

Strategic Communication in the Department of Defense

A Continuous Process

Rear Admiral Frank Thorp IV, USN,
is Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Defense (Joint Communication).

By FRANK THORP IV

The U.S. military is not sufficiently organized, trained, or equipped to analyze, plan, coordinate, and integrate the full spectrum of capabilities available to promote America's interests. Changes in the global information environment require the Department of Defense, in conjunction with other U.S. Government agencies, to implement more deliberate and well-developed strategic communication (SC) processes.

Effective communication by the United States must build upon coordinated actions and information at all levels of the U.S. Government in order to maintain credibility and trust. This will be accomplished through an emphasis on accuracy, consistency, veracity, timeliness, and transparency in words and deeds. Such credibility is essential to building relationships that advance national interests.

With the publishing of the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Strategic Communication Execution Roadmap last September, a watershed event occurred: the Deputy Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had agreed to the definition of strategic communication and how it is to be integrated into all planning efforts. In essence, they concurred that *strategic communication* is "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, and actions synchronized with other elements of national power."

Concept of Operations

Not long after this roadmap was approved and promulgated, a concept of operations was developed, coordinated with all applicable parties, approved, and widely distributed. It establishes a proven construct based on operational planning. Whereas the old school of thought placed communication (usually titled *public affairs*) somewhere near the execution phase, the new school of strategic communication planning identifies those combinations of actions and words that are most likely to produce the desired understanding and actions by key audiences.

SC Philosophy

The strategic communication process is continuous and integrated from the beginning of each operational planning cycle. The SC cycle moves quickly and can repeat itself several times in the course of operational planning. Strategic communication takes Government policy and consistently applies it to *what we say and do*. When what we say and what we do are not synchronized or are inconsistent with policy, a "Say-Do Gap" is created, our efforts are not maximized, the desired effect is perhaps not achieved, and the disconnect adversely affects our credibility as a military force and as a nation.

Previous dialogue about strategic communication focused on the informational element of national power, and most agreed that this element was the main driver toward SC effects. But in true strategic communication, we acknowledge the *interdependency* of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) elements. Strategic communication provides

a *process* to integrate and synchronize the DIME effort, affecting the way we work to achieve desired effects.

Inside the military, we ensure that our roles in the DIME elements are integrated and synchronized internally and that we are prepared to integrate and synchronize those efforts in the interagency and coalition SC process. Through this process, we help the Nation achieve desired effects, either independently or in concert with other nations, intergovernmental organizations, or nongovernmental organizations.

Four-Phase Process

Research and Analysis. Information can be collected in advance of serious contemplation of action, but research becomes more deliberate and focused as situational requirements arise. Research is focused on the commander's intent and desired effects, both of which must shape all phases of the SC process. During this phase, we attempt to understand our audiences and their environment, how they think, what they believe, and how they routinely receive information upon which they trust and act—in other words, what it takes for us to create desired effects. Reachback capabilities may be a key contributor toward optimizing the resources required of a combatant command or joint task force to perform the needed research.

Planning. Desired effects prompt planners to develop courses of action that meet the commander's intent. Planning includes branches and sequels that seize opportunities and adjust execution as assessments deem necessary. Planning can be done both within the individual lines of operation and

Open Letter to *JFQ* Readers

Joint Force Quarterly is mindful that many of its readers have experienced multiple tours of duty in one or more theaters in the war on terror. We want to hear your stories, share your practical insights, and improve the way our government secures national security interests in partnership with allies and nongovernmental organizations. Even when manuscripts focus on technical or specialized aspects of security research, *JFQ* can usually find a way to incorporate the work and sometimes refers an author's study to outside institutes and centers, such as the Center for Technology and National Security Policy. We ask that authors and research groups continue submitting the broad array of articles and thoughtful critiques unfettered and would also like to solicit manuscripts on specific subject areas in concert with future thematic focuses.

The following are areas of interest that *JFQ* expects to return to frequently, with no submission deadline:

- orchestrating instruments of national power
- coalition operations
- employing the economic instrument of power
- future of naval power
- humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
- industry collaboration for national security
- integrated operations subsets (new partners, interoperability, and transformational approaches)
- joint air and space power
- Just War theory
- defending against surprise attack
- proliferation and weapons of mass destruction
- prosecuting the war on terror within sovereign countries
- military and diplomatic history

The following topics are tied to submission deadlines for specific upcoming issues:

June 1, 2007 (Issue 47, 4th quarter 2007):
U.S. Pacific Command
Focus on China
SECDEF and CJCS Essay Contest Winners

December 1, 2008
(Issue 49, 2^d quarter 2008):
Focus on Air and Space Power
U.S. Special Operations Command

September 1, 2007
(Issue 48, 1st quarter 2008):
The Long War
Homeland Defense
U.S. Northern Command

March 1, 2008 (Issue 50, 3^d quarter 2008):
Weapons of Mass Destruction
Stability and Security Operations
U.S. Central Command

JFQ readers are typically subject matter experts who can take an issue or debate to the next level of application or utility. Quality manuscripts harbor the potential to save money and lives. When framing your argument, please focus on the *So what?* question. That is, how does your research, experience, or critical analysis improve the understanding or performance of the reader? Speak to implications from the operational to strategic level of influence and tailor the message for an interagency readership without using acronyms or jargon. Also, write prose, not terse bullets. Even the most prosaic doctrinal debate can be interesting if presented with care! Visit ndupress.ndu.edu to view our NDU Press Submission Guidelines. Share your professional insights and improve national security.

Colonel David H. Gurney, USMC (Ret.)
Editor, *Joint Force Quarterly*
Gurneyd@ndu.edu

collaboratively between lines of operation; however, it must be integrated and synchronized within boards and cells comprising all participants. This enhances the creation of a better overall design, intended to produce desired effects on target audiences.

Execution. Operations are conducted across lines of operation in an integrated and synchronized manner, in accordance with the plan, to produce desired effects. Not all lines will be involved in every instance, and different lines will be more active than others at various times.

Assessment. This phase begins upon execution and is continuous throughout. Based on assessment, research, planning, and execution for any follow-on operations can be adjusted or modified in an effort to ensure that we are producing the commander's desired effects, goals, and objectives.

The Future of SC

The military element of strategic communication *cannot* be overemphasized. The military commander's ability to inform and influence selected audiences in today's complex environment is a critical element to successful operations. While it is encouraging to see commanders developing SC processes that are fully nested within higher national-level SC objectives, there remains a long road to travel before these processes are fully integrated into joint planning efforts. It would do well for military leaders and Defense officials to follow in the path of both the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Chairman, who have come to understand the vast importance of strategic communication.

Joint Doctrine Update

Joint Chiefs of Staff J7 Joint Education and Doctrine Division

The joint doctrine development community (JDDC) revised or published an unprecedented 25 joint publications in 2006. The efforts of the JDDC, which consists of the Joint Staff, Services, and the combatant commands, should come as no surprise because it has engaged in sustained combat operations in support of the war on terror for over 5 years. During this time period, the JDDC has revised over 96 percent of the publications in the hierarchy.

The revisions of Capstone Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Joint Doctrine of the Armed Forces of the United States*, and the Keystone publications have been the most significant achievements. In the past year, the Chairman approved all of these publications, except for JP 2-0, *Intelligence Support*, and JP 4-0, *Logistics*, both due to be completely revised in summer 2007. JP 1 consolidated the previous versions of JP 1 and JP 0-2, *Unified Action Armed Forces*. This publication expanded interagency and multinational aspects of operations, updated joint force characteristics, and reflected portions of the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*. Most notably, JP 1 introduced the term *irregular warfare* into joint doctrine.

The introduction of irregular warfare posed a unique situation as doctrine and concept were developed nearly simultaneously. The insertion of irregular warfare into joint doctrine will occur through revisions of various joint publications that must discuss irregular warfare activities. The parallel development of the irregular warfare joint operating concept will continue through rigorous experimentation. Lessons learned from experimentation, coupled with capturing best practices from current operations, will have significant impacts on future doctrine. In addition, U.S. Joint Forces Command will assess the need for joint doctrine on counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and combating terrorism.

Perhaps the most profound changes to joint operations and joint planning doctrine

since the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 occurred during the recent revisions of JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, and JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*. JP 3-0 introduced a new “range of military operations” to encompass military engagement, security cooperation, and deterrence; crisis response contingencies; and major operations and campaigns. Joint operations added three principles (restraint, perseverance, and legitimacy) to the principles of war and replaced the four-phase model with a six-phase one. This new phasing model incorporated lessons from recent combat operations to change the “decisive operations” phase to the “dominate” phase and to replace “transition” with two new phases: “stabilize” and “enable civil authority.” Furthermore, JP 3-0 covered the systems perspective of the operational environment, the effects-based approach to planning, and effects assessment.

JP 5-0 incorporated the joint operational planning process to complement the joint operational planning and execution system (JOPEs). While providing a link to JOPEs, it also focuses on military decision-making and operational design between combatant commanders and components or subordinate joint forces.

Finally, the JDDC continues to make significant contributions to the joint force. A recent survey of Joint Staff, combatant command staffs (division and branch heads), and joint professional military education venues found that over 93 percent use joint doctrine in some aspect of their jobs. Over 86 percent reported using joint doctrine at least monthly. Of that percentage, over half use it weekly. Only 3 percent reported being dissatisfied with the quality of information.¹ With the number one complaint about joint doctrine being that it is outdated, the JDDC efforts to provide the best possible product will continue in earnest.

For access to joint publications, visit the Joint Doctrine, Education, and Training Electronic Information System Web site at <https://jdeis.js.mil>.

Joint Publications Revised

(Calendar Year 2006)

- JP 4-05, *Joint Mobilization Planning*
- JP 1-04, *Legal Support*
- JP 3-13, *Information Operations*
- JP 3-50, *Personnel Recovery*
- JP 3-08, *Interagency Coordination*
- JP 3-07.3, *Peace Operations*
- JP 6-0, *Joint Communications System*
- JP 3-09, *Joint Fire Support*
- JP 3-07.2, *Antiterrorism*
- JP 3-13.1, *Electronic Warfare*
- JP 3-17, *Air Mobility Operations (Ch. 1)*
- JP 3-34, *Joint Engineer Operations*
- JP 4-06, *Mortuary Affairs in Joint Operations*
- JP 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*
- JP 2-01.2, *Counter Intelligence and Human Intelligence Support*
- JP 2-03, *Geospatial Intelligence Support*
- JP 3-13.3, *Operations Security*
- JP 3-11, *Countering Air and Missile Threats*
- JP 3-01.4, *Military Deception*
- JP 3-41, *Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High Yield Explosives Consequence Management*
- JP 3-10, *Joint Security Operations in Theater*
- JP 1-0, *Personnel Support to Joint Operations*
- JP 3-32, *Command and Control for Joint Maritime Operations*
- JP 4-02, *Health Service Support*
- JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*

Joint Publications Revised

(2nd Quarter Fiscal Year 2007)

- JP 3-05.1, *Joint Special Operations Task Force Operations*
- JP 3-07.5, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*
- JP 3-16, *Multinational Operations*
- JP 3-35, *Deployment and Redeployment*
- JP 3-60, *Targeting*
- JP 3-27, *Homeland Defense*
- JP 3-33, *Joint Task Force Headquarters*
- JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*

Joint Publications Projected for Revision

(3rd Quarter Fiscal Year 2007)

- JP 3-03, *Joint Interdiction*
- JP 3-15, *Barriers, Obstacles, and Mine Warfare for Joint Operations*
- JP 3-04.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Shipboard Helicopter Operations*
- JP 3-07.4, *Joint Counter Drug Operations*
- JP 4-05.1, *Manpower Mobilization/Demobilization*
- JP 2-0, *Doctrine for Intelligence Support to Joint Operations*
- JP 3-28, *Civil Support*
- JP 4-0, *Joint Logistic Support*

NOTE

¹ Joint doctrine survey results brief delivered on November 7, 2006, at the 38th Joint Doctrine Working Party. This conference took place at the U.S. Joint Forces Command Joint Warfighting Center in Suffolk, Virginia.

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor: Two articles in the last issue of *Joint Force Quarterly* (Issue 44, 1st quarter 2007), Philip Wasielewski's "Defining the War on Terror" and Jerry Long's "Confronting an Army Whose Men Love Death: Osama, Iraq, and U.S. Foreign Policy," are a help in understanding the essence of the war on terror, and such an understanding is crucial to winning. But there are some points made by both authors that need further clarification.

For instance, Professor Long states, "The concern is that the Bush administration's doctrine of preemption . . . and its larger war on terror proceed from a serious misreading of Islamic ideology and that U.S. actions may not ameliorate the threat but exacerbate it." Unfortunately, it is Professor Long who has somewhat misread Islamic ideology. His key contention, based on a comment by Osama bin Laden of 80 years of "humiliation and disgrace," is that "the context for 9/11 is modern Middle East history, beginning with World War I" and that, to many Muslims, Western (particularly U.S.) actions in that region in the last 80 years primarily caused this humiliation.

A more nuanced reading of bin Laden's comment traces the "80 years" reference back to the abolition of the Sunni Islamic caliphate by the Republic of Turkey in the early 1920s. This point is confirmed by Professor Long's own quotation from Mullah Mustapha Kreikar: "There is no difference between this [Iraqi] occupation and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. . . . The resistance is not only a reaction to the American invasion, it is part of the continuous Islamic struggle since the collapse of the caliphate." Professor Long omitted the next sentence that clarifies what is meant: "All Islamic struggles since then are part of one organised effort to bring back the caliphate." Bin Laden has also commented repeatedly on the caliphate.

More importantly, a significant number of statements from bin Laden make clear that the timeline he is focused on is not modern history but a much longer period—1,500 years back to the foundation of Islam. For example, bin Laden has stated, "The struggle between us and them [the West], the confrontation and clashing began centuries ago and will continue until judgement day." The conclusion is clear: the underlying issue for bin Laden is the caliphate, not modern events in Palestine,

Iraq, Afghanistan, East Timor, and Bosnia. The question is *why*.

Professor Long comments that "there is an inherent clash of ideologies and not simply national interests," but he does not go on to develop this point fully. Part of this ideological clash comes from the concept he identifies as *Jahiliyya*, the state of ignorance that prevailed before Islam was established, but he does not attribute this concept, as Colonel Wasielewski does, to the Muslim scholar Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328).

Based on this concept, Professor Long points out that bin Laden considers all Muslim governments illegitimate. He fails, however, to clarify two important points here: first, al Qaeda views all current Muslim governments—democratic, authoritarian, or highly religious—as totally illegitimate; second, Ibn Taymiyya in the 13th century and then Sayyid Qutb in the 20th century both believed that any state that did not put God wholly at its center was illegitimate. Qutb, probably the most important ideologist for al Qaeda, believed that the separation of religion and state was "hideous schizophrenia" and that this secularism of the Republic of Turkey was an attempt to "exterminate" Islam.

Secularism, therefore, is a crucial factor that makes all current Muslim governments, and all other governments in the world today, illegitimate (*Jahili* as Professor Long puts it) in the eyes of al Qaeda. It is important to understand this idea because it shows what al Qaeda hates most is what the West *is*, not what it *does*. The numbers of Muslims who fully adhere to this ideology are tiny. The vast majority of Muslims, as evidenced by numerous opinion polls and by Pew Global Attitude Surveys, oppose what the Vice President of Indonesia, Yusef Kalla, has described as these "fringe ideological views."

An accurate analysis of the source of al Qaeda is vital to ensuring that the proposed methods of dealing with it are effective. Most scholars would agree that a key reason for Muslim discontent and a foundational explanation for the rise of al Qaeda is their perception of the failure of Islam, relative to its illustrious past and relative to other societies currently. Al Qaeda focuses on the reestablishment of the caliphate because it believes only with such a development will Islam recover its past glories. Muslim scholars who have studied this situation agree that the decline commenced in the 12th century due to internal reasons and not, as is frequently

thought, due to the Crusades, Western imperialism, or globalisation.

Many experts, however, would accept that globalisation is an explanatory factor for the rise of al Qaeda itself. Professor Michael Mousseau argues that in the movement from a nonmarket to a market economy, globalisation produced significant disruption in European and now in Islamic and other societies commencing in the mid 19th century. Such can and does lead to a support for terror. Professor Long correctly attributes the impact of the war in Afghanistan as a factor leading to the rise of al Qaeda. My own research would indicate that the Sunni/Shia conflict is the fourth and final part of the explanation for its rise.

Based on this more detailed analysis, it is clear that the solution to this problem is, as with the Cold War, primarily the use of soft power to reverse the relative failure of Islam and to minimise the impact of globalisation on Islamic societies.

Colonel Wasielewski's article does look at the historic sources of al Qaeda's ideology, while surprisingly ignoring the impact of Saudi Wahhabism. While he correctly identifies the need to challenge their ideology, I would disagree with some of his suggested actions. Accepting that al Qaeda's ideology is based on fringe views, Muslims clearly are the only ones who can confront this ideology successfully. This part of the war on terror must be led by Muslim states—particularly the democratic states of Indonesia and Turkey. (It is important to remember here that the majority of Muslims live in Asia, not the Middle East and Persian Gulf.) Some success in this effort is evident already in Indonesia where the majority of activists in the al Qaeda-related movement *Jemaah Islamiyah* have apparently decided to achieve their aims by nonviolent means.

Fully understanding the source of Muslim grievances, the ideology that al Qaeda espouses, and the extent to which it is a virulent form of Sunni extremism helps to clarify the approach to winning the war on terror and the crucial importance of Muslim states leading that effort, particularly on the key ideological front.

—Richard F. Whelan
Dublin, Ireland

Richard F. Whelan is the author of *Al-Qaedaism: The Threat to Islam, The Threat to the World* (Ashfield Press, 2005).