other agencies and departments.<sup>59</sup> The report also reflects a significant change in responsibilities; the National Security Staff (NSS) is now described as having 'lead' for the interagency community for the "guiding and coordinating interagency deliberate communication and engagement efforts."<sup>60</sup> It reflects a new responsibility for the NSS – whereas the DoS had held that responsibility previously.

Another example of Congressional oversight of the DoD SC enterprise is in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2010, PL 111-166. It states:

Furthermore, the committee is concerned that the disestablishment of the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Support to Public Diplomacy has left the Department of Defense without the necessary management structure to coordinate and guide effectively the myriad activities that comprise military public diplomacy. In order to craft an effective engagement strategy, the Department of Defense should understand all of the instruments at its disposal. The committee directs the Secretary of Defense to submit a report on the planning for, and execution of, military public diplomacy to the congressional defense committees within 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act.<sup>61</sup>

These Congressional requirements articulate that Congress is serious about their congressional oversight role of DoD, and the importance of SC. They obviously feel that a direction is needed and want the USG and DoD to move forward in developing an SC capacity. One could infer that Congress believes that USG and DoD efforts are either very superficial or at the very least, ineffective.

## Conclusion

The key issue is the absence of clear leadership and organizational harmony within the DoD SC enterprise. Leadership provides unity of effort and strategic vision, develops strategy, and fights for and allocates resources to the SC enterprise. SC efforts, both past and present, are a direct reflection of leadership and organizational ineffectiveness. Past efforts suffered from it, as evidenced by Admiral Mullen's recommendation to appoint an SC leader within DoD, and by DoD's report to Congress, noted above, that policy-driven strategic communication requires high-level advice and coordination. Both acting Assistant Secretary Floyd and Ambassador Carlson draw on extensive experience in strategic communication when they recommended appointment of an Under Secretary of Defense for Strategic Communication to transform the organization. Further, Carlson further noted that there is no SC leader in DoD of a level equivalent to the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, able to execute effective interagency coordination.<sup>62</sup>

In the fiscal year 2010 NDAA, referenced above, Congress expressed concern that DoD's management structure offers inadequate leadership to guide strategic communication. Almost every major report and study on SC has four common themes: a call for leadership; demand for increased resources for strategic communication and public diplomacy; a call for a clear definition of an overall strategy; and the need for better coordination and organizational changes (or additions).

## Recommendations for DoD Strategic Communication

*Create a new Under Secretary of Defense for Strategic Communication: USD (SC).* As an Under Secretary, USD (SC) would be of equal status with his/her Strategic Communications/Public Diplomacy peers within the interagency community. The Under

Secretary would provide the vital leadership needed, and represent and fight for DoD equities among federal agencies, as well as the National Security Council, on an equal footing.

*Transform the DoD SC Enterprise so that all SC Elements Fall Under the Newly Established USD (SC).* To be an effective organization, all elements of SC must be placed under the newly established USD (SC). That organization then would be led, resourced and staffed by an organization equal to its importance within DoD. The Under Secretary would have a Deputy Under Secretary and three Assistant Secretaries of Defense (ASD). Each ASD would each lead one of the three pillars of SC (PA, IO, and DSPD). Though there would be a few caveats: the USD (I) would keep all technical elements of IO; and the ASD (PA) would maintain his access and position as advisor to the Secretary of Defense for all matters relating to the media.

Consolidation of all elements would create a unity-of-effort organization. This organization would have a leader who would provide strategic vision and guidance, set goals and priorities, and is able to fight for and then allocate resources to its elements. In essence, this SC organization would be a true hierarchical organization with leadership responsible for and authorized to direct and control all elements of SC in support of DoD and USG national interests. This would also end the participation of numerous DoD representatives in interagency SC related meetings; the OUSD (SC) would then have a single point of contact for interagency coordination.

When asked if he were king for a day and how he would fix the DoD SC problem, Mr. Floyd stated "Do what we discussed, create an Under Secretary, but being king for

a day implies that it's not reality and looking at reality and ultimately the political will, the most you could hope for is having one element being put in charge as the lead."<sup>63</sup>

Adequate political will has not existed within the DoD, to date, to create an effective SC enterprise. That position is maintained in DoD's recent report to Congress recommending against any organizational change and the articulation that they continue to view SC as a process.

With all the Congressional interest being generated, Congress may gain enough momentum to act on its own and require a dramatic transformation to an effective DoD SC enterprise within DoD. Congress has exercised its influence before, when it created the United States Special Operations Command after DoD ignored numerous recommendations to do so. Only time will tell if Congress will be the proponent for more effective Strategic Communication enterprise within DoD and in support of the USG.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Vincent Vitto, "Final Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication" in *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*, (Washington, DC, Department of Defense, January 2008). [https://www.intelink.gov/w/images/2/22/2008-01-Strategic\\_Communication.pdf](https://www.intelink.gov/w/images/2/22/2008-01-Strategic_Communication.pdf) (accessed January 12, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Defense Science Board, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*, (Washington, DC, Department of Defense, January 2008), 21. [https://www.intelink.gov/w/images/2/22/2008-01-Strategic\\_Communication.pdf](https://www.intelink.gov/w/images/2/22/2008-01-Strategic_Communication.pdf) (accessed January 12, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Richard Wike, "Repairing The U.S. Image In Muslim World,: Our Reputation's On The Mend But Challenges Aplenty Remain" CBS News July 29, 2009. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/07/29/opinion/main5195849.shtml> (accessed January 12, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Michael Mullen, "Strategic Communication: Getting Back to Basics", *Joint Forces Quarterly*, issue 55, (4th quarter 2009), 4. [http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq\\_pages/editions/i55/1.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/editions/i55/1.pdf) (accessed January 15, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Representatives Adam Smith and Mac Thornberry, “Join the new Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Caucus”, memorandum to Congress, Washington, DC., March 2, 2010. [http://mountainrunner.us/files/2010-3-2\\_SCPD\\_Caucus\\_Announcement.pdf](http://mountainrunner.us/files/2010-3-2_SCPD_Caucus_Announcement.pdf) (accessed March 12, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Representative Mac Thornberry, “Establishing the Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Caucus” open posting on <http://Mountainrunner.us>, March 7, 2010, <http://mountainrunner.us/2010/03/thornberry.html> (accessed March 12, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Vincent Vitto, “Final Report of the Defense Science Board”.

<sup>9</sup> Mr. Price Floyd, acting ASD (PA) and PDASD (PA), interview with the author, Washington, DC, February 12, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 12 April 2001, (As Amended Through 31 October 2009), 2006. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 31 October 2009), 518. [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new\\_pubs/jp1\\_02.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf) (accessed: January 4, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Department of Defense, “DOD Report on Strategic Communication (Section 1055(b))”, December 14, 2009. (Washington DC., U.S. Department of Defense, 14 December 2009), 2. [https://www.intelink.gov/wiki/Image:TAB\\_B-Section\\_1055%28b%29\\_report\\_Dec\\_14.pdf](https://www.intelink.gov/wiki/Image:TAB_B-Section_1055%28b%29_report_Dec_14.pdf) (accessed January 15, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>13</sup> Stanley McChrystal, “COMISAF Afghanistan assessment”, *Washington Post*, September 21, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/21/AR2009092100110.html?hpid=topnews> (accessed 11 January 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Robert M. Gates, Speech to the U.S. Global Leadership Campaign, Washington, D.C., July 15, 2008, <http://www.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1262> (accessed March 2, 2010).

<sup>15</sup> Defense Science Board, *Report of the Defense Science Board*, 11.

<sup>16</sup> Since there is not official doctrine for SC, the three key areas described are the most common referenced and most important elements of SC. Some practitioners add Visual Information or Civil Affairs within SC. For the purposes of this paper I am using PA, IO, and DSPD.

<sup>17</sup> Department of Defense, DOD Report on Strategic Communication, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Mr. James Swartout, Director, Joint Communication, Office of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Joint Communication, interview by author, Washington DC, February 12, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Department of Defense, DOD Report of Strategic Communication, 5-6.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>24</sup> Department of Defense., Joint Publication 3-13, Information Operations, (Washington D.C., Department of Defense, 13 February 2006) I-1. [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new\\_pubs/jp3\\_13.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_13.pdf) (accessed January 12, 2010).

<sup>25</sup> Department of Defense, DOD Report of Strategic Communication, 7-8.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>27</sup> Defense Science Board, *Report of the Defense Science Board*, xiii.

<sup>28</sup> Department of Defense, DOD Report of Strategic Communication, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>30</sup> James Swartout, email message to author, March 23, 2010.

<sup>31</sup> Hal Pittman, "Strategic Communication and Countering Ideological Support for Terrorism", Congressional Record, (November 15, 2007), [http://www.carlisle.army.mil/dime/documents/Pittman\\_Testimony111507.pdf](http://www.carlisle.army.mil/dime/documents/Pittman_Testimony111507.pdf) (accessed December 15, 2009).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>33</sup> Department of Defense, *2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, (Washington D.C., Department of Defense, February 6, 2006), 92. <http://www.comw.org/qdr/06qdr.html> (accessed January 18, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Pittman, "Strategic Communication and Countering Ideological Support for Terrorism", 6-8.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>37</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen, "Strategic Communication" memorandum for the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Washington D.C, December 14, 2007), <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/DIME/documents/CJCS%20ADM%20Mullins%20memo%20to%20Deputy%20SecDef%20on%20Strategic%20Communication.pdf> (accessed 15 Jan 2010).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Christopher J. Castelli, Pentagon Terminates the Strategic Communications Integration Group, Inside the Pentagon, March 6, 2008. In LexisNexis Academic (accessed March 15, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> Ambassador Brian E. Carlson, the State-Defense Strategic Communication Liaison from the Office of the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, telephone interview with author, March 15, 2010.

<sup>41</sup> Various sources, Daniel P. Jordan, *The Demise of the Office of Strategic Influence*, The National Security Strategy Process (Washington D.C., NDU, January 14, 2004), 1. <http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/pmt/exhibits/1487/demiseofOSI.pdf> (accessed March 10, 2010), Carlson, telephone interview with author, and Floyd, interview with the author.

<sup>42</sup> Jordan, *The Demise of the Office of Strategic Influence*, 7.

<sup>43</sup> Floyd, interview with the author.

<sup>44</sup> Carlson, telephone interview with the author.

<sup>45</sup> Swartout, interview with the author.

<sup>46</sup> Department of Defense, DOD Report of Strategic Communication, 8-9.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>48</sup> Floyd, interview with the author.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Swartout, interview with the author.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Christopher Paul, *Whither Strategic Communications? A Survey of Current Proposals and Recommendations*, (Santa Monica, CA., RAND Corp, February 25, 2009), v. [http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional\\_papers/2009/RAND\\_OP250.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/2009/RAND_OP250.pdf) (accessed (20 January 2010)).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>55</sup> Department of Defense, *2010 Defense Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, (Washington, DC, Department of Defense, February 2010), 25-26 and Department of Defense, *2006 Defense Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 91-92.

<sup>56</sup> Department of Defense, *2006 Defense Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 91-92.

<sup>57</sup> Defense Science Board, *Report of the Defense Science Board*, xi.

<sup>58</sup> U.S. Congress, Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, (Washington, DC, U.S. Congress, October 14, 2008) Section 1055. [http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/olc/docs/2009NDAA\\_PL110-417.pdf](http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/olc/docs/2009NDAA_PL110-417.pdf) (accessed February 15, 2010).

<sup>59</sup> President of the United States Barack Obama, "Report on the Administration's Comprehensive Interagency Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication of the Federal Government." Report to Congress (section 1055), Washington DC, March 19, 2010.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>61</sup> U.S. Congress, National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2010, (Washington, DC, U.S. Congress, June 18, 2009), 374. <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/T?&report=hr 166&db name=111&> (accessed February 15, 2010).

<sup>62</sup> Carlson, telephone interview with the author.

<sup>63</sup> Floyd, interview with the Author.