



# Sodobni vojaški izzivi

Contemporary Military Challenges

Znanstveno-strokovna publikacija Slovenske vojske

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Junij 2019 – 21/št. 2



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MINISTRSTVO ZA OBRAMBO  
GENERALŠTAB SLOVENSKE VOJSKE

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# STRATEŠKE KOMUNIKACIJE IN OBOROŽENE SILE

*»Nikoli se nihče ni odločil na podlagi številke.  
Potrebujejo zgodbo.«  
Daniel Kahneman*

# STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION(S) AND ARMED FORCES

*»No-one ever made a decision because of a number.  
They need a story«.  
Daniel Kahneman*



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## UVODNIK

# STRATEŠKE KOMUNIKACIJE IN OBOROŽENE SILE

Druga številka v enaindvajsetem letu izhajanja *Sodobnih vojaških izzivov* je namenjena strateškim komunikacijam in njihovemu vplivu, povezavam in interakcijam, povezanim z oboroženimi silami. Morda ste že opazili, da uporabljamo izraz komunikacije, in ne komuniciranje. Na hitro bo marsikdo pomislil, da gre za majhno nepomembno razliko v besedah in besedni zvezi, saj med strateškim komuniciranjem in strateškimi komunikacijami ne more biti prav velike razlike, drugi bodo spet menili, da je raba ene ali druge oblike napačna. Terminološkega konsenza ni ne v slovenščini ne v angleščini. Na podlagi mnenja Inštituta za slovenski jezik Frana Ramovša<sup>1</sup> v slovenščini uporabljamo v tej številki v kontekstu Natovega koncepta izraz strateške komunikacije. Pri tem poudarjamo, da z izborom izraza ne normiramo rabe, temveč si predvsem prizadevamo za doslednost in spodbujanje razprave. Iz člankov v številki razberemo, da si bo za terminologijo še treba prizadevati in da to ne bo preprosto. Nekateri sicer menijo, da je nepomembno usmerjati pozornost na drobne terminološke razlike, saj je vendar pomembna vsebina oziroma vse tisto, kar nam razvoj neke vsebine prinaša. Pa je res tako?

Pri pripravi tematske številke, ki je pred vami, smo se s številnimi izzivi srečali že pri načrtovanju. Temeljna zamisel je bila nameniti nekaj pozornosti komunikacijam in komuniciranju oboroženih sil z različnimi notranjimi in zunanjimi ciljnim javnostmi v različnih oblikah, kot so na primer klasični mediji, socialna omrežja, različni javni dogodki, uporaba sile in podobno. Za oborožene sile je zelo pomembno, kakšna so razmerja znotraj sil, torej med zaposlenimi, in kakšna so razmerja z drugimi javnostmi, ki o delovanju in prihodnosti oboroženih sil tudi odločajo. Da bi dosegli kar najboljši rezultat, smo se povezali s prof. dr. Marjanom Malešičem s Fakultete za družbene vede Univerze v Ljubljani, ki je med drugim

<sup>1</sup> Dostopno na <https://isjfr.zrc-sazu.si/sl/terminologisce/svetovanje?keys=strategic+communications#v>.

tudi dolgoletni vodja delovne skupine za področje odnosa javnosti in množičnih medijev do vojske pri evropskem združenju ERGOMAS, ki proučuje razmerja med vojsko in družbo.

Nismo ostali samo pri terminološkem vprašanju, temveč smo se ukvarjali tudi s pojmovnim. O temi, ki smo se ji posvetili, je veliko napisanega in ima vsebinsko bogato zgodovino. Med najpogostejšimi izrazi v njeni zgodovini so *propaganda* (ta je najstarejši), *odnosi z javnostmi*, *informacijsko vplivanje*, *komuniciranje*, *strateško komuniciranje*, *korporativno komuniciranje* in *strateške komunikacije* ter drugi. Ti so kot pojmi zapisani v Natovem konceptu strateških komunikacij, v katerem lahko preberemo, da gre za usklajeno in namensko uporabo njegovih informacijsko-komunikacijskih zmogljivosti in dejavnosti. Sem spadajo dejavnosti javne diplomacije, odnosov z javnostmi ter informacijskega in psihološkega delovanja. Te so primerna podpora politiki, operacijam in delovanju zavezništva za doseganje ciljev Nata. Republika Slovenija je že petnajst let članica zavezništva. Slovenska vojska je ves ta čas močno vpeta v različne Natove dejavnosti in tudi zanjo velja Natov koncept strateških komunikacij. Zaradi navedenega je naslov tematske številke pred vami *Strateške komunikacije in oborožene sile*.

Pojmovni in terminološki vidik sta samo dva izmed številnih vidikov proučevanja izbrane teme, ki je interdisciplinarna in trenutno zelo pomembna. S svojih hitrim razvojem prinaša veliko priložnosti, vendar tudi vprašanj. Možnosti za raziskave, razprave in različne rešitve bo v prihodnje še veliko.

V članku *Strategic communication(s) – kakšna je razlika?* **Iris Žnidarič** predstavlja težave s pojmi, ki izhajajo iz različne rabe edninskega in množinskega samostalnika »communication« in »communications«, pri tem je poudarek na angleškem jeziku. Za izhodišče je avtorica vzela Natov koncept strateških komunikacij in predstavila rabo pojmov v posameznih teorijah, pri avtorjih in institucijah, ki se s tem področjem ukvarjajo. Dogovora o terminološkem poenotenju še ni, je pa veliko razlogov za to, da bi soglasje vendarle dosegli.

Legitimnost delovanja oboroženih sil je zelo pomembna. O tem, kakšen vpliv imajo socialni mediji nanjo in na švicarsko vojsko, pišejo **Eva Moehlecke de Baseggio**, **Olivia Schneider** in **Tibor Szvircsev Tresch** v članku *Vpliv komunikacije na družbenih medijih na legitimnost oboroženih sil*. Dejavnosti na Instagramu so začeli leta 2017 in že izvedli raziskavo o njihovi učinkovitosti. O njihovih ugotovitvah več v članku.

**Nina Raduha** se je v prispevku *Strateške komunikacije kot priložnost voditeljev Nata in držav članic Nata* posvetila konceptu Natovih strateških komunikacij s poudarkom na pomembni vlogi in odgovornosti voditelja oziroma poveljnika pri uveljavljanju, usmerjanju, sooblikovanju, izvajanju in spremljanju kakovosti izvajanja koncepta strateških komunikacij, ki predstavlja enega najpomembnejših orodij vsake moderne

organizacije pri spoprijemanju s sodobnimi varnostnimi izzivi. Dvomov o tem, ali imeti StratCom ali ne, ni več, voditelj pa ima pri tem odločilno vlogo.

Informacijsko bojevanje je ena od oblik strateških komunikacij, trdi **Glen Segell** v članku *Informacijsko bojevanje z mehko in trdo močjo: primer Izraela in Hamasa*. Avtor pojasnjuje, da Hamas kot nevladna organizacija v Izraelu uporablja trdo obliko moči, Izrael pa uporablja mehko obliko moči v informacijskem vojskovanju znotraj strateških komunikacij v Gazi.

Nekateri pripadniki oboroženih sil po koncu mednarodnih operacij in misij napišejo knjigo o svojih izkušnjah. O tem, kakšne so te izkušnje in kakšno je sporočilo avtorjev, piše **Esmeralda Kleinreesink** pod naslovom *Vojaške avtobiografije: jih spodbujati, odsvetovati ali prezreti?* Za raziskavo je preučila primere avtorjev del, ki so pisali o svojih izkušnjah v Afganistanu.

**Paul Ellis** in **Ric Cole** sta osredotočena na socialna omrežja in njihove poglobitve sestavine. O tem, kaj je tisto, na kar mora biti pozorna vsaka organizacija, ki želi strateško komunicirati, in vse oborožene sile, ki želijo prek strateških komunikacij doseči svoje strateške, a tudi povsem operativne cilje, si preberite v članku *Potreba po dejavnejšem sodelovanju in boljših komunikacijah v svetu, v katerem vlada stalna konkurenca*.

Upamo in si želimo, da smo s to tematsko številko prispevali k razvoju, razumevanju ter implementaciji in opozorili na pomembnost obravnavane teme, ki je poglobitvega pomena za delovanje v sodobnem varnostnem okolju.



## EDITORIAL

### STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARMED FORCES

This second edition in the 21<sup>st</sup> year of the publication of ‘Contemporary Military Challenges’ is dedicated to strategic communications and their influence, connections and interactions connected to the armed forces. Maybe you have already noticed that we use the term communications, and not communication? At first glance, many would think that the difference between these words and phrases is minor and irrelevant, because strategic communication and strategic communications cannot be that different in meaning; while others may be of the opinion that one form or the other is incorrect. Terminological consensus has not yet been reached in Slovene or in English. Based on the opinion of the Fran Ramovš Institute of the Slovenian Language<sup>1</sup>, the term ‘strategic communications’ is used in Slovene in this edition in the context of the NATO concept. We would like to emphasize that we are not trying to codify the use with our choice of the term, but rather seeking to achieve consistency and encourage debate. The articles in this edition show that a lot of effort needs to be put into terminology. Some believe that it is not important to focus on small terminological differences, claiming that it is the content and its associated development that really matters. But is that really the case?

While preparing this themed edition, we encountered numerous challenges, beginning with the planning phase itself. The basic idea was to devote some attention to the communications and communication of armed forces with different target audiences (internal or external), in different forms, such as classic media, social media, various public events and the use of force, among others. For the armed forces, the relationships within the forces, that is, between their personnel, and the relationships with other audiences, who may decide on the functioning and future of the armed forces, are of the utmost importance. In order to achieve the best possible result, we collaborated with Professor Marjan Malešič, PhD, from the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, a long-standing coordinator of the Public

Opinion, Mass Media and the Military Working Group at the European research group on military and society, ERGOMAS.

We have addressed not only the issue of terminology, but also the concept. This topic often appears in writing and has a rich history in terms of its content. The terms used most frequently in its history are: propaganda (the oldest), public relations, information influencing, communication, strategic communication, corporate communication, and strategic communications, among others. As concepts, they are listed in the NATO Military Concept for Strategic Communications, and described as the coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities - Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs, Military Public Affairs, Information Operations and Psychological Operations, as appropriate - in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO's aims. The Republic of Slovenia has been a member of the Alliance for 15 years. The Slovenian Armed Forces have been fully engaged in various NATO activities and committed to NATO's Strategic Communications Concept. So, the title of this themed edition is 'Strategic Communications and Armed Forces'.

The conceptual and terminological aspects are only two of the many aspects of exploring this interdisciplinary and highly relevant topic. With its fast development, it offers many opportunities, but also questions. In the future, there will be even more opportunities for research, debate and various solutions.

In the article *Strategic Communication(s) – what is the difference?* **Iris Žnidarič** presents the conceptual difficulties arising from different use of the singular and the plural forms: “communication” and “communications”. The emphasis is on the English language. Having NATO's Strategic Communications concept as the starting point, the author presents the use of the concepts by individual theories, authors and institutions working in this field. An agreement on unified terminology has not yet been reached, but there are many reasons in favour of agreement.

The legitimacy of the armed forces' functioning is of extreme importance. The influence of social media on legitimacy and on the Swiss Armed Forces is described in the writing of **Eva Moehlecke de Baseggio, Olivia Schneider** and **Tibor Szvirsev Tresch** in the article *#Inclusion - the impact of social media communication on armed forces' legitimacy*. Activities on Instagram commenced in 2017; a study on their effectiveness has already been carried out, and the findings are described in the article.

In the article *Strategic Communications as a NATO and NATO nations' leadership opportunity*, **Nina Raduha** explores the concept of NATO's Strategic Communications with an emphasis on the key role and responsibility of the leader or the commander in enforcing, directing, co-shaping, implementing and monitoring the quality of the implementation of the concept of strategic communications, one of the most important tools of every modern organization when dealing with modern

security challenges. There is no doubt whether or not StratCom should be used, and the leader has the key role in how.

Information operations are one form of strategic communications, claims **Glen Segell** in *Information warfare by means of soft and sharp power: the case of Israel and Hamas*. The author explains that Hamas, a non-governmental organization in Israel, uses sharp power, whereas Israel uses soft power in information warfare within its strategic communications in Gaza.

In the aftermath of international operations and missions, some members of the armed forces write books about their experience. In her article *Military autobiographies: encourage, discourage or ignore?* **Esmeralda Kleinreesink** writes about the nature of these experiences and the authors' message. For the purposes of her research, she analyzed authors who dealt with their experiences in Afghanistan.

**Paul Ellis** and **Ric Cole** focus on social media and their key elements. What should be the focus of all organizations which want to communicate strategically and of all armed forces that want to achieve not only strategic but also purely operational goals through strategic communications? Find out in the article *The need to improve engagement and communications in a world that is in a state of persistent competition*.

It is our hope and wish that our themed edition will contribute to the development, understanding and implementation of strategic communications, and will help to highlight the importance of the selected topic as a crucial element of functioning in the modern security environment.



## UVOD

# STRATEŠKO KOMUNICIRANJE NA VARNOSTNEM PODROČJU

Na varnostnem, obrambnem in vojaškem področju se nadaljuje ciklično pojavljanje različnih konceptov, povezanih s komuniciranjem. Najnovejši med njimi je strateško komuniciranje, ki sledi konceptom, kot so psihološke operacije, informacijske operacije, javna diplomacija, odnosi z javnostmi, psihološko bojevanje, politično bojevanje in propaganda. V preteklosti so za uresničitev interesov in izpolnitev ciljev različnih držav, mednarodnih organizacij ter drugih udeležencev oblikovali tudi širše koncepte, ki vključujejo različne, s komuniciranjem povezane dejavnosti. Najpomembnejši med njimi, naštetih kronološko, so strategija posrednega nastopanja, spopadi nizke intenzivnosti, nevojne vojaške operacije, informacijsko bojevanje, asimetrično vojskovanje, razumna moč in hibridno vojskovanje. Na tem mestu naštetih konceptov ne moremo opredeljevati in primerjati, da bi na podlagi tega lahko določili vzorce (dis)kontinuitete oziroma načine, na katere se ti koncepti podvajajo, prekrivajo in dopolnjujejo. Izhajamo iz dejstva, da je koncept strateškega komuniciranja navzoč tako v teoriji kot v praksi različnih udeležencev, zato se bomo v tem uvodu posebne izdaje Sodobnih vojaških izzivov osredinili na konceptualna vprašanja, povezana s strateškim komuniciranjem, in poskušali razpoznati način razumevanja in uporabo tega koncepta v Združenih državah Amerike (ZDA), Ruski federaciji, Evropski uniji (EU), Organizaciji Severnoatlantske pogodbe (Nato) in Islamski državi Iraka in Levanta (ISIL).

Zdi se, da se v sodobni družbi, ki je pogosto označena kot postresnična družba (angl. post-truth society), v kateri čustva, prepričanja in populistična občutja prevladujejo nad dejstvi, podatki in točnimi informacijami (iz slovarja English Oxford Living Dictionaries), pomen strateškega komuniciranja oziroma sorodnih konceptov krepi. Pomembna značilnost postresnične družbe so lažne novice. Poleg tega se zdi, da živimo tudi v družbi vse večjega nezaupanja (angl. post-trust society), v kateri je zaradi upada zaupanja javnosti v institucije uspešno posredovanje sporočil zelo težavno opravilo. Mogoči dejavniki, ki vplivajo na vse

nižjo raven zaupanja, so družbena odtujenost, pomanjkanje socialnega kapitala, višja raven izobrazbe, večja dostopnost informacij, zaradi katerih je javnost vse bolj dvomeča, večji znanstveni pluralizem, ki vodi do posredovanja dvoumnih sporočil, klientelizem v vladi, porast državljskega aktivizma, regulatorni škandali in hiperkritičnost medijev (Löfstedt 2005, str. 4). Ciklične gospodarske in finančne krize z negativnimi socialnimi posledicami dodatno otežujejo komunikacijske procese med organizacijami in njihovimi javnostmi.

Koncept strateškega komuniciranja lahko obravnavamo z različnih vidikov: terminološkega, teoretično-konceptualnega, sistemsko-organizacijskega in funkcionalnega. Osredinimo se lahko na primere in izkušnje posameznih držav, njihovih ministrstev za obrambo oziroma oboroženih sil, mednarodnih obrambnih in varnostnih organizacij (koncept, strukture, organiziranost, programi, načrtovanje, vloga političnih odločevalcev in vojaških poveljnikov itn.) ter na empirične analize strateškega komuniciranja oziroma njegovih različnih prvin prek družbenih medijev.

Besedna zveza se je pojavila v povezavi z nacionalno strategijo in na področju obrambe ter se je hitro razširila na druga področja, kot so gospodarstvo, odnosi z javnostmi in družbeno komuniciranje. Na splošno strateško komuniciranje pomeni poskus uresničitve glavnih interesov in izpolnitve glavnih ciljev organizacije prek procesa komuniciranja z različnimi javnostmi. Oziroma, kot je to povedal Hallahan s sod. (2007, str. 3), »strateško komuniciranje je namenska uporaba različnih oblik komuniciranja, s pomočjo katerih organizacija izpolnjuje svoje poslanstvo«. Namen strateškega komuniciranja je razumeti, »kako bo določen nabor pogledov, vedenj in zaznav javnosti« podpiral cilje organizacije (Paul 2011, str. 5). Strateško komuniciranje zahteva temeljito in dolgoročno raziskovanje, načrtovanje, izbiro ustreznih medijskih kanalov, nadzor nad komunikacijskim tokom organizacije in posredovanje doslednega sporočila različnim javnostim. Bistvo koncepta je holistično razumevanje različnih oblik komuniciranja, ki jih organizacija uporablja. Po mnenju nekaterih avtorjev je strateško komuniciranje način, na katerega posamezniki in organizacije uporabljajo proces komuniciranja in medije za uveljavljanje svoje vloge v družbah, ki so pod močnim vplivom medijev (Univerza v Miamiu). Strateško komuniciranje se razvija na področju stikov z javnostmi, vodenja in upravljanja, komuniciranja identitete blagovne znamke in oglaševanja. Uporabljajo ga korporacije, vladne organizacije, mednarodne organizacije, nepridobitne organizacije in celo teroristične skupine. Nedavne vojaške operacije so okrepile naraščajočo moč komuniciranja tako v javni kot v politični sferi.

Paul (2011, str. 1) je tudi začel razpravo o vprašanju, kaj strateško komuniciranje je, kaj vključuje in kaj izključuje. Uvedel je več mogočih razlag in definicij strateškega komuniciranja ter njegovih posledic. Čeprav je koncept nejasen, obstaja soglasje, da »sta zaznava in razumevanje podob, politik in ukrepov pomembna, da je uspeh številnih politik odvisen od podpore, ki jo prejmejo od različnih javnosti (tako tujih

kot domačih) in da na zaznavo vpliva tako to, kar delamo, kot to, kar govorimo« (prav tam). Koncept je izredno pomemben na področju nacionalnovarnostne politike, še zlasti v boju proti nasilnemu ekstremizmu. Ta boj bi se moral ukvarjati s »prepričanji, motivi in zaznavami, ki temeljijo na ekstremizmu, še posebej s tistimi, ki vodijo k podpori nasilju« (prav tam).

Zdi se, da obstajata dva temeljna razloga za razvoj koncepta strateškega komuniciranja: neučinkovitost komuniciranja od zgoraj navzdol, predvsem v luči sodobne informacijsko-komunikacijske tehnologije, ki državljanom omogoča vključevanje v proces komuniciranja od spodaj navzgor, in pomanjkanje usklajenosti med komunikacijskimi dejavnostmi, bodisi horizontalno ali vertikalno. V tem duhu se poraja vprašanje, ali ne bi bilo bolje strateškega komuniciranja poimenovati »integrirano komuniciranje« (Westenkirchner 2019).

Ni presenetljivo, da so mednarodni udeleženci koncept strateškega komuniciranja sprejeli in ga začeli razvijati. Guerrero - Castro (2013, str. 27–28) poroča, da so se zmogljivosti strateškega komuniciranja v ZDA začele pospešeno razvijati po terorističnih napadih 11. septembra 2001: informacijske operacije in psihološke operacije, odnosi z javnostmi in obrambna podpora javni diplomaciji so dobile zagon in začele bojevati »vojno zaznav«. Strateško komuniciranje je bilo kmalu prepoznano kot bistveno za nacionalno varnost ZDA. Njegov namen je pomoč pri doseganju ciljev na področju diplomacije, obrambe, obveščevalne dejavnosti, na področju preprečevanja, odkrivanja in preiskovanja kaznivih dejanj ter na področju domovinske varnosti. Koncept bi morali razumeti kot nadstrankarski, vlada bi morala sodelovati z zasebnim sektorjem, komuniciranje pa bi moralo okrepiti glavne teme in sporočila, »ki bi jih bilo treba ves čas presoјati glede na izbrane cilje in jih z njimi usklajevati« (Guerrero - Castro 2013, str. 28).

V krogih ameriške vlade je strateško komuniciranje opredeljeno kot »usmerjena prizadevanja vlade Združenih držav Amerike za poznavanje najpomembnejših javnosti in njihovo vključitev v oblikovanje, krepitev ali ohranjanje razmer, ki so ugodne za podporo interesov, politik in ciljev vlade Združenih držav Amerike, z uporabo programov, načrtov, tem, sporočil in produktov, ki so usklajeni z ukrepi vseh instrumentov nacionalne moči« (Joint Publication 2001).

Nacionalna moč je sestavljena iz gospodarske moči, vojaških zmogljivosti (trda moč), političnega vpliva in kulturnega potenciala oziroma vrednot (mehka moč) države ter predstavlja temelj strateškega komuniciranja. Temeljna zamisel je, da bi lahko strateško komuniciranje učinkovito uporabili pri uveljavljanju nacionalnih interesov z usklajevanjem in poenotenjem informacijske dejavnosti. V poskusu operacionalizacije strateškega komuniciranja je Guerrero - Castro (2013, str. 29) opredelil dva bistvena elementa: usklajevanje besed in dejanj (in kako jih izbrana javnost zaznava) ter programe in dejavnosti, vključno s tistimi, ki jih izvajajo strokovnjaki s področja odnosov z javnostmi, javne diplomacije in informacijskih operacij, ki so usmerjeni h komuniciranju in sodelovanju z izbrano javnostjo.

**Ruska federacija** je razvila strateško komuniciranje, ki je kompleksno tako z vidika idej, ki jih promovira, kot z vidika vključenih institucij. Na tem področju je zelo dejavna in razmeroma učinkovita v ZDA, državah članicah EU, republikah nekdanje Sovjetske zveze in v državah kandidatkah za članstvo v EU. Uspeh Ruske federacije je še dodatno okrepila gospodarska kriza, ki je prizadela in celo marginalizirala različne družbene skupine v omenjenih državah. Tudi vloge migrantske krize v Evropi v obdobju 2015–2016 in v ZDA pri tem ne smemo podcenjevati. Vsebina ruskega strateškega komuniciranja ni nujno vedno dosledna, vendar »je njegovo izvajanje sofisticirano, ciljno usmerjeno in prilagojeno različnim javnostim« (Directorate General for External Policies 2016, str. 6). Sposobno je izkoristiti pomanjkljivosti in napake nasprotnikov. Glavni namen strateškega komuniciranja je razvijanje in uveljavljanje mehke moči Ruske federacije. Promocija države in njenih politik poteka prek medijev (najpomembnejša sta Russia Today in Sputnik News), nevladnih organizacij, gospodarskih lobijev, političnih strank in drugih udeležencev. Če razmere niso naklonjene poudarjanju uspehov Ruske federacije, postane glavna naloga strateškega komuniciranja usmerjanje toka negativnih novic o zunanjem svetu: Zahod je prikazan kot nasilen in osvajalen subjekt, ki je šibek in se bo najverjetneje zrušil, EU bo razpadla zaradi finančne in migrantske krize in bo doživela podobno usodo kot nekdanja Sovjetska zveza (Directorate General for External Policies 2016, str. 9). Za krepitev argumentov Ruske federacije proti Zahodu oziroma EU, ZDA in Natu se pogosto uporablja teorija zarote. Slabosti EU, kot so Brexit, neučinkovito in zamudno reševanje migrantske krize, zapleteni postopki sprejemanja odločitev, populizem in podobno so v zadnjih letih prispevali k uspehu strateškega komuniciranja Ruske federacije.

**Nato** je na področju komuniciranja poudarjeno dejaven vse od leta 1950, ko je bila ustanovljena Natova služba za informiranje (NATO Information Service, NATIS), razvoj njegovega koncepta strateškega komuniciranja je dobil zagon po ruski priključitvi Krima marca 2014. Takratni vrhovni poveljnik zavezniških sil Nata je dogodek označil kot »najbolj izjemno bliskovito vojno (blietzkrieg), ki smo ji bili kadar koli priča v zgodovini informacijskega bojevanja« (Directorate General for External Policies 2016, str. 18).

Natova politika komuniciranja strateško komuniciranje opredeljuje kot »uskklajeno in ustrezno uporabo Natovih komunikacijskih dejavnosti in zmogljivosti – javne diplomacije, vojaških odnosov z javnostmi, informacijskih operacij in psiholoških operacij – da podpre politike, operacije in dejavnosti zavezništva in da promovira Natove cilje« (International Staff 2009). Glavni namen strateškega komuniciranja je torej podpiranje in krepitev Natovih prizadevanj, da bi dosegel svoje politične in vojaške cilje. Strateško komuniciranje na predhodno omenjenih področjih bi moralo prispevati k uspešni izvedbi Natovih operacij, misij in dejavnosti, oblikovanju javnega zavedanja o pomenu Nata, razumevanju in podpori njegovim specifičnim politikam, operacijam in drugim dejavnostim pri različnih javnostih ter k boljšemu razumevanju Nata med splošno javnostjo. Pri strateškem komuniciranju ne gre za

ločen organ ali organizacijo, temveč za sestavni del načrtovanja zaveznitva od zgodnjih stopenj naprej.

Kljub temu so januarja 2014 ustanovili Natov center odličnosti za strateško komuniciranje (NATO Strategic Communications Centre for Excellence, StratCom CoE), v katerem delujejo pripadniki, ki prihajajo iz civilnega, vojaškega, zasebnega in akademskega sektorja. Namen centra je podpiranje cele vrste Natovih procesov komuniciranja, njegove glavne dejavnosti pa lahko povzamemo kot razvijanje politike komuniciranja in njene promocije prek Natovih teles in poveljstev, raziskovanje scenarijev hibridnega vojskovanja in informacijskega bojevanja Ruske federacije, ISIL-a in drugih vpletenih, izobraževanje na področju komuniciranja in publicistična dejavnost (npr. izdajanje revije Defence Strategic Communications) (Directorate General for External Policies 2016, str. 19).

Po mnenju nekaterih avtorjev (npr. Wilburja 2017, str. 209) strateško komuniciranje uporabljajo tudi ekstremistične skupine, med katerimi so teroristi. Njegova analiza se nanaša na uporabo propagande kot oblike strateškega komuniciranja ISIL-a. S tehničnega vidika je ISIL strateško komuniciranje uporabljal podobno kot neekstremistične organizacije, torej tako, da je »svojo organizacijo promoviral kot boljšo od konkurenčnih«. Po ugotovitvah analitikov Oddelka za oblikovanje politike, ki deluje v Generalnem direktoratu za zunanjo politiko EU, je ISIL prek revij in videov ter z učinkovito uporabo družbenih medijev ponovno opredelil način pošiljanja političnih sporočil različnim javnostim, ki vključujejo vse od mednarodnih nasprotnikov do dejavnih članov ISIL-a in morebitnih novih članov (Directorate General for External Policies 2016, str. 20). Strateško komuniciranje ISIL-a je bilo oblikovano za doseganje dolgoročnega političnega cilja organizacije: zagotavljanje njenega preživetja in zavzetje čim večjega fizičnega in virtualnega prostora. Namen strateškega komuniciranja ISIL-a je bil predstaviti ga kot učinkovito vojaško in politično organizacijo, ki je sposobna voditi kalifat, novačiti nove člane in jih zadržati, razložiti svoj obstoj ter vcepiti strah v družbe nasprotnikov in jih razdvojiti. Proces posredovanja sporočil različnim javnostim je bil dosleden in strateški (prav tam). Na srečo se je pokazalo, da so bili cilji ISIL-a preveč visokoleteči.

V svoji analizi je J. Reid (2018, str. 52) posredno opozorila, da je zelo pomembna tudi obramba pred negativnim strateškim komuniciranjem. Raziskovala je »negativne informacijske kampanje«, ki jih je Ruska federacija izvajala ob priključitvi Krima in med oboroženimi spopadi v Donecku in Lugansku. Poglobila se je tudi v nedavni ruski vdor v družbene medije ZDA. Po avtoričinem mnenju je prebivalstvo držav Srednje in Vzhodne Evrope še posebno podvrženo negativnim sporočilom Ruske federacije in celo različnih terorističnih skupin. Raziskava je posebno zanimiva, ker odkriva kulturno podlago moči, tekmovalnosti, individualizma, negotovosti, izogibanja, dolgoročnega usmerjanja in popuščanja v kontekstu dojemljivosti za negativne vplive.

V duhu odgovora na negativno strateško komuniciranje je EU pred kratkim razvila svoj koncept strateškega komuniciranja, in to kljub dejstvu, da so države članice na tem področju dolgo časa želele delovati samostojno. Za poglobljeno obravnavo informacijskih groženj v kontekstu strateškega komuniciranja se je oblikovala medsektorska politika EU, ki se osredinja na preplet vrednot in ciljne javnosti (Örden 2019, str. 421). Glavni razlog, da so države članice sprejele usklajena prizadevanja na tem področju, so bile prej omenjene nedavne dejavnosti Ruske federacije in Islamske države Iraka in Levanta, ki sta bila vpletena v »agresivno pošiljanje sporočil in zavajajoče medijske kampanje« (Directorate General for External Policies 2016, str. 4). Za spopadanje s tem so ustanovili Sektor za strateško komuniciranje (Strategic Communication Division), ki tesno sodeluje z Evropsko službo za zunanje delovanje (European External Action Service, EEAS) in institucijami EU. Sektor jim zagotavlja smernice in podporo glede komuniciranja ter tako podpira glavne politike in temeljne vrednote EU. Med drugim so za obravnavo širjenja dezinformacij Ruske federacije oblikovali tudi projektno skupino EU East StratCom (East StratCom Task Force). Njene naloge so promocija sosedske politike EU na vzhodu, krepitev medijskega okolja, zlasti svobode in neodvisnosti medijev, ter odgovor na dejavnosti zunanjih udeležencev, povezanih s širjenjem dezinformacij. Projektna skupina se ne ukvarja s protipropagando, temveč le prepoznava in razkriva dezinformacije. Prav tako projektna skupina ni usmerjena proti »propagandistom« – osredinja se na sporočilo, in ne na prenašalca sporočila (Strategic Communications 2019). Vloga in naloge projektne skupine so podrobno opredeljene v Akcijskem načrtu EU za strateško komuniciranje, sprejetem junija 2015 (EU's Action Plan on Strategic Communication 2015).

Končujemo z Guerrero - Castrom (2013, str. 30), ki je o konceptu strateškega komuniciranja postavil več vprašanj. Ali se koncept nanaša na odnose z javnostmi, novinarstvo, diplomacijo, telekomunikacije, propagando oziroma prizadevanja za oblikovanje podobe države? Ali se nanaša na usklajevanje notranjega in zunanjega komuniciranja javnih, državnih in vladnih institucij? Ali gre v bistvu za oglaševanje organizacije? Kakšno vrsto strateškega komuniciranja naj bi uporabljali za doseganje nacionalnih interesov? Avtor hkrati opozarja, da obstaja toliko različnih definicij strateškega komuniciranja na tako veliko družbenih področjih, da je koncept izgubljen »v veselju dvoumnosti, zmed in konceptualnih vrzeli« (prav tam). Morda bo prav ta posebna številka Sodobnih vojaških izzivov odgovorila na nekaj izmed teh vprašanj in pripomogla k pojasnitvi koncepta strateškega komuniciranja.

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## INTRODUCTION

### STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN THE FIELD OF SECURITY

The cyclic emergence of various concepts related to communication in the security, defence and military fields continues. The newest one is Strategic Communication that follows Psychological Operations, Information Operations, Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs, Psychological Warfare, Political Warfare and Propaganda. There have been broader concepts developed in the past that involve different communication-related activities to realize interests and fulfil objectives of countries, international organizations as well as other actors. Listed chronologically as they appeared, the Strategy of Indirect Approach, Low Intensity Conflict, Operations Other Than War, Information Warfare, Asymmetric Warfare, Smart Power and Hybrid Warfare are among the most prominent ones. We are not in a position to define and compare all of the above concepts in order to identify the patterns of (dis)continuity or to explore how the concepts duplicate, overlap, and complement each other. The Strategic Communication concept is here, theoretically and in the practical application of various actors. Therefore, this introduction to the special issue of the Contemporary Military Challenges, will dwell upon conceptual issues related to Strategic Communication, and will try to identify the understanding and applying of the concept in the United States of America (USA), the Russian Federation, the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The importance of Strategic Communication or related concepts seems to grow in contemporary society that has been frequently labelled as “post-truth” society where emotions, beliefs and populist feelings prevail over facts, data and accurate information (English Oxford Living Dictionaries). Fake news are its important feature. In addition to that, we also seem to live in a “post-trust” society where the declining public trust in institutions makes the successful communication of messages extremely demanding. Potential factors influencing the decreasing trust are social alienation, a lack of social capital, higher levels of education, a greater

availability of information, which makes the public more sceptical, increased scientific pluralism, which leads to confusing messages, cronyism in government, the growth of citizen activism, regulator scandals, and a hyper-critical media (Löfstedt 2005, p 4). Cyclic economic and financial crises with negative social implications furthermore complicate the communication processes between organisations and their audiences.

The concept of Strategic Communication could be addressed from different vantage points: Terminological, theoretical and conceptual, system-organizational and functional. The focus of interest could be on the cases and experiences of individual countries, their defence ministries or armed forces, international defence and security organizations (concept, structure, organization, programmes, planning, the role of political decision-makers, military commanders, etc.), and the empirical analyses of Strategic Communication or its various elements through social media.

The syntagm “strategic communication” appeared in relation to national strategy and in the field of defence, and soon spread to other fields such as business, public relations and social communication. Most generally, Strategic Communication means an attempt to realize key interests and fulfil main objectives of an organisation through the process of communicating with various audiences. Or, as Hallahan et al. (2007, p 3) put it, strategic communication is a “purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfil its mission”. Strategic communication tries to understand “how a certain set of audience attitudes, behaviours, or perceptions” will support the objectives of the organization (Paul 2011, p 5). Strategic communication requires thorough and long-term research, planning, selection of adequate media conduits, control of the organization’s communication flow, and conveying consistent messages to various audiences. The focus of the concept is to understand various forms of the organization’s communication holistically. For some authors, strategic communication is the way in which individuals and organizations use communication and media in order to negotiate their role in highly mediated societies (Miami University). Strategic communication is being developed in the fields of public relations, management communication, brand communication and advertising. It is used by corporations, government organizations, international organizations, non-profit organizations and even terrorist groups. Recent military operations emphasized the increasing power of communication in the public and governmental arena.

Paul (2011, p 1) also raised the question what strategic communication is, what it includes, and what it excludes? He introduced several possible interpretations of and definitions for strategic communication and its implications. The concept is unclear, however, there is a consensus “that perceptions and understandings of images, policies, and actions matter, that the success of many policies is contingent on the support they receive from various populations (both foreign and domestic), and that perceptions are influenced both by what you do and what you say” (ibid).

The concept is extremely relevant in the realm of the national security policy, especially in the fight against violent extremism. This fight ought to address “the beliefs, motives, and perceptions that predicate extremism as well as those that lead to support for violence” (ibid).

It seems that there are two main reasons for the development of the Strategic Communication concept: The inefficiency of top-down communication approach, especially in the light of modern Information-Communication Technology that allows citizens to engage in a bottom-up communication process, and the lack of coordination of communication activities, either horizontally or vertically. In this spirit, the question is raised whether Strategic Communication should be rather labelled as “Integrative Communication?” (Westenkirchner 2019).

It is no surprise that the Strategic Communication concept was embraced and developed by key international actors. Guerrero-Castro (2013, pp 27-28) reports that communication capabilities in the USA began to develop increasingly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks: The information operations and psychological operations, public affairs and defence support to public diplomacy gained momentum and started fighting a “war of perceptions”. Strategic communication was soon recognised as key for the US national security. It should assist in achieving objectives in the fields of diplomacy, defence, intelligence, law enforcement and homeland security. The concept should be seen as bipartisan, the government should collaborate with the private sector, communication ought to reinforce the main themes and messages and should be “constantly measured against defined objectives” (Guerrero-Castro 2013, p 28).

In the US government context, strategic communication has been defined as »focused United States Government efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favourable for the advancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power« (Joint Publication 2001).

Evidently, national power is composed of economic strength, military capabilities (hard power), political influence and cultural/value potential (soft power) of the nation, and represents a basis of strategic communication. The basic idea is that strategic communication could be effectively used in the process of implementing national interests by synchronizing and coordinating information. In his attempt to operationalize strategic communication, Guerrero-Castro (2013, p 29) identified two key elements: the synchronization of words and deeds and how they will be perceived by selected audiences, and programs and activities aimed at communicating and engaging with intended audiences, including those implemented by public affairs, public diplomacy, and information operations professionals.

**Russian Federation** developed strategic communication that is complex both in terms of ideas promoted and institutions involved. The country is very active in the domain and relatively effective in the USA, the EU member states, the former Soviet Union republics and in the EU candidate countries. The success was amplified by the economic crisis that affected and even marginalised various social groups in the above-mentioned entities. The role of migrant crisis in Europe in the 2015-2016 period and in the USA should also not be underestimated. The content of Russian strategic communication is not necessarily consistent, however “its delivery is sophisticated, targeted and tailored to different audiences” (Directorate General for External Policies 2016, p 6). It is capable of exploiting the weaknesses and mistakes of its opponents. The main purpose of strategic communication is to develop and promote Russian Federation’s soft power. The promotion of the country and its policies is performed through the media (Russia Today and Sputnik News are the most prominent ones), the NGOs, business lobbies, political parties and other actors. If the conditions are not favourable to expose the Russian Federation’s own successes, the predominant role of strategic communication is to direct the stream of negative news about the outside world: The West is seen as an aggressive and expansionist entity, which is weak and is expected to collapse; the EU will crumble due to fiscal and migrant crises and might demise similarly as former Soviet Union did (Directorate General for External Policies 2016, p 9). Conspiracy theory is often used to reinforce Russian Federation’s arguments as far as West, the EU, the USA and NATO are concerned. The EU’s own weaknesses, such as Brexit, the inefficient and time-consuming solving of the migrant crisis, complex decision-making procedures, populism, and alike have contributed to the success of the Russian Federation’s strategic communication in the recent years.

**NATO** has been increasingly active in the field of communication since 1950 onwards when the NATO Information Service (NATIS) was established, however the development of its Strategic Communication concept gained momentum after the Russian annexation of Crimea in March 2014. The latter was labelled by the then NATO Supreme Allied Commander as perhaps “the most amazing blitzkrieg we have ever seen in the history of information warfare” (Directorate General for External Policies 2016, p 18).

NATO’s communication policy refers to Strategic Communication as “the coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communication activities and capabilities – Public Diplomacy, Military Public Affairs, Information Operations and Psychological Operations, as appropriate – in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO’s aims” (International Staff 2009). Therefore strategic Communication’s chief purpose is to support and underpin NATO’s efforts to achieve its political and military objectives. Strategic communication in the above-mentioned fields should contribute to the successful implementation of NATO’s operations, missions and activities, build public awareness of NATO’s importance, the understanding of and support for

specific NATO policies, operations and other activities in all relevant audiences, and contribute to the better understanding of NATO among the general public. Strategic communication is not a special body or an organization but an integral part of the Alliance's planning process from the earliest phases onwards.

Nevertheless, the NATO Strategic Communications Centre for Excellence (StratCom CoE) which consists of members coming from civilian, military, private and academic sectors, was formed in January 2014 in order to support a whole range of NATO's communication processes. The main activities of the Centre could be summarized as follows: The development of communication policy and its promotion through NATO's bodies and commands, the research of hybrid warfare scenarios and information warfare of Russia, ISIL and other actors, the education in the field of communication, and the publishing activity (e.g. academic magazine *Defence Strategic Communications*) (Directorate General for External Policies 2016, p 19).

Some authors (e.g. Wilbur 2017, p 209) suggest that strategic communication is used by extremist, as well as terrorist groups. His analysis refers to the use of propaganda as a form of strategic communication by **ISIL**. Technically speaking, ISIL used strategic communication in a similar way as non-extremist organizations, as it was seeking "to advance its organization as being superior to rival ones". According to the EU's Policy Department, ISIL – using slick magazines and videos, and effective application of social media – actually redefined the way of sending political messages to various audiences, ranging from international opponents, to active members of ISIL and potential recruits (Directorate General for External Policies 2016, p 20). ISIL's strategic communication was designed to achieve the organization's long-term political objective: ensuring of its survival and the conquest of as much of the physical and virtual space as possible. ISIL's strategic communication purpose was to portray itself as an effective military and political organization capable of running the caliphate, to recruit and retain new members, to explain the reason of its existence and to instil fear in opponents' societies and polarize them. The process of conveying messages to various audiences was consistent and strategic (*ibid.*). Fortunately, ISIL's key objectives proved to be too ambitious.

In her analysis, Reid (2018, p 52) implicitly warned that defence against negative strategic "communications" is of high importance, as well. She explored "negative information campaigns" performed by the Russian Federation in the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk. She also looked into the recent Russian penetration into the US social media. According to the author, the population of Central and Eastern European countries is particularly vulnerable to negative messaging from the Russian Federation and even from various terrorist groups. The research is particularly interesting because it discovers cultural basis of power, competition, individualism, uncertainty, avoidance, long-term orientation and indulgence in the context of openness to negative influences.

In the spirit of response to negative strategic communication, the EU has recently developed a concept of strategic communication, despite the fact that member states preferred to act individually in this domain for a long time. The EU cross-sectoral policy was designed in order to better address information threats in the context of strategic communication, focusing on the intersection between values and target audiences (Örden 2019, p 421). The main reason for the acceptance of coordinated effort by the member states have been the above mentioned recent activities of the Russian Federation and ISIL that were engaged in “aggressive messaging and deceptive media campaigns” (Directorate General for External Policies 2016, p. 4). To tackle the issue, a Strategic Communication Division was established. It works closely with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the EU institutions. The Division offers communication guidance and support to them in order to promote key EU policies and core values. The East StratCom Task Force was formed, as well, to address the Russian Federation’s ongoing disinformation campaigns. Task Force’s mission is to promote the EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood policies, to strengthen media environment, especially media freedom and independency, and to respond to disinformation activities by external actors. The Task Force is not engaged in anti-propaganda but it identifies and exposes disinformation. Neither is the Task Force directed against ‘propagandists’ – It focuses on the message and not on the messenger (Strategic Communications 2019). The role and mission of the Task Force is explained in detail in the EU’s Action Plan on Strategic Communication having been adopted in June 2015 (EU’s Action Plan on Strategic Communication 2015).

We conclude with Guerrero-Castro (2013, p 30), who raised several questions, related to the Strategic Communication concept. Does it refer to public relations, journalism, diplomacy, telecommunications, propaganda, or efforts to shape the country’s image? Does it relate to coordination of internal and external communications of public, state and government institutions? Is it in its essence an organization’s marketing? What kind of strategic communication should be used in order to pursue national interests? Concurrently, the author warns there are so many definitions of strategic communication(s) in so many social fields that the concept is lost “in a universe of ambiguities, confusions and conceptual gaps” (ibid.). Perhaps the special issue of the Contemporary Military Challenges will answer at least some of those questions and will contribute to the clarification of the Strategic Communication concept.

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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION(S) – KAKŠNA JE RAZLIKA?

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION(S) - WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

**Povzetek** Članek temelji na terminološkem pristopu k dilemi glede tega, kako razlikovati med angleškima zvezama *strategic communications* in *strategic communication* in ali je to sploh potrebno. Na podlagi različnih kontekstov je v članku tematika obravnavana z jezikoslovnega in terminološkega stališča, pri čemer je pojasnjenih nekaj temeljnih terminoloških pojmov, ki so potrebni za razumevanje analize, ki sledi. Cilj članka je s terminološkim pristopom ugotoviti, ali zvezi delujeta kot sinonima ali kot dva različna koncepta in ali je sploh mogoče postaviti jasno ločnico.

**Ključne besede** *Terminologija, koncept, strateško komuniciranje, strateške komunikacije, Nato.*

**Abstract** This article is based on a terminological approach to the dilemma of how to differentiate between the phrases *strategic communications* and *strategic communication*, and whether it is necessary. On the basis of different contexts, it approaches the subject from a linguistic and terminological point of view, defining some basic terminological terms to assist the reader in understanding the analysis which follows. With this terminological approach it aims to establish whether, in practice, the two phrases function as synonyms or as two different concepts, and whether a clear-cut line can be established.

**Key words** *Terminology, concept, strategic communication, strategic communications, NATO.*

**Introduction** This article results from an attempt to translate the term NATO's Strategic Communications concept into Slovene, and the dilemma of whether or not, and how, to differentiate the plural form of the phrase that NATO uses from the singular version of the phrase, which is also in use in other contexts. At first glance, the terms *strategic communication* and *strategic communications* appear to refer to one and

the same concept, and a discussion about the difference between them may seem to be unnecessary hair-splitting. However, the attempt to identify the differences between the two phrases makes more sense when we approach the subject from a linguistic point of view.

In this article, we deal with an analysis of the definitions and concepts lying behind both versions of the phrase in different contexts, and attempts to identify whether the terms indeed differ in concept or they co-exist as synonyms. Its aim is not to go into the depth of the theory of communication(s) as this is in the domain of communication(s) experts. We will approach the subject from a linguistic and terminological perspective, although, to a certain extent, an analysis of the substance and content of the concepts will be inevitable.

In the first part, the article outlines the general dilemma arising from the co-existence and, sometimes, co-occurrence of the terms *strategic communication* and *strategic communications*. It begins by explaining the basic terminological notions and aspects to facilitate an understanding of this challenge and analysis. The theory of terminology is followed by an analysis of the contexts in which both phrases occur, and an explanation of the concepts behind them. The final part of the article comprises the arguments of authors who do differentiate between the two phrases as two different concepts, as well as those who claim that the phrases are synonymous and designate one single concept. Our research was based on the analysis of publicly available literature, relevant documents, and other publicly available information, focusing primarily on NATO's Strategic Communications concept.

## 1 DEFINING THE PROBLEM

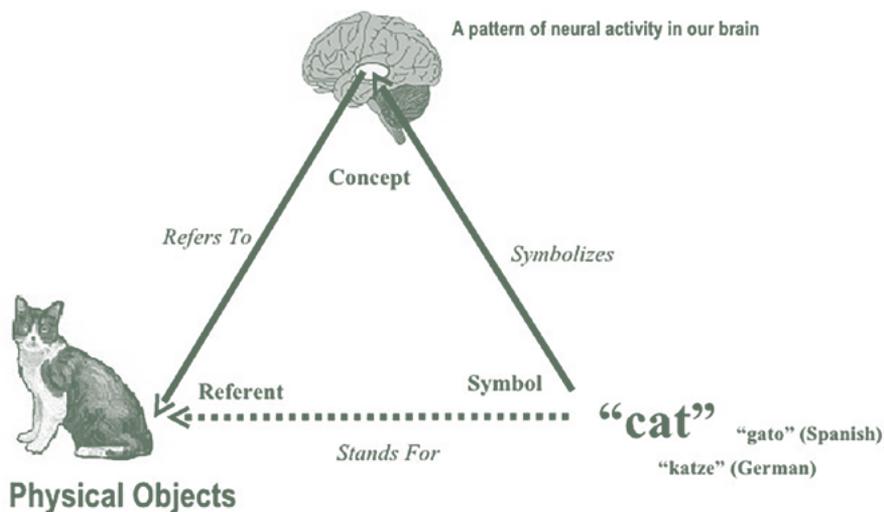
When attempting to translate the term NATO's Strategic Communications into Slovene, we encountered a dilemma of whether or not NATO's *strategic communications* (plural), which at first glance resembles the notion of *strategic communication* (singular), was indeed the same concept or was it different enough to be translated by a different term. In the spirit of NATO's approach to terminology, as explained by Folkert Zijlstra, who said that terminology management should serve to complement and support all the efforts to enhance the 'interoperability' of the Alliance (Žnidarič, 2018), we decided to explore the dilemma and try to identify a solution. When looking at the available literature, it soon became clear that there was little consensus about which version of the term should be used, whether or not the phrases were synonymous, and what were the possible differences between them. Christopher Paul, for example, claims that there are many different definitions of strategic communication and many different understandings of those definitions, and no agreement on whether it is *strategic communication* or *strategic communications* with an "s" at the end (Paul, 2011). In this view, he enjoys the company of Murphy (2008) and other authors. On the other hand, however, there are experts who see a clear difference between the two forms and defend the use of one or the other and a differentiation between the two; however, not all of them follow the same direction.

## 2 INTRODUCTION TO BASIC TERMINOLOGY CONCEPTS

In order to be able to better grasp the challenge of defining a possible difference between the phrases *strategic communication* and *strategic communications*, it is important to understand some basic principles of the theory of terminology. This is an extensive subject area and could be broadly discussed in an independent article or several of them. The information contained here, however, will explain only some of the basic terminology ideas, and will be as detailed as is necessary for a reader with little or no knowledge of terminology to understand the analysis which will follow.

The fundamental elements of terminology work are *the concept*, *the designation* and *the definition* (NATO STANDARD AAP-77). The three notions can be graphically represented in the triangle of reference (Figure 1), also known as the semiotic or semantic triangle or the “Ogden and Richards’ triangle”, as it was famously depicted by these authors in their book “The Meaning of Meaning”. This triangle is a simplified explanation of how linguistic symbols are related to the objects they represent, and is sometimes also represented as a tetrahedron with the “definition” as the fourth vertex (Kudashev and Kudasheva, 2010). Grosjean very well explains that the human mind abstracts and conceptualizes all the objects sharing the same properties, which means that they are grouped according to their most significant characteristics and assigned to a corresponding mental image – the concept (2009, p 16). In NATO STANDARD AAP-77, the concept is defined as “a mental representation of something that can be considered a unit of knowledge” (2018, p 9). Eventually, this concept is denoted by a linguistic sign or symbol.

Figure 1:  
Triangle of  
reference  
(McCreary,  
2006)



Ogden, C. K., & Richards, I. A. (1923) *The Meaning of Meaning*

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Considering the crucial role of the concept in the classification and naming of objects, Grosjean claims that terminology, as its designation implies, is not about terms in the first place, but about the identification of the corresponding concepts, and that any terminology work should therefore be based on concepts and not on terms (2009, p 17).

In the case of our analysis, it is also important to consider these facts in a communicative context. The triangle represented in Figure 1 depicts the perception of one person, while communication takes place between two or more people, each with their own respective triangles of reference. In order to ensure “interoperability” between them, it is therefore important that these two or more triangles contain the same elements and are synchronized, i.e. that a certain symbol (word/term) refers to the same concept and the same referent. If this is not the case, our communication attempts are doomed to failure because of misconceptions and ambiguity. The misunderstanding in this context can be attributed to two main factors:

1. Individuals talk about the same concept, but each one uses a different word/term (synonymy),

or

2. They use the same word/term, but each of them refers to a different concept and, hence, a different object (homonymy) (Grosjean, 2009, p 36)

The aim of our analysis will be to identify the concepts behind each of the two phrases in different contexts, and to try to ascertain possible synonymy or homonymy.

### 3 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS (PLURAL)

As already mentioned, the starting point and the basis for this article was NATO’s Strategic Communications concept and its translation into Slovene; hence, this will be the first concept we will look into. NATO has opted for the plural version of the phrase and uses it consistently in all its key documents regulating the field of NATO *Strategic Communications*. NATO defines *strategic communications* as “the coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities, Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs, Military Public Affairs, Information Operations and Psychological Operations, as appropriate in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO’s aims” (PO (2009) 0141, NATO StratCom Policy). According to the explanation provided by the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Latvia (StratCom COE), NATO opted for the plural form based on the fact that “a large part of the English-speaking world outside of the NATO military already use strategic communications with an “s” at the end. For example, King’s College London, Chatham House, RAND, Cambridge University...” (Curika, 2019). The official argumentation of NATO’s

choice has still not been published; however, NATO StratCom COE is currently running a terminology project, which will publish the results of its efforts in the upcoming months.

In official documents, NATO does not differentiate between the singular and the plural terminology. However, Wing Commander Peter Clarke from the Communications Division, SHAPE/NATO, does see a difference between the two phrases. According to his perception both concepts are needed in the same context, where the phrase “*strategic communications*” denotes the deliberate information activities we do in the physical, virtual and cognitive domains to create the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours we desire (what is said and done), while the phrase “*strategic communication*” would imply the effects we have (what our audiences see and hear) (Clarke, 2019).

Chatham House is another example of an entity using the plural version of the term, and it served as the basis informing NATO’s terminology. In the Chatham House Report “Strategic Communications and National Strategy”, *strategic communications* is defined as “a systematic series of sustained and coherent activities, conducted across strategic, operational and tactical levels, that enables understanding of target audiences and identifies effective conduits to promote and sustain particular types of behaviour” (Chatham House, 2011, p 4), also acknowledging that it comprises four main components: information operations, psychological operations, public diplomacy, and public affairs (ibid). Clearly, Chatham House adopted a similar definition of *strategic communications* to NATO, also using the plural form of the phrase consistently. However, when we further explored some of the cited sources, we found certain discrepancies. At some points in the Chatham House Report, where, generally, terminology is synchronized and consistent, certain citations differ from the originals. One such example is the definition from the White House “National Framework for Strategic Communication”, cited in the Chatham Report using the plural phrase *strategic communications* (Chatham House, 2011, p 5), whereas the original document in its title and the majority of the document contains the singular version of the term – *strategic communication* (White House, 2010). This again raises doubts about a clear differentiation between the two forms on the part of the Chatham House researchers in terms of concept, and invites a suspicion that they consider the terms as synonymous. What is more, when reviewing the White House report, it became evident that even the authors of the White House document did not use the singular version of the phrase consistently. Moreover, by using the combined form *strategic communication(s)* in their definition, they implicitly admitted that they themselves were not able to resolve the dilemma of which version to use. The two phrases were obviously treated as synonyms: “By ‘strategic communication(s)’ we refer to: (a) the synchronization of words and deeds and how they will be perceived by selected audiences, as well as (b) programs and activities deliberately aimed at communicating and engaging with intended audiences, including those implemented by public affairs, public diplomacy, and information operations professionals.” (White House, 2010, p 2)

King's College, another resource informing NATO's terminological decision, also uses the plural form of the phrase consistently in offering their MA in Strategic Communications. On the basis of their introductory website, their Master's programme provides knowledge of "how states and their governments communicate in international politics and how they shape long term strategies in a range of fields from military to diplomatic to aid and development. This includes preparing for conflict between states or with insurgent groups, communicating a path during hostilities, transitioning through post-conflict situations and also how states use diplomacy, culture and economics to manage the peace and avoid conflict and engage in treaty and trade negotiations."

The terminology of the RAND Corporation, however, which is an organization with 1,850 employees from fifty countries (Rand.org, 2019), varies by author and project. Christopher Paul, for example, a senior social scientist at the RAND Corporation from its Pittsburg Office, uses the singular form of the phrase, clearly stating that as a US citizen, he takes the perspective of the US government and the US approach (2011, p 2). However, he warns of the lack of consensus regarding its definition. According to Paul, the term *strategic communication* denotes "coordinated actions, messages, images, and other forms of signalling or engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives" (2011, p 3). A group of French authors, on the other hand, who prepared a report on the relevance of NATO's strategic communications concept for France, published within RAND, consistently use the plural form of the phrase (Reding et al., 2010) using NATO's definition, which is a logical consequence of the fact that they deal with an analysis of NATO's approach. Interestingly, unlike some other sources their report does include a chapter on terminology; however, it never questions it from the linguistic perspective, only from a substantive one.

#### 4 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION (SINGULAR)

The singular version of the phrase is used in a large proportion of US governmental documents regulating the field in question, e.g. the National Framework for Strategic Communication (White House, 2010), or the US National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication (2007), although some of them may seem to differ from NATO's concept, since they do not incorporate public diplomacy (e.g. the US National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication). The definition from the White House report has already been noted above, while the US National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication does not really offer a clear definition, but implies one in the following statement: "*Public diplomacy and strategic communication should always strive to support our nation's fundamental values and national security objectives*" (2007, p 2).

The singular version of the phrase is also consistently used by the authors and editors of the International Journal of Strategic Communication, which in 2016, according to the renowned SCOPOS ranking of academic journals, ranked 33 in the overall

list of communication journals<sup>1</sup>. In the first issue of the journal, Hallahan et al. defined strategic communication as “*the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfil its mission*” (2007, p 3), noting that “*strategic communication is about informational, persuasive, discursive, as well as rational communication when used in a context of the achievement of an organization’s mission*” (2007, p 17), and adding that “*strategic communication focuses on how the organization itself presents and promotes itself through the intentional activities of its leaders, employees, and communications practitioners*” (2007, p 7). Verčič, one of the authors of the article and a renowned communication(s) expert, in this respect warns of substantial terminological confusion and inconsistencies and claims that both phrases are synonymous. Nevertheless, he defends the use of the singular form of the phrase common in the United States of America (USA), which he supports with the argument of James Grunig that the plural form “communications” was imported from marketing and refers more to the tools (Verčič, 2019).

In their article (Zerfass et al, 2018), Zerfass, Verčič, Nothhaft and Werder admit the conceptual fuzziness and lack of a proper definition of the concept, highlighting four different understandings of strategic communication. For the purpose of this analysis, we will look at the third field of the use they identify, i.e. *military and national power* (Zerfass et al, 2018, p 489). In this respect, the authors cite Evgeny Pashentsev, a Russian expert, who defines strategic communication as “the state’s projection of certain strategic values, interests and goals into the conscience of domestic or foreign audiences by means of adequate synchronization of multifaceted activities in all the domains of social life with professional communication support” (2018, p 489). They continue by citing NATO’s Strategic Communications Concept<sup>2</sup> and admitting that “strategic communication as an integral part of warfare is widely neglected by communication science, probably due to the negative notions of information warfare and propaganda” (2018, p 489). In the same context, they evoke public diplomacy as a separate notion, which is in the real world closely connected to military communication.

Christopher Paul of RAND also generally defends the use of “*strategic communication*” in governmental contexts. His arguments, however, are different, since he considers the two phrases more as two different concepts, and not so much as synonyms. According to Paul, the plural form of the phrase comes from industry and constitutes part of public relations. Nevertheless, he admits that *strategic communication* used in a governmental context has some overlaps with *strategic communications*, although, in his opinion, industry (using the plural form of the phrase) focuses more on messages, media and public relations, while the many perspectives on government strategic communication include actions as important sources of images, messages and signals (Paul, 2011). In a similar spirit, Ted Tzavelas explained that before the

<sup>1</sup> <http://euprera.org/2016/07/05/where-next-for-european-communication-euprera/>

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps unintentionally, but still interestingly, citing its title with a singular form of the term *Strategic Communication*, while the original version uses the plural form *Strategic Communications*.

concept of *strategic communication* was adopted and defined in the USA and the US military, “public affairs had used the term ‘*strategic communications*’ – plural – but limited the meaning of that term to informing, not influencing” (Farewell, 2012).

There is, obviously, a thin line of difference between the concepts denoting “*strategic communications*” and “*strategic communication*”. The following table provides a more manageable overview of the aforementioned definitions and concepts, and enables a more systematic look at the differences in their definitions and use of the terminology:

| AUTHOR                  | TERM                     | DEFINITION   | DIFFERENTIATION<br>between singular and plural  |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| 1. NATO                 | Strategic communications | The coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities, Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs, Military Public Affairs, Information Operations and Psychological Operations, as appropriate in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO's aims.  | <b>NO</b><br>but P. Clarke (SHAPE): the phrase “ <i>strategic communications</i> ” denotes the deliberate information activities we do in the physical, virtual and cognitive domains to create the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours we desire (what is said and done), while the phrase “ <i>strategic communication</i> ” would imply the effects we have. |
| 2. Chatham House        | Strategic communications | A systematic series of sustained and coherent activities, conducted across strategic, operational and tactical levels, that enables understanding of target audiences and identifies effective conduits to promote and sustain particular types of behaviour/.../<br>/.../ comprises four main components: information operations; psychological operations, public diplomacy, and public affairs.   | <b>NO</b><br>(inconsistencies in citing – pointing to the fact that they treat the terms as synonymous)   |
| 3. Reding et al. (RAND) | Strategic communications | Using NATO's definition  | <b>NO</b>   |
| 4. King's College       | Strategic communications | How states and their governments communicate in international politics and how they shape long term strategies in a range of fields from military to diplomatic to aid and development. This includes preparing for conflict between states or with insurgent groups, communicating a path during hostilities, transitioning through post-conflict situations and also how states use diplomacy, culture and economics to manage the peace and avoid conflict and engage in treaty and trade negotiations. | <b>NO</b>   |

| AUTHOR   | TERM                    | DEFINITION  | DIFFERENTIATION<br>between singular and plural   |
|--|-------------------------|---|--|
| 5. White House   | Strategic communication | By 'strategic communication(s)' we refer to: (a) the synchronization of words and deeds and how they will be perceived by selected audiences, as well as (b) programs and activities deliberately aimed at communicating and engaging with intended audiences, including those implemented by public affairs, public diplomacy, and information operations professionals. | <b>NO</b><br>(implicitly admits the terminological confusion and synonymy)   |
| 6. C. Paul (RAND)  | Strategic communication | Coordinated actions, messages, images, and other forms of signalling or engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives.   | <b>YES</b><br><i>Strategic communications</i> comes from industry and constitutes a part of public relations.<br>- <i>Strategic communication</i> used in governmental context has some overlaps with <i>strategic communications</i> , although industry (using the plural form of the phrase) focuses more on messages, media and public relations, while the many perspectives on government strategic communication include actions as important sources of images, messages and signals (Paul, 2011). |
| 7. US National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication | Strategic communication | Public diplomacy and strategic communication should always strive to support our nation's fundamental values and national security objectives.  | <b>NO</b><br>Differentiates between public diplomacy and strategic communication, which NATO considers as a single concept.  |
| 8. Hallal et al. (IJSC, 2007)  | Strategic communication | The purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfil its mission. Strategic communication focuses on how the organization itself presents and promotes itself through the intentional activities of its leaders, employees, and communications practitioners"   | <b>NO</b>  |
| 9. Zerfass et al. (IJSC, 2018)   | Strategic communication | Military/governmental context:<br>- Pashentsev: The state's projection of certain strategic values, interests and goals into the conscience of domestic or foreign audiences by means of adequate synchronization of multifaceted activities in all the domains of social life with professional communication support.<br>- NATO definition                              | <b>NO</b><br>(by citing NATO's concept they implicitly show that they treat terms as synonymous)   |

**Conclusion** Before we attempt any conclusion based on the information gathered, it is important to note that, in addition to the differing convictions of subject-matter experts, there are two factors that in our case additionally impede a clear terminology decision.

The first is the fact that a thorough terminological effort requires the cooperation of both linguists and subject-matter experts, since, due to the close similarity of the concepts, the details decide the difference. Nevertheless, we will attempt our (again, purely linguistic) conclusion based on the assumption that each definition in the table is indeed *the formal description of a concept that provides the minimum amount of information that allows one to recognize and differentiate that concept from another* as NATO STANDARD AAP-77, requires.

The second factor hampering a clear conclusion is the fact that the two terms (or symbols) in question are very similar in form and really differ only by one letter. It is thus so much harder to clearly decide whether the use of a singular or plural form in a certain context can reliably be attributed to a certain concept and the possible differentiation is purposeful, or whether possible differences in form are accidental.

Nevertheless, since NATO's concept serves as our starting point, we have tried to find a pattern in the resources using the plural form *strategic communications*. A look at the definitions of the first five analyzed sources (NATO, Chatham House, RAND, King's College, and the White House) shows that they all incorporate certain elements which the other four examples do not. They refer to *strategic communications* either as a set of activities, capabilities, or programmes, and all incorporate disciplines such as public diplomacy, military information operations, psychological operations, and public affairs (at King's College, as a civilian institution, also the economy and culture). The use of the plural form could hence be attributed to this feature, since four of these five resources use the plural form of the term. The only exception is the White House "National Framework for Strategic Communication", which adopts a similar concept to the other four, but opts for a singular version of the term. Nevertheless, its authors are obviously aware of the terminology dilemma, which they, however, do not resolve, but rather use the combined form *strategic communication(s)* when providing a definition. Based on their decision to use the combined form, we can assume that they do entertain the possibility of allowing the use of the plural form *strategic communications* to designate a similar concept, as in the four other resources. Consequently, a linguistic conclusion can be drawn that the plural form of the term *strategic communications* might indeed designate a more elaborated concept than the one designated by the singular form of the term in the analyzed resources.

Regardless of the conclusion, which will in the end have to be drawn by subject-matter experts, the buzzwords that can, most importantly, mitigate possible misunderstandings and ambiguities are *terminology clarification* and *consistency*. Consistency, coupled with a clear definition of the concepts that different authors assign to one or the other of the terms in different contexts, can greatly contribute

to general understanding and can clear doubts about the actual differences between them. As mentioned above, NATO's report regarding the choice of terminology in the case of *strategic communications* can be expected later in the spring of 2019. Nevertheless, NATO can already be commended on its awareness of the terminology challenge and consistency in the use of terminology in its documents, and could be considered as a role model. In addition to facilitating clear mutual understanding and interoperability within the Alliance, which is based on definitions, its consistency can also be of great assistance to NATO member states, should they decide to adopt separate terminology to specifically denote the NATO concept.

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## #VKLUČEVANJE – VPLIV KOMUNIKACIJE NA DRUŽBENIH MEDIJAH NA LEGITIMNOST OBOROŽENIH SIL

## #INCLUSION – THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION ON THE LEGITIMACY OF ARMED FORCES

**Povzetek** Švicarske oborožene sile so kot del demokratičnega sistema odvisne od legitimnosti, pri čemer so demokracija, legitimnost in javnost tesno povezane. Iz tega sledi, da morajo biti prepoznavne v javni sferi, saj jih tako državljani v okviru premišljene razprave nadzorujejo in upravičujejo ter sprejemajo sporazumne politične odločitve. V luči tega postane pomen političnega komuniciranja, vključno s komuniciranjem švicarskih oboroženih sil, očiten, saj je najpomembnejša podlaga za procese politične legitimacije. Z družbenimi mediji švicarske oborožene sile dobijo nov način komuniciranja in neposrednega sodelovanja s prebivalstvom, kar jih lahko približa ljudem in jih vključi v dialog. To prispeva k transparentnosti švicarskih oboroženih sil, s komuniciranjem na družbenih medijih pa lahko vplivajo na svoj boljši ugled in večjo legitimnost. Da bi se izmeril učinek komuniciranja na družbenih medijih, je bila izvedena raziskava pri švicarskih uporabnikih interneta. Na podlagi te je bil opredeljen model strukturnih enačb, ki s svojimi učinki utemeljuje trditev, da navzočnost na družbenih medijih švicarskim oboroženim silam koristi. Tako lahko širijo svoj doseg in vplivajo na povečanje svoje legitimnosti.

**Ključne besede** *Legitimnost, ugled, komunikacija, družbeni mediji, švicarske oborožene sile.*

**Abstract** The Swiss Armed Forces (SAF), as part of a democratic system, depends on legitimacy. Democracy, legitimacy and the public are closely connected. In the public sphere the SAF need to be visible; it is where they are controlled and legitimated by the citizens, as part of a deliberative discussion in which political decisions are communicatively negotiated. Considering this, the meaning of political communication, including the SAF's communication, becomes obvious as it forms the most important basis for political legitimization processes. Social media provide a new way for the SAF to communicate and interact directly with the population.

The SAF's social media communication potentially brings it closer to the people and engages them in a dialogue. The SAF can become more transparent and social media communication may increase its reputation and legitimacy. To measure the effects of social media communication, a survey of the Swiss internet population was conducted. Based on this data, a structural equation model was defined, the effects of which substantiate the assumption that the SAF benefits from being on social media in terms of broadening its reach and increasing legitimacy values.

**Key words** *Legitimacy, reputation, communication, social media, Swiss Armed Forces.*

## Introduction

In the past decade, social media have become an integral part of communication. The Swiss Armed Forces (SAF) were hesitant to communicate on social media for a long time. It was only in February 2017 that social media communication was introduced, with an official SAF Instagram account.<sup>1</sup> The launch of the channel was the first step in implementing the social media concept as a whole. So far, the Instagram communication by the SAF seems to be successful, and the community is growing steadily. But besides the quantitative numbers on the growth rate, there is also the question of how social media communication affects the SAF and its perception among the Swiss people in terms of their legitimacy. Social media are not simply different channels in a communication tool kit; being interactive and user-engaging platforms, they add a new element to corporate communication, in this way marking an intervention or even a disruption in the former communication behaviour of organizations, and so must be considered and included in their strategic communication. On social media, users discuss what is presented to them, and these discussions may entail positive aspects, but also critical questions, accusations, and falsification of facts. This risk has always been present even in oral conversations, but along with social media communication goes a certain degree of loss of control of written follow-up conversation, accompanied by the latent risk of public outrage, the so-called 'shitstorm'.

In these times, when communication has become one of the main legitimation mechanisms for an organization, this area of tension gains an importance beyond likeability. Communication, or in the case of armed forces political communication, is about conveying information to the public sphere and thereby creating room for public opinion to be formed. Establishing transparency by communicating more openly supports trust and legitimacy (von Bredow, 2008). These are affected by consent or dissent not only by the communication content of the SAF, but also by its communication strategy.

Thus, the question pursued in this paper is how social media communication affects the legitimacy of the SAF. It draws upon data from a study conducted in spring 2018. The paper begins by outlining the theoretical framework of the study before moving to a methodology chapter, in which the conducted study is described, including the

<sup>1</sup> *armee.ch, the SAF's official Instagram account.*

operationalization of the main concepts and the methods applied. Following this, the results are presented and discussed, and the paper concludes with some final remarks.

## 1 LEGITIMACY AND REPUTATION

In a democratic society, with its different systems of economy, education or politics, the public sphere and the media are closely connected, as the media is the one system which is about conveying information. The media system functions as a bridge between the different systems and the public, while all of these systems are social phenomena of mutual interdependence, with a strong connectedness between the political and the media system (Sarcinelli, 1998). In the past few decades, the interdependence of the two systems has grown into a true fusion of political and media reality, understood as the mediatization of the political system (ibid). This term includes the reception of the political system as imparted by the media, and the orientation of all political action through the means of the media system's logic (ibid). Considering this background, the importance of political communication and public news coverage is explained, as it forms the most important basis for political legitimization processes. The organizations of the political system are especially dependent on communication taking place. Citizens need information about the political system of their country in order to fulfil their civic duties (Brainard & McNutt, 2010). Such information can be imparted not only by the media system but also by the political system itself. Direct communication offers an organization an opportunity to address the citizens and to steer communication in the direction they prefer. Social media is a superb tool for direct communication, especially when wanting to convey a modern image of the organization.

### 1.1 The licence to act: legitimacy

Legitimacy is a prerequisite for a political organization in a democratic society. The literature differentiates between a *claim* for legitimacy, which if fulfilled implies that the organization is based on rightful and commonly binding principles, and the *conviction* of legitimacy, meaning the citizens also recognize the organization as rightful and binding (Braun & Schmitt, 2009). During the Cold War, the legitimacy of the armed forces was unquestioned (Deverell et al., 2015), but with the end of that imposed threat, a need for new legitimization mechanisms became necessary. Communication as an instrument to convey information about the armed forces became one of the main mechanisms to foster legitimacy (ibid). It contributes to the development of the openness and transparency of the organization. By having access to information about an organization, the public can debate it and exercise its controlling function (Imhof, 2006). This public control and its inherent possibility of intervention if things go wrong creates legitimacy (ibid). Legitimacy is defined as “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions.” (Suchmann, 1995, p 574). It is the belief in the moral right of an organization to possess and exercise power and influence (Dogan, 1992).

Legitimate organizations are perceived as more valuable and meaningful, with a higher degree of predictability and therefore also trustworthiness (Suchmann, 1995). Social media communication, with its huge potential audience, however, has often been associated with a risk to the armed forces' legitimacy that goes beyond the possible loss of control of follow up-discussion (Olsson et al., 2016).

If an organization engages in new activities, such as social media communication, it needs legitimacy for the activities themselves (Suchmann, 1995). However, the legitimation process of innovative fields or activities is usually accompanied by a parallel de-legitimation process of the existing or former organizational mechanisms, precisely because of the innovative activities (DiMaggio, 1988), which will not please everybody. With the armed forces being on social media, there is a conflict between the traditional values generally associated with armed forces: authority, hierarchy, formality and a certain degree of secrecy, and the values of openness, informality and deliberation associated with social media communication (Olsson et al., 2016). For those clinging to the latter values, social media communication might potentially strengthen the legitimacy of the armed forces.

## 1.2 The political capital: reputation

Reputation serves as the reduction of complexity, and is of fundamental importance for the economic or societal system of a nation by contributing substantially to the maintenance of the social order (Eisenegger & Schranz, 2015). In this paper, the term reputation leans on a concept rooted in the sociology of the public sphere. It understands reputation as a three-dimensional concept, consisting of functional, social and expressive reputation (Eisenegger & Schranz, 2015). These three dimensions are in line with a Habermasian view of the world and the corresponding objective, social and subjective worlds (Eisenegger & Imhof, 2007). According to Habermas, actors must always succeed in all three worlds, due to the fact that *»the rationalization of modern thinking has led to a differentiation of three worlds«* (Eisenegger & Imhof, 2007, p 245, translation by the authors). In the objective world of cognitive facts, competence and success are measured through expected performance and manifest themselves as functional reputation. The social world of norms and values is judged upon moral integrity. Social reputation is about good citizenship or governance and respecting the prevailing norms and values. Expressive reputation is formed in the subjective world and is mainly based on emotional taste (Eisenegger & Schranz, 2015). It is about the emotional attractiveness, trustworthiness and uniqueness of an actor. The way an actor is portrayed in the media is thus decisive in the development of their expressive reputation. Thus, reputation – if high – generates a favourable attitude towards an actor, which public sector agencies can dispose of as political capital. In this paper, expressive reputation does not rely on how the SAF are portrayed in public communication, but on the impression they evoke by cultivating their social media channels. This impression, however, is not created by the SAF's social media communication alone. It is subject to other influences, such as one's opinion about social media in general or, more specifically, about a person's perception of the political potential inherent in social media. Social media are often discussed as either

an opportunity for or a threat to democracy (Foos et al., 2015), which again supports the thesis that new activities need legitimation themselves (Suchmann, 1995).

### 1.3 Interrelationships of reputation and legitimacy

The impact communication has on legitimacy goes mainly through reputation. The extent of the reputation an organization retains, be it favourable or not, is decisive for the trust it enjoys (Eisenegger & Imhof, 2007). Trust is an integral element of legitimacy.

Reputation and legitimacy are closely related; legitimacy stands for the social acceptance of an organization (Deephouse & Carter, 2005), whereas reputation comprises the general estimation of it (Fombrun, 1996). In contrast to private sector enterprises, which are in a constant condition of competition and therefore heavily reliant on reputation as a distinction factor, for public sector agencies legitimacy is the crucial factor (Waeraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012). They depend on legitimacy as their licence to act (Deephouse & Carter, 2005). For public sector agencies, a good reputation serving as political capital is not an existential need, but substantially strengthens legitimacy (ibid). For reputation to be formed, information about the agency is needed, comprising knowledge of its performance for functional reputation, an impression of its societal prestige (social reputation) and emotional impressions created through its communication (expressive reputation). These factors generate trust, which is a precursor of legitimacy. Thus, public sector agencies should focus on building a strong reputation supported by as many groups as possible (Waeraas & Byrkjeflot, 2012).

Following these theoretical assumptions, the way in which the SAF are perceived functionally, socially and expressively influences the legitimacy of the organization. Based on these considerations, the question pursued in this paper is whether the official social media communication of the SAF has an impact on legitimacy through reputation. Of particular interest is the potential effect of expressive reputation on legitimacy. It is the concept which specifically measures the effect of the image and impact which the SAF creates by its social media presence.

### 1.4 The shaping effect of attitudes

Attitudes largely affect the perception and behaviour of a person (Ajzen and Cote, 2008). Figuratively, they are the glasses through which one perceives reality and filters all sensations. In the case of the SAF, attitudes towards the necessity of the SAF heavily affects the three dimensions of reputation and legitimacy. People who see the existence of the SAF as an absolute necessity will filter all information about it differently from those who judge its existence as less necessary.

Furthermore, a person's attitude towards the political potential of social media affects expressive reputation in the same way. People who believe social media carry an inherent potential to intervene in political events in a positive way will perceive the SAF's social media presence differently from those who think of social media as manipulating or a threat to democracy. Such attitudes will even affect the legitimacy of the SAF.

## 1.5 Demographic influences

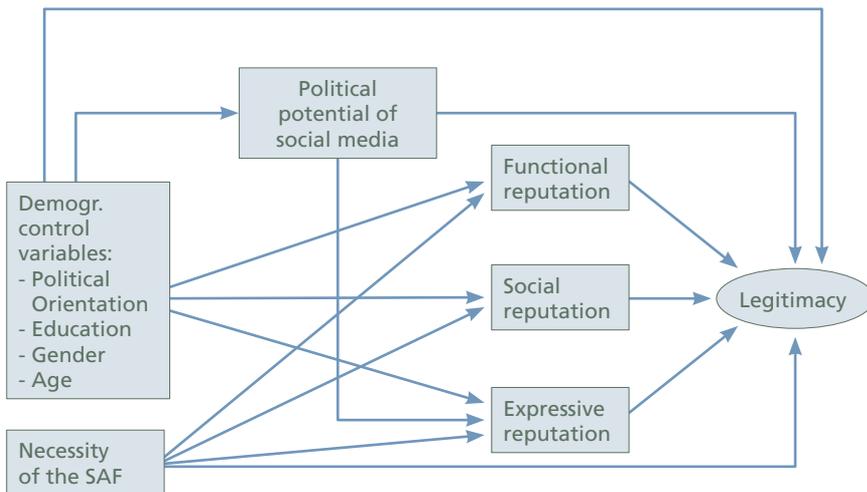
The demographic characteristics of gender, age, education and political orientation are associated with the level of reputation and legitimacy a person attributes to an organization. Women tend to evaluate public sector agencies which are related to public safety more highly in terms of reputation and legitimacy than men (Lee & Van Ryzin, 2018). Older people generally favour law enforcement agencies more highly in terms of reputation and legitimacy than younger cohorts (ibid). A higher education is, generally speaking, accompanied by a lower reputation and legitimacy of armed forces (ibid). Political orientation also influences the reputation and legitimacy of armed forces. Conservative people evaluate these concepts more highly for armed forces than liberals (ibid). On the left-right scale of political orientation, those who are more towards the right end of the spectrum assess the armed forces' reputation and legitimacy more highly (Szvircev Tresch et al., 2018).

## 2 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Path model

The theoretical considerations postulate interrelationships between legitimacy and the three-dimensional concept of reputation (functional, social, expressive; see Figure 1). These constructs, however, do not stand in isolation, but are affected by demographic variables (political orientation, education level, gender and age) and the perceived necessity of the SAF. As outlined in section 2.4, one's attitude towards the political potential borne by social media as communication platforms shapes the perception of social media communication, and therefore in the present model the expressive reputation of the SAF (see Ajzen & Cote, 2008).

Figure 1:  
Model of the effects of social media communication on the SAF's legitimacy



## 2.2 Survey, data collection and sample

To analyze the effects of the above path model, an online survey was created. The survey contained questions regarding the social media usage of the Swiss online population; attitudes towards the general, political and specifically the SAF's use of social media; knowledge of and interaction with the SAF social media channels; and questions pointing to the SAF's reputation and legitimacy.

The survey was conducted in May 2018 through computer-assisted web interviews with an original sample of 1213 people.<sup>2</sup> The sample included the three main language regions of Switzerland (the German, French and Italian speaking areas). Of the sample, 78% actively used social media and 22% did not, where active social media use was defined as exceeding mere written communication such as email or WhatsApp messages and passive Youtube use. The 22% not using social media were a control group for the effects of social media use on the reputation and legitimacy of the SAF. The overall sample was representative of the resident population of Switzerland between 15 to 60 years, who consulted the internet privately at least once a week, and who could be interviewed in German, French or Italian. It was defined according to language region, age, and gender quotas.

Due to the nature of the statistical method applied, which asks for all cases to be complete, the sample needed to be reduced to 693 cases. There were 277 female (40%) and 416 male participants (60%). Of these, 79% used social media (21% did not use social media), and 17% of the social media users knew at least one social media channel of the SAF (23% in the original sample).

## 2.3 Operationalization and item analysis

### 2.3.1 Endogenous predictors

The opinion on the political potential and use of social media platforms is built as a battery of eight items, such as whether social media are a means to rise up to the political elites, or whether they allow the manipulation of voters. These were divided into the 'positive and negative attitudes towards political use of social media' indices (6 items; 2 items). They are formative constructs following theoretical considerations (Weiber & Mühlhaus, 2014).<sup>3</sup>

As explained in the theoretical part, the present paper distinguishes reputation in different dimensions corresponding to a Habermasian perception of the world (Eisenegger & Schranz, 2015). Representing the social perspective on the world, social reputation reflects the prevailing values and norms of a society, and therefore consists of both the personal and the perceived societal prestige and of the general impression of the SAF. This suggests that norms and values are implicitly present in

<sup>2</sup> Survey conducted by LINK Institut, Switzerland.

<sup>3</sup> For more information concerning the composition of the different indices in the model, please contact the authors.

the overall impression one has about an organization. Social reputation is a reflective model with a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .818 (3 items).

Expressive reputation is the dimension mirroring emotional judgements in the subjective world, generally conveyed by the media. It is operationalized by forming an index of four items measuring the participants' attitude towards the impression the SAF creates in developing and maintaining a social media presence, such as the SAF is becoming more modern, more transparent, and closer to the people, and whether they are more open to current developments by being on social media. The expressive reputation index was confirmed by factorial analysis and shows a good Cronbach's  $\alpha$ -value of .879 (4 items).

The third dimension, functional reputation, stands for the objective perspective on the world and is about measurable success. In this study, it is operationalized as satisfaction with three specific missions of the SAF (besides its overall mission to protect the country and its people). Functional reputation is a formative construct and was formed as a sum index (3 items).

### 2.3.2 Dependent construct

Legitimacy requires trust and a certain degree of satisfaction with the performance of the organization (Deephouse & Carter, 2005). The indicator's measurement model therefore consists of the 3 items 'trust in the SAF', 'satisfaction with the overall performance of the SAF', and 'general satisfaction with its mission to protect the country and its people'. It thereby largely follows the operationalization of legitimacy of the police by Grimmelikhuisen and Meijyer (2013). Another item, 'attitude towards the necessity of the SAF', which in theory belongs to legitimacy, was excluded in order to control the influence of personal conviction of the necessity of the SAF. Although legitimacy is included in the statistical analysis as a latent construct and therefore treated as a factor, it was subjected to a factorial analysis and a reliability test (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .878).

### 2.3.3 Exogenous variables

Besides these constructs, the theory postulates relationships between the demographic control variables and the reputation and legitimacy of public sector organizations (Lee & Van Ryzin, 2018). The demographic variables used in the present model are gender, age, level of education and political orientation (left-right, liberal-conservative and ecology-technocracy scales), which to a certain degree shape a person's perception of the government and its agencies (ibid). As elaborated in section 2.4, the variable 'attitude towards the necessity of the SAF' is used as a predictor in order to control for personal attitude towards the SAF.

## 2.4 Structural equation model

The theory postulates interrelationships between the demographic and control variables, the attitude towards the political use of social media, the three-dimensional

concept of reputation, legitimacy and knowledge of the SAF channels. In order to mirror these complex interrelationships, a structural equation model (SEM) was set up. By the application of a SEM, indirect effects can be calculated, and at the same time the effects of the different variables are isolated from correlations and further disturbances (Kline, 2005).

It is assumed that the SAF's social media presence affects the expressive reputation of the organization and, through that, its legitimacy. In order to isolate such an effect and the subsequent differences between those who know the SAF social media channels (Group 1), those who use social media but do not know the SAF channels (Group 2) and those who do not use social media (Group 3), a multiple group analysis was performed.

### 3 RESULTS

The following section first presents the descriptive characteristics of the sample and subsequently illustrates the calculated model.

#### 3.1 Bivariate analyses

Of the 693 people interviewed in the course of the survey, 79% use social media. Of these, 17% know at least one social media channel of the SAF. These are mainly young (53%, as compared to 26% middle-aged and 21% old), politically leaning towards the right (60%, as compared to 20% centre and 20% left) and see the SAF as absolutely necessary (54%, as compared to 23% quite necessary, 17% somewhat necessary, and 6% not necessary at all).<sup>4</sup>

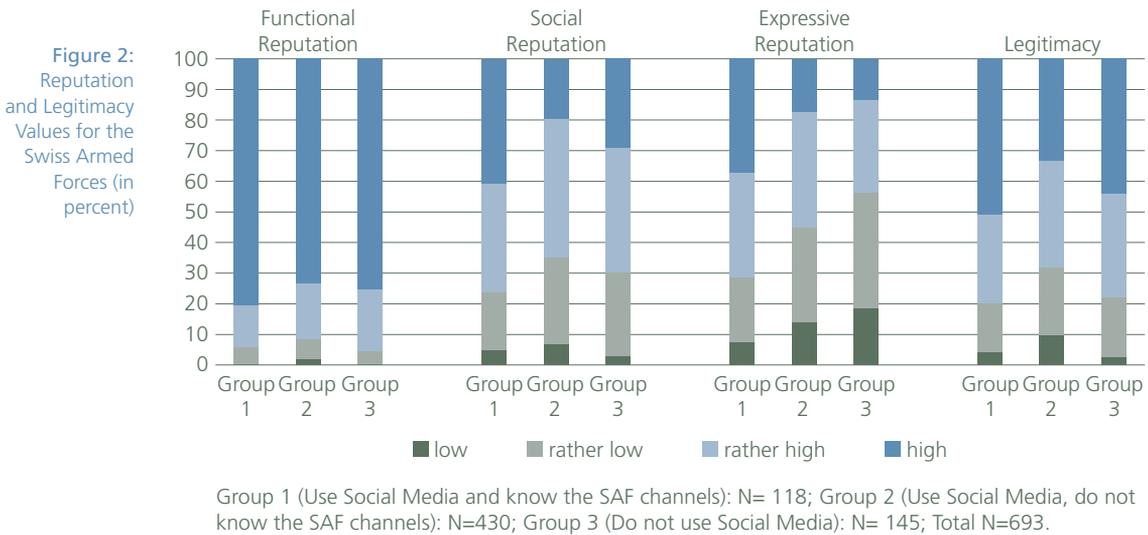
The SAF enjoy high legitimacy in Switzerland (see Szvircev Tresch et al., 2018). Of the participants, 72% evaluate the SAF's legitimacy highly (high: 39%; rather high: 33%, rather low: 21%; low; 7%).<sup>5</sup> There are significant group differences when comparing the reputation and legitimacy values aligned with the social media use of the respondents and their knowledge of the SAF's social media channels (see Figure 2). Those who know the SAF's social media channels differ significantly from the remainder in their assessment of the expressive, social and total reputation of the SAF (CC<sup>6</sup>: .224\*\*\*, .194\*\*\*, resp. .231\*\*\* for total reputation)<sup>7</sup>. For functional reputation, there are no significant differences between the three groups. Finally, the values of the legitimacy index differ significantly from social media users who do not know the SAF's channels to the two other groups (CC: 0.172\*\*).

<sup>4</sup> In the structural equation model, the values of “somewhat necessary” and “not necessary at all” were combined into one value group due to low case numbers.

<sup>5</sup> Grouped values of the index legitimacy (3 items)

<sup>6</sup> CC stands for Contingency Coefficient. It is a measure of association that indicates whether two variables are dependent or independent of each other.

<sup>7</sup> Statistical significance is specified as \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .



### 3.2 Impact of reputation on legitimacy: structural equation model

The model, shown in Figure 1, is a recursive one with manifest indicators and is positive definite without Heywood Cases (Weiber & Mühlhaus, 2014). All the indices acting as predictors were created before integrating them into the model. The dependent entity of legitimacy is a latent construct, consisting of three items, so the empirical anchoring of the latent variable is given (Baltes-Götz, 2008).

With a Chi-Square value of 317.6 after 25 iterations and 128 degrees of freedom, the model is over-identified. It shows good model fit with a CMIN/DF of 2.481, a CFI of .976 and a RMSEA of .033.<sup>8</sup> The overall model was calculated with a sample of N=693 and explains 85.9% of the variance of the legitimacy the SAF has in Switzerland.<sup>9</sup> The strongest direct effects<sup>10</sup> on legitimacy are observed in social reputation (.716\*\*\*), followed by functional reputation (.121\*\*\*), expressive reputation (.120\*\*\*) and attitude towards the necessity of the SAF (.098\*\*\*).

#### 3.2.1 Group 1: Knowledge of the SAF social media channels

For Group 1, those who use social media and know the SAF social media channels (N=118), the model explains 87.6% of the variance of legitimacy. Social reputation shows the strongest effect on legitimacy (.847\*\*\*; see Table 1). Expressive reputation affects legitimacy directly, but with a lower value (.209\*\*\*). Functional reputation does not have a significant direct effect on legitimacy.

<sup>8</sup> The goodness of fit of a model is indicated by certain key figures such as the Minimum Discrepancy divided by its Degrees of Freedom (CMIN/DF), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Comparative-Fit Index (CFI).

<sup>9</sup> For the overall model, please contact the authors of this study.

<sup>10</sup> All coefficient values are standardized values.

The highest predictor for social reputation is the attitude towards the necessity of the SAF (.529\*\*\*). Political orientation shows a direct effect within Group 1. The more to the right a person places themselves on the political left-right scale, the higher the value of social reputation of the SAF to that person (.179\*). On a scale of liberal to conservative, the more conservative people are, the higher social reputation will be (.174\*\*). Attitude towards the necessity of the SAF is the principal predictor of functional and expressive reputation (.383\*\*\*; .219\*). Political orientation on the left-right scale affects expressive reputation almost the same (.205\*). The more politically right people are, the higher they will perceive the expressive reputation of the SAF. Attitude towards the political use of social media affects expressive reputation both in its positive (.202\*) and in its negative evaluation (.197\*\*). In both cases, higher values signify a higher expressive reputation. The more critical the judgment of the political potential of social media, the higher the values of expressive reputation become.

Table 1:  
Significant  
paths group 1  
(Knowledge  
of SAF social  
media channels)

| Dependent variable                      | Predictor                               | Standardized coefficient | S.E.  | C.R.   |
|---|---|--------------------------|-------|--------|
| Positive attitude towards political use | Education (low level)                   | -0.289**                 | 0.908 | -3.175 |
| Functional reputation                   | Necessity of SAF                        | 0.383***                 | 0.166 | 4.298  |
| Social reputation                       | Necessity of SAF                        | 0.529***                 | 0.167 | 7.426  |
| Social reputation                       | Education (low level)                   | 0.148*                   | 0.715 | 2.205  |
| Social reputation                       | Left vs right                           | 0.179*                   | 0.063 | 2.546  |
| Social reputation                       | Liberal vs conservative                 | 0.174**                  | 0.055 | 2.784  |
| Expressive reputation                   | Necessity of SAF                        | 0.219*                   | 0.221 | 2.426  |
| Expressive reputation                   | Left vs right                           | 0.205*                   | 0.083 | 2.302  |
| Expressive reputation                   | Positive attitude towards political use | 0.202*                   | 0.087 | 2.575  |
| Expressive reputation                   | Negative attitude towards political use | 0.197**                  | 0.069 | 2.654  |
| Legitimacy                              | Social reputation                       | 0.847***                 | 0.092 | 7.169  |
| Legitimacy                              | Expressive reputation                   | 0.209**                  | 0.046 | 3.405  |

N=118; \*<0.05 significant, \*\*<0.01 very significant, \*\*\* <0.001 highly significant

The total effect of attitudes towards the necessity of the SAF shows strong effects on legitimacy through reputation. There is no direct effect of the predictor on legitimacy, but neither is there an indirect effect of the perceived necessity of the SAF through functional reputation. The only indirect effects of attitude towards the necessity of the SAF are through social reputation (.448)<sup>11</sup> and positive expressive reputation (.046), adding up to a total effect of .494<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Indirect effects are calculated as the product of the coefficients of the regression of the endogenous on the exogenous variable and the coefficient of the regression of the dependent construct on the endogenous variable.

<sup>12</sup> Total effects are calculated as the sum of direct and indirect effects affecting the specified variable.

As the explanatory power of the attitude towards the necessity of the SAF falls, political orientation steps in. Classification on a left-right scale gains an indirect effect through social (.152) and expressive reputation (.042), resulting in a total indirect effect of .194. A politically right orientation leads to higher legitimacy values of the SAF. Being liberal or conservative shows some effect too, as an indirect effect through social reputation on legitimacy. The more conservative a person is, the higher the legitimacy of the SAF will be (.147).

### 3.2.2 Group 2: No knowledge of the SAF channels, but social media use

Group 2 consists of those people who use social media, but do not know the SAF's channels (N=430). Again, the strongest and direct predictor for legitimacy is social reputation (.725\*\*\*; see Table 2), followed by the direct effects of expressive (.132\*\*\*) and functional reputation, which now shows a highly significant effect on legitimacy (.113\*\*\*). Attitude towards the necessity of the SAF has a weak, but direct and significant, effect on legitimacy (.074\*). Overall, the model for Group 2 explains 87.5% of the legitimacy of the SAF (Group 1: 87.6%).

**Table 2:**  
Significant  
paths group 2  
(No knowledge  
of the SAF  
channels, but  
social media  
use)

| Dependent variable                      | Predictor                               | Standardized coefficient | S.E.  | C.R.   |
|---|---|--------------------------|-------|--------|
| Negative attitude towards political use | Left vs right                           | -0.101 *                 | 0.048 | -2.016 |
| Functional reputation                   | Necessity of SAF                        | 0.382***                 | 0.097 | 7.873  |
| Functional reputation                   | Age (young cohort)                      | -0.144**                 | 0.176 | -2.747 |
| Functional reputation                   | Gender (male)                           | -0.145***                | 0.136 | -3.320 |
| Social reputation                       | Necessity of SAF                        | 0.607***                 | 0.093 | 15.442 |
| Social reputation                       | Age (young cohort)                      | -0.165***                | 0.169 | -3.900 |
| Expressive reputation                   | Necessity of SAF                        | 0.371***                 | 0.132 | 7.615  |
| Expressive reputation                   | Liberal vs conservative                 | -0.100*                  | 0.042 | -2.218 |
| Expressive reputation                   | Gender (male)                           | -0.126**                 | 0.186 | -2.859 |
| Expressive reputation                   | Positive attitude towards political use | 0.123**                  | 0.058 | 2.963  |
| Legitimacy                              | Functional reputation                   | 0.113***                 | 0.029 | 3.953  |
| Legitimacy                              | Social reputation                       | 0.725***                 | 0.041 | 15.074 |
| Legitimacy                              | Expressive reputation                   | 0.132***                 | 0.020 | 4.985  |
| Legitimacy                              | Necessity of SAF                        | 0.074*                   | 0.062 | 2.416  |

N=430; \*<0.05 significant, \*\*<0.01 very significant, \*\*\*<0.001 highly significant

Attitude towards the necessity of the SAF affects social reputation the most (.607\*\*\*). Belonging to the youngest cohort of 15-30 years results in a lower social and functional reputation of the SAF (-.165\*\*\*; -.144\*\*). Compared to Group 1,

attitude towards the necessity of the SAF gains a stronger effect on expressive reputation (.371\*\*\*), while the influence on functional reputation remains nearly the same (.382\*\*\*). High values in the positive political assessment of social media’s potential affect positive expressive reputation (.123\*\*)

The total effect of the predictor attitude towards the necessity of the SAF gets stronger in Group 2 compared to Group 1. The model for Group 2 shows indirect effects of attitude towards the necessity of the SAF through social (.440), functional (.043) and expressive reputation (.049). The total effect of necessity of the SAF amounts .606.

### 3.2.3 Group 3: Do not use social media

For Group 3, those who do not use social media, the model explains 83.8% of the variance of legitimacy, 3.8% less than in Group 1. Legitimacy is mostly affected by the direct effect of social reputation (.654\*\*\*; see Table 3). Functional reputation also affects legitimacy (.188\*\*). The third direct and very significant effect is carried out by the attitude towards the necessity of the SAF, with a higher direct effect than in Group 2 (.181\*\*). Attitude towards the necessity of the SAF affects functional reputation the most, compared to the other groups (.456\*\*\*).

In Group 3, political opinion on the left-right scale affects expressive reputation, which is operationalized as the participants’ attitude towards what impression the SAF creates with its social media presence (.201\*). The more right, the higher the expressive reputation becomes.

**Table 3:**  
Significant Paths  
Group 3 (No  
Social Media  
Use)

| Dependent variable                      | Predictor                               | Standardized coefficient | S.E.  | C.R.   |
|---|---|--------------------------|-------|--------|
| Positive attitude towards political use | Liberal vs conservative                 | -0.274**                 | 0.057 | -3.277 |
| Functional reputation                   | Necessity of SAF                        | 0.456***                 | 0.143 | 5.681  |
| Social reputation                       | Necessity of SAF                        | 0.633***                 | 0.143 | 9.209  |
| Expressive reputation                   | Positive attitude towards political use | 0.418***                 | 0.105 | 5.358  |
| Expressive reputation                   | Left vs right                           | 0.201*                   | 0.079 | 2.475  |
| Legitimacy                              | Functional reputation                   | 0.188**                  | 0.058 | 3.256  |
| Legitimacy                              | Social reputation                       | 0.654***                 | 0.075 | 7.465  |
| Legitimacy                              | Necessity of SAF                        | 0.181**                  | 0.118 | 2.722  |

N=145; \*<0.05 significant, \*\*<0.01 very significant, \*\*\*<0.001 highly significant

In the group of those who do not use social media at all, the total effect of the predictor attitude towards the necessity of the SAF shows the most powerful total

effect. Again, there is a direct effect of attitude towards the necessity of the SAF on legitimacy, higher than in Group 2 (.181\*\*). In Group 3, there is no more influence of expressive reputation on legitimacy, but only indirect effects of attitude towards the necessity of the SAF through social reputation (.415) and functional reputation (.086), adding up to a total effect of the necessity of the SAF on legitimacy of .682.

## 4 DISCUSSION

The results presented in the above section show that the SAF enjoy high legitimacy amongst the Swiss, a long-term phenomenon (see Szvircsev Tresch et al., 2018). Almost 88% of the variance of legitimacy are explained by the structural equation model. This is not surprising, as reputation and legitimacy are entangled concepts, so the explanatory power of reputation for legitimacy is by definition high.

### 4.1 Do good and make it known

In Group 1, functional reputation does not have a significant effect on legitimacy, but expressive reputation does. This is an astonishing result. Functional reputation stands for satisfaction with performance linked to the missions of the SAF. As Figure 1 illustrates, those who know the SAF's social media channels show high values for functional reputation; however, this does not significantly affect legitimacy. Expressive reputation conversely has a highly significant effect on the SAF's legitimacy. Performing to the best of the SAF's ability is not enough. The services need to be made visible to have an effect on legitimacy. The SAF need to both deliver, and to make their performance known.

In doing this, they need to keep in mind that the public perception of their social media communication cannot be completely controlled, but is constantly subjected to an ongoing debate about social media.

### 4.2 The uniting power of social media communication

One of the two principal predictors for the legitimacy of the SAF is the attitude towards the necessity of the SAF. Of those who do not use social media, the indicator shows the strongest influence on legitimacy. Those who find the SAF to be a necessity show higher legitimacy values. The indicator loses power if the participants use social media, and even more if they know the SAF channels. What does this mean? On social media platforms, people are subjected to a broad range of different opinions (Barbera, 2015). Despite the often cited effects of filter bubbles or echo chambers (Pariser, 2011), social media use does not necessarily result in a single-edged opinion-forming eventually leading to polarization, but may result in the opposite effect (Barbera, 2015). Being confronted with different opinions to one's own stimulates reflection and enhances further opinion-forming. This reflective process further fosters a functioning deliberative public sphere, which profits democratic societies. Decisions become more legitimate and more rational (Habermas, 1984) and thereby political comprehension increases (Habermas, 1998).

For those who use social media and know the SAF channels, the effect of the indicator attitude towards the necessity of the SAF becomes even weaker. This group is reached by the information the SAF publishes on their channels. Even if they do not actively consume the information, they perceive the SAF as communicating. Ho and Cho (2016) have shown that the mere visibility of communication contributes to trust in the communicating party. Trust is a precursor of legitimacy (Suchmann, 1995).

**Conclusion** The present findings show that the SAF and their social media presence enjoy high legitimacy, not only with those who are in favour of the SAF anyway, but also with those whose attitude towards the SAF is of a more sceptical or critical nature. This is of fundamental importance. To be legitimate, actors in the political system should aim for the support of all population groups, not only of the largest ones (Imhof, 1996). If the SAF tried to only serve those who are already convinced of their necessity, it would lose sight of important target groups for strengthening its legitimacy. If it manages to reach those who need to be convinced of the legitimacy of the SAF, it will effectively increase trust and legitimacy. A weakening effect of the attitude towards the necessity of the SAF by merely knowing the SAF's social media channels was shown. This does not mean that a strong conviction of the necessity of the SAF loses its meaning. Neither does it equal a strong conviction of the necessity of the SAF being wrong. What it does mean, though, is that through social media communication, the SAF is managing to reach those who do not share a strong conviction of the necessity of the SAF. Still, legitimacy values are the highest amongst this group. This is corroborated by findings of Sicherheit's 2018 study (Svirčev Tresch et al., 2018). They show that one of the particularities of social media as a communication channel of the SAF is that whereas more traditional communication channels are principally known by people in favour of the armed forces, social media reaches population groups which are neutral or not in favour of them. Thus, social media clearly need to be considered in strategic communication. Obviously the SAF should continue to expand their social media communication and to make their performance known to the public.

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## STRATEŠKE KOMUNIKACIJE KOT PRILOŽNOST VODITELJEV NATA IN DRŽAV ČLANIC NATA

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AS A NATO AND NATO NATIONS' LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

**Povzetek** Globalno strateško okolje se je v zadnjem času dramatično spremenilo. Živimo v kompleksnem informacijskem okolju, v katerem se spoprijemamo s hibridnimi grožnjami, terorizmom, informacijskim bojevanjem, kibernetičnimi grožnjami, neregularno vojno, množičnimi migracijami idr. V takem okolju je moralo Severnoatlantsko zavezništvo poiskati pameten odgovor na pojavljajoče se varnostne izzive sodobnega. S tem namenom je bil sprejet Natov koncept strateških komunikacij, ki bi lahko okreplil povezljivost in učinkovitost zavezništva z usklajevanjem komuniciranja, informacij in vseh drugih vojaških aktivnosti.

V članku je opisan Natov koncept strateških komunikacij (StratCom) zaradi zagotovitve boljšega poznavanja in razumevanja koncepta, zmogljivosti in procesov. Razložena je tudi vloga odgovornosti in priložnosti voditelja oziroma poveljnika pri uveljavitvi, izvajanju, vodenju in uporabi Natovega koncepta strateških komunikacij.

**Ključne besede** *Nato, strateške komunikacije, strateško komuniciranje, voditeljstvo, poveljniška odgovornost.*

**Abstract** The global strategic environment has dramatically changed. We live in a highly complex information environment, where we are facing hybrid threats, terrorism, information confrontations, cyber threats, irregular war, massive migration and so on. In this environment, the Alliance needed to adapt and enhance the speed, connectivity and effectiveness of its Strategic Communications (StratCom) effort, which was created as NATO's smart answer to the challenging information environment we live in.

This article describes the NATO Strategic Communications concept to provide deeper understanding and increase knowledge of the context, tools, capabilities and processes conducted within the frame of it. The article explains the role, responsibility

and opportunity leaders at every level have in conducting, leading, implementing and using the NATO concept of Strategic Communications.

**Key words** *NATO, strategic communications, StratCom, leadership, commander responsibility.*

**Introduction** We all live in the Information Age. Contemporary military activities are conducted in a rapidly evolving information environment which is characterized by growing complexity and multidimensionality. We are exposed to a constant flow of information, expansion of information technology, social media and wireless communications, smartphones, networking and a global audience. Information has become an extremely powerful tool and is no longer just an enabler but a fully-fledged national power and weapon. Our perception of the world and of the truth has been manipulated extremely quickly.

The contemporary and future strategic context and operating environment are characterized by complexity, uncertainty, pervasive information and instability. The character of war is changing; today we face a much broader range of threats than in the past. We are faced with hybrid warfare, information confrontation, cyber threats, terrorism and violent extremism, computer-based operations, massive migrations, trans-national organized crime, environmental threats, loss of national identities and much more.

In this context, what Mark Lanity<sup>1</sup> said is a fact: “We are all communicators now” (Laity, 2018, p 66), and his sentence is reflected in numerous NATO documents. For example, the Military Concept for NATO Strategic Communications states that what NATO and its partners say and do, or fail to say and do, has intended and unintended consequences. Every action, image and word sends a message, and every member is a messenger. We must face the fact that all aspects of our work have a critical communications component. Every operation, every action, even the smallest tactical engagement can have strategic consequences. Unintended audiences are unavoidable in the global info environment (MCM-0085-2010). An adequate response of the Alliance to these future challenges seems to be the concept of Strategic Communications (StratCom).

NATO’s leaders first recognized the importance of strategic communications in their Summit Communiqué of 2009, where they stated: “Strategic Communications are an integral part of our efforts to achieve the Alliance’s political and military objectives.” This was just the beginning of developing, adopting and using the concept. After the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the strategic communications concept became reality. In the 2014 Summit Communiqué, NATO’s leaders stated, “We will ensure that NATO is able to effectively address the specific challenges posed by hybrid warfare threats. This will also include enhancing strategic communications.” The

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need was clear, resulting in the Military Committee tasking of 2015 that ultimately led to 2017's Strategic Communications military policy approved document – MC 0628 (Laity 2018, p 67).

The struggle for MC 0628 was the culmination of a 10-year debate, critical discourses, clashes between principals, traditional thinking, influencing and old habits on the question of whether Strategic Communications is the concept the Alliance needs and will be able to use. With MC 0628 NATO has the essential basis for the next stage of the Strategic Communications evolution, with clear definitions, roadmaps, tools and concept development for information and influence in accordance with NATO values. The adopted military policy 0628 is essential, but is only one piece of the overall concept. Now we need to ensure the Strategic Communications concept will reach its potential to help the Alliance (Laity, 2018, pp 65-68) in peace and in crisis.

A decisive component of the full application and implementation of strategic communications is leadership. At all levels, leaders and commanders must understand and enforce the strategic communications concept in their respective organizations. They need to understand and manage the challenges of the information environment, and give strategic communications the opportunity to become a crucial part of comprehensive planning and support for decision-making. The development of the vision as well as the setting of the mission end state are the commander's responsibility, and can support strategic communications (narrative) development. Leaders should be the first to set strategic communications as a mindset and spread it to both the higher and the lower levels of the organization. Leaders must be directly involved in strategic communications. Is it enough?

The aim of this article is to highlight the importance of using and understanding the strategic communications concept's processes and capabilities in responding to the challenges and threats in the contemporary information environment, and to emphasize the role of the leader in this new approach to the synchronization of all actions.

The main thesis of our paper is that leadership at any level and in any organization or structure is the most important enabler, supporter and executer of strategic communications in every environment. For this reason, the commander first needs to understand what the NATO concept of Strategic Communications is, and how to apply it in its units, headquarters, and organizations. Secondly, they need to find their role and responsibility with active engagement in the concept. Leaders need to understand what they and their personal actions communicate and will communicate and then decide how to act. The Strategic Communications concept is a perfect tool for this.

The structure of the article will pursue this thesis and will be divided into two main sections. Firstly, it will present the NATO concept of Strategic Communications

and, secondly, set strategic communications within the context of leadership. Because of its limited length, the article will not incorporate a detailed explanation of leadership. For this purpose, we will use the most general and broad leadership definition, which includes all type of leaders from military (commander) to governmental: leadership is a process for influence which maximizes efforts towards a desired end state.

The term Strategic Communications is still being contested. The article will not include any debate on the terminological challenges with the plural or singular use of communication(s), nor on the word strategic, which covers all levels from tactical to strategic. In the text, we will use the formally approved term “Strategic Communications – StratCom” and its definition (MC 0826, PO 0141, MCM-0085). The abbreviation StratCom for this concept is commonly used and well known, and will as such also be used in this article.

The selected methodology of the article is based on the combination of facts found in numerous documents, books and articles, the author’s personal participant observations, and lessons learned during the author’s deployment in UNIFIL as a contingent commander. The first section will mostly use the descriptive analysis of primary and secondary sources to give a theoretical framework, followed by a more applied section, where author’s assumptions and conclusions will be made through a case study, comparative method of case analysis, and participant observation.

## 1 NATO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CONCEPT

### 1.1 What is NATO StratCom?

NATO defined StratCom as a coordinated and appropriate use of communications activities and capabilities in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO’s aims. By Strategic Communications, NATO refers to the synchronization of words and deeds (reducing the say-do gap) and how they will be perceived by selected audiences. Within the framework of StratCom, NATO applies programmes and activities deliberately aimed at communicating and engaging with the intended audiences, key leaders, and the general population, including those implemented by public affairs, public diplomacy, civil-military relations, and information and psychological operations.

The first definition adopted in 2009 defines StratCom as the coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities – Public Diplomacy (PD), Public Affairs (PA), Military Public Affairs (MilPA), Information Operations (InfoOps) and Psychological Operations (PsyOps), as appropriate – in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO's aims (PO 0141, 2009, pp 1-2).

The newest definition of StratCom, in the context of the NATO military, is the integration of communication capabilities and information staff functions with other military activities, in order to understand and shape the Information Environment<sup>2</sup> (IE), in support of NATO's aims and objectives (MC 0628, 2017, p 4)<sup>3</sup>.

StratCom principles are overarching and apply equally to activities and actions, both kinetic and non-kinetic, which have an effect within the IE. StratCom implementation requires unity of effort and relies on the following:

- All activity is founded on NATO's values<sup>4</sup>,
- Activity is driven by objectives derived from Narrative, Policy and Strategy issued within a framework of political-military direction,
- Credibility and trust are vital attributes and must be protected,
- Words and actions must be aligned,
- The IE must be understood,
- Communication is a collective and integrated effort,
- Focus is on achieving (a) desired effect(s) and outcome(s),
- Communication is empowered at all levels.

(MC 0628, 2017, 4 and NATO Strategic Communication Handbook, 2017, p 7).

StratCom is a mindset and is all about understanding and engaging audiences to advance objectives and interests by shaping the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of the population. StratCom is the tool of influence. It uses informing as the most indirect form of force and the most direct form of influence, a counterweight to disinformation and propaganda; aligning actions, images, and words to support

<sup>2</sup> *The Information Environment is defined as the virtual and physical space in which information is received, processed and conveyed. It consists of the information itself and information systems (MC 422/3).*

<sup>3</sup> *For comparison:*

*According to leading civilian (strategic) communication experts (e.g. Werder, Nothaft, Verčič, Zeffass, 2018, pp 333-334) strategic communication [they use the singular form of communication, in contrast to NATO where they use the plural form – Author's note] is an emerging interdisciplinary paradigm and its definition is evolving over time. According to Hallalah's definition, strategic communication is the purposeful use of communication practice on behalf of organizations, because it examines organizational communication from an integrated, multidisciplinary perspective by extending ideas and issues grounded in various traditional communication (Hallalah 2007 in Werder, Nothaft, Verčič, Zeffass, 2018, p 334). Later, in 2013, a more comprehensive definition of strategic communication was adopted by Holtzhausen and Zeffass: "the practice of deliberate and purposive communication that a communication agent enacts in the public sphere on behalf of a communication entity to reach set goals" (Holtzhausen and Zeffass in Werder, Nothaft, Verčič, Zeffass, 2018, p 334).*

*US DoD Definition:*

*"Efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen or preserve conditions favourable for the advancement of US government interests, policies and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, themes, messages and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power" (Strategic Communication Joint Integrating Concept, 2009, p ii)*

*UK Defence Academy:*

*"A systematic series of sustained and coherent activities, conducted across strategic, operational and tactical levels, that enables understanding of target audiences, identifies effective conduits, and develops and promotes ideas and opinions through those conduits that promote and sustain particular types of behaviour" (Tatham, 2008, pp 3-4).*

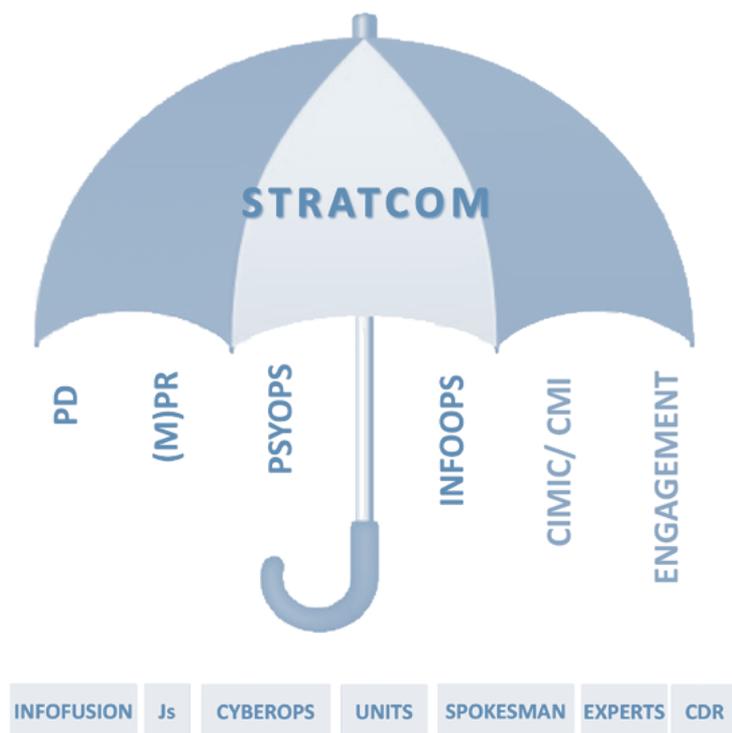
<sup>4</sup> *NATO member states form a unique community of values, committed to the principles of individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Alliance is firmly committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to the Washington Treaty (Active Engagement, Modern Defence, 2010, p 6).*

policy and military planning, which enable and strengthen the effects to meet overarching strategic objectives.

StratCom tools include the coordinated use of a broad range of instruments, military and civilian, conventional and unconventional, from diplomatic, social-cultural, economic, media and military activities.

From the author’s perspective, all the described complexity of Stratcom can be described as an umbrella (Figure 1), under which the framework and story we coordinate and synchronize is all conducted: all the planned activities from communication to the tactical movements of units, with different tools and capabilities in order to reach the maximum effects and desired end state.

Figure 1:  
The StratCom  
Umbrella  
Source:  
Author’s own  
design and view  
on StratCom



StratCom is more than just media, PR or communication; it is actually all about perception. Perception is something that takes place in people’s minds, and determines peoples choices and, in fact, their behaviour. It is a battle for perception that we need to win.

## 1.2 General descriptions of StratCom functional areas

This sub-section describes the four main functional areas<sup>5</sup> that serve as the basic blocks of NATO StratCom, and a frame of wider effort to enhance the coherence of all information and communication processes, capabilities and activities. The definitions are contained in applicable regulations and NATO military policies, and provide a good understanding of each functional area.

For deeper understanding, the reader needs to know that a revision of these functions and their terminology, definitions, and processes is underway, in order to adapt the policies in selected functional areas, which must be in line with MC 0628. This points to the intent that StratCom will become a discipline which will encompass all four functional areas (InfOps, Psyops, PA and MilPA, PD), and, in the future, maybe even some additional ones (all types of engagement, civil-military relations, key leader engagement – which are defined at the end of this chapter).

This confirms the importance of the MC 0628 Policy on StratCom, which must be the main review reference. As MC 0628 stated, StratCom will direct, coordinate and synchronize the overall communication effort, and will ensure coherence across the communication capabilities and information staff function (MC 0628, 2017, p 7).

### Public Diplomacy

Public Diplomacy is NATO's civilian communications and outreach efforts and tools responsible for promoting awareness of and building understanding and support for NATO's policies, operations and activities, in the short, medium and long term, in complement to the national efforts of the Allies (PO 0141, 2009, pp 1-2).

It gives a political dimension to StratCom through the North Atlantic Council, which provides overall direction and guidance to NATO's StratCom efforts, as well as mission-specific political and strategic guidance for all information activities. The Secretary General provides specific direction and guidance on StratCom to all NATO civilian and military bodies and commands. The Public Diplomacy Division in NATO Headquarters oversees the coordination of all StratCom activities across all NATO bodies and commands, and also directs all public diplomacy activities (MC 0628, 2017).

### Public Affairs and Military Public Affairs

Civilian Public Affairs is NATO's civilian engagement through the media to inform the public of NATO policies, operations and activities in a timely, accurate, responsive, and proactive manner (PO 0141, 2009, pp 1-2).

<sup>5</sup> *Additionally, to enable a better understanding of what StratCom encompasses in the broadest sense of the word, a definition on optional functional areas (civil-military relations, key-leader engagement, etc.) will be presented.*

NATO Military Public Affairs is the function responsible for promoting NATO's military aims and objectives to audiences in order to enhance awareness and understanding of the military aspects of the Alliance. This includes planning and conducting external and internal communications, and community relations. Military Public Affairs, at each level of command, directly supports the commander and may not therefore be further delegated or subordinated to other staff functions. The Secretary General is the principal spokesperson for the Alliance (MC 0457/2, 2011, p 4).

NATO recognizes three basic functions of NATO Military Public Affairs: External Communications (Media Relations, Outreach Activities), Internal Communications and Community Relations, based on five principles: tell and show the NATO story; provide accurate information in a timely manner; ensure that the information provided is consistent and complementary; practice appropriate operational security; and conduct work mindful of multinational sensitivities (MC 0457/2, 2011, pp 4-6).

### Information Operations

Information Operations is a staff function to analyze, plan, assess and integrate Information Activities to create desired effects on the will, understanding and capability of adversaries, potential adversaries, and NAC-approved audiences in support of Alliance mission objectives (MC 0422/5, 2015, p 4).

It supports StratCom by planning to achieve effects and coordinating information activities at the operational and tactical levels, in accordance with the Commander's operational objectives. InfoOps is comprised of three inter-related information activities: preserving and protecting the Alliance's freedom of action in the information environment at all times; focusing on the behaviours, perceptions and attitudes of NAC<sup>6</sup> approved audiences; and focusing on countering an adversary's propaganda as well as their command and control functions and capabilities which support their opinion-forming and decision-making processes (MC 0422/5, 2015, pp 4-5).

Information activities are designed to affect information and/or information systems and may be carried out by any actor. In conducting InfoOps, basic principles must be taken into account: focused and integrated, effect based, coherent and consistent, comprehensively understood, centrally planned, de-centrally executed, continuous, monitored and assessed, and agile. According to MC422/5, InfoOps Activity Areas include influence activities, counter command activities and information protection activities (MC 0422/5, 2015, pp 4-5).

### Psychological Operations

Psychological Operations (PsyOps) are planned activities using methods of communication and other means directed at approved audiences in order to influence

<sup>6</sup> NAC = North Atlantic Council

perceptions, attitudes and behaviour affecting the achievement of political and military objectives (MC 040212, 2012, p 3).

The application of PsyOps can have a significant impact in the long term to influence behaviour and act as a force multiplier and enabler to enhance military capabilities. Its capabilities are not precluded from supporting and providing technical assistance (printing, radio broadcast equipment, and so on) to other StratCom function areas in peace, at home. Psychological Operations are a military act which aims to compel the target audiences to act according to our will, without fighting. In order to preserve NATO credibility, PsyOps activities should be based on true and factual information.

Below are definitions of two additional functional areas, which are not organic StratCom functions, but are in very close relation to the concept, and are important for conducting it.

### **Civil-military interaction and civil-military cooperation**

Civil-Military Interaction (CMI) is defined as a group of activities founded on communication, planning and coordination, that all NATO military bodies share and conduct with international and local non-military actors, both during operations and in preparation for them, which mutually increases the effectiveness and efficiency of their respective actions in response to crises (MC 0411/2. 2014, p 5).

Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) is a joint function comprising a set of capabilities integral to supporting the achievement of mission objectives and enabling NATO commands to participate effectively in a broad spectrum of CMI with diverse non-military actors (MC 0411/2. 2014, p 5).

### **Key leader, civil-military, target audience engagements**

NATO's agreed definition for engagement is as follows: any form of human interaction aimed at delivering influential messages in support of the overall Campaign Objectives. Engagement is a distinct activity from civil-military interaction and liaison, which is conducted for purposes other than influence (NATO Engagement Handbook, 2017).

Traditionally, engagement is focused only on the key leader, but recent operations have emphasized that the engagement of commanders at all levels, other civil-military personnel and all kinds of different political-military professionals (e.g. a military chaplain engages with a local religious leader, a mine expert engages the population around a minefield) can have an impact on behaviours, attitudes, and perceptions. Engagement should be consistent, coordinated, culturally-sensitive, credible, adaptive, balanced, and pragmatic within the framework of a given narrative.

## 2 LEADERSHIP PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN STRATCOM

According to MC0628, StratCom in NATO is a command responsibility that spans all levels. Successful implementation and use requires clear direction and guidance incorporating the commander's intent into all aspects of staff activities, especially in the operational planning process and during the conduct of operations (MC 0628, 2017). The leader's or commander's vision, intent and philosophy represent the framework which will enable their operation to be conducted in all environments, in the field or within the organization. One of the basic principles and commander's responsibilities at all levels<sup>7</sup> with regard to their involvement in the StratCom processes and with the focus on team work approach, is synchronization and coordination.

Under the MC 0628 policy, the communication capabilities and the information staff function must be grouped together under a Chief StratCom<sup>8</sup> (or similar title), who has coordination and integration authority, in accordance with the Commander's intent, to issue appropriate direction and guidance in order to ensure the integration of StratCom. It sees StratCom moving from a purely advisory/coordination function to that of holding the Commander's delegated authority and ensuring it is fully integrated with other activities (MC 0628, 2017), with direct access to the commander as the final and decisive enabler of the effective use and conduct of StratCom activities.

The Handbook for Military StratCom states that the commanders [leaders – Author's note] must accept their key role in their organization's communications orchestration. When senior leaders ignore the importance of communication they seriously undermine the value of major initiatives of their organization. Ineffective communication can cause ambiguity and confusion, and damage credibility inside and outside the organization (MilStratCom Handbook, 2018, p 9).

From the author's viewpoint<sup>9</sup> the leader's main role in StratCom can be divided into four groups, described below in next four sub-sections:

- Understand the concept and set the conditions for its implementation;
- Provide the vision and objectives (end state) on which the narrative should be built;
- Put StratCom at the heart of operational planning from the beginning;
- Be active in conducting StratCom, with key leader engagement, media communication engagements, direct communication, social media engagement, internal communication, etc.

<sup>7</sup> The "Strategic Corporal" concept confirms the fact that we are all communicators and the action of the last soldier on the ground can have significant strategic consequences, which is why conducting StratCom at all levels is so important, even for a team leader somewhere in the operation.

<sup>8</sup> In enacting the key organizational and structural guidelines to group the communication capabilities and information staff function together in a single staff element carrying executive authority, the principle of mission command must be respected, giving commanders flexibility in how the overarching guidance is implemented.

<sup>9</sup> According to the author's experience: lessons learned from command and different staff functions and analysis of the relevant literature, most of it listed in the references and presented in this article.

## 2.1 Understanding and implementing StratCom in the organization

According to the NATO Military Concept for NATO Strategic Communications, StratCom is a leadership-driven process focused on enhancing the Alliance's ability to coherently articulate its narratives, themes, and messages to external and internal audiences. NATO StratCom provides strategic political and military guidance and direction based on a North Atlantic Council approved information strategy (MCM-0085-2010, p 1). For this reason, nations should understand, implement and possibly use the concept of StratCom, which is not always easy. Nations are members of the NATO alliance, not militaries, so the agreed and accepted StratCom policy should be used and applied nationwide in accordance with national limitations and its special features.

The first step in recognizing this is the responsibility of the leaders/commanders, who need to understand the importance of StratCom in the contemporary world and recognize the utility of this concept for their leadership level and the structure they lead. And it must start at the very top – from the national level, ministry level, military level, all the way down to the strategic corporal level on the ground.

Positive changes within an organization can be real, but they depend to a considerable extent on the skills, determination, knowledge and imagination of current leaders. They enable an organization to look outside the box, think for itself, develop new ideas, suggest smart changes, use a comprehensive approach and coordinate all level activities in order to reach the desired end state and maximize the effects which can lead to a successful transformation. StratCom, through a common appreciation and thorough understanding of the mission, the Information Environment, and the impact it has on all activities, can be a leadership opportunity for this.

According to the documents, the significant ongoing improvement in NATO commanders' awareness of the power of StratCom must be maintained. This development area needs to focus on identifying the steps to strengthen the knowledge, expertise, mindset and capabilities development of NATO and national commanders in recognizing and operationalizing the principles of good StratCom, both internally within the command and externally as an important part of carrying out assigned missions (MCM-0085-2010, p 9); especially because of the fact written in the article “The role of military leadership in StratCom”, where it is stated that only properly exercised leadership is the ultimate condition of achieving the desired effect, including the required influence results concerning specific audiences and conveying accurate information to the public (KacaŁa, 2016, p 33).

Establishing the role of the commander as a champion for StratCom is the key to the success of the implementation and efficient use of this concept. This provides an accurate and effective response to challenges and threats in the information environment at every functional level. Leaders enable the development and

integration of the StratCom concept<sup>10</sup>, process, resources and capabilities in their organizations, nations, allied operations and everyday work. They are the start and the end point of effective StratCom, with their vision and intent and through their authority.

## 2.2 From commander vision, intent to narrative

The commander's second opportunity, conducted as StratCom promotion and use, is well paraphrased in Plato's quote: "Those who tell the stories rule society<sup>11</sup>." Leaders lead the narrative in such a way that mission command and vision come into play and are integrally linked to the strategy.

A narrative is an organizational scheme expressed in story form. Stories about a community's history provide models of how actions and consequences are linked. Stories are often the basis for strategies and actions, as well as for interpreting others' intentions (FM 3-24, 2006). Narratives give a simple answer to who we are; where are we coming from; what benefits are we bringing to whom; where are we going to; and what is next.

Leaders need to consider information as currency, audience perception of the organization's narrative as a dominant market force, reputation as long-term stock, and influence as the bottom line. Communications can no longer play a supporting role to strategy, once written. It must become strategy's beating heart (Osborne, 2017, 14). The leader must recognize information as an enabler and effector, because as Joseph Nye said, in the information age it is not only whose army wins, but whose story wins. Accordingly the biggest challenge is to create and control a narrative which connects the power of words to the legitimacy of deeds (Nye, 2009, p 62)<sup>12</sup>.

According to the mission command policy, it is essential to implement StratCom effectively and in a timely way. It also requires the empowering of each level to adapt, integrate and implement appropriately according to their circumstances in order to achieve the desired effect (MC 0628, 2017). StratCom is crucial for commanders; it is inherent to commander's mission command through his intent. The commander's intent is a statement on which the narrative will be established. There is only one narrative and therein lies its strength; it explains who we are, it determines our identity and we adhere to it (Erder, 2013, p 33).

<sup>10</sup> *And even give direction and guidance to modify existing organizational structures as recommended in StratCom documents and in accordance with their organization specifics. Leaders must consider StratCom a priority comparable to other important areas such as logistics and intelligence (MCM-0085-2010, 3).*

<sup>11</sup> *Full Plato quote: Tell your story, tell it efficiently and protect it, because those who tell the stories rule society. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/20382-those-who-tell-the-stories-rule-society>*

<sup>12</sup> *One of the most significant examples of how narrative wins perception can be found in the 2016 American elections. According to Randy Olson, in the United States 2016 presidential election, president-elect Donald Trump won because his narrative won: "America was once great. America is no longer great. I will make America great again." Trump demonstrated no depth. Shared no policy points. And seemingly went out of his way to offend people like no other candidate ever has. And yet he won. He is an example of a leader with deep narrative intuition (Olson, 2019). It confirms our assumption that narrative is leadership.*

### 2.3 StratCom at the heart of all levels of military policy, planning and execution

NATO recognizes that it cannot resolve a crisis or conflict by military force alone. There is therefore a need for a comprehensive approach – deliberate and inclusive (civil and military) planning and action created through established crisis management procedures that allow both military and non-military resources and efforts to be assembled with a greater unity of purpose. Adopting such a comprehensive approach to operations begins with inculcating a culture of active collaboration and transparency in those involved in military planning, with the commander at the head.

The nature of modern conflict blurs the lines of the traditional definitions of peace and war, and because of that StratCom must be organized and active in a way that is effective during peacetime, crisis and conflict. This will require changes in policy and organization to improve how the Alliance plans, coordinates and executes its activities. Processes must be more integrated, simpler and quicker in order to ensure that information and communication aspects are at the core of all levels of policy, planning and implementation, and are fully integrated with other operational effects (MC 0628, 2017).

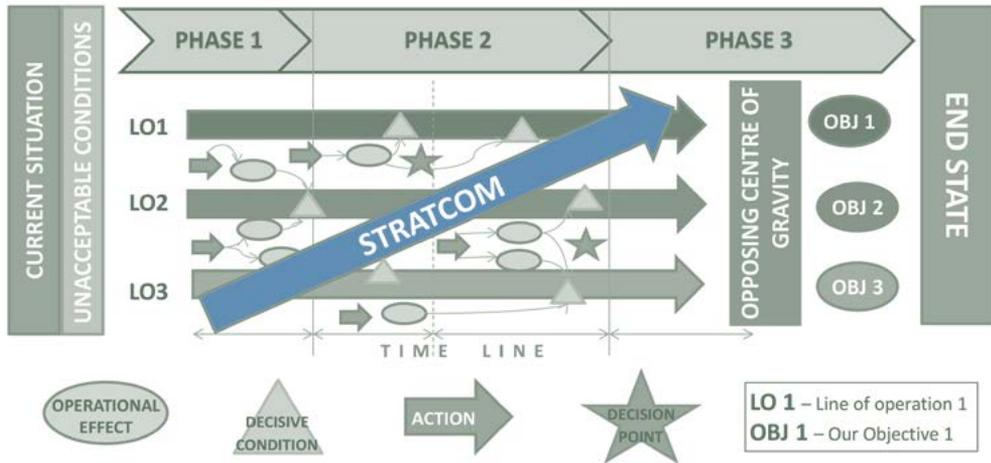
StratCom seeks to put information strategy at the heart of all levels of policy, planning and implementation or execution. Furthermore, as Mark Laity said: “What we need is a StratCom Plan with an Operational Annex”. StratCom is not an additional activity but an inherent part of the planning, coordination and conduction of all military operations and activities. As part of the overarching political-military approach to StratCom, the vision is to put this concept at the heart of all levels of military policy, planning and execution – this is the commander’s responsibility and care. Leaders should coordinate and synchronize capabilities and instruments of all power within their area of responsibility to achieve the desired effects.

This is not to say that StratCom is only important in irregular warfare, because it also focuses on selected audiences beyond the local population. As such, StratCom is critical across range of military operations (Commander’s Handbook for Strategic Communication and Communication Strategy, 2010, p I-1). In order to achieve joint effects and more effectively approach, the desired end state StratCom should diagonally connect all the lines of operational design from the first phase of operation onwards, as shown in Figure 2.

Exploitation of information, the need for a more integrated force, and better adaptability to the changing circumstances are three central ideas at the heart of the enhanced joint action. Influence can be achieved by a clear focus on audiences and effects, and by integrating and synchronizing kinetic and non-kinetic activities conducted across the physical and virtual domains to try to achieve those effects (Joint Concept Note 1/17, p 5).

## NATO OPERATIONAL DESIGN

Figure 2:  
StratCom  
enhancing and  
orchestrating  
joint  
Source: Author's  
own design  
actions<sup>13</sup> from  
the beginning of  
the planning of  
every operation



All activities and operations have a critical communication component because everything we say and do, or fail to say and do, has intended and unintended consequences, with intended and unintended audiences. This is why leaders must undertake a comprehensive assessment of potential StratCom outcomes when they plan operations (MCM-0085-2010, p 2). By using StratCom, commanders can do things differently, with better and more effective integration of information and physical activities across multiple domains, and gain more effects in conducting and enhancing joint actions (JCN 2/18).

General John R. Allen<sup>14</sup> described StratCom as his most responsive manoeuvre element. According to his opinion and practical experience, information must be treated in the same way as a component of combined arms, indeed as a weapon (Eder, 2013, p 39).

Commanders must involve StratCom (with clear intent, directions and guidance) in the ongoing planning process, to advise the Joint Operations Planning Group (JOPG) leader and to ensure that StratCom plays a guiding role and assists the senior leadership in all aspects of integrated communication, synchronized with all other military activities.

<sup>13</sup> *Joint action is defined as the deliberate use and orchestration of military capabilities and activities to affect an actor's will, understanding and capability, and the cohesion between them to achieve influence (JDP 3-00, 2009).*

<sup>14</sup> *He was the ISAF Commander for the period July 2012-February 2013.*

## 2.4 Leaders must be active in conducting StratCom activities

Leaders must decisively engage, conduct and drive StratCom even in the execution<sup>15</sup> phase, and must make it a priority. The success of StratCom depends on gaining support for our narrative/ story, and the engine of this is the leader<sup>16</sup>.

Policy on this requires leaders to maintain awareness of information released and the ability to refine this information as necessary to ensure its accuracy. Commanders must balance the requirement for speed in the release of information with legitimate concerns for its accuracy and the demands of operational security (MCM-0085-2010, 8).

Active engagement in delivering StratCom activities is a process of communicating the commander's intent, vision and narrative by integrating words and deeds, with the leader in the front line. Below are listed what are considered as the most useful StratCom tools for commanders:

- Key leader engagement is one of the most important engagements of the commander. It involves the commander's contact with the leaders who represent the selected target audience, in order to change the behaviour of decision-makers and gain some useful suggestions and information in order to conduct the operation in the direction of the desired end state.
- Media communication engagements, when needed and planned to involve the commander, can help to communicate to the wider public the topics which need to be delivered by the authority to gain special effects, raise credibility or achieve other planned effects. Media engagement can be conducted in various ways: an interview, short media statements, guest speaker in TV shows or radio, images and so on.
- Using social media engagement is significant for commanders in order to share their expertise, to communicate, to be part of a community, to build trust, to get feedback, to be a good example to follow, to stay relevant and many other things. Many leaders are still uncomfortable about being present on social media platforms (such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn etc.). The fact that adversaries use it and the numbers of participants mean it is crucial to have a presence there<sup>17</sup>.
- Internal communication is a very important StratCom tool. It can be used from the commander's side to inform, to deliver a message, to motivate or educate, to influence from the bottom up, to develop situational awareness, to provide understanding of the IE, to guide future planning efforts, or to simply answer questions or solve a problem.

<sup>15</sup> And later in the assessment and evaluation phase, to ensure improvements in the process, adapt operations if needed, estimate performance and effects, collect lessons learned, monitor; provide bottom-up feedback etc.

<sup>16</sup> This does not mean that the commander (or spokesperson) is the best communicator of our story, because people know that the commander's (communicator's) role is to address the audience. The best communicators are our soldiers, who have credibility on the ground.

<sup>17</sup> According to statistics from January 2019, approximately 2 billion internet users use social networks. Facebook is the primary social media app, currently sitting at 2.27 billion monthly active users, followed by Whatsapp with 1.5 billion users, and the photo-sharing app Instagram with 1 billion monthly active accounts. (The most popular social networks worldwide: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>).

- There are many others, such as formal and informal speeches or other public performances (e.g. ribbon cutting at an opening, public ceremonies, etc.), shaping the environment with PPP (Presence, Posture and Profile), photo sessions, round tables, and so on.

A brief preview of good and bad instances of “say-do gaps”<sup>18</sup> shows one fact. In bad examples, there should not be criticism of the soldiers on the ground; there should be criticism of the leaders, and of those who prepared them, or rather failed to prepare them. As a commander you need to prepare your “strategic corporal” not to commit individual tactical mistakes, because they can have powerful negative strategic effects.

StratCom is the primary tool of the commander to appropriately inform and influence audiences through actions and words. How the military gained advantage by affecting the perception and behaviour of the target audience has been seen throughout history. From the past we can also learn how some great leaders knew and used information and communications in line with their actions to influence audiences and reach the desired end state by selling their narrative, affecting perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.

### Examples of StratCom used by NATO and NATO nation’s leaders in practice

The military and political footprint of the largest NATO exercise since the Cold War – Trident Juncture 2018 (TRJE18) – was significant in every aspect of the operation, especially in the set objectives of StratCom. This exercise in central and eastern Norway was a highly visible exercise on land, in the air and at sea<sup>19</sup> which had StratCom implications in reality.

Two parallel StratCom stories in TRJE18 were conducted, both with full support of the leadership. One was the NATO story, where they tried to demonstrate that the Alliance has the political will and ability to defend its members, and signalled to Russia that it would not be able to paralyze NATO by creating information warfare and a military threat on its northern and eastern flanks. The other was the Norwegian StratCom approach, whose mission was to explain and communicate why NATO

<sup>18</sup> Some examples of the say-do gap:

- American soldiers urinating on the dead bodies of the Taliban was considered by President Karzai “inhuman”, and was far from the intended message that the soldiers were there to support the Afghanistan population and to respect their culture and lives.
- Very young American men preaching about survival to Afghans old enough to be their grandfathers. There was no respect for age shown in any of the local encounters PBS filmed (*Commander’s Handbook for Strategic Communication and Communication Strategy*, 2010, p N-1).
- General Stanley McChrystal stopping fire rocketing on the Sunnis from a nearby village with engagement. When he realized the course of the rocketing and helped the village, they gave full support, not only peace (Eder; 2013, p 33).

<sup>19</sup> Around 50,000 participants from 31 nations, 10,000 vehicles, 65 vessels and around 250 aircraft attended a fourteen day exercise from 25 October to 7 November 2018. In parallel with TRJE18 three big exercises took place in the Baltic Sea and Poland (Northern Coast, Anakonda and ARRCADe Fusion 2018) ([https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_158620.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_158620.htm)).

came to Norway on exercise, in the largest exercise since the Cold War, without scaring the citizens, and gaining the full support of the country's population.

An analysis and comparison of StratCom activities in TRJE18 from a leadership point of view, according to the author's four points (listed in chapter 3) where leaders have the main role in StratCom<sup>20</sup>, is shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Leaders' support of the StratCom concept, processes and activities in TRJE18  
**Source:** Author analysis from: PO(2018)0116; PDD(2018)0111; <https://twitter.com/jensstoltenberg>, [https://twitter.com/forsvaret\\_no/](https://twitter.com/forsvaret_no/); <https://jfcnaples.nato.int/exercises/trident-juncture-18>; Wojciech, 2018; <https://forsvaret.no/en/exercise-and-operations/exercises/nato-exercise-2018>.

|                        | Understanding and implementing StratCom   | Providing the vision and objectives   | StratCom in operational planning  | Conducting StratCom by leaders   |
|------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| NATO Secretary General | Implemented StratCom at highest level of Public Diplomacy Division/ StratCom  | Strategic direction and guidance given by the StratCom Framework, the TRJE18 Information Environment Assessment (IEA) Handbook, and the Integrated Communications Plan for Exercise Trident Juncture 2018.<br>Five StratCom objectives:   | StratCom as part of NATO's Operational Planning Process – Comprehensive Operations Planning | Addressing different audiences, key leader engagement, press conferences, participating in high ranking social activities, social media engagement.  |
| TRJE18 Commander       | In the exercise environment the StratCom structure was formed as the NATO Media Information Centre (working in exercise and in real life). In Joint Headquarters in Naples, StratCom was implemented according to NATO policy MC0628. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Generate recognition and support from Allied audiences that NATO is capable, united, and ready to protect its Allies.</li> <li>2. For Russia: the Alliance will protect its citizens and territory in order to contribute to deterrence and risk reduction.</li> <li>3. Demonstrate to Norway that NATO is fundamental to their defence.</li> <li>4. Finnish and Swedish audiences recognize benefits of joint training.</li> <li>5: Demonstrate to all audiences the transparent and defensive nature of NATO in the interest of peace and stability.</li> </ol> | With OASIS <sup>21</sup> Integrated Communications Plan on TRJE18                           | Internal Communications, conducting media activities, key leader engagement, cooperation with host nations, coordination of all military activities in line with the StratCom narrative and guidance |

<sup>20</sup> The role of leadership in the analyzed case is not as obvious as in the case of the US presidential election in 2016, described in footnote 12. The leadership role in TRJE18 can be derived by knowing the structure of the organizations involved, knowing the narrative and objective of the mission, checking written documents on the topics, and conducting information awareness and assessment which showed the presence of StratCom in the planning process. All these activities must be strongly supported and directed by the leaders. We can gain direct insights by analyzing leader/commander activities and engagement within the framework of StratCom's set objectives (mostly from open source reports and the leaders' social media engagement).

<sup>21</sup> The OASIS Model is a model for the planning and implementation of StratCom and stands for Objective, Audience insight, Strategy, Implementation, and Scoring.

|   | Understanding and implementing StratCom  | Providing the vision and objectives   | StratCom in operational planning   | Conducting StratCom by leaders  |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Tactical leaders and "strategic corporal"                       | If needed, but at this level the leaders' understanding of the StratCom concept and the incorporation of it into their OPORDERS is enough.             | Soldiers card, media cards, clear and transparent key messages, awareness of information environment.   | Include StratCom top-down guidance at appropriate level of military decision-making in accordance with unit purpose and task.  | Use of Social media leaders/ influencers, tactical engagement with civil environment, care for nature, CIMIC projects, local leaders engagement. Use of air power to show strength and capabilities, coordinating military activities with words.   |
| Norwegian Minister of Defence and Armed Forces Chief of Defence | They have developed national StratCom. At the defence level they have Ministry of Defence's communication unit and the Chief of Defence's spokesperson | NATO came to Norway to Exercise, in the largest exercise since the Cold War, to ensure our nation's sovereignty and the safety of our population. | According to Forsvarets mediesenter they carry out planning through long term planning, within which they build situational awareness, define clear goals, develop narrative and key messages etc. according to the analysis of environment and NATO guidance. | All levels of governmental and military leaders were fully active in TRJE18. Even His Majesty Prince Harald came to the exercise to show support and spread the messages. CIMIC, environmental projects, engagement with leaders and local population, addressing different target audiences. |

According to the context of Table 1 and the final output of the exercise TRJE18<sup>22</sup>, we can conclude that all levels of leaders of NATO and NATO nations, from both the political and the military side, took StratCom as an organizational opportunity and tool to effectively reach the set objectives and the desired end state. They used StratCom as an executive capability whose fully integrated communications functions with other aspects of military operations (fires/manoeuvres).

<sup>22</sup> Some facts which indicate that TRJE was a successful exercise: media coverage in more than 600 articles on TRJE18; 90% of the Norwegian population believe that it is necessary to have armed forces, 70% of them have a good impression of NATO, more online conversation than any other exercise, Russia disinformation campaign was managed and did not have any influence on TRJE or the Alliance at that time.

Being a UNIFIL<sup>23</sup> Contingent commander<sup>24</sup> gave the author the same experience in a leadership role in StratCom as has been presented on a doctrinal basis in this article. Even if this was a UN mission, the way NATO countries plan and conduct military operations under different organizations is the NATO working process in the frame of the mission mandate and rules of engagement. In today's working and operating environment, StratCom is one of the most important tools a commander can use. UNIFIL is a peace mission where, with the consent of all the involved parties, soldiers provide peace and security through reporting, presence and observation. In such a fragile and unstable environment as South Lebanon, this is not always the easiest task, since every action you do wrong can have a strategic impact on the overall security situation. In such missions a high level of competence and maturity of the decision-maker is crucial. By understanding and implementing StratCom<sup>25</sup>, a commander can make a change in the conduct of the mission. This, in continuous coordination with all other military activities, brings a greater effect towards the set objectives, effective fulfilment of the mandate, and increased force protection in the long term. This is evidenced by the author's experience in trying to normalize the local attitude and lack of acceptance, which was very aggressive and unkind towards the Slovenian contingent. This was achieved by conducting planned, approved, and synchronized contingent commander StratCom activities, such as KLE with the sector Commander, CIMIC engagement in UNIFIL, social event participation, key message spreading and so on. All commander activities were in orchestration with the tactical military activities and soldiers' PPP. After six months of the Sector West Joint Task Force's planned approach to StratCom, the Slovenian Contingent were able to normalize the local attitude towards Slovenian soldiers and they were accepted.

Commanders who enable an organization to think for itself, to develop ideas, build a narrative, give directions and guidance from the top, coordinate from the bottom up, and know the audience and information environment are likely to be more successful. StratCom gives a perfect framework for this.

### **Conclusion – StratCom is a leadership tool and opportunity**

StratCom is an important, useful and smart NATO concept developed as an answer to the challenging and contemporary information environment we live in. StratCom is the crossroads between public diplomacy and smart defence, which is essential in the coordination of communication and all other activities in the frame or narrative and in the way of the desired end state in war, crisis and peace time. StratCom is a demanding and complex concept which must be understood, commander led, and fully integrated into the organizational efforts to achieve maximum effect. Figure 3

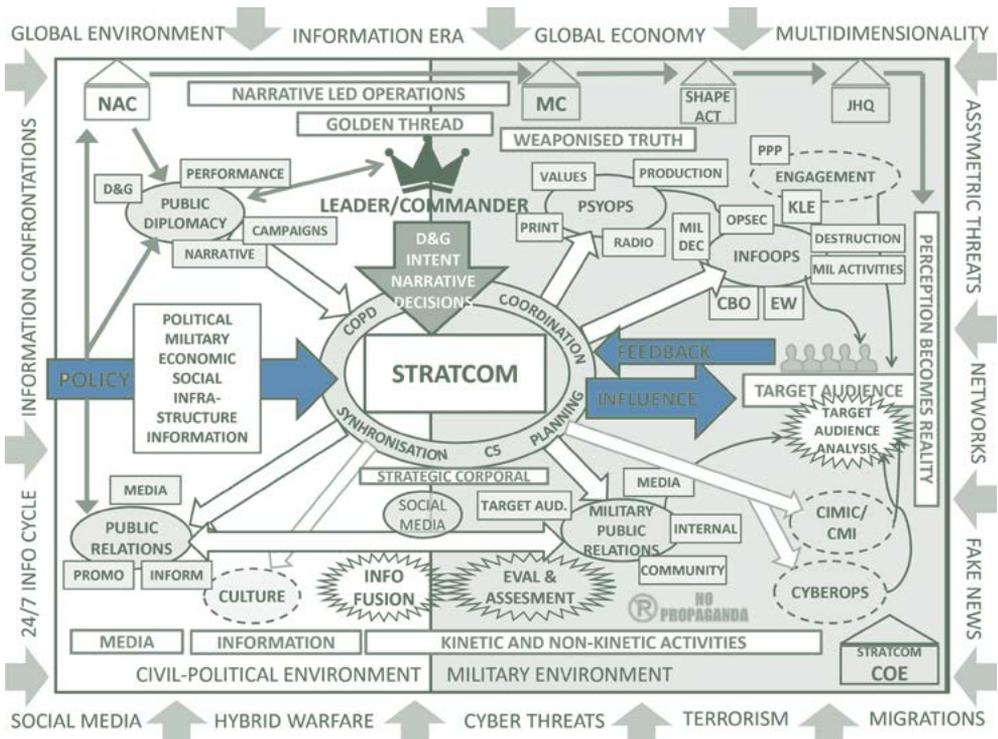
<sup>23</sup> UNIFIL is the United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon.

<sup>24</sup> The author, Major Nina Raduha, spent 7 months (May-December 2016) in the UNIFIL mission in South Lebanon, under the Sector West Joint Task Force Lebanon. She commanded the 22<sup>nd</sup> Slovenian contingent in UNIFIL and conducted the mission mandate – maintain peace and security and freedom of movement, and work with the Lebanon Armed forces.

<sup>25</sup> In UN terminology, integrated outreach activities are comparable to NATO StratCom, without PsyOps.

is the takeaway of this article. It describes two facts: firstly, StratCom is a leadership opportunity and tool to answer the challenges in the contemporary world, but it must be accepted as a mindset, not only to separate it from public relations but to understand its complexity, multidimensionality, interdisciplinarity and its role in the synchronization of all ways, means and ends in political, military, economic, and social infrastructure and the information field. Secondly, StratCom is a must, but its success depends mostly on the leader and their team.

Figure 3: StratCom is whole-organization approach led by the commander<sup>26</sup>  
Source: Author's own design and idea



After the first adopted policy on StratCom in 2009, NATO won the struggle of adopting the StratCom capstone document MC 0628 in 2017. This was a decisive step towards recognizing StratCom as one of the basic building blocks of an effective NATO response. But it was only one piece of the overall concept; today, the term and the context of StratCom are still being contested. This is why it is so important to understand the idea, concept, processes, tools, functions and usefulness of StratCom, in order to fully use and implement it, not only in the Alliance but nationwide.

<sup>26</sup> Abbreviations in figure 3: NAC – North Atlantic Council; MC – Military Committee; SHAPE – Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe; ACT – Allied Command Transformation; MILDEC – Military Deception; CBO – Computer Based Operations; KLE – Key Leader Engagement; EW – Electronic Warfare; D&G – Directions and Guidance; COE – Centre of Excellence; OPSEC – Operational Security; PPP – Presence, Posture and Profile.

Confirming both theses from the beginning of the article, we can claim that leadership at all levels plays the most important role in the implementation and enforcement of StratCom in their organization and structures. Accordingly, leaders need to understand in depth what this concept is, and how important it is in fighting hybrid warfare, coordinating the effect of units on the ground, or gaining the credibility of our organization at home in peace. They need to recognize their role and responsibility with active engagement in StratCom.

In short, StratCom is a function, process and mindset which, in full implementation and use, brings organizational changes, education needs and a shift in traditional conducting, (military) planning, and operating. StratCom is an integral part of the political and/or military decision-making process, strategy and consistency, and can become a whole-of-government effort to reach the desired end state. StratCom supports long term effects, by which true synchronization and orchestration of our words and deeds with integration of all communication capabilities, information staff function and other military activities is reached. All StratCom activities are founded on NATO's values. Stratcom is an interdisciplinary approach, led from the top in the framework of the narrative.

StratCom is as a leadership opportunity. It is a commander's instrument of power and influence, and a coordinator and orchestrator of their activities. Leaders are enablers of the concept and multifaceted players of its efficiency. They need to understand that all actions have an effect in the information environment and spread this within the framework of their responsibility.

The concept is a long-term action, in the success of which the leadership needs first to believe. Leaders have three main responsibilities:

- Understand the concept, process and capabilities of StratCom;
- Implement the StratCom concept, build its capabilities and put it in the centre of decision-making in their organizations;
- Lead the StratCom process by giving overall direction and guidance and executing it.

Leaders should place a high priority on communication. Successful StratCom, with integrating actions, words, and images, begins with a clear, top-guided, coordinated leadership intent and guidance that results in narrative building and is considered in the operational planning process.

Whether or not to have StratCom should no longer be a question. In implementing and successfully conducting it, it would be good to keep in mind that StratCom is a mindset and needs to be command-led. Only leaders can enable the adoption and successful implementation of StratCom, but in order to make it work, each and every member must work in line with the adopted narrative.

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## INFORMACIJSKO BOJEVANJE Z MEHKO IN TRDO MOČJO: PRIMER IZRAELA IN HAMASA

### INFORMATION WARFARE BY MEANS OF SOFT AND SHARP POWER: THE CASE OF ISRAEL AND HAMAS

**Povzetek** Informacijsko bojevanje je vrsta strateškega komuniciranja z modeli moči, kot sta mehka in trda moč. Raziskava je pokazala, da veljata teoretični okvir in domneva, da najpomembnejši modeli moči ne vključujejo le zmožnosti, zmogljivosti in namena, temveč tudi sredstva, metode ali tehnike držav in nedržavnih akterjev. Primer spora med Izraelom in Hamasom v Gazi, ki je trajal od decembra 2017 do marca 2018, kaže na to, da Izrael uporablja mehko, Hamas pa trdo moč. V članku analiziramo modele moči, nato pa z metodologijo pripovedi in protipripovedi Izraela in Hamasa predstavimo njihov način informacijskega bojevanja. Hamas si je kot nedržavni akter sicer pridobil naklonjenost javnosti, vendar tega ni znal izkoristiti za doseganje drugih ciljev. Zmaga v informacijski bitki z bodisi mehko ali trdo močjo namreč še ne pomeni, da je konflikt končan. V sklepu ugotavljamo, da nedržavni akterji, kot je Hamas, ki se bolj nagibajo k nadzoru kot k odprtosti, manj uporabljajo mehko moč. Namesto tega poskušajo odvrniti pozornost s trdo močjo, tako da vplivajo na najpomembnejše načine izražanja ter manipulirajo z množičnimi mediji in občutljivostjo javnosti. V primerjavi z njimi države, na primer Izrael, za doseganje svojih ciljev uporabljajo privabljanje in prepričevanje, torej mehko moč. V obeh primerih je treba v zavest publike, kamor spadajo svetovni voditelji, splošno prebivalstvo in medijske hiše, le usidrati neko prepričanje, čeprav brez dejstev.

**Ključne besede** *Strateško komuniciranje, informacijsko bojevanje, Hamas in Izrael, mehka in trda moč.*

**Abstract** Information warfare is a type of strategic communication realized through models of power such as soft and sharp power. Investigation provides evidence sustaining the theoretical framework and premise that the essential models of power are not just the ability, capability and intent, but also the means, method or technique of both states and non-state actors. The example of a dispute between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, from December 2017 to March 2018, shows Israel wielding soft power and Hamas wielding

sharp power. This article reviews the models of power, then uses the methodology of the narrative and counter-narrative of Israel and Hamas to show their information warfare campaign. Hamas, a non-state actor, succeeded in gaining sympathy, but was unable to utilize this to further any other objectives. Winning an information battle by soft or by sharp power does not mean that the conflict is over. The conclusion shows that non-state actors, e.g. Hamas, that prioritize control over openness are deficient in soft power projection, so use sharp power to create distraction by the key attributes of expression and manipulation of mass media and public sensitivities, rather than by the attraction and persuasion (soft power) used by states, e.g. Israel. In both, all that is required is to instil a perception, even without facts, in the minds of the audience, which includes global leaders, the mass population and media outlets.

**Key words** *Strategic communication, information warfare, Hamas and Israel, soft and sharp power.*

**Introduction** The general premise of this article is that information warfare is a type of strategic communication which is waged by those means outlined in the descriptive models of soft and sharp power. The explicit hypothesis within this is that non-state actors wage information warfare in accordance with the sharp power model, and democratic state actors wage information warfare in accordance with the soft power model. The prescriptive research method of using these models provides sound, already proven, theoretical grounds. The logical process of analysis based on these models is further tested qualitatively in this article through data sets of the narrative and counter-narrative of two sides to a conflict, the non-state actor Hamas and the state of Israel.

The research process or approach to addressing the hypothesis of this article is first to define communication and strategic communication and explain the models of power in context to them. Then the data will be presented. The research question of why soft power is used by some and not others, why sharp power is used by some and not others, and why some cannot use either soft power or sharp power, permeates throughout the article.

This leads to the conclusions that link the hypothesis, the models and the data to the answer to the research question, which is that non-state actors, for example Hamas, which prioritize control over openness, are deficient in soft power projection, and so use sharp power to create distraction by the key attributes of expression and manipulation of the mass media and public sensitivities, rather than the attraction and persuasion (soft power) used by states, for example Israel.

The methodology of handling the data sets was to gather, process, interpret and analyze the narrative and counter-narrative of events deductively, using the models of power to ascertain when states and non-state actors utilize soft and/or sharp power in their information warfare in order to attain strategic communication objectives. The data were primary media material, prepared and delivered by each side, and quoted by

newspapers, TV, radio, and social media in their efforts to influence and sway opinion. The information provided by both sides was in three languages, English, Arabic and Hebrew. The analysis unveiled that there was the same content in all three languages.

The data of the narrative and counter-narrative were gathered systematically on the day of the broadcast and stored digitally, labelling the time of the broadcast and the time of data collection. The data were processed by looking at the narrative of each of the events and by summarizing the content. To consider the impact of the narrative, the counter-narrative or response was the second set of data gathered. This second set of data was also stored digitally, labelling the time of broadcast and the time of data collection. The significance of date/time stamping was to enable interpretation of whether the narrative had had an impact by influencing or swaying opinion that was observed in the counter-narrative.

If there was a link between the narrative and the counter-narrative, that meant there had been an impact or sway of opinion and it was coded 1, and if not, then it was coded 0. Data that were coded 1 were interpreted by classification into soft or sharp power in accordance with the model of each power.

This methodology of an analysis of the narrative and counter-narrative shows the techniques each side used to attempt to influence and sway opinion. The models of soft and sharp power have different techniques, so such an analysis deductively determined which model of power in information warfare was being used to attempt to achieve strategic communication objectives. In this manner the content analysis examining patterns in the narrative and counter-narrative was able to determine that Israel used soft power and Hamas used sharp power in their respective information warfare. The meaningful pieces of content in the analysis coded 1 were thus determined in accordance with the models of soft and sharp power.

The structure of the argument to achieve this was a content analysis of the narrative and counter-narrative of two sides in a conflict waging information warfare using the models of soft and sharp power which are elements of strategic communication. The analysis places the narrative of the two actors in the context of the different models of power, and within this context showed the relevance of information warfare and thereby the significance of the case of Israel and Hamas.

The sample of data used and described in this article was the narrative and counter-narrative of events by Israel and Hamas for the period 1 December 2017 to 31 March 2018. This was the first pre-stage of regular Palestinian protests at the Gaza border fence in what has become known as “The March of the Return”. The narrative is about the violence of both sides attempting to sway and influence the opinions of others about the events. An investigation into the events brought the United Nations Human Rights Council to debate and approve five anti-Israel resolutions on 22 March 2019. This included an arms embargo against Israel and the prosecution of the Israeli Defence Force for war crimes.

The dispute of Israel and Hamas is their ongoing military conflict on the border of Gaza. The Gaza Strip is 11 km wide and 51 km long at its maximum points and should have been part of the State of Palestine as proposed by a United Nations' General Assembly Resolution on 29 November 1947. Egypt controlled it from 1947 until the 1967 War, and then Israel occupied it until 2005. Israel had a unilateral disengagement and withdrew all civilians and soldiers and dismantled all settlements in 2005. An election in Gaza in 2007 led to the governance of Hamas in Gaza, while the urban areas in the other Palestinian territory, the West Bank, has been governed by the Palestinian Liberation Organization as the Palestinian Authority since the 1993 Oslo Accords with Israel.

There have been unsuccessful attempts to bring Hamas and the Palestinian Authority to national unity, as the former is in part an Iranian proxy and is also funded by Qatar and does not recognize the existence of the State of Israel, while the latter recognizes the existence of the State of Israel and is funded in part by the USA, the EU and local taxation. Since 2007 there have been constant violent exchanges on the border between Gaza and Israel; the firing of rockets and missiles by Hamas at cities in Israel and an Israeli armed response including significant campaigns or wars in 2008 and 2014. Israel maintains a land and sea blockage and embargo of Gaza. The ongoing dispute between Hamas and Israel is not confined to territory. This article shows that the dispute between the two is also being waged by information warfare to sway the opinion of others, be it world leaders or the general public.

The structure of this article continues by defining communication and strategic communication and explains the models of power in context to these through a review of their definitions. The article then presents the data gathered in the form of the narrative and counter-narrative, the interpreted data, and the deductive analysis. Such a methodology qualifies the link to the research question of why a state actor, Israel, wages information warfare by soft power and why a non-state actor, Hamas, wages information warfare by sharp power. The study concludes that the state, Israel, cannot use sharp power and that the non-state actor, Hamas, cannot use soft power.

This leads to the conclusion that when waging information warfare non-state actors such as Hamas can cause distraction by the key attributes of expression and manipulation of the mass media and public sensitivities (sharp power), rather than the attraction and persuasion (soft power) used by states such as Israel. All that is required is to instil a perception, even without facts, in the minds of the audience, which includes global leaders.

## 1 COMMUNICATION AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Strategic communication placed in the context of the model of soft and sharp power provides a better insight as to why any form of communication has long been accepted as integral to the conduct of warfare. Farwell (2012) provides examples of how this is the case through the principles of communication that throughout history have

made a critical difference to the outcomes of crises, conflicts, politics, and diplomacy across different cultures and societies. He shows how major leaders have moved audiences; figures in history from Julius Caesar to Winston Churchill, Napoleon to Hugo Chavez, Martin Luther to Barack Obama and Ronald Reagan have forged communication strategies to influence audiences. The strategic mindset is similar even if the technology is not; Obama used social media and the internet while Luther used the printing press. Now more than ever, an effective communication strategy is of paramount importance in the arenas of national security, diplomacy, and military operations. A 24/7 television, radio, and internet news cycle, paired with an explosion in social media, demands it (Farwell, 2012).

James Carey provides a synthesis of how communication in the military sphere has for many years mainly been viewed as a transmission system and an organizational function for production and distribution. Effective communication leads to improved performance. Well-designed communication programmes are essential for sharing strategic plans and providing other important organizational information which informs the goals, objectives and priorities that are integral to any military campaign (Carey, 1992).

Strategic communication as a sub-set of communication, according to Thorson (2018), has emerged as a mode of thought and practice promising to enhance state communication; encompassing long-established activities including public diplomacy, public relations, nation branding, and information operations. According to him the mode of power in the art of communication strategy sees concepts, doctrines, and activities employed which include psychological operations, military information support operations, propaganda, and public diplomacy that can be summed up as information warfare. Each of these use techniques observed in the models of soft or sharp power. In waging information warfare, be it by the soft power or the sharp power model, the objectives are to create and counter threats, such as propaganda, hybrid warfare, fake news, and election tampering, and it is often taken for granted that states are inferior to their non-state challengers in these domains, as non-state actors are less constrained by laws and regulation (Thorson, 2018).

The significance of this is provided by Steyn, who elaborates on how strategic communication is a critical organizational management process. The main driving force behind the increased interest in strategic communication is because complex changing environments require even more communication, and when functioning across international borders require legitimacy to operate (Steyn, 2003).

This is developed by Hallahan et al, who consider that strategic communication as a military tool ties objective to core values, with the mission statement as the blueprint for communication to sustain momentum and rationale and to spur innovation. To succeed it needs to convey a consistent message thread that is clear and simple in order to capture attention and engage a conversation that generates

support, motivates behaviours, and, through empowerment, allows the audience to participate in creating the change without alienating them. The audience may have multiple generations, gender, ethnicity, geographies and functional areas (Hallahan et al., 2007).

Argenti et al. show that effective strategic communication creates engagement and increases the likelihood of success in any conflict, considering that victory needs a positive post-conflict reception by the international community. Well-designed communication provides the tools for a stronger and more consistent expression of the brand that is *per se* the ideology of the victor. Storytellers need to communicate the message with authenticity, purpose and consistency, playing close attention to each audience's concerns, potential resistance, requirements and objectives (Argenti et al., 2005).

This means that information warfare needs to engage both populations and world leaders to influence and sway opinion from the onset of any conflict. Zerfass et al. show such developments in the rollout of an effective strategic communication programme which involves an education process that needs to be designed to build support, maintain strength and shift attitudes in accordance with the established objectives. They show how messages are most effective when communicated through more than one medium, using multiple communication outlets such as print, the internet, social media, town hall meetings and most importantly, face-to-face discussions. Their conclusions are that lasting impact requires two-way communication, so feedback must be sought in order to understand what is working and what is not working, and to make changes accordingly to reflect input (Zerfass et al., 2007). This article adopts this finding and codes the narrative and the counter-narrative of the data sets deductively as a measure of effect, and then classifies the technique in either the model of soft power or the model of sharp power.

## 1.1 The relevance of power to strategic communication

The research question of this article seeks an analysis of strategic communication by means of waging information warfare through two models of power, that of soft and sharp power. In order to explain this, the article continues with a review of the definitions of the different models of power, and then proceeds to show how Hamas, a non-state actor, uses sharp power in its struggle against a state actor, Israel, which uses soft power. In this aspect both are using communication in the strategic sense of waging war where the difference is in tactics or techniques, and this leads to different outcomes in the battle of information warfare.

In context, then, strategic communication is the umbrella of information warfare, and the models of power are relevant to non-state actors like Hamas, even though they were conceived as concepts and descriptors for state actors. The rationale of the emphasis on the state at the time they were conceived is explained by Mingst and Arreguín-Toft: because the Cold War arena was dominated by states and the bi-polar alliance system (Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, 2010). The rationale for also

looking at non-state actors after the end of the Cold War is provided by Muhittin, who explained that the bi-polar alliance system has ended, state borders have opened, and a process of globalization is going on that involves many other actors in addition to states (Muhittin, 2003).

## 2 MODELS OF POWER

Power has many definitions, according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary. One is the ability or capacity to do something or to act in a certain way. Another is the ability or capacity to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events. Both mean getting what you want when you want it. There are means, methods and techniques beyond that of the use of physical force, such as the threat thereof; you do not necessarily need to have the capability. All that is required is the perception that you have the capability. The essential difference then is not just the means, but rather the method or technique, the model or tactic.

This is significant in today's world, as noted by Carson, because news is distributed by social media and sometimes it relates to or denotes circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotions and personal belief. A population can be influenced by that which is not factual or fabrications of varying degrees, a.k.a. the buzzword "fake news" (Carson, 2019).

While there are many good reasons to have a critical view of generalizations, the idea of post-truth as described by Grathwohl captures important challenges about how power is exercised and information warfare waged (Grathwohl, 2017). In considering this, the article argues that non-state actors are as relevant as state actors, and that they wield power and wage information warfare. The more we research, the more we can distinguish between different models of power and how they are used and by whom, and in doing so we find that the same concepts and descriptors of power are applicable to both state and non-state actors.

In order to show this, the article will continue by detailing the main characteristics of each model of power to show the main differences between hard, soft, smart and sharp power. It will then discuss the case of a non-state actor, Hamas, showing that the descriptors of power originally used for states can also be applied to non-state actors.

### 2.1 Hard power and soft power

The field of international relations developing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century's Cold War brought Harvard Professor of Government Joseph Nye Jr to conceive the term "*hard power*" to describe the power interactions in the international arena. Hard power is a model of strategic communication that, according to him and those subsequently using the term, was based on coercion and was largely a function of a country's military or economic might through threat or payment. In other words, hard power meant a state getting what it wanted by waging information warfare by using or threatening to use force or sanctions, or by inducing compliance with rewards (Nye, 2009).

Technological evolution, the opening of borders, and increased travel and migration enabled people to communicate more than ever before. Communication was no longer just one-to-one such as over a phone, or one-to-many such as a radio or television broadcast. Communication was many-to-many, enabling a conversation and the mass population to express its opinions. It also enabled information warfare to be waged both by and against the mass population and non-state actors such as terrorist entities.

It was this new medium of mass two-way communication that brought Joseph Nye to coin the term “*soft power*” as another model of strategic communication, defined as a state or other actor waging information warfare to get what it wanted by attracting and persuading people through values, policies, institutions, and culture. The inference was that the new medium of communication could be used akin to a commercial advertisement or product branding in order to influence people (Nye, 2004).

Nye contrasted hard power and soft power when analyzing state activities. The latter, he said, is based on attraction (as opposed to the former which is coercion) and arises from the positive appeal of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies – as well as from a vibrant, independent civil society. It involves diplomacy, strategic communication, foreign assistance, civic action, economic reconstruction and development, as well as cultural influences such as art, literature, music, cinema, design, fashion, and even food.

Around the time that the US government began to acknowledge the importance of soft power in the mid-2000s, almost a decade after it was first voiced by Nye, Nye also realized that soft power is rarely enough on its own. When it is used to wage information warfare by states it is often to support or reinforce hard power. He therefore introduced “*smart power*” as an extension, a combination of hard and soft power where one reinforces the other. In other words, soft power when coupled with hard power would be a force multiplier in information warfare (Nye, 2009).

Nossel elaborates that smart power is also a model of strategic communication which is the careful calibration of hard power and soft power to achieve political objectives. It refers to an approach that underscores the necessity of a strong military, but also invests heavily in alliances, partnerships, and institutions at all levels to expand one's influence and establish the legitimacy of one's actions. Smart power is a useful term which provides a framework for analysis. It assists in showing when the framing of the information shades into deception, limiting the subject’s voluntary choices and moving from persuasion to coercion (Nossel, 2004).

This is significant because smart power as a model of information warfare underscores the necessity of a state to expand its influence and establish the legitimacy of its actions. This highlights political objectives and military objectives against not only the state leadership but also the civilian population. This opens the door to considering how non-state actors also wield power to influence both state leadership and the mass population through social media, for example.

## 2.2 Sharp power

Yet another model of waging information warfare to achieve strategic communication objectives is “*sharp power*”, as articulated by Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig in 2017. The intention was to provide a model that would explain the rising influence of authoritarian states in the democratic world as being something different to soft power, because the soft power characteristics of persuasion were not prevalent. They described it as a model of power that applies the deceptive use of information by authoritarian governments for hostile purposes employing subversion, manipulation, distraction, and lies. They provided the case studies of China and Russia, as examples of authoritarian states, who use information in a piercing, penetrating, or perforating manner in the political and information environments in the targeted countries, for example, a democracy like the United States. They demonstrated that this means, and method of influence is not soft (persuasion) or hard (coercion) but, in their view sharp (subversive) (Walker and Ludwig, 2017).

They provided cases to show how authoritarian states exploit freedoms in the Western world to covertly propagate their partisan and illiberal views, without engaging in a legitimate effort to share alternative ideas or broaden the debate. Authoritarian states can do this because they have not and do not play by the rules of governing democracies. They exploit the asymmetry of openness between their restrictive systems and democratic societies. The sharp power model is not principally about attraction or even persuasion; instead, it centres on distraction and manipulation. The means used to gain favourable public opinion are via sophisticated information technologies and social media with a reliance on subversion, bullying and pressure.

Sharp power is an excellent addition to the terminology. It does not make redundant the models of hard, soft and smart power, which are still very relevant to information warfare. Sharp power adds a model to help understand events that cannot be explained solely in terms of hard and soft power or their combined smart power. In other words, sharp power is when the target audience can no longer be discerning; it is determinism, where the target audience may not even be aware of it and so lacks the ability to be discerning.

## 3 NEW TERMS BUT THE SAME THREATS

The proliferation of terms, concepts and descriptors was very useful in understanding the wielding of power. These provide models that can be used to show how the waging of information warfare is to achieve strategic communication objectives. Each model also indicates a different means that could be contemplated to counter the threats posed. In doing so the model or the means used by actors, both state and non-state, also provide a methodology by which an analysis can be conducted to determine whether they were wielding hard, soft, smart or sharp power. While some means such as military or economic are clear to observe, as are their impacts and effects, it is not always easy to determine when or how an actor is using information and its impact

and effects. For example, hard power uses information to coerce, while soft power uses information to persuade – but both are using information to wage war. So, an additional way to differentiate them is to look at the responses of the target state or its population or the measures of effect, and not just at the means used.

For example, in using hard power, which is coercion or threat, there is no interest in what the target wants or thinks, because the objective is to make the target afraid, and so if it is afraid then hard power has been applied and has succeeded. Reassurance and mitigating the fear reduces the effectiveness of hard power. In soft power the adversary is trying to persuade the target to freely change. It could be described as voluntary change or voluntarism. In this case, everything depends on what the target wants or thinks, and there are a range of responses, none of which involve fear. If the target's opinions or actions change, then it has been effective.

So, measuring effect is an additional way to differentiate between the models of power, by looking at the responses of the target state or its population. This article does so by interpreting the counter-narrative as a response to the narrative of each side, after the narrative has been coded and then analyzed in the context of the models of power. This methodology of evaluating the means used, as well as the responses and measures of effect, makes it possible to determine whether soft or sharp power is being used.

Public diplomacy, for example, is soft power because it aims to persuade, but if the principle of voluntarism has been breached because the audience has been injected by fake news, that is sharp power, because the audience then lacks the ability to be discerning. Sharp power is offensive by piercing, penetrating, or perforating the political and information environments in the targeted countries. The techniques of sharp power involve psychological warfare and propaganda which are all very similar, and not too different from commercial marketing strategies. Product branding, advertising and market research clearly show how vulnerable and influenced any person is. The measures of effect can be determined quantitatively by surveys or qualitatively by responses in the sway of opinion.

Sharp power differs from soft power, which harnesses the allure of culture and values to enhance a country's strength. When actors use sharp power, it is accompanied by a determination to monopolize ideas, suppress alternative narratives, and exploit partner institutions. Sharp power and soft power are not mutually complementary. No actor can simultaneously use soft power attraction and coercive sharp power disruption and censorship against an open democratic society.

It is hard to counter both soft and sharp power in a democracy because the objective of the state is to permit and even promote openness, for example, the freedom of the press. But there are still watchdog authorities and censors that could limit deliberate deception. One way to counter both sharp power and soft power is to tarnish the wielder and to take an assertive posture on behalf of principles.

## 4 THE CASE OF HAMAS AND ISRAEL

As has been noted, the models of hard, soft, smart and sharp power were first coined in literature that used states as the case example. However, in war there are also non-state actors, which have progressively become significant in the wielding of power and the waging of information warfare. This article argues that the models of power are applicable and very useful to the analysis and understanding of the waging of information warfare between state and non-state actors, in their actions, the means and the outcomes, in order to attain strategic communication objectives.

This article proceeds to demonstrate this applicability of the various models of power in the context of information warfare as a means of strategic communication. This is achieved by taking the case of Hamas, a non-state actor, and Israel, a state actor, in their conflict during the period 1 December 2017 to 31 March 2018. This was the first pre-stage of regular Palestinian protests at the Gaza border fence in what has become known as “The March of the Return”.

In order to make a solid determination of whether Israel the state and/or Hamas the non-state were successful in conveying their messages to their audiences, a secondary analysis of data after the information warfare campaign was necessary, and was undertaken in the research for this article and provided in the data sets of the narrative, the counter-narrative and the coding that is the measure of effect. In doing so this article will also show the value of the models of soft power and sharp power for the analysis of non-state actors.

### 4.1 Hard power, soft power and sharp power in a real-life example

The results determined and found in the research for this article were also determined and found in research undertaken by others. This mutual reinforcement sustains the conclusions by Frisch, for example, who details how there is no doubt that hard power was used constantly by both sides (Frisch, 2018). Polon elaborates on a protracted and ongoing exchange of fire that included the launch of rockets and burning kites and balloons across the border by Hamas into Israel, and the bombing by the Israel Air Force of targets in Gaza and the economic blockade of Gaza by Israel (Polon, 2018).

These also determined that there was an information warfare battlefield in addition to the geographical face-off between the armed forces. The narrative of events initially targeted each other’s population through the global mass media and social media. The success or failure of this, or the measure of effect, is analyzed in this article as a counter-narrative which was also targeted at each other’s populations, as well as at the international media and the global opinion both of leaders and the public. This was also through social media. The objective of both sides was to influence the other side, attain legitimacy for their own policies, politics and actions, and delegitimize the other side’s policies, politics and actions. There was no indication that their own population was a target in this information warfare campaign.

Looking at how both sides battled in and for the international media, world public opinion and the support of world leaders shows how soft and sharp power were wielded, and how sharp power is an excellent model for the means used by non-state actors, in addition to that used by the authoritarian states which were the origin of the construction of the model.

## 4.2 The data sets

So far, this article has considered the aspects of communication, strategic communication and the models of power applicable in the waging of information warfare. The general premise of this article is that information warfare is a type of strategic communication which is waged by those means described in the models of soft and sharp power. The explicit hypothesis within this is that non-state actors such as Hamas wage information warfare in accordance with the sharp power model, and democratic state actors like Israel wage information warfare in accordance with the soft power model.

The methodology is now to describe the gathering, processing, interpretation, and analysis of the data sets that tested this by deductively questioning which model of power was being used by which actor in the case example. The sample of data used and described is the narrative and counter-narrative of events by Israel and Hamas for the period 1 December 2017 to 31 March 2018. The data was primary media material, prepared and delivered by each side and quoted by newspapers, TV, radio, and social media, projecting their efforts to influence and sway opinion. The information provided by both sides was in three languages, English, Arabic and Hebrew. The analysis found that all three languages held the same content.

The data of the narrative and counter-narrative were gathered systematically on the day of the broadcast and stored digitally, labelling the time of broadcast, the time of data collection and the type of content e.g. statement by official, official press release or report of an event. The data was processed by looking at the narrative of each of the events and summarizing its content. In order to consider the impact of the narrative or the measure of its effect, the response or the counter-narrative was the second set of data gathered. This was also stored digitally, labelling the time of broadcast, the time of data collection, and the type of content e.g. statement by official, official press release, report of an event or report of a response to the narrative. The significance of date/time stamping was to enable the interpretation of whether the narrative had had any direct impact by influencing or swaying opinion.

If there was a link between the narrative and the counter-narrative, i.e. if there was an impact or sway of opinion in the counter-narrative that related back to the narrative, then it was coded 1, and if not then it was coded 0. The data that was coded 1 was then interpreted by classification into soft or sharp power in accordance with the model of each type of power. The models of soft and sharp power have different techniques, so by using such a method of analysis it was possible to deductively determine which model of power in information warfare was being used by each

side to attempt to achieve strategic communication objectives to try to influence and sway opinion.

The meaningful pieces of content in the analysis, coded 1, were thus determined in accordance with the models of soft and sharp power. In this manner the content analysis examining patterns in the narrative and counter-narrative was able to determine that Israel used soft power and that Hamas used sharp power in their respective information warfare. This interpretation also concluded that a state, Israel, cannot use sharp power, and a non-state actor, Hamas, cannot use soft power.

### 4.3 The narrative of Hamas and Israel

The methodology of the narrative in considering the case requires sufficient data to show a coherent and consistent information warfare campaign, and to be able to determine a pattern that would enable the models of power to be interpreted and analyzed deductively. During a 121-day period, from 1 December 2017 to 31 March 2018, a minimum of three newspaper articles from different newspapers, five radio broadcasts from different radio stations, and two TV news broadcasts from different TV stations three times a day (morning 8am, afternoon 1pm and evening 8pm), in addition to social media exchanges including YouTube clips, were gathered from each side. So, the data gathered for the narrative consisted of 1694 items plus social media content, which in the case of Hamas came to a data total of 2034 items, and in the case of Israel 2033 items.

The events described by both sides in the narrative relate to the use of hard power, that of acts of violence, by the other side. Differences in the wording and intonation, the type of language, between coercive (sharp power) or persuasive (soft power) was also made possible by looking at the styles of each narrative of each side to differentiate, for example, the use of adjectives, adverbs, hyperbole and rhetoric in addition to the content. With such a methodology it was possible to ascertain both the means and the objective of the provision of detail and information, and hence which model of power was being applied in the information warfare.

Following the interpretation, it could be seen that the underlying message in Israel's narrative, written in statements issued by the Israel Defence Forces and other Israeli government offices, is that Hamas was a ruthless and violent Islamic theocracy supported by a bellicose state, Iran, which constantly threatened and attacked civilians in Israel. The apparent goal of Israel's narrative was to persuade the other side's population, and world opinion, that Hamas was a terrorist organization that initiated and organized the protests and demonstrations, not a group of oppressed citizens, and that it was forcing suicide bombers to break through the border fence and perpetrate violence against Israeli civilians. In the case of Israel, the style of the narrative was written as public diplomacy to attract, i.e. soft power.

On the other hand, in the interpretation it could be seen that the underlying message in Hamas' narrative, voiced by their leadership, was that it was the elected government

of a desert enclave facing a humanitarian crisis because of a prolonged blockade by Israel, which despite withdrawing from Gaza in 2005 was still occupying another area of Palestinian territory, the West Bank, and was refusing to grant statehood to a nation. The narrative of Hamas presented its protests and demonstrations as innocent and peaceful, initiated by suffering citizens to protest their awful economic and social conditions. They wanted to show that the Israeli response was not proportional, and that civilians, including women and children, were being wounded and killed. The apparent goal in Hamas' narrative was to provide selective information to obtain condemnation of Israel by international bodies, such as the United Nations Council on Human Rights. In the case of Hamas, the style of the narrative was written to persuade, and to provide misleading information or deception by only showing and providing selective, out of context information, i.e. it was using sharp power.

Between 1 December 2017 and 31 March 2018 friction between the two sides escalated progressively. Hamas threw firebombs, shot at Israeli soldiers, put explosives on the border fence, and crossed into Israeli territory. Israel used riot control methods, including teargas and live fire. There were casualties on both sides. There was no success by either side in swaying the opinion of the population of the other side that, if successful, would have had an impact on the leader's decisions and actions.

In order to make a solid determination on whether Israel the state actor, and/or Hamas the non-state actor, were successful in conveying their messages to global audiences, a secondary analysis of data was necessary, as a measure of effect. This was undertaken by ascertaining whether any world leader's opinion was swayed towards supporting the other side. No evidence was found to sustain that the narrative of either side was in any manner achieving its objective. So, the first stage of the information warfare campaign, be it by soft power, Israel, or by sharp power, Hamas, failed on both sides. Nor did hard power succeed on either side, and the armed conflict continued.

#### **4.4 The counter-narrative of Hamas and Israel**

Given that the information warfare campaign failed, both sides had an immediate counter-narrative to the other side's narrative. This commenced on 2 December 2017. The same process of sample data gathering was used for the counter-narrative as was used for the narrative. The methodology of the counter-narrative in considering the case required enough data to show a coherent and consistent information warfare campaign, and to be able to determine a pattern that would enable the models of power to be interpreted and analyzed deductively.

During a 120-day period, from 2 December 2017 to 31 March 2018, a minimum of three newspaper articles from different newspapers, five radio broadcasts from different radio stations, and two TV news broadcasts from different TV stations three times a day (morning 8am, afternoon 1pm and evening 8pm), in addition to social media exchanges including YouTube clips, were gathered from each side. So, the data gathered for the narrative consisted of 1680 items plus social media content,

which in the case of Hamas came to a data total of 2002 items, and in the case of Israel 2003 items.

The target audience of both was not their own population. The content analysis used qualitative methods which analyzed content within texts, that is the words, the language, and the intonation in the spoken language. The content analysis of the techniques, means, objectives and outcomes in accordance with the models of sharp and soft power showed that as it went in the narrative, so it went in the counter-narrative. Israel continued to wage information warfare in accordance with the model of soft power, and Hamas in accordance with the model of sharp power.

The purpose of this interpretation of the counter-narrative relative to the narrative was to ascertain the measure of effect of the narrative. If there was a link between the narrative and the counter-narrative, i.e. if there was an impact or sway of opinion, then it was coded 1, and if not then it was coded 0. The data that was coded 1 was interpreted by classification into soft or sharp power, in accordance with the model of each type of power.

In the counter-narrative both sides appealed to the emotion and personal beliefs of the other's population, but also escalated this to the world forum and global leaders, attempting to apply third party pressure on the other side or at least to tarnish its image and validity, and maybe delegitimize it.

The dominant theme in Israel's counter-narrative was that the Hamas narrative wanted to deceive, and that its acts on the Gaza border were an attempt to force Israel to respond by military means so as many Palestinians as possible would be killed, including women and children, in order to obtain favourable media coverage, sympathy in global public opinion, denunciation from world leaders, and condemnatory resolutions from UN bodies. The Israeli counter-narrative stressed that Hamas was using disproportionate means, namely violence, and media deception, whereas peaceful diplomacy would result in a lifting of its blockade of Gaza.

Israel employed public diplomacy techniques and associated means to attempt to attract and persuade the residents of Gaza not to engage in activities that Hamas promoted and its preferred means. The overriding message in Israel's counter-narrative was to show a better life than violence. In view of this it is possible to define Israel as waging information warfare in accordance with the model of soft power. Israel's narrative left the door open for the target audience to decide whether to support Hamas or not, and whether to condemn it or not. Given this freedom of choice there was no evidence to suggest that Israel succeeded in swaying the opinion of anyone.

The dominant theme in Hamas's counter-narrative was that Israel was using media deception to hide the evidence that Israel was committing war crimes by intentionally shooting and killing peaceful demonstrators. Hamas' narrative did not offer a choice but called on the world to condemn Israel.

There was no evidence to suggest that Hamas in its counter-narrative attempted to attract or persuade Israel's citizens through values, policies, institutions or culture, or to aim to win through the positive appeal of its cultural and political ideals or by suggestions that these provide a vibrant, independent civil society. Hamas did not engage in foreign assistance, civic action, economic reconstruction and development, or cultural influences such as art, literature, music, cinema, design, fashion, or even food. So, in accordance with the models of power, Hamas was not waging information warfare by the model of soft power.

The interpretation of the content in accordance with the techniques of the models of power showed that Hamas' counter-narrative was waging information warfare in accordance with the model of sharp power. In this information warfare campaign, waged between 1 December 2017 and 31 March 2018, it was Hamas that succeeded and not Israel, for in accordance with the model of sharp power all that is required is to instil a perception, even without facts, in the minds of the audience, which includes global leaders. Even though Hamas, a non-state actor, succeeded in gaining sympathy, it was not able to utilize this to further any other objectives. So, winning an information battle, be it by soft or by sharp power, does not necessarily mean that the conflict is concluded.

Other research has reached the same conclusions. For example, Clarke explained that Hamas succeeded in gaining support from third parties such as the United Nations Secretary General and the EU foreign policy chief (Clarke, 2017). Landau also detailed how the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, and the EU foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, called for an independent investigation into Israel's conduct (Landau, 2018). Similarly, Lyman showed how at the Vatican, Pope Francis lamented the killing of defenceless Palestinians (Lyman, 2018). The analysis of Baconi was also important, because it showed that a limited information warfare battle is not enough to further other objectives (Baconi, 2017). An investigation into the events brought the United Nations Human Rights Council to debate and approve five anti-Israel resolutions on 22 March 2019. This included an arms embargo against Israel and the prosecution of the Israeli Defence Force for war crimes.

## Conclusions

The general premise of this article is that information warfare is a type of strategic communication that is waged by those means described in the models of soft and sharp power. The explicit hypothesis within this is that non-state actors wage information warfare in accordance with the sharp power model, and democratic state actors wage information warfare in accordance with the soft power model.

The research process or approach to address the hypothesis of this article moved from the general to the specific, commencing with an introduction on communication and strategic communication, then placed the models of different types of power within this context, showing the relevance to information warfare. Thereafter the case was presented.

In presenting the case example the research to prove the hypothesis was explained as having been tested through data sets of the narrative and counter-narrative of events by Israel and Hamas for the period 1 December 2017 to 31 March 2018 in their conflict on the border of Gaza, the first pre-stage of what has become known as “The March of the Return”. The data was gathered, processed and interpreted according to the differences in style and content of each side’s narrative and counter-narrative, and the apparent objectives therein. The data was analyzed deductively using the models of power to determine when states and non-state actors utilize soft and/or sharp power in their information warfare to attain strategic communication objectives. In doing so the differences between the models of soft and sharp power were accentuated, thereby sustaining the theoretical underpinning of the hypothesis that the essential differences in the models of power are not just the ability, capability and intent, but also the means, method or technique of both states and non-state actors.

The secondary analysis of the data after the initial information warfare campaign, the narrative, was necessary and was undertaken by analysis of the counter-narrative that was also an information warfare campaign. The coding illustrated the measure of effect. If there was a link between the narrative and the counter-narrative, which meant there was an impact or sway of opinion, then it was coded 1, and if not then it was coded 0. The data that was coded 1 was interpreted by classification into soft or sharp power in accordance with each model of power.

The interpretation and analysis of the data for both the narrative and counter-narrative concluded that Israel, a state, wields soft power, while Hamas, a non-state actor, wields sharp power in their respective information warfare. The analysis of the counter-narrative concluded that when waging information warfare non-state actors such as Hamas can cause distraction by the key attributes of expression and manipulation of the mass media and public sensitivities (sharp power), rather than by the attraction and persuasion (soft power) used by states such as Israel. A state, Israel, cannot use sharp power, and a non-state actor, Hamas, cannot use soft power. Even though Hamas as a non-state actor succeeded in gaining sympathy, it was not able to utilize this to further any other objectives. So, winning an information battle, be it by soft or sharp power, does not necessarily mean that the conflict is concluded.

The analysis of models of power used in information warfare in the context of strategic communication from the data of the case example in this article offers certain conclusions. It shows that non-state actors that prioritize control and censorship over openness are deficient in soft power projection and success, so they fall to using sharp power. In an information warfare battle, be it by the model of soft power or the model of sharp power, all that is required is to instil a perception, even without facts, in the minds of the audience, be it the population or global leaders.

Given such a conclusion, which has also been demonstrated by others, there is therefore just cause to declare that the theoretical framework and premise of the models of power in information warfare, both soft and sharp power, are and have

been sustained deductively by empirical research. This thereby contributes to scientific knowledge and demands the analysis of further research and cases towards developing a paradigm on information warfare and models of power within the context of strategic communication.

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## VOJAŠKE AVTOBIOGRAFIJE: JIH SPODBUJATI, ODSVETOVATI ALI PREZRETI?

### MILITARY AUTOBIOGRAPHIES: ENCOURAGE, DISCOURAGE OR IGNORE?

**Povzetek** Eden izmed vsakih 6000 napoteni vojakov kmalu po končani napotitvi na mednarodno operacijo ali misijo objavi avtobiografsko knjigo o svojih izkušnjah. Vojaški spomini so torej neizogibna posledica napotitev. Kako naj se obrambne organizacije odzovejo na te vojaške avtorje? Ali naj jih spodbujajo, odvrčajo od pisanja ali ignorirajo? Na to vprašanje v tem članku ponujamo argumentiran odgovor. Navajamo profile vseh pisateljev vojaških spominov iz Afganistana, ki prihajajo iz sedmih držav, in sicer ZDA, Združenega kraljestva, Nemčije, Kanade, Avstralije, Belgije in Nizozemske, ter vrste zgodb, ki jih pišejo. Majhna večina piše pozitivne zgodbe. Negativne zgodbe opisujejo predvsem razočaranje nad tem, kako je obrambna organizacija ali družba na splošno poskrbela za udeležence, ter izkušnje s posttravmatsko stresno motnjo (PTSM). Zanimivo se izkaže, da je na podlagi vrste dela in tega, ali pripadniki še vedno delajo za obrambno organizacijo, mogoče napovedati, ali bo pisatelj napisal pozitivno ali negativno zgodbo. Priporočljivo je, da vojaške organizacije, ki si želijo objavo pozitivnih knjig, še posebej spodbujajo k pisanju individualno napotene pripadnike, ki delujejo na področju bojne podpore in so pripadniki stalne sestave.

**Ključne besede** *Vojaški pisatelji, Afganistan, spomini, avtobiografije, veterani.*

**Abstract** Of every 6,000 soldiers deployed, one publishes an autobiographical book about their experiences shortly after the war. Military memoirs are therefore an inescapable consequence of deployments. How should defence organizations react to these soldier-authors: should they be encouraged, discouraged, or ignored? A substantiated answer to that question is given in this article by providing a profile of all writers of military Afghanistan memoirs from seven countries (the US, the UK, Germany, Canada, Australia, Belgium and the Netherlands) and the kind of plots they write. A small majority write positive plots. The negative ones specifically deal with

disillusionment about the care the defence organization or society at large provided, and experiences with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It is interesting that it proves to be possible to predict whether a writer will write a positive or a negative plot based on the type of work they do and whether they still work for the defence organization. Military organizations interested in getting positive books published are advised to particularly encourage writing by individually deployed personnel who work in combat support positions and are on active service.

**Key words** *Military writers, Afghanistan, memoirs, autobiographies, veterans.*

**Introduction** In the United States, service personnel who had just returned from Iraq and Afghanistan were helped to write a short story about their experiences by well-known writers. It not only resulted in the bestselling book *Operation Homecoming* (Carroll, 2008), but also in an Oscar nomination for the documentary about the project (Robbins, 2007).

Inspired by *Operation Homecoming*, a similar project was started in the Netherlands with a similar outcome: a bestseller called *Task Force Uruzgan* (Bemmel, 2009). Although the initiative for this book came from the Dutch quality newspaper *De Volkskrant*, it was embraced by the Dutch Ministry of Defence (MoD), who offered not only locations for the ‘literary training camp’ sessions, but also allowed the writers to attend during working hours.

This active support for writing activities is not a matter of course, however, as research into international military autobiographies shows that defence organizations do not seem to actively encourage their personnel to write books; on the contrary, the number of soldier-authors who specifically indicate that they have been encouraged by their MoD is just as low (7%) as the number of soldier-authors who have been actively discouraged (6%) (Kleinreesink & Soeters, 2016).

On the one hand, MoDs may be concerned about the negative image that could be created by these books, and might therefore choose to discourage soldiers from writing their deployment stories. On the other hand, for any organization, creating a good, or at least realistic, image is important to ensure its continuity, and for organizations that are dependent on politics, such as the armed forces, public support also helps in furthering their cause. This can be a reason to encourage soldiers<sup>1</sup> to write books about their experiences.

As the Dutch Department of Defence public relations formulates it in its ISAF<sup>2</sup> Stage III communication plan:

<sup>1</sup> In this article the term ‘soldier’ is used colloquially as a synonym of ‘military personnel’, not as an indication of rank.

<sup>2</sup> ISAF: International Security Assistance Force, the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan.

[...] it is essential that the perception of Dutch society does not differ from reality. Knowledge of the operation and insight into the modes of operation will lead to an understanding of the complex circumstances and to an appreciation for the way in which Dutch servicemen operate in them. The social support that is created in this way is important, especially in crisis situations<sup>3</sup> (DV&C, 2006 pp 4-5).

This article explores military autobiographies from seven different countries to provide a substantiated answer to the question: should the MoD actively encourage or discourage book writing by military authors?

In order to do this, the article will provide a scientific profile of the ‘writing soldier’: who are these soldier-authors, what kind of stories (positive or negative) do they write, and is it possible to predict who will write what kind of story?

For the article every military Afghanistan autobiography published in the US, the UK, Australia, Germany, Canada, Belgium and the Netherlands in the first decade of the war in Afghanistan (2001-2010) was researched; a total of 54 books.

## 1 THEORY

Military memoirs have been written since ancient times. The first military memoir that has survived to this day was written in the fourth century BCE by the Greek historian and soldier Xenophon (Lee, 2005). Time and again historical research in different countries has shown that soldiers are prolific writers. After religious writers, they are usually the largest or second largest category of writers (Bjorklund, 1998; Harari, 2008; Baggerman, 2010). The *Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis*<sup>4</sup> database, for example, shows that of the 5,033 ‘egodocuments’ written between 1813 and 1914, 399 (8% of the total) were written by military personnel (Instituut, 2019).

Over the centuries, the writers of these types of texts have changed. Whereas in earlier history mainly kings, noblemen and senior officers wrote books about their war experiences, from the beginning of the mid-eighteenth century more and more junior officers, non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and common soldiers began to write, drawing in a reading audience.

This change of rank also changed the content of the writing. A general officer, with political influence and strategic responsibilities, will write a very different memoir from that of a private, whose tactical experience of war is often limited to what he or she can see immediately in front of them. Common soldiers mainly describe war from their own experiences. This writing style became so popular that by the end of

<sup>3</sup> *My translation*

<sup>4</sup> *Institute for the History of the Netherlands*

the twentieth century senior commanders had begun to take over the writing style of the common soldiers to increase their own credibility (Harari, 2007). The Israeli historian Yuval N. Harari calls this a change from eyewitness to ‘flesh-witness’. During the Renaissance, military memoirs were still fact-based eyewitness accounts, while contemporary military autobiographers gain authority by the very fact that they tell the story as they lived it “in the flesh”. These stories are not so much about the facts, but more about what it felt like.

To these flesh-witnesses, war becomes a revelatory experience, providing the flesh-witness with new knowledge and new experiences. According to Harari, these revelatory experiences can be represented by two different types of stories: growth stories (he calls them ‘narratives of positive revelation’) that deal with positive experiences (‘naive youth becomes wise veteran’), and disenchantment stories that deal with negative ones (‘naive youth expects to become a hero, but war turns out to produce victims, not heroes’) (Harari, 2008). With this, Harari departs from what most scientists have come to consider typical twentieth century military stories; following American literary scholar Paul Fussell (Fussell, 1975/2000) in his landmark study of military memoirs from the First World War, mainly written by conscripts, they assume that contemporary soldiers mainly write disenchantment stories. Harari does not agree, but he also acknowledges that he does not have precise numbers about the division between growth and disenchantment plots (Harari, 2008, p199).

This lack of quantitative insight is a general problem among researchers into military memoirs. Many claims are made about who writes and what they write about, but hardly anyone substantiates these claims with numbers.

In this article I would like to bridge that gap by quantitatively answering the following questions based on a complete set of international military memoirs:

- Who writes military memoirs? How representative are they of military personnel in general?
- What do they write about? Do they write positive or negative plots? Growth, disenchantment or other types of stories?
- Can we predict which soldier-authors will write positive or negative stories?

Based on this information, we can provide a substantiated answer to the question: should the MoD actively encourage, discourage, or ignore book writing by military authors?

## 2 METHODOLOGY

In order to answer these questions, autobiographical books written by military personnel that dealt for at least 50% of the text with their deployment experiences in Afghanistan were researched. Every Afghanistan memoir, traditionally or self-published between 2001 and 2010 and written in English, German or Dutch was researched, as long as it came from a country that has close military ties with the

Netherlands: the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, Canada, Australia and the Netherlands itself.<sup>5</sup>

The choice of Afghanistan memoirs had both an academic and a personal background. Academic, since the Afghanistan mission has been the largest mission for the Netherlands and many other countries in the past 20 years, which makes insight into Afghanistan veterans very relevant, and personal, as I have been deployed to Afghanistan myself and have written a military autobiography about this period (Kleinreesink, 2012). My book is not part of the research as it was published after 2010.

This first decade of the war, between 2001 and 2010, was chosen in order to look specifically at immediate memoirs (Hynes, 1997), i.e. memoirs that were written during or directly after a war. This type of memoir (in contrast to retrospective memoirs, written long after the war) can influence a war still in progress, and is therefore most interesting for an MoD looking to develop a strategic communications policy on the subject.

## 2.1 Who?

During the analysis phase, each book was read at least five times and the necessary data on the author (such as age, gender, type of deployment, still working for the MoD or not) and the plot were collected in a SPSS database. When it was not possible to find specific data in a book, additional methods were used, such as internet searches or directly contacting the author.

In addition, a separate database was created with comparison data on the seven countries in order to be able to estimate representativeness. This database holds data on the armed forces per country when it comes to gender, age, rank, branch of service and status (reservist versus full-timer). Where possible, data from 2010 was used from the *Military Balance* (IISS, 2002-2011). Where these were not available, country specific sources were used.<sup>6</sup> The total number of books published during the period researched (n = 54) is large enough (> 50) to be able to calculate statistical significance (p < 0.05).

This database also holds an estimate of the number of soldiers deployed to Afghanistan between 2001 and 2008<sup>7</sup>. This was calculated by multiplying the number of posts a country fulfils in Afghanistan (according to the *Military Balance*) by the average rotation factor (RF) per country, as in some countries a post is

<sup>5</sup> For a complete overview of all 54 researched books, see Appendix H of Kleinreesink, 2014 or Chapter 10 of Kleinreesink, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> US: (DoD-US, 2011); UK: (MoD-UK, 2011); Canada: (Park, 2008); Germany: U Michl, email 1 May 2012; the Netherlands: R. van Leeuwen, email 31 January and 9 March 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Only the numbers until 2008 are taken into consideration as it is on average two years after a deployment before an autobiography is published (in the period 2001-2010).

normally filled for an entire year, whereas in other countries an average rotation period only takes four months (Table 1).

**Table 1:**  
Calculation  
of Estimated  
# Soldiers in  
Afghanistan

| Country         | Posts 2001-2008 | RF    | Estimated # Soldiers |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------|----------------------|
| Australia       | 2.632           | 2     | 5.264                |
| Belgium         | 2.096           | 3     | 6.288                |
| Canada          | 11.510          | 2     | 23.020               |
| Germany         | 20.771          | 2 - 3 | 53.434               |
| The Netherlands | 8.084           | 2     | 16.168               |
| United Kingdom  | 28.030          | 2     | 56.060               |
| United States   | 151.414         | 1     | 151.414              |

## 2.2 What?

In order to gain insight into the kind of stories that soldier-authors write, I have used Norman Friedman's plot theory (Friedman, 1955). Friedman distinguishes fourteen different plots. A plot describes the development of the main character during the story; for instance, 'a protagonist who was sympathetic and full of ambition is subjected to a crucial loss which results in his utter disillusionment' is an example of a degeneration plot. An advantage of Friedman's plot analysis is that it clearly distinguishes between positive and negative stories. The example given is of a negative plot.

Also, Friedman's plot theory makes it possible to quantitatively test Harari's theory, as Friedman distinguishes two different disenchantment plots (disillusionment and degeneration) and two different growth plots (maturing and education). The ten other plots (such as action and sentimental plots) are not growth or disenchantment stories.

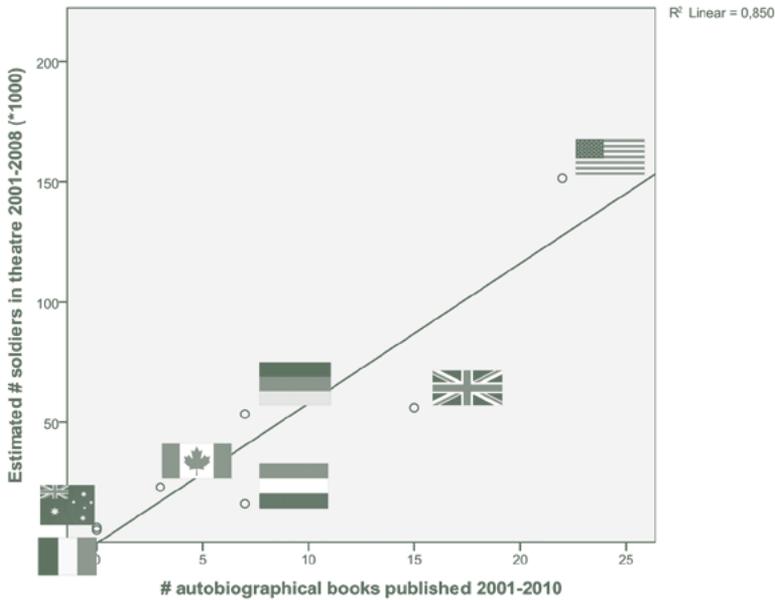
## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Who?

The majority of the books come from the US (41%) and the UK (28%). These are also the countries that deployed most military personnel to Afghanistan. The variance in the numbers of books published in each of the seven countries researched is almost entirely explained by the estimated number of soldiers that were deployed to Afghanistan between 2001 and 2008 per country<sup>8</sup> (Figure 1).

<sup>8</sup>  $R^2 = 0.85$ , slope = 0.15,  $p = 0.003$ ,  $r = 0.92$  (extremely large-sized effect). This model does suffer from a smaller sample size (7) than normally expected for reliable results (10-15 per predictor).

Figure 1:  
Relationship  
between books  
published and  
No. of soldiers in  
Afghanistan per  
country



On average one book is produced per 6,000 soldiers deployed, with a mean publication time of two years after deployment<sup>9</sup>. Since Belgian and Australian deployment figures are around this threshold number, no autobiographical mission-specific books were published there at all. In Canada three books were published, in the Netherlands and Germany seven, in the UK fifteen and in the US twenty-two.

How representative are these soldier-authors? When it comes to the division between male/female, they are very representative. Four of the 54 Afghanistan memoirs (7.4%) were written by women: each country, with the exception of Canada, had one female writer. That may not sound like much, in neither relative nor absolute terms, but it is not significantly different<sup>10</sup> from the normal population, since the percentage of female soldiers varies between 8.8% in Germany to 14.7% in Canada.

The same goes for branch of service. The division of soldier-authors across the service branches does not differ significantly<sup>11</sup> from the normal military population. Most writers have an Army background.

Representiveness starts to decline when it comes to the division between conscripts, reservists and full-timers. During the research period, only Germany still had active conscription, and conscripts could only be deployed to Afghanistan on a voluntary

<sup>9</sup>  $M = 2.31, SD = 1.89$ .

<sup>10</sup>  $\chi^2(4, N = 54) = 2.40, p > 0.05$ .

<sup>11</sup>  $\chi^2(12, N = 54) = 18.09, p > 0.05$ .

basis. An estimated 500 to 600 conscripts did so<sup>12</sup>, a fraction of the threshold number (6,000) for writing a book. So it is not surprising that there are no author-conscripts among the writers of these 54 books.

For the US, Canada and Germany the ratio of reservists against full-timers conforms to the normal ratio in these countries. However, in the Netherlands there are more reservist writers (5 out of 7; 71%) than should be expected from a country in which only 7% of its soldiers is reservist. The opposite is the case in the UK, which has a large percentage of reservists (32%), but not one writing reservist<sup>13</sup>. Part of the explanation for these phenomena can be found in the way the military book market functions. In all countries, full-time soldiers are eight times more likely to be published by a traditional publisher than reservists<sup>14</sup>. In the UK, military books are (almost) exclusively published by traditional publishers, explaining the absence of reservists. In the Netherlands, however, few military books are published by traditional publishers, and most military writers resort to self-publishing their book, something which may lead to more reservist-writers. The military book markets of the other countries function in between these extremes.

Also when looking at the rank of soldier-authors, they are only partially representative of the average soldier. Despite the fact that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century more and more military autobiographies were written by the lower ranks, two-thirds of the 21<sup>st</sup> century's soldier-authors are still officers. Of the 54 books, 36 are written by officers, fourteen by NCOs, and four by enlisted men. The number of non-commissioned officers that write, however, is consistent with the percentage of NCOs in the countries in this study<sup>15</sup>.

There are two aspects in which military writers are clearly not representative. First of all age; soldier-authors are on average 40 years old<sup>16</sup>, the youngest 25, the oldest 61, and over-40s are in the majority (58%). Military book writers are not representative of the normal military population when it comes to the distribution of age<sup>17</sup>. Writing books is something for the older soldier, either because it is more their medium, whereas younger soldiers may be more attracted to other public media such as blogs, or because it takes an objectivity that comes with maturity to write books.

The second aspect in which soldier-authors are not representative is the way in which they are deployed, either in a team or individually. Although no public data

<sup>12</sup> G. Kümmel, email 4 July 2013.

<sup>13</sup> US:  $X^2(1, N = 22) = 0.16, p > 0.10$ ; Canada:  $X^2(1, N = 3) = 0.88, p > 0.10$ ; Germany:  $X^2(1, N = 7) = 2.68, p > 0.10$ ; the Netherlands:  $X^2(1, N = 7) = 19.44, p < 0.01$ ; UK:  $X^2(1, N = 15) = 2.55, p > 0.10$ .

<sup>14</sup>  $X^2\text{Fisher}(1, N = 54) = 10.99, p = 0.002$

<sup>15</sup> NCOs:  $X^2(4, N = 54) = 5.75, p > 0.10$ ; Officers:  $X^2(4, N = 54) = 79.20, p < 0.001$ ; Enlisted:  $X^2(4, N = 54) = 17.82, p < 0.01$ .

<sup>16</sup>  $M = 39.9; SD = 9.6$

<sup>17</sup>  $X^2(9, N = 26) = 39.58, p < 0.001$ . NB: for the US no age distribution data was available, and for nine of the books, the age of the writer was not traceable.

is available on the percentage of individually deployed military personnel, the J1<sup>18</sup> from the Dutch Defence Operation Centre estimates that the number would not exceed 10% of all military personnel deployed to Afghanistan in any of the countries researched. However, exactly half the books were written by individually deployed soldiers. This would only not be significantly higher than expected if 35% or more of all military personnel deployed to Afghanistan were individually deployed<sup>19</sup>, and 35% is an unrealistically high percentage.

This fits the data from Polish research into Afghanistan veterans (Iwanek, 2011). When asked with whom they most often shared their mission memories, the majority (76%) preferred to do so with colleagues who had also been to Afghanistan, and only 48% (also) did so with colleagues who had not participated in the mission. As sharing mission experiences is easiest for military personnel who have been deployed with their own team and more difficult for individually deployed personnel, this may result in a greater motivation for individually deployed personnel to share their stories with the outside world in the form of books, than for personnel deployed with their own unit, who have more outlets to discuss their experiences. It also indicates a self-help motive for the individually deployed: a way of dealing with their experiences in the absence of like-minded colleagues.

We can conclude that soldier-authors are to a certain degree (gender, branch of service, number of writing NCOs) representative of the normal military population. However, they are not entirely representative, as they are older and higher in rank than the average soldier, and consist of a disproportionately large percentage of individually deployed personnel. In two of the five countries (the Netherlands and the UK) the ratio of reservists against professionals was also not representative.

### 3.2 What?

The next question is: how positive or negative are these soldier-authors in their books? Do 21<sup>st</sup> century volunteer forces still mainly describe being disillusioned by war, as did their mainly conscripted predecessors from the First World War?

Looking at the basic storylines by following the main character's development during the book, what catches the attention is that a (small) majority of the books have a positive plot: 31 out of 54 (57%). The division of the books is as Harari predicted: the majority (69%) describe revelatory experiences, either growth plots (30%) or disenchantment plots (39%). Other stories (such as action and admiration plots) make up the remaining 31% of the books.

We can therefore cautiously conclude that contemporary military memoirs are no longer only negative. However, a large minority (43%) of soldier-authors still write negative stories, nearly all of them disenchantment plots.

<sup>18</sup> J1: *The personnel department responsible for deploying all military personnel, regardless of branch of service.* Here: Verweij, 26 March 2013.

<sup>19</sup>  $\chi^2(1, N=52) = 3.91, p \approx 0.05$ .

There are two kinds of disenchantment plot. The first are degeneration plots; these are stories in which the main character's personality changes negatively, mainly because their deployment has resulted in them suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Six of the books (11%) describe such outcomes. This is remarkable, since memoir researchers (Hynes, 1997; Woodward & Jenkins, 2013) assume that PTSD stories need reflection time and therefore only appear long after a war. This may have to do with the attention given to the early detection of PTSD symptoms in contemporary armed forces, which allows for less of a taboo around PTSD. The symptoms are more clearly recognized and treated, and so soldiers can more quickly enter their experiences into book form than earlier generations, when PTSD or its precursors such as 'shell shock' were experienced as a personal failure, instead of something that can happen to anyone.

The second kind is the disillusionment plot, in which it is not the main character's personality that changes negatively, but their thinking. Disillusionment plots are about shattered ideals instead of shattered souls. Fifteen books (28%) describe this kind of negative story.

The disillusionment plots from the First World War dealt with shattered illusions about war. The mainly conscripted, male soldiers expected that war would turn them into heroes, but in reality war turned out to be awful and turned them into victims instead. In contemporary military memoirs these shattered romantic ideals of war can barely be seen, as only one book deals with this type of disillusionment (Bury, 2010). Apparently, 21<sup>st</sup> century full-time soldiers know better what to expect from war, possibly also thanks to their writing predecessors from previous wars.

Instead, in these 21<sup>st</sup> century how-war-shattered-my-ideals narratives, two other ideals are more often shattered: that of a caring armed forces and that of a caring society. Half the disillusionment plots were written by writers who were disappointed by their own armed forces. In some cases the soldiers felt they had been treated unfairly by the military, such as the story of an American reservist whose team, on their return to the US, are kept more or less imprisoned for four weeks without any explanation, because (it later turns out) they had been given a very dangerous anti-malaria medicine that needed to get out of their system (Skelly, 2010). But most are simply disappointed in their expectations of working in efficient and effective armed forces, with enough equipment in both quality and quantity, in which they are recognized by their superiors and colleagues for their work and hardship. These are complaints that can also be found in positive plots, but they are not so prevalent there as in the disillusioned-with-the-armed-forces books.

The other type of disillusioned authors, the disillusioned-with-society writers, are also disappointed by the recognition they receive, but in their case it is that of society at large. On their return they had expected more interest from their friends and also from the press, more money for the Defence organization or for wounded veterans, or more insight from politicians.

The disillusioned writers not only complain, but they also offer solutions, which vary from a list of military materiel that is required (Wohlgethan, 2010) or initiating a charity (Tootal, 2009), to writing a detailed, new political strategy (Lindemann, 2010). Their criticism is related to real and recognizable problems and in a democratic society contributes to the debate about deploying the military.

### 3.3 Plot predictions

In order to find out whether it is possible to predict who will write positive and who will write negative plots, a number of author characteristics were statistically tested. Most of them (such as rank, age, multiple deployments, branch of service<sup>20</sup>) do not influence the type of plot. There were only two author characteristics that tested significantly: still working for the Defence organization when the book was published, and the type of work: either combat or combat support.

#### 3.3.1 Working for the MoD

In general, soldier-authors who wrote negative plots no longer worked for the Defence organization at the time their book was published. Active service members were nine times more likely to write positive plots than former soldiers<sup>21</sup>. This probably has three main reasons: first of all, ‘you don’t bite the hand that feeds you’: people are more tempted to write positively about the organization they work for and must keep functioning in. Secondly, we know from social-psychology and organizational sciences that people who have left an organization are more prone to be negative about their former employer, to fit with their new beliefs about this organization as no longer positive, in order to solve their cognitive dissonance<sup>22</sup>. Thirdly, people who are disillusioned by their experiences are more likely to leave the defence organization and then write negative stories.

#### 3.3.2 Combat/Combat support

The second author characteristic that influences plot is the type of work the author primarily does: combat or combat support. Combat supporters (such as medical personnel, logisticians) have a weapon mainly for defensive use. Combatants (such as infantry, fighter pilots), on the other hand, are specifically trained to use their weapons offensively. Combatants write negative plots almost four times more often than combat supporters. This probably has to do with the fact that combat is less likely to lead to positive stories. Combatants have a greater chance of incurring direct losses in their own teams (and seeing death on the other side as well) and less chance of seeing what the (positive) effect of their work is. The very nature of their

<sup>20</sup> Rank:  $X^2$  (3,  $N = 54$ ) = 0.411,  $p = 0.938$ ; Age: Negative plots:  $M = 39.0$ ;  $SD = 8.9$ ; Positive plots:  $M = 40.6$ ;  $SD = 10.2$ ;  $t(43) = -0.570$ ,  $p = 0.572$ ,  $r = 0.09$  (small effect); Multiple deployments:  $X^2$ Fisher (1,  $N = 53$ ) = 0.012,  $p = 1.000$ ; Branch of service:  $X^2$ Fisher (1,  $N = 54$ ) = 1.95,  $p = 0.200$

<sup>21</sup>  $X^2$ Fisher (1,  $N = 51$ ) = 12.48,  $p = 0.001$ . For three authors it is unknown whether they still worked within the Defence organization at the time their book was first published.

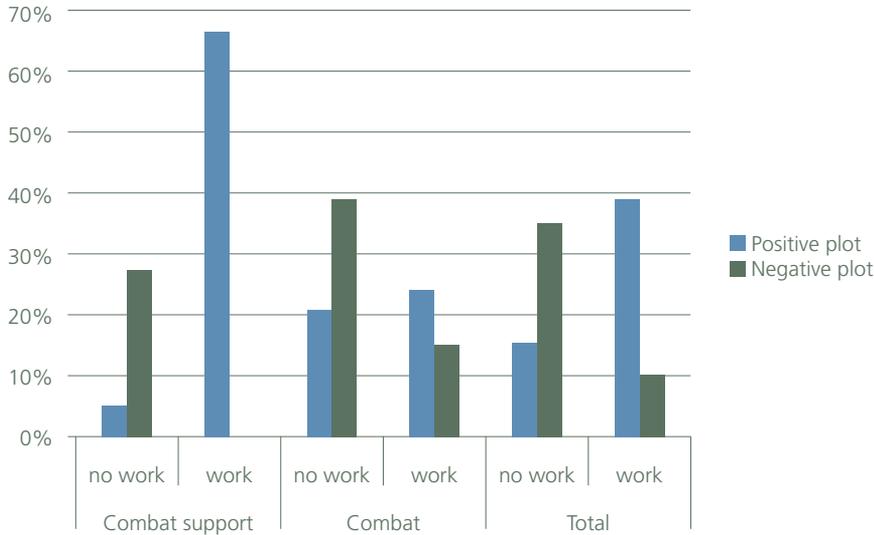
<sup>22</sup> Cognitive dissonance: the idea that if a person knows various things that are not psychologically consistent with one another, they will, in a variety of ways, try to make them more consistent (Festinger, 1962, p 93).

work is troublesome; using violence is difficult and taxing, even for professional soldiers (Collins, 2008).

### 3.3.3 Combination

Of these two, the most important variable for predicting whether someone will write an overall positive or negative story is ‘working for the MoD’. Logistic regression shows that work alone can predict at 30%<sup>23</sup> whether a plot will be positive or negative, which is considered to be a large effect<sup>24</sup>; adding the variable ‘Combat/Combat Support’ to the model only raises this to 33%. Of those who still worked for the MoD, 80% will write a positive plot, whereas former soldiers will mostly (69%) write a negative plot (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Plots for the combination combat/ combat support and working for the MoD



**Conclusion** Based on the data from this research it is possible to provide recommendations to defence organizations on how to react to the production of books by soldier-authors. Should they actively encourage, discourage or ignore book writing by military authors?

The data show that in Western countries nowadays the production of military memoirs is an almost unavoidable consequence of deploying soldiers; the number of military memoirs published during and right after a war by both traditional publishers and

<sup>23</sup>  $R^2 = 0.30$  (Nagelkerke).

<sup>24</sup> Model  $X^2(1) = 13.09, p = 0.000$ . Work:  $\beta = -2.19, SE = 0.66, p = 0.001$ . Odds ratio = 0.11, 95% CI for odds ratio = 0.03-0.40. Constant:  $\beta = 1.39, SE = .50, p = 0.006$ .

self-publishers can even be predicted by a formula<sup>25</sup>. The data also show that the most reliable variable in predicting whether a book has a positive or a negative plot is 'working for the MoD': whether the soldier-author was still working for the MoD when their book was first published. Furthermore, the research shows that combat support soldiers (who are in the majority in modern armed forces) write far more positive plots than combatants, and that full-time soldiers are eight times more likely to be published by a traditional publisher (rather than self-publishing) than reservists.

For Western military organizations that are first and foremost interested in positive publications in any medium, the recommendation with regard to (potential) soldier-authors is to try to stimulate them to write while they are still in employment, and to especially encourage those with a combat support background. Good places to look for willing writers are individually deployed soldiers, as they make up 50% of the writers. It may actually help them as well, as writing will provide them with an extra outlet for coping with their deployment experiences.

For military organizations which are focused on providing a realistic image (irrespective of whether that is positive or negative) and which are particularly interested in getting the stories published by traditional publishers, the recommendation is to particularly encourage full-timers to write.

In both cases, whether looking for positive or realistic books, the advice is: encourage book writing.

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## POTREBA PO DEJAVNEJŠEM SODELOVANJU IN BOLJŠIH KOMUNIKACIJAH V SVETU, V KATEREM VLADA STALNA KONKURENCA

## THE NEED TO IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS IN A WORLD THAT IS IN A STATE OF PERSISTENT COMPETITION

**Povzetek** Vsak, ki se danes ukvarja s komunikacijami, se spoprijema s hitrim informacijskim okoljem, tehnološko pismeno publiko in svetovnimi razmerami, v katerih vlada stalna konkurenca. Pri tem se državni in nedržavni akterji namenoma vključujejo v kognitivno domeno.

Da bi bile strateške komunikacijske in informacijsko delovanje učinkoviti, je torej nujno, da se zavedamo potrebe po izboljšanju večšin dejavnega sodelovanja in komunikacije.

V članku obravnavamo spreminjajočo se dinamiko, ki vpliva na strateške komunikacije, predvsem na vpliv globalnih omrežij in družbenih medijev. Preučujemo načine, kako povečati učinkovitost z boljšim zgodbičenjem, in zaključujemo z vpogledom v vlogo in koristnost tako imenovane simulacijske skupine nasprotnika za informacijsko delovanje (Red Information Operations Team).

Trdimo, da čeprav so se številni vidiki teh razmer spremenili in se še spreminjajo, veliko temeljnih načel učinkovitega komuniciranja ostaja stalnica od vsega začetka civilizacije. Če se osredotočimo na te bistvene elemente zgodbičenja in jih uporabimo v našem sodobnem okolju, bomo pri podpiranju svojih strateških in taktičnih ciljev veliko učinkovitejši.

**Ključne besede** *Strateške komunikacije, stalna konkurenca, aktivno sodelovanje, zgodbičenje, kognitivna pristranskost, informacijsko delovanje, simulacijske skupine nasprotnika.*

**Abstract** Anyone involved in communications today is faced with a fast-paced information environment, a technologically enabled ‘audience’, and a global situation that has evolved into a state of constant competition, with state and non-state actors deliberately engaging in the cognitive domain.

For Strategic Communications and Information Operations to be effective, it is imperative that we recognize the need to improve engagement and communication skills.

This article looks at the changing dynamics affecting Strategic Communications, especially the impact of global networks and social media, how to increase effectiveness through better storytelling, and concludes by looking at the role and benefit of a Red Information Operations Team.

We assert that, while many aspects of this situation have and continue to change, many of the fundamental principles of effective communication have been with us since the earliest days of civilization. If we focus on these essential elements of storytelling and apply them to our modern-day environment, we will be far more effective in support of our strategic and tactical objectives.

**Key words** *Strategic Communications; Persistent Competition, Engagement, Storytelling, Cognitive Biases, Information Operations, Red Teaming.*

**Introduction** It is now generally accepted that the nature of conflict has changed. The change is not so much at the ends of the scale from Peace to War, but rather the middle has been stretched and populated with different levels of ‘conflict’.<sup>1</sup>

There remain many armed conflicts around the world, and most of these are below the level that would be legally considered a War, although a pragmatic view would recognize that most armed conflicts feel like a war to those who are directly affected or closely impacted.

In addition to these violent conflicts, there now seems to be an escalation of global rivalry; a situation often referred to as a state of persistent or ‘constant competition’<sup>2</sup>. The players in this constant competition are states and non-state organizations. The field of play and the goals in this competition are our minds and of course, our hearts or emotions – more formally labelled, *The Cognitive Domain*.<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 illustrates the overarching nature of this cognitive domain and the interrelationships between the more commonly recognized virtual and physical domains.

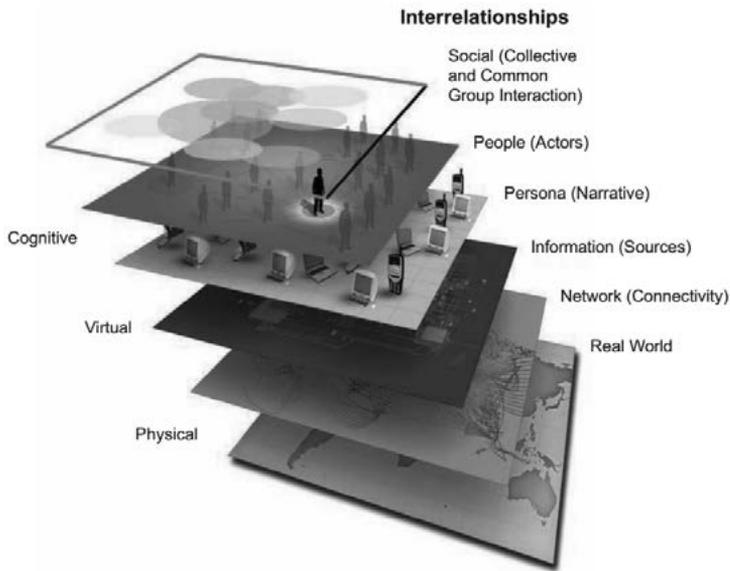
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<sup>1</sup> UK Ministry of Defence Joint Doctrine Note 1/19: *Deterrence: The defence contribution* [1.5]

<sup>2</sup> *Speech: Dynamic security threats and the British Army: Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Nicholas Carter KCB CBE DSO ADC Gen 22-01-2018*

<sup>3</sup> UK Ministry of Defence (JDN 1/12) *Strategic communication: the defence contribution* [211]

Figure 1:  
Strategic  
communication:  
the defence  
contribution  
(JDN 1/12)  
Figure 2.1



While some argue that this era of constant competition is new, actually the only aspects that are truly new are the scale of reach and the number of participants in the competition. The ‘battle’ for people’s opinions has been waged for millennia. From the birth of large-scale civilization, powerful communicators have sought to persuade through the power of words and images.

However, what has changed, is the global digitalization of communication; in short the internet, and the ease with which communicators can reach audiences. But again, mass communication is not new in itself; the mass media has been around since the 19th century, and has been exploited extensively with political and military intent.<sup>4</sup>

*So, now we may be thinking that we simply need to have a good Public Affairs team and our Strategic Communications are covered? Well, unfortunately not.*

This is why there is so much focus on Information Operations and Strategic Communications now, and why so many in defence speak about the changing nature of war. The digitalization of communications and a connected worldwide audience has fundamentally changed the flow dynamics of information, and this has, in turn, raised the expectations of audiences.

It is no longer sufficient to simply ‘broadcast your story’ in the one-way manner that we have understood and used for over a hundred years, from newspapers to modern day mainstream media. Our communications must now also be engaging, and that does not simply mean ‘well-written and interesting’.

<sup>4</sup> *Propaganda & Persuasion* By Garth S. Jowett, Victoria O'Donnell Ch3 'Propaganda Institutionalized'

This article explores what has changed in the arena of communications and how these changes have impacted upon Strategic Communications. First we look at the technological impact and the consequent changes to methods of communication, and at the same time we consider that, even though the world has and continues to change dramatically, the fundamentals of effective communication remain the same. With that assertion, we consider the critical elements of good communication, the perennial nature of ‘storytelling’, and how we might increase the use of ‘story structures’ in our communications activities. Finally, we briefly explore how we can increase the resilience and effectiveness of our Information Operations activities through the use of a skilled and knowledgeable Red Information Operations Team.

## 1 THE ERA OF DIRECT ACCESS

The key dynamic that changes everything is ‘Direct Access’.

Anyone wishing to communicate to an audience can reach them directly without the need to use any third party publisher. Also, anyone interested in receiving information can seek out content from any number of sources, again not just the ‘traditional outlets’.

*So, this explosion of access to information could only be a positive thing, yes?*

‘More people can access more information, and more people can share more information; so the truth of everything will be available to all and anyone can find anything’: a utopian view of the democratization of communications.

Unfortunately, this utopian view forgets a few critical dynamics of the human condition.

- Firstly, to communicate means far more than just sharing information or opinions, regardless of whether they are based on fact or fiction. How our communication is framed and delivered is of great importance if we want to be not only heard but more importantly, listened to.<sup>5</sup>
- Secondly, this seems obvious, but we only really care about that which interests us. If we do not have our audience’s interest, then again, they will not be listening.
- Thirdly, human cognition is inherently lazy; our minds will seek out the path of least effort for everything unless we deliberately make it work harder. Consequently, headlines, soundbites and memes that are easy to digest and make assumptions about are highly effective in delivering messages.<sup>6</sup>
- Fourthly, and related to the third dynamic, we generally like to be comfortable, and this applies to our cognitive state as much as it does to our physical state.

<sup>5</sup> *Why Inspiring Stories Make Us React: The Neuroscience of Narrative*, Paul J. Zak, Ph.D. Feb. 2, 2015

<sup>6</sup> *Shah, Anuj K.; Daniel M. Oppenheimer (March 2008). "Heuristics Made Easy: An Effort-Reduction Framework". Psychological Bulletin. 134 (2): 207-222*

So communications that reassure and reinforce our current understanding (confirmation bias) are much more readily accepted; again regardless of truth or falsehood – we do not feel the need to check.<sup>7</sup>

- Lastly, we are, generally speaking, selfish, or rather, we are focused on our own interests, some more so than others. Communications that promise us personal advantage will always gain cognitive precedent over those that do not.<sup>8</sup>

If communications are *well structured, interesting, easily understood, enjoyable, and personally advantageous*, then we greatly increase the likelihood that our messages will influence our audience.

These are all qualities that a good story has, and furthermore, they are the tools that a good storyteller uses to engage and communicate with their audience. This is why the egalitarian, utopian view of internet-enabled publishing for all and unfettered access to information has, in reality, become an exploitable battlefield.

A virtual battlefield, where those who understand how to communicate and engage tell well-crafted stories to audiences that are sub-consciously receptive to influence and are not inherently inclined to challenge what they see, hear or read, especially if it reassures us and we see something in it for us!

Describing this as ‘exploitation’ may seem like quite strong or inflammatory language; however, it is simply an objective assessment and description for that which we are all happy to live with – perhaps, for some, in blissful ignorance.

The art of good storytelling has been part of the human psyche since humankind started to organize into sustained tribal structures. The oral tradition was used to impart knowledge, maintain history, inspire, bond, warn and lead. Today, the best storytellers are hired to sell to us and to entertain us, ideally doing both simultaneously; furthermore, we give awards and recognition to the best.

Therefore, is it a surprise to find that, given direct, unfiltered access to large-scale audiences, those seeking political or military advantages have deployed the art of storytelling and storytellers to achieve their goals?

## 1.1 Is there really a difference between Strategic Communications and Propaganda?

Today, many consider the term ‘propaganda’ as pejorative and use it that way. This means there tends to be great reluctance and indeed, vociferous denial, that Strategic Communications might be in any way similar to propaganda. However, if we were to be completely objective, it is normally just the communications directed at our audiences from undesirable sources that are usually labelled ‘propaganda’. Our own

<sup>7</sup> *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman

<sup>8</sup> *Crano, W.D., & Prislin, R. (2006). Attitudes and persuasion. Annual review of psychology, 57, 345-74.*

messages are more likely to be labelled ‘Strategic Communications’ or something similar, even if it may simply be a matter of perspective.

It may be worth considering why the label of propaganda is a negative one, and what we can learn from that for our own communications. Simply put, it is our own fault, or rather, the fault of past ‘strategic communicators’. Often in the past, political orators have frequently used powerful speeches and well-written articles to obfuscate and conceal, rather than to amplify and extol reality. So, when the truth of a matter is finally revealed, we, the audience, realize it was actually false propaganda, used to, in some manner, deceive, distract or confuse us. The biggest cost of this behaviour is the trust of all audiences, intended or otherwise<sup>9</sup>. This is a key factor in the loss of trust in our institutions and the growth in fake news, mis-information and dis-information.

However, with all that said, when considered objectively effective propaganda usually has all the same characteristics as a good story, and is often delivered by skilled storytellers, either in person or through the content they produce.

*To increase our engagement and communications, we need to gain our target audience’s interest and deliver well-structured stories, AND we need to be authentic and open, extolling and amplifying reality.*

There are differences of course, but these are related to the intent and purpose of the communications rather than the structure and delivery of the messages. The other dimension to propaganda is that which is based on falsehood or deception; such communication is better labelled as disinformation or mis-information.

## 1.2 Let's get social...

The final part to engagement and communications is the two-way, or rather multi-directional nature of communications in our connected world.

The most important aspect of social media is that it is *social*. It is community-oriented and, put simply, it is the digitization of word-of-mouth.

In just the same way that physical word-of-mouth exchanges are multi-directional, so too are digital interactions. It is useful to picture a small town or community now, and remember that within such a town, different people and places play different roles in the exchange of information.

- A shopkeeper, hairdresser or barber for propagating stories/gossip;
- A tradesman or professional, such as a plumber, electrician or doctor, for specialist, trusted information on their particular expertise;
- The town officials for ‘authoritative’ information;
- The well connected, well-respected voices of the community are influential supporters or decriers of news and opinion;

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<sup>9</sup> Gallup Research, Edelman Trust Barometer

- The pubs, coffee-houses and club-houses are good places to gather a range of views and to reach like-minded individuals.

The metaphorical similarities go on and their digital equivalents are easy to identify on social media.

Thinking of social media in this way helps us to realize that different individuals, audiences and places need different messages, content and approaches. However, all of them require some form of interactive engagement in order for our communications objectives to be achieved.

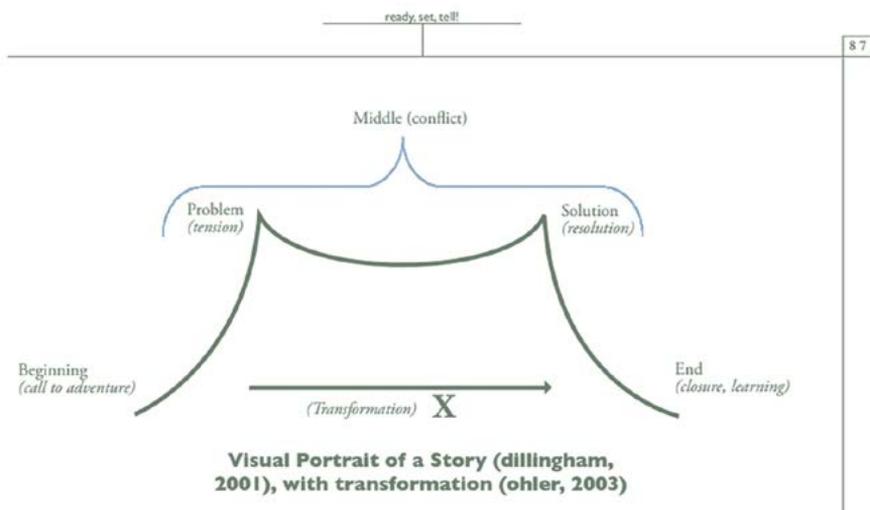
*Now we can see that good engagement and communications requires good, interesting storytelling from authentic storytellers who are prepared, capable and empowered to interact with a connected audience.*

## 2 WHAT MAKES A GOOD STORY?

Many people have spent years trying to understand the art of storytelling and some have gone on to create guides and frameworks to help us all tell better stories. You can easily find books, blogs and resources online that go into great detail about how to create good stories, mostly for commercial marketing or the creative arts, but as we noted above, these principles also apply to Strategic Communications.

Back in 2001 Jason Ohler adapted some work by Brett Dillingham to create a simple but powerful visual portrait of a story<sup>10</sup>. Figure 2 illustrates this story arc and provides an easy framework to help us sequence our messaging.

Figure 2:  
Visual portrait of  
a story



<sup>10</sup> *Digital storytelling in the classroom: new media pathways to literacy...* by Jason Ohler

Regardless of domain or purpose, a good story needs to start and end with people – we need to have empathy in some manner. If we do not care about the characters then we will not remember the story. A forgotten story has no influence and moreover is never retold!

## 2.1 A practical story framework

After considering different story structures and the nature of social media, we have created a very simple but effective framework for any messaging story, as follows;

### 1. Interest Stage 1 – Who?

Who is the story about? Who features? How are they relatable to the target audience? Why should they care?

### 2. Interest Stage 2 – What?

What is the challenge? What are they trying to achieve? What is stopping them? Why does it matter?

### 3. Influence Stage 1 - How?

How did they overcome the challenge? What did they do? What were the issues faced in achieving the objective? Who and What else was involved?

### 4. Influence Stage 2 – Why?

Why is this relevant? What did they gain? What was achieved? What can be done now? What did they do next?

### 5. Call-to-Action Stage

Do you want to know more? Where can you learn more? If you are facing a similar situation, what should you do now? Who can you ask for help? Who should you tell?

This framework acts as a skeleton or mannequin; the art lies in how you put the flesh on the bones or dress the mannequin. Here you need to invest in Intelligence to understand your target audience and find the right answers to the framework questions and the right language to use<sup>11</sup>.

Take the time to research, understand and plan your messaging, all the while remembering what it takes to be engaging and effective in your communications.

Once you have a narrative approach and tailored stories, you can plan your engagement and communications Information Operations, and then test and improve their resilience using a Red Information Operations Team (>>RIOT<<)

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<sup>11</sup> UK Ministry of Defence, *Allied Joint Doctrine for Psychological Operations AJP 3.10.1 [0109] UK – Target Audience Analysis – the critical enabler*

### 3 INCREASED RESILIENCE THROUGH RED TEAMING!

An essential element of military planning has always been the requirement to review and test the plan using Red Teaming<sup>12</sup>. This role traditionally fell to the Intelligence Officer and the J2-staff, as they were best sighted on the adversary's tactics and doctrine. However, in fast-moving and pressured headquarters, many of which suffer from 'group think', this is often overlooked, by-passed or rushed. Also, the outsourcing of such a function is frequently restricted by time, practicality or budget.

As a result, plans are often implemented having never truly been stress-tested or questioned, whether the result of a staff-led or command-led process. This is never truer than in the area of Information Operations, or Information Activities & Outreach, where the reactions of audiences, probable ripostes from actors, or the inaction of advocates can affect the outcome of an operation far more than the tactical actions of an enemy.

To clarify, a Red Team is an independent team of trusted advisors and thematic specialists who question planning assumptions, ask the difficult questions, second-guess the commander's decision, and ensure that worst-case and most-likely outcomes are sufficiently covered in the planning process. A Red Cell acts as the adversary and other actors during exercises.

In the spirit of "disruptive innovation", the Red Team must be focused on the given problem and understand the context of the operation, adopt deadlines that ensure that their inputs are available to the planning staff at the appropriate time, and (most importantly) be separate from the chain of command.

To examine each in turn as they relate to the Red Info Ops Team (RIOT):

The Team must represent the fundamental components of the spectrum of Info Activities. The RIOT leader should fully understand the information environment and ideally, have experience in Strategic Communications at the governmental level. The RIOT 2iC/Chief of Staff, must understand the planning process (6-Steps, 7-Questions or Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP)) and have extensive operational experience and understanding of relevant adversarial strategy and tactics.

Depending on the scenario or Area of Operations, the team should be made up of experts in Media Operations or Public Affairs and Key Leader Engagement, Engagement & Outreach, Psychological Operations or academic psychology, and Target Audience Analysis/Open Source Intelligence. Additional 'reach-back' to other expertise is also essential, to prevent the team from becoming fixed by the organization's battle rhythm.

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<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Defence Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) guide to red teaming

These RIOT members need to be alive to the details of the operation or exercise, attending the scenario writing phase, if possible, to ensure that Information Operations are to be fully tested and facilitated by the scenario with enough detail to allow an appropriate level of analysis and message development.

The RIOT must adopt hard deadlines that ensure their injects are available to the planning staff at the correct step in the process. Adopting a crawl-walk-run approach will ensure the HQ staff can adapt their processes and incorporate the RIOT inputs without unnecessary disruption to their own timelines. Their budget should be equally restrictive, to prevent the adoption of over-complicated and tech-dependent solutions, incompatible with those used by the headquarters.

Finally, the RIOT must be (and be seen to be) separate from the Chain of Command. This allows their input to remain objective and not influenced by the commander or his staff, or by fear of any negative impact on the careers of the team members. This in turn allows the RIOT to make a significant impact on the planning cycle (i.e. to be disruptive), and maintains separation and objectivity. While this could be achieved using staff from training centres or other units, they will remain rank conscious and unduly influenced by empathy with the planning staff. The most suitable provider of this capability is a vetted and known third-party provider.

The value added from using a Red Info Ops Team cannot be understated. They provide the opportunity to assist in the development of scenarios that support realistic Info Ops exercise play, including realistic audience data sets. They can stress-test the planning staff at a crawl, walk or run depending on the staff's comfort level and training objective. They are able to provide on-hand expert guidance, mentorship and (if needed) additional training, as well as coaching of the senior leadership and commanders. They offer subjective exercise injects, planning inputs and expert feedback, aligned to the headquarters' own battle rhythm, to achieve its training objectives. Once that working relationship has been established, further opportunities such as reach-back support will present themselves. All this comes at a relatively low cost, especially when considered against the potential impact of not fully Red Teaming a plan.

*« Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose »*

**The more things change, the more they stay the same!**

*Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr in January 1849*

## Concluding Comments

The power of communications to support strategic objectives has been recognized for hundreds, and arguably for thousands, of years. For our communications to be effective and to engage our target audiences, we need to recognize the importance of story structures and understand how to compete in an information environment where both our adversaries and ourselves have direct access to our audiences, and our audiences have direct access to all manner of information sources.

It is clear that, with the digitization of communications and the connected nature of the globe, many things have increased in reach, speed and volume. It is also generally accepted that the nature of ‘conflict’ has changed, and that we now operate in a state of constant competition. However, we have also highlighted, that as much as these things have changed, many factors remain unchanged.

Our concluding assertions are that to be effective communicators we need to;

- 1) Always, first, gain the attention of our audience;
- 2) Tell stories that are enjoyable, emotive, easily understood and meaningful;
- 3) Explicitly or implicitly offer our audience the answer to ‘What is in it for me?’;
- 4) Be open and authentic;
- 5) Be adaptive, reactive and interactive.

As evidence that these techniques and requirements are far from new, in the last century BC, Marcus Tullius ‘Cicero’ wrote;

*“The three aims of the orator are »docere, delectare, et movere.«<sup>13</sup>*

In other words, to be effective in communications we need to teach, delight and move our audience emotionally.

Cicero was also known for extolling the importance of truth and authenticity, and we turn to him again for our closing words:

**“If the truth were self-evident, eloquence would be unnecessary.”**

[Marcus Tullius Cicero]

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## RECENZIJAZ

### O SMERNICAH ZA PRIHODNOST NA PODROČJU STRATEŠKEGA KOMUNICIRANJA

Novembra lani je International Journal of Strategic Communication, ki ga izdaja Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, izdal posebno tematsko številko z naslovom Future directions of strategic communication.

Kot v uvodu razlagajo uredniki Howard Nothhaft z oddelka za strateško komuniciranje na univerzi v Helsingborgu na Švedskem, Kelly Page Werder z univerze v južni Floridi v ZDA, Dejan Verčič z Univerze v Ljubljani in Ansgar Zerfass iz norveške poslovne šole v Oslu, je ideja za posebno številko nastala na predkonferenci International Communication Association, 67th Annual Conference, v San Diegu v Kaliforniji maja 2017. Zbralo se je 42 akademikov iz 14 držav in predstavilo 21 prispevkov. V posebni številki so uredniki zbrali deset odličnih člankov. Z njimi so želeli odgovoriti na nekaj pomembnih vprašanj. Ugotovili so, da še vedno ni univerzalnega razumevanja stebrov, na katerih temelji strateško komuniciranje. Vprašali so se, kaj sta bistvena perspektiva in prispevek k temu, ali uporabljajo ustrezne strategije in koncepte komuniciranja, kaj se lahko naučijo iz nedavnih razprav v strateškem menedžmentu in strateških povezavah, kako lahko empirične študije prispevajo k razpravam in kako se področje razvija v različnih delih sveta.

Uredniki v prvem sklopu z naslovom The emergence of a paradigm v dveh člankih obljublajo interdisciplinarni pogled znotraj akademskega strateškega komuniciranja, ki bo trdneje opredelil njegov namen, ki je do zdaj manjkal.

V drugem sklopu z naslovom Conceptual foundations of strategic communication se zvrstijo štirje članki šestih avtorjev, ki so predvsem teoretični in so poleg strateškega komuniciranja povezani še z drugimi področji.

Tretji sklop *Expanding the body of knowledge* sestavljajo trije članki osmih avtorjev. Osredotočeni so na najpomembnejše koncepte, identiteto in funkcijo osnovne discipline.

Zadnji sklop z naslovom *Future directions of strategic communication* ima le en članek, ki so ga napisali vsi štirje uredniki in bo najverjetneje naletel na največ pozornosti, posebej tistih, ki se ukvarjajo s področjem strateškega komuniciranja na varnostnem, obrambnem in vojaškem področju. Avtorji nas uvedejo v pojem in zgodovino strateškega komuniciranja, ki sta na različnih področjih zelo različno razumljena. Pojasnjujejo njune začetke, pri čemer ima pomembno vlogo Edward Bernays s svojo *Propagando* in razvojem pojma odnosov z javnostmi v nadaljevanju. Oba sta bila namreč skozi zgodovino tesno povezana z varnostnimi, obrambnimi in vojaškimi vsebinami in še vedno je tako. Ta povezava je zelo podrobno pojasnjena skozi razlago uporabljene terminologije in njenih odtenkov. Eden od teh je tudi raba pojma strateško komuniciranje na področju državne uprave, medtem ko v gospodarstvu pretežno uporabljajo pojem korporativno komuniciranje. V novejših časih poudarjajo sicer že star, a povečan interes na področju komuniciranja v kontekstu vojaške in nacionalne moči. Te vsebine navadno niso priljubljene v javnosti, še zlasti, kadar gre za novo orožje, pri katerem gre za velik odvrtačni učinek in temu primerno kolateralno škodo, kar pa zahteva več spretnosti in večini pri njihovem komuniciranju. Zato se zdi logično, da za očeta začetkov komuniciranja velja ravno Bernays, ki je svoje veščine najbolj razvil po drugi svetovni vojni z več različnimi programi ameriške pomoči stari celini Evropi.

Nekaj pozornosti je namenjeno tudi izrazu strateško, kaj je torej strateško in kaj ne na področju komuniciranja.

Posebna izdaja *International Journal of Strategic Communication* z naslovom *Future Directions of Strategic Communication* je namenjena poznavalcem področja strateškega komuniciranja. Priporočamo jo akademikom in strokovnjakom, ki se kakor koli srečujejo s strateškim komuniciranjem, še posebej tistim, ki delajo na tem področju v varnostnih, obrambnih ali vojaških strukturah in si želijo v prihodnje narediti nekaj več. Kakovostna teorija in odlične praktične izkušnje so najboljša kombinacija za razvoj novih teorij, konceptov in idej.

## REVIEW

### THE FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

The International Journal of Strategic Communication, published by the Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, issued a specially themed edition entitled “Future Directions Of Strategic Communication” in November 2018.

In the foreword the editors, Howard Nothhaft from the Department of Strategic Communication, Lund University Campus Helsingborg, Sweden; Kelly Page Werder from the University of South Florida, USA; Dejan Verčič from the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; and Ansgar Zarfass from the Norwegian Business School in Oslo, Norway, explain how the idea of the special edition emerged at the pre-conference of the International Communication Association’s 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, held in May 2017 in San Diego, California. The conference hosted 42 academics from 14 countries who delivered 21 presentations. The special edition features 10 articles which are undeniably excellent. The aim of the editors was to provide answers to some key questions; one of their findings was that a universal understanding of the key pillars underlining strategic communication was still missing. They also explored the idea of the key perspective and its contribution, the use of appropriate strategies and concepts of communication, lessons learned from recent debates on strategic management and strategic connections, how empirical studies have contributed to the discussion, and the development of the field in different parts of the world.

In the first section, entitled *The Emergence of a Paradigm*, the editors offer an interdisciplinary perspective within academic strategic communication, which will provide a permanent definition of its purpose, so far lacking.

The second section, entitled *Conceptual Foundations of Strategic Communication*, includes four articles by six different authors. The articles are mainly theoretical and connected to other fields in addition to strategic communication.

The third section, *Expanding the Body of Knowledge*, consists of three articles by eight authors. They focus on the key concepts, identity and function of the basic discipline.

The final section, *Future Directions of Strategic Communication*, contains a single article written by all four editors, and will likely attract the most attention, especially from those dealing with strategic communication in security, defence and military contexts. The authors introduce the term strategic communication and its history, which are both understood very differently in different fields. They then describe the origins of the two, also referring to Edward Bernays' significant role, with his Propaganda and the development of the term public relations. Throughout history, both of them have been and still are closely linked to security, defence and military topics. This connection is explained in great detail through an explanation of the terminology and its nuances; for example, the use of the concept of strategic communication in public administration, while the term corporate communication is mostly used by the private sector. The old, yet recently growing, interest in communication in the context of military and national power is highlighted. These topics are not usually very popular with the public, particularly in the case of new weapons with a strong deterrent effect and the related collateral damage, which demands more versatility and skill in communication. Logically, Bernays is credited as the 'father of communication', developing his skills mostly after World War II through various American assistance programmes for the old European continent.

Some light is also shed on the term strategic, i.e. what is and what is not strategic in the field of communication.

The special edition of the International Journal of Strategic Communication, entitled Future Directions of Strategic Communication, is targeted at strategic communication enthusiasts. It is recommended for academics and experts who deal with strategic communication in any form, especially those who work in security, defence or military structures and would like to explore this further in the future. The existing high quality theory and excellent practical experience are the best combination for the development of new theories, concepts and ideas.

Avtorji

Authors



Iris Žnidarič

**Iris Žnidarič** je diplomirala na Oddelku za prevajalstvo Filozofske fakultete v Ljubljani. V Slovenski vojski je kot prevajalka zaposlena od leta 2006, trenutno v Oddelku za odnose z javnostmi Kabineta NGŠ. Poleg svojega prevajalskega dela je dejavna na področju zbiranja in urejanja slovenske obrambno-vojaške terminologije v okviru Ministrstva za obrambo, sodelovala pa je tudi v projektu priprave terminološko-podatkovne zbirke odnosov z javnostmi Fakultete za družbene vede v Ljubljani.

**Iris Žnidarič** holds a bachelor's degree in translation from the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. She joined the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) as translator in 2006 and currently works in the Public Affairs Section of the SAF Chief of the General Staff's Office. In addition to her regular translation work, she is actively involved in the collection and management of Slovene defence and military terminology within the Ministry of Defence, and has taken part in the project of the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana setting up the terminological database for the field of public relations.



Eva Moehlecke de Baseggio

**Eva Moehlecke de Baseggio** je vodja projektov na Oddelku za vojaško sociologijo vojaške akademije v Zürichu v Švici. Izkušnje ima na področju sociologije in kulturnih znanosti. Trenutno se v okviru projekta ukvarja z vplivom komuniciranja švicarskih oboroženih sil na družbenih medijih na njihovo legitimnost.

**Eva Moehlecke de Baseggio, MA**, is a Project Manager at the Department of Military Sociology at the Military Academy at the ETH Zurich, Switzerland. She has a background of sociology and cultural sciences. Her current project is about the effects of social media communication of the Swiss Armed Forces on their legitimacy.



Olivia Schneider

**Olivia Schneider** je magistrirala iz sociologije, politologije in etike na Univezi v Zürichu leta 2018, kjer je trenutno doktorska kandidatka. Od leta 2017 je zaposlena na Oddelku za vojaško sociologijo kot asistentka raziskovalka na področju družbenih medijev.

**Olivia Schneider, MA**, *obtained her Master's degree in Sociology, Political Science and Ethics at the University of Zurich in 2018, where she now is a PhD student. Since 2017 she has been working at the Department for Military Sociology as a research assistant on the subject of social media.*



Tibor Szvircev Tresch

**Dr. Tibor Szvircev Tresch** je vodja Oddelka za vojaško sociologijo vojaške akademije v Zürichu v Švici. Doktoriral je iz sociologije na univerzi v Zürichu. Je koordinator delovne skupine za zaposlovanje in zadrževanje kadra v okviru Evropske raziskovalne skupine o vojski in družbi (European Research Group on Military & Society – ERGOMAS) in član uredniškega odbora Sodobnih vojaških izzivov.

**Tibor Szvircev Tresch, PhD**, *is the head of the Department of Military Sociology at the Military Academy at the ETH Zurich. He earned a doctorate from the University of Zurich in Sociology. He is the working group coordinator of "Recruitment and Retention" of the European Research Group on Military & Society (ERGOMAS) and is a member of the Editorial Board of Contemporary Military Challenges.*



Nina Raduha

**Majorka mag. Nina Raduha** je diplomirana politologinja, smer obramboslovje. Magistrirala je iz kazenskopravne znanosti na Pravni fakulteti v Ljubljani. V Slovenski vojski je zaposlena od leta 2003. Sodelovala je na misiji v BiH in Libanonu. Leta 2016 je kot najboljša slušateljica končala višje štabno šolanje. Je pehotna častnica SV. Opravila je vse poveljniške dolžnosti do ravni čete, bila je častnica za odnose z javnostmi in InfoOps. Na šoli za obrambno komuniciranje v ZDA je z odliko končala tečaj s področja odnosov z javnostmi.

**Major Nina Raduha, MSc**, holds a bachelor's degree in political science (defence studies). She earned her master's degree in criminal law science from the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana. She has worked in the SAF since 2003 and has been deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Lebanon. In 2016, she graduated from the Senior Staff Course as the dux. She is an infantry officer and has performed commanding duties up to the company level and worked as a Public Affairs and InfoOps officer. She completed the Public Affairs Course at the Defence Information School, USA with distinction.



Glen Segell

**Dr. Glen Segell** je znanstveni sodelavec na centru Ezri za iranske in zalivske študije na univerzi v Haifi. Leta 2002 je postal član Atlantskega sveta Združenega kraljestva, leta 2003 pa član Kraljevega geografskega združenja FRGS. Deloval je na akademskem področju v Veliki Britaniji, Južni Afriki in Izraelu ter izdal več kot 30 knjig in 150 člankov. Kot poveljnik psiholoških operacij je deloval v Kuvajtu, Iraku, Sudanu in Libiji.

**Glen Segell, PhD** is a Research Fellow of the Ezri Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies, University of Haifa. He was made a Fellow Member of the Atlantic Council United Kingdom (2002) and elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society FRGS (2003). He has held academic positions in Britain, South Africa and Israel and has published over 30 books and 150 articles. He served as Commander of PYSOP Operations in Kuwait, Iraq, Sudan and Libya.



Esmeralda  
Kleinreesink

**Dr. Esmeralda Kleinreesink** je podpolkovnica nizozemskih letalskih sil. Doktorirala je leta 2014 na Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, v Rotterdamu na Nizozemskem. V tem času je bila zaposlena kot docentka na nizozemski obrambi akademiji. Za svojo doktorsko disertacijo v obliki knjige (*On Military Memoirs*, Brill, 2017) je prejela nagrado *Caforio* za najboljšo vojaškoznanstveno knjigo. Izdala je tudi vojaške spomine o svoji napotitvi v Afganistan (*Officer in Afghanistan*, Meulenhoff, 2012). Trenutno je dejavna kot vodja projekta za veterane na nizozemskem ministrstvu za obrambo.

**Esmeralda Kleinreesink, PhD** is a Lieutenant-Colonel with the Royal Netherlands Air Force. She obtained her doctorate at the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, Rotterdam, the Netherlands in 2014, while working as an Assistant Professor at the Netherlands Defence Academy. The trade edition of her dissertation (*On Military Memoirs*, Brill, 2017) won the *Caforio Award* for best scientific military book. She published a military memoir about her own deployment in Afghanistan (*Officer in Afghanistan*, Meulenhoff, 2012). Currently, she works as Project Leader for Veterans at the Dutch MoD.



Paul Ellis

**Paul Ellis** je specializiran za načrtovanje in spodbujanje učinkovitosti na področju komunikacij in aktivnega sodelovanja. Ima več kot 30-letne izkušnje z marketingom na področju poslovne tehnologije. Je rezervist britanske vojske in direktor družbe *i3 Gen Ltd*, ki je specializirana za svetovanje in združevanje znanj na področju poslovnega marketinga in vojaških strateških komunikacij ter informacijskega delovanja.

**Paul Ellis** is a specialist in planning and delivering effective communications and engagement, with a background of 30 years marketing in the business technology sector, and also serves as a British Army Reservist. He is Managing Director of *i3 Gen Ltd*: a specialist consultancy that brings together Business Marketing and Military Strategic Communications and Information Operations expertise.



Ric Cole

**Ric Cole** ima več kot 23 let vojaških izkušenj. Bil je pripadnik britanskih kraljevih marincev in kraljevega irskega polka, leta 2007 pa je postal rezervist na področju medijskega delovanja. Ima obsežno znanje na področju medijskega delovanja, informacijskega delovanja in strateških komunikacij. Je vojaški direktor družbe i3 Gen Ltd, ki je specializirana za svetovanje in združevanje znanja na področju poslovnega marketinga in vojaških strateških komunikacij ter informacijskega delovanja.

***Ric Cole** has over 23 years military sector experience, serving with the Royal Marines and Royal Irish Regiment, and joining the Army Reserves in 2007 in MediaOps. Ric has a deep knowledge of Media Ops, Info Ops and Strategic Communications. He is Director (military) of i3 Gen Ltd: a specialist consultancy that brings together Business Marketing and Military Strategic Communications and Information Operations expertise.*

Navodila avtorjem  
za oblikovanje prispevkov

Instructions for the authors  
of papers

## NAVODILA AVTORJEM ZA OBLIKOVANJE PRISPEVKOV ZA SODOBNE VOJAŠKE IZZIVE IN VOJAŠKOŠOLSKI ZBORNIK

### Vsebinska navodila

#### Splošno

**Sodobni vojaški izzivi** je interdisciplinarna znanstveno-strokovna publikacija, ki objavlja prispevke o aktualnih temah, raziskavah, znanstvenih in strokovnih razpravah, tehničnih ali družboslovnih analizah z varnostnega, obrambnega in vojaškega področja.

**Vojaškošolski zbornik** je vojaškostrokovna in informativna publikacija, namenjena izobraževanju in obveščanju o dosežkih ter izkušnjah na področju vojaškega izobraževanja, usposabljanja in izpopolnjevanja.

Kaj objavljamo?

Objavljamo prispevke v slovenskem jeziku s povzetki, prevedenimi v angleški jezik, in po odločitvi uredniškega odbora prispevke v angleškem jeziku s povzetki, prevedenimi v slovenski jezik.

Objavljamo prispevke, ki še niso bili objavljeni ali poslani v objavo drugi reviji. Pisec je odgovoren za vse morebitne kršitve avtorskih pravic. Če je bil prispevek že natisnjen drugje, poslan v objavo ali predstavljen na strokovni konferenci, naj to avtor sporočiti uredniku in pridobiti soglasje založnika (če je treba) ter navesti razloge za ponovno objavo.

### Tehnična navodila

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Prispevki naj obsegajo 16 strani oziroma 30.000 znakov s presledki (avtorska pola), izjemoma najmanj 8 strani oziroma 15.000 znakov ali največ 24 strani oziroma 45.000 znakov.

#### Recenzije

Prispevki se recenzirajo. Recenzija je anonimna. Glede na oceno recenzentov uredniški odbor ali urednik prispevek sprejme, če je treba, zahteva popravke ali ga zavrne. Pripombe recenzentov avtor vnese v prispevek.

Zaradi anonimnega recenzentskega postopka je treba prvo stran in vsebino oblikovati tako, da identiteta avtorja ni prepoznavna.

Avtor ob naslovu prispevka napiše, v katero kategorijo po njegovem mnenju in glede na klasifikacijo v COBISS spada njegov prispevek. Klasifikacija je dostopna na spletni strani revije in pri odgovornem uredniku. Končno klasifikacijo določi uredniški odbor.

#### Lektoriranje

Lektoriranje besedil zagotavlja OE, pristojna za založniško dejavnost. Lektorirana besedila se avtorizirajo.

#### Prevajanje

Prevajanje besedil ali povzetkov zagotavlja OE, pristojna za prevajalsko dejavnost oziroma Šola za tuje jezike Centra vojaških šol.

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Navajanje avtorjev prispevka</b> | <p>Navajanje avtorjev je skrajno zgoraj, levo poravnano.</p> <p><i>Primer:</i><br/>Ime 1 Priimek 1,<br/>Ime 2 Priimek 2</p> <p>V opombi pod črto se za slovenske avtorje navede, iz katere ustanove prihajajo. Pri tujih avtorjih je treba navesti tudi ime države.</p>  |
| <b>Naslov prispevka</b>             | <p>Navedbi avtorjev sledi naslov prispevka. Črke v naslovu so velike 16 pik, natisnjene krepko, besedilo naslova pa poravnano na sredini.</p>  |
| <b>Povzetek</b>                     | <p>Prispevku mora biti dodan povzetek, ki obsega največ 1200 znakov (20 vrstic). Povzetek naj na kratko opredeli temo prispevka, predvsem naj povzame rezultate in ugotovitve. Splošne ugotovitve in misli ne spadajo v povzetek, temveč v uvod.</p>   |
| <b>Povzetek v angleščini</b>        | <p>Avtorji morajo oddati tudi prevod povzetka v angleščino. Tudi za prevod povzetka velja omejitev do 1200 znakov (20 vrstic).</p>   |
| <b>Ključne besede</b>               | <p>Ključne besede (3-5, tudi v angleškem jeziku) naj bodo natisnjene krepko in z obojestransko poravnavo besedila.</p>   |
| <b>Besedilo</b>                     | <p>Avtorji naj oddajo svoje prispevke na papirju formata A4, s presledkom med vrsticami 1,5 in velikostjo črk 12 pik Arial. Na zgornjem in spodnjem robu naj bo do besedila približno 3 cm, levi rob naj bo širok 2 cm, desni pa 4 cm. Na vsaki strani je tako približno 30 vrstic s približno 62 znaki. Besedilo naj bo obojestransko poravnano, brez umikov na začetku odstavka.</p> |
| <b>Kratka predstavitev avtorjev</b> | <p>Avtorji morajo pripraviti kratko predstavitev svojega strokovnega oziroma znanstvenega dela. Predstavitev naj ne presega 600 znakov (10 vrstic, 80 besed). Če je avtorjev več, se predstavi vsak posebej, čim bolj zgoščeno. Avtorji naj besedilo umestijo na konec prispevka po navedeni literaturi.</p>   |
| <b>Strukturiranje besedila</b>      | <p>Posamezna poglavja v besedilu naj bodo ločena s samostojnimi podnaslovi in ustrezno oštevilčena (členitev največ na 4 ravni).</p> <p><i>Primer:</i><br/>1 Uvod<br/>2 Naslov poglavja (1. raven)<br/>2.1 Podnaslov (2. raven)<br/>2.1.1 Podnaslov (3. raven)<br/>2.1.1.1 Podnaslov (4. raven)</p>  |

## Oblikovanje seznama literature

V seznamu literature je treba po abecednem redu navesti le avtorje, na katere se sklicujete v prispevku, celotna oznaka vira pa mora biti skladna s harvardskim načinom navajanja. Če je avtorjev več, navedemo vse, kot so navedeni na izvirnem delu.

*Primeri:*

*a) knjiga:*

Priimek, ime (lahko začetnica imena), letnica. *Naslov dela*. Kraj: Založba.

Na primer: Urlich, W., 1983. *Critical Heuristics of Social Planning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*b) zbornik:*

Samson, C., 1970. Problems of information studies in history. V S. Stone, ur. *Humanities information research*. Sheffield: CRUS, 1980, str./pp. 44–68. Pri posameznih člankih v zbornikih na koncu posameznega vira navedemo strani, na katerih je članek, na primer:

*c) članek v reviji*

Kolega, N., 2006. Slovenian coast sea flood risk. *Acta geographica Slovenica*. 46-2, str. 143–167.

## Navajanje virov z interneta

Vse reference se začenjajo enako kot pri natisnjenih virih, le da običajnemu delu sledi še podatek o tem, kje na internetu je bil dokument dobljen in kdaj. Podatek o tem, kdaj je bil dokument dobljen, je pomemben zaradi pogostega spreminjanja www okolja.

Urlich, W., 1983. *Critical Heuristics of Social Planning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, str. 45–100. <http://www.mors.si/index.php?id=213>, 17. 10. 2008. Pri navajanju zanimivih internetnih naslovov v besedilu (ne gre za navajanje posebnega dokumenta) zadošča navedba naslova (<http://www.vpvs.uni-lj.si>). Posebna referenca na koncu besedila v tem primeru ni potrebna.

## Sklicevanje na vire

Pri sklicevanju na vire med besedilom navedite le priimek prvega avtorja in letnico izdaje. *Primer:* ... (Smith, 1997) ...

Če dobesedno navajate del besedila, ga ustrezno označite z narekovaji, v oklepaju pa poleg avtorja in letnice navedite stran besedila, iz katerega ste navajali.

*Primer:* ... (Smith, 1997, str. 15) ...

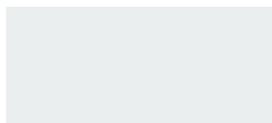
Pri povzemanju drugega avtorja napišemo besedilo brez narekovajev, v oklepaju pa napišemo, da gre za povzeto besedilo. *Primer:* (po Smith, 1997, str. 15). Če avtorja navajamo v besedilu, v oklepaju navedemo samo letnico izida in stran (1997, str. 15).

## Slike, diagrami in tabele

Slike, diagrami in tabele v prispevku naj bodo v posebej pripravljenih datotekah, ki omogočajo lektorske popravke. V besedilu mora biti jasno označeno mesto, kamor je treba vnesti sliko. Skupna dolžina prispevka ne sme preseči dane omejitve.

Če avtor iz tehničnih razlogov grafičnih dodatkov ne more oddati v elektronski obliki, je izjemoma sprejemljivo, da slike priloži besedilu. Avtor mora v tem primeru na zadnjo stran slike napisati zaporedno številko in naslov, v besedilu pa pustiti dovolj prostora zanjo. Prav tako mora biti besedilo opremljeno z naslovom in številčenjem slike. Diagrami se štejejo kot slike. Vse slike in tabele se številčijo. Številčenje poteka enotno in ni povezano s številčenjem poglavij. Naslov slike je naveden pod sliko, naslov tabele pa nad tabelo. Navadno je v besedilu navedeno vsaj eno sklicevanje na sliko ali tabelo. Sklic na sliko ali tabelo je: ... (slika 5) ... (tabela 2) ...

Primer slike:



Slika 5: Naslov slike

Primer tabele:

Tabela 2: Naslov tabele



## Opombe pod črto

Številčenje opomb pod črto je neodvisno od strukture besedila in se v vsakem prispevku začne s številko 1. Posebej opozarjamo avtorje, da so opombe pod črto namenjene pojasnjevanju misli, zapisanih v besedilu, in ne navajanju literature.

## Kratice

Kratice naj bodo dodane v oklepaju, ko se okrajšana beseda prvič uporabi, zato posebnih seznamov kratic ne dodajamo. Za kratico ali izraz v angleškem jeziku napišemo najprej slovensko ustreznico, v oklepaju pa angleški izvornik in morebitno angleško kratico.

## Format zapisa prispevka

Uredniški odbor sprejema prispevke, napisane z urejevalnikom besedil MS Word, izjemoma tudi v besedilnem zapisu (text only).

## Naslov avtorja

Prispevkom naj bosta dodana avtorjeva naslov in internetni naslov ali telefonska številka, na katerih bo dosegljiv uredniškemu odboru.

## Kako poslati prispevek

Na naslov uredništva ali članov uredniškega odbora je treba poslati tiskano in elektronsko različico prispevka.

## Potrjevanje sprejetja prispevka

Uredniški odbor avtorju pisno potrdi prejetje prispevka. Avtorjem, ki sporočijo tudi naslov svoje elektronske pošte, se potrditev pošlje po tej poti.

## Korekture

Avtor opravi korekture svojega prispevka v treh dneh.

**Naslov  
uredniškega  
odbora** Ministrstvo za obrambo  
Generalštab Slovenske vojske  
Sodobni vojaški izzivi  
Uredniški odbor  
Vojkova cesta 55  
1000 Ljubljana  
Slovenija  
Elektronski naslov  
Odgovorna urednica:  
liliana.brozic@mors.si

**Prispevkov, ki ne bodo urejeni skladno s tem navodilom, uredniški odbor ne bo sprejemal.**

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE AUTHORS OF PAPERS FOR THE CONTEMPORARY MILITARY CHALLENGES AND THE MILITARY EDUCATION JOURNAL

### Content-related instructions

#### General

**The Contemporary Military Challenges** is an interdisciplinary scientific expert magazine, which publishes papers on current topics, researches, scientific and expert discussions, technical or social sciences analysis from the field of security, defence and the military..

**The Military Education Journal** is a military professional and informative publication intended for education and informing on achievements and experiences in the field of military education, training and improvement.

What do we publish?

We publish papers in Slovene with abstracts translated into English. If so decided by the Editorial Board, we also publish papers in English with abstracts translated into Slovene.

We publish papers, which have not been previously published or sent to another magazine for publication. The author is held responsible for all possible copyright violations. If the paper has already been printed elsewhere, sent for publication or presented at an expert conference, the author must notify the editor, obtain the publisher's consent (if necessary) and indicate the reasons for republishing.

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The papers should consist of 16 typewritten double-spaced pages or 30,000 characters. At a minimum they should have 8 pages or 15,000 characters and at a maximum 24 pages or 45,000 characters.

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All papers are reviewed. The review is anonymous. With regard to the reviewer's assessment, the Editorial Board or the editor accepts the paper, demands modifications, if necessary, or rejects it. Upon receiving the reviewers' remarks, the author inserts them into the paper.

Due to an anonymous review process, the first page must be designed in the way that the author's identity cannot be recognized.

Next to the title, the author should indicate the category the paper belongs to according to him and according to the classification in the COBISS<sup>1</sup>. The classification is available on the magazine's internet page and at the responsible editor. The Editorial Board determines the final classification.

- Proofreading** The organizational unit responsible for publishing provides the proofreading of the papers. The proofread papers have to be approved.
- Translating** The translation of the papers or abstracts is provided by the organizational unit competent for translation or the School of Foreign Languages, Military Schools Centre.
- Indicating the authors of the paper** The authors' name should be written in the upper left corner, aligned left.  
*Example:*  
 Name 1 Surname 1,  
 Name 2 Surname 2,  
 In the footnote, Slovenian authors should indicate the institution they come from. Foreign authors should also indicate the name of the state they come from.
- Title of the paper** The title of the paper is written below the listed authors. The font in the title is bold, size 16 points. The text of the title is centrally aligned.
- Abstract** The paper should have an abstract of a maximum 1,200 characters (20 lines). The abstract should include a short presentation of the topic, particularly the results and the findings. General findings and reflections do not belong in the abstract, but rather in the introduction.
- Abstract in English** The authors must also submit the translation of the abstract into English. The translation of the abstract is likewise limited to a maximum of 1,200 characters (20 lines).
- Key words** Key words (3-5 also in the English language) should be bold with a justified text alignment.
- Text** The authors should submit their papers on an A4 paper format, with 1.5 line spacing, fontArial size 12 points. At the upper and the bottom edge, there should be approx. 3 cm of space; the left margin should be 2 cm wide and the right margin 4 cm. Each page consists of approx. 30 lines with 62 characters. The text should have a justified alignment, without indents at the beginning of the paragraphs.
- A brief presentation of the authors** The authors should prepare a brief presentation of their expert or scientific work. The presentation should not exceed 600 characters (10 lines, 80 words). If there are several authors, each should be presented individually, as shortly and as comprehensively as possible. These texts should be placed at the end of the paper, after the cited literature.

<sup>1</sup> Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services

**Text structuring**

Individual chapters should be separated with independent subtitles and adequately numbered.

*Example:*

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Title of the chapter (1<sup>st</sup> level)
- 2.1 Subtitle (2<sup>nd</sup> level)
- 2.1.1 Subtitle (3<sup>rd</sup> level)
- 2.1.1.1 Subtitle (4<sup>th</sup> level)

**Referencing**

In the bibliography, only the authors of references one refers to in the paper should be listed, in the alphabetical order. The entire reference has to be in compliance with the Harvard citing style.

*Example:*

Surname, name (can also be the initial of the name), year. *Title of the work*. Place. Publishing House.

*Example:*

Urlich, W., 1983. *Critical Heuristics of Social Planning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

With certain papers published in journals, the author should indicate, at the end of each reference, a page on which the paper can be found.

*Example:*

Urlich, W., 1983. *Critical Heuristics of Social Planning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 45-100.

**Referencing internet sources**

All references start the same as the references for the printed sources, only that the usual part is followed by the information about the Internet page on which the document was found as well as the date on which it was found. The information about the time that the document was found on the Internet is important, because the WWW environment changes constantly.

Urlich, W., 1983. *Critical Heuristics of Social Planning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p. 45-100. <http://www.mors.si/index.php?id=213>, 17 October 2008.

When referencing interesting WWW pages in the text (not citing an individual document) it is enough to state only the Internet address (<http://www.vpvs.uni-lj.si>). A separate reference at the end of the text is therefore not necessary.

**Citing**

When citing sources in the text, indicate only the surname of the author and the year of publication. *Example:* ..... (Smith, 1997) ...

When making a direct reference to a text, the cited part should be adequately marked with quotation marks and followed by the exact page of the text which the citing is taken from.

*Example:* ... (Smith, 1997, p.15) ...

**Figures, diagrams, tables**

Figures, diagrams and tables in the paper should be prepared in separate files which allow for proofreading corrections. The place in the text where the picture should be inserted must be clearly indicated. The total length of the paper must not surpass the given limitation.

Should the author not be able to submit the graphical supplements in the electronic form due to technical reasons, it is exceptionally acceptable to enclose the figures to the text. In this case the author must write a sequence number and a title on the back of each picture and leave enough space in the text to include it. The text must likewise contain the title and the sequence number of the figure. Diagrams are considered figures.

All figures and tables are numbered. The numbering is not uniform and not linked with the numbering of the chapters. The title of the figure is stated beneath it and the title of the table is stated above it.

As a rule, the paper should include at least one reference to a figure or a table.. Reference to a figure or a table is: ... (Figure 5) ..... (Table 2) .....

Example of a figure:

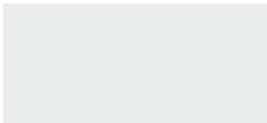
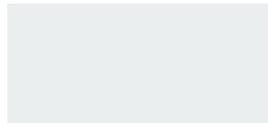


Figure 5: Title of the figure

Example of a table:

Table 2: Title of the table



**Footnotes**

The numbering of the footnotes is not related to the structure of the text and starts with number 1 in each paper. We want to stress that the aim of the footnotes is to explain the thoughts written in the text and not to reference literature.

**Abbreviations**

When used for the first time, the abbreviations in the text must be explained in parenthesis; therefore no additional list of abbreviations is needed. If the abbreviations or terms are written in English, the appropriate Slovenian term should be written along with the English original and possibly the English abbreviation in the parenthesis.

**Format type of the paper**

The Editorial Board accepts only the texts written with a MS Word text editor and only exceptionally those in the 'text only' format.

**Author's address**

Each paper should include the author's address, e-mail or a telephone number, so that the Editorial Board can reach him or her.

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A print or an electronic version of the paper should be sent to the address of the Editorial Board or the members of the Editorial Board.

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