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ACO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

- REFERENCES:**
- A. PO(2009)0141, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, dated 29 Sep 09.
 - B. MCM-0164-2009, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, dated 29 Sep 09.
 - C. IMSWM-0051-2011(SD1), NATO Strategic Communications Military Capability Implementation Plan (CIP), dated 21 Apr 11.
 - D. MC 422/3 NATO Military Policy on Information Operations (Final), dated 8 Jul 08.
 - E. MC 457/2 NATO Military Policy on Public Affairs, dated 8 Feb 11.
 - F. MC 402/1 NATO Military Policy on Psychological Operations (Final), dated 17 Apr 03.
 - G. CPPSPL/4010-79/10, Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive - Interim Version, dated 17 Dec 10.
 - H. IMSM 0348-2011, Terms of Reference NATO HQ StratCom Cell, dated 7 Jul 11.
 - I. ACO Directive (AD) 95-3, Social Media, dated 3 Dec 09.

1. **Status.** This Directive supersedes Allied Command Operations (ACO) Directive 95-2, dated 19 November 2009.
2. **Purpose.** To provide guidance on the planning and conduct of Strategic Communications within ACO.
3. **Applicability.** This directive is applicable to all ACO headquarters/units to be used for the preparation of local directives.

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4. **Supplementation.** Supplementation is authorised. Proposals for supplementation should be submitted to the SHAPE Strategic Communications Advisor.
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FOR THE SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER, EUROPE:

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

1-1. **The Information Environment.** ACO is operating in an era in which the role of information is critical to success, and is still evolving in rapid and often unpredictable ways that require imagination and flexibility to respond effectively. All of the challenges facing NATO have a critical information component, whether it is countering our opponents' use of information, or working to sustain the support of our publics and opinion leaders by ensuring they fully understand what is being done in their name. Changes in the global information environment offer both opportunities and threats to NATO and potential adversaries who see it as a vital part of asymmetric warfare. Responding to contemporary information challenges will consequently require bold reform of structures, working methods, and mindsets. The information age, with its cheap, accessible technology has blurred the distinction between actors and audiences, observers and participants, reporters and reported. Perception of events, whether accurate or not, shape responses and become the future reality, with the information arena becoming ever more crowded and competitive. Maintaining credibility, closing the 'say-do' gap and seeking to integrate more closely lethal and non-lethal activities in pursuit of its goals and objectives, remains a significant challenge for NATO. Indeed, such is the importance of information to mission success that, on occasion, policies and actions may need to be adapted in response to the imperatives of achieving the information aspects of the overall objectives.

1-2. **NATO Strategic Communications.** NATO addresses the challenges of the information age with the various information disciplines covered under the umbrella of Strategic Communications (StratCom) which is defined as:

“... the coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities - Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs (PA), Military Public Affairs, Information Operations (Info Ops) and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), as appropriate - in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO's aims.”¹

1-3. NATO StratCom is led by NATO HQ and is political-military in nature but to ensure effective coordination there is a role for StratCom at all levels. NATO's StratCom Policy identifies the central role StratCom plays throughout all phases of operations, from planning to execution. NATO StratCom is a broad-based endeavour, reliant on the contributions of all levels of command within the Alliance, and where appropriate the support of Allies and NATO's partners. StratCom will be consistent with the relevant NATO policies, MC422/3 on Information Operations, MC402/1 on Psychological Operations, and MC457/2 on Public Affairs, which highlight the need for co-ordination between all elements of the information community.

1-4 ACO and ACT are responsible for the development of capabilities to enable it to deliver the information and communication effects provided by Military Public Affairs, Information Operations (Info Ops) and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS). Their activities must be planned and executed within the context provided by the overarching StratCom approach, and integrated vertically and horizontally with each other and between headquarters and formations. ACO is responsible for synchronising military lethal actions, with non-lethal military and non-military activities. Hence, the ACO StratCom definition is:

¹ PO(2009)0141, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, dated 29 Sep 09 and MCM-0164-2009, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, dated 29 Sep 09.

“In cooperation with NATO HQ, the coordinated and appropriate use of Military PA, Info Ops and PSYOPS which, in concert with other military actions and following NATO political guidance, advances NATO’s aims and operations.”

1-5 **StratCom Purpose.** The purpose of StratCom is to make a major contribution to Alliance success through gaining and maintaining understanding and support for NATO/ACO and its operations, particularly among NATO nations, partners, and with relevant international and local actors within our areas of interest and operations. In addition, StratCom coordinates communication capabilities and synchronises them with lethal effects in order to influence the opinions and behaviour of selected audiences by demonstrating NATO/ACO’s power and will to succeed. Moreover, in order to ensure the consistency of themes and messages vital to maintaining credibility, StratCom will provide oversight and facilitate interaction and mutual awareness among the various information disciplines as they deliver their effects.

1-6 StratCom must also encourage and facilitate the longer-term perspective and strategic thinking which can be undermined by the intense pressures of a daily media environment that can produce a reactive rather than proactive approach. Overall, **by ensuring information and communication aspects are placed at the heart of all levels of policy, planning and implementation, and are a fully integrated part of the overall effort, StratCom can support the development of practical strategies that make a real contribution to operational success.**

1-7 **StratCom process.** In addition to its coordinating function, NATO regards StratCom as a process and a mindset rather than a capability. A process is commonly defined as a series of actions intended to achieve an end. However processes are not automatic, and need direction and management. In this context the role of StratCom is that of ‘process owner’, requiring StratCom staff and structure to ensure the process stays on track. This will involve active participation in planning and setting objectives and effects, aiding operators to work together and removing barriers to effective cooperation, encouraging strategic and long-term perspectives, assessing performance and seeking to improve both process and outputs.

1-8 **StratCom mindset.** The value of information effects in operations has not always been well appreciated. The StratCom mindset can be defined as one where all those involved in operations routinely understand that StratCom has an important role as one of the basic requirements to achieve success in missions and operations. As such the question then becomes not whether to use information effects, but how to best use them.

1-9 As with other specialist areas (whether lethal or non-lethal), this does not mean commanders, operators or planners should be expected to have the expertise to instinctively exploit the potential benefits of StratCom, and so require appropriate staff support to ensure they make best use of it. This will help facilitate understanding and exploitation of the contribution of StratCom to maintaining alliance cohesion at difficult times, the power of narratives, the linkage between verbal and non-verbal messaging, taking account of cultural aspects in policies and actions, the need for consistent and sustained themes and messaging at multiple levels, the key role of senior leadership in StratCom.

CHAPTER 2

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

2-1. **Introduction.** In accordance with NATO StratCom Policy², the Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy (ASG(PDD)) has overall responsibility for StratCom on behalf of the Secretary General. ACO is a key stakeholder in the development of StratCom policy, directives and associated products, and is responsible for the coordination of military PA, Info Ops and PSYOPS activities in support of operational effects and NATO's StratCom objectives. In addition, ACO leadership has a critical role to play in engaging selected audiences and promoting NATO messages.

2-2. **NATO HQ.** NATO HQ³, closely supported by ACO, is responsible for leading development of NATO-wide StratCom direction and guidance and for its promulgation to the military chain of command. Thereafter, NATO HQ is responsible for overall coordination of StratCom efforts through planning and execution phases of operations, missions and other activities. This process is supported by various bodies and working groups:

- a. StratCom Coordination Cell (SCC). Provides a permanent focal point for StratCom issues within NATO HQ. The SCC is staffed by personnel from NATO HQ IS and IMS, supported as required by ACO and ACT StratCom staffs. The SCC provides direct staff support to the StratCom Policy Board and its subordinate bodies.
- b. StratCom Policy Board (SCPB). Chaired by ASG(PDD), is scheduled to meet at least quarterly and is the top-level, cross-divisional, political-military body guiding development of StratCom within NATO. Core membership of the SCPB is at the ASG-level, along with the NATO Spokesperson, Secretary General's StratCom Advisor, IMS Public Affairs/StratCom Advisor (PA&SCA), ACO's StratCom Advisor and Chief PAO, and ACT's StratCom Advisor and Chief PAO. Joint Force (JF)/Component participation may be requested for discussion of specific topics.
- c. StratCom Working Groups (SCWG). Staff-level bodies working on specific topics under the SCPB umbrella to ensure implementation of SCPB guidance. Core membership is at the staff level from the same organisations and Divisions as the SCPB.

2-3. **The Command Role.** At all levels within ACO, StratCom is a Command responsibility and a Command Group function. Within the NCS StratCom will be in the Staff Advisory Group (SAG) with the StratCom Adviser having direct access to the commander. StratCom provides a cross-divisional coordinating and enabling function on information issues across and between headquarters. Commanders' StratCom-related communication capabilities shall be developed and carried out within the context of political-military direction and guidance provided by higher headquarters in concert with other military actions.

2-4. **SHAPE.** Within ACO, the SHAPE StratCom Advisor has the lead for supporting the development of political-military direction and guidance, drawing on expertise and input from within SHAPE and from subordinate headquarters and formations as necessary. The SHAPE StratCom Advisor is subsequently responsible for interpreting NATO HQ StratCom direction and guidance, and for providing any further guidance to subordinate headquarters or formations.

² PO(2009)0141, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, dated 29 Sep 09.

³ In the context of this directive, "NATO HQ" refers to all of the StratCom stakeholders within the International Staff (IS) and the International Military Staff (IMS).

SHAPE StratCom will therefore operate as a coordinator and catalyst for action. In accordance with SACEUR's StratCom direction and guidance, the SHAPE StratCom Advisor is also responsible for the coordination of military PA, Info Ops and PSYOPS outputs in support of StratCom aims and objectives; and, for overseeing their execution, in coordination with NATO HQ and subordinate ACO HQs. In addition to the main information disciplines, SHAPE StratCom will ensure coordination and cooperation with CIMIC (Civil Military Cooperation) and CMI (Civil Military Interaction) to improve communications with civil actors. In addition to routine informal contact, the following ACO fora facilitate execution of these tasks:

- a. SHAPE StratCom Working Group. Quarterly meetings of the SHAPE StratCom Working Group (SCWG) provide cross-functional oversight of development and implementation of StratCom policy, plans and activities.
 - I. Membership of the SCWG is drawn from the SHAPE divisions, Special Staff elements, NATO Special Operations HQ (NSFHQ) and agencies as required.
 - II. Core membership, in addition to the information disciplines, will include Command Group, INTAF, DOM, J3, J5, J9 (CIMIC/CMI).
- b. ACO-Wide StratCom Meeting. A monthly ACO-wide StratCom meeting provides a forum for StratCom staffs at SHAPE and the JF/Component level to discuss current and emerging StratCom issues. NATO HQ and ACT StratCom staffs are also invited to participate to further improve information sharing and coordination among stakeholders. Quarterly, this forum should include representation from CIMIC/CMI, INTAF/POLAD, OPS and the staff body responsible for KLE (Key Leader Engagement).
- c. StratCom Adviser is a permanent advisory member of the SCOMB (Strategic Crisis and Operations Management Board).
- d. StratCom is an earmarked augmentation of the CCOMC (Comprehensive Crisis and Operations Management Centre) for all StratCom related issues.

2-5. Joint Force, Component & Subordinate Headquarters. StratCom coordination and synchronisation occurs at all levels of command and will be staffed to reflect this. At Joint and Component level there will be a StratCom Advisors within the Staff Advisory Group with direct access to the commander, and they must receive adequate staff support to carry out their function. This must not be at the expense of other information disciplines. Within the following guidelines subordinate HQs have flexibility over organising information coordination structures and procedures that are appropriate to their circumstances.

- a) Under all circumstances StratCom remains a Command responsibility and a Command Group function,
- b) Within subordinate HQs, StratCom should provide:
 - I. StratCom advice to the HQ Command Group
 - II. Subject Matter Expert (SME) support on StratCom to deployed forces under HQ command
 - III. SME support to Higher HQ for StratCom capability development and plans
 - IV. Facilitate message alignment and synchronisation throughout the HQ and with subordinate HQs.
- c. To ensure synergy between all information disciplines and with other areas, the effective coordination of StratCom processes will require specific mechanisms, structures and personnel with assigned responsibility for StratCom implementation.

- d. d JF/Component and subordinate headquarters' StratCom activities are to be coordinated with, and in support of, SHAPE direction and guidance.
- e. Staffs from the various communication and information disciplines should as far as possible be co-located or in close proximity. This improves coordination and collaborative working.
- f. Those managing StratCom and chairing information coordination boards or similar bodies must have sufficient responsibility and seniority to both ensure the information disciplines work closely together and that other divisions play a full role. Such bodies should operate under the direct authority of the Command Group.
- g. Individuals or bodies with responsibility for StratCom activities as defined by the NATO definition should be titled as such. A number of differing titles for conducting what is in effect StratCom have been in use, creating unnecessary confusion.
- h. At operational levels in particular cooperation and coordination with CIMIC must receive a high priority. CIMIC is a primary tool of 'soft power' engagement with outside actors, and StratCom and CIMIC must work closely together to maximise its communication potential.
- i. At operational levels in particular StratCom must ensure that Key Leader Engagement is properly coordinated with the overall StratCom effort.

2-6. **The StratCom Approach.** The diverse nature of StratCom and wide geographic location of stakeholders, demands innovative working processes and offers opportunities to develop operating practices more in tune with the flat, network structures found both in information era businesses and among potential adversaries. Consequently, within ACO, a strong emphasis will be placed on collaborative working through a Community of Interest approach which provides physical and virtual linkages between relevant stakeholders. In addition, coordination and synchronisation of all communication capabilities are vital to the delivery of StratCom effects. This approach also fits with effective use of the decentralized, mission orientated principles of Mission Command. Furthermore, all ACO HQs should ensure that engagement on StratCom-related issues is established with external organisations and groups which contribute to the delivery of StratCom objectives. For example, in the interest of alignment and efficiency, there will periodically be a requirement to coordinate NATO/ACO StratCom activities with individual Allies and Partners and (while respecting the sensitivities of many bodies about contact with the military) with non-NATO StratCom stakeholders such as IOs/NGOs (International Organisations/Non-Governmental Organisations).

CHAPTER 3

STRATCOM PROCESS & PLANNING

3-1. **Introduction.** The Comprehensive Operational Planning Directive (COPD) articulates, together with the CCOM handbook, the military planning process in response to emerging crises, and identifies the points in the process at which StratCom D&G and/or products are required. StratCom, working through the communication and information disciplines, should encourage and facilitate an enduring and sustained approach, ensuring outputs are linked to strategic and operational aims.

3-2. **Analysis of the Information Environment.** An assessment of the information environment in which NATO is to conduct operations/activities is essential to inform effective StratCom planning and delivery, involving all of the information disciplines as appropriate, and building upon their existing planning, analysis and assessment capabilities. Analysis of the information infrastructure, the cultural dimension, the key decision-takers and opinion-formers, and NATO's own capabilities is necessary to plan and execute missions and operations. StratCom planners should leverage all available open-source information, and Knowledge Development capabilities to develop an understanding of the information environment, potentially supplemented by contractor support. Analysing potential audiences is important as NATO/ACO must communicate to a variety of external audiences, with differing interests and priorities. These range from conventional media, through IOs/NGOs and academia, to adversaries. External audience analysis and assessment capabilities are critical to the success of this process.

3-3. **Narratives.** Sustainable support for any institution or campaign is founded on both logic and instinct. NATO's core narrative must resonate with its audiences, and its operations, missions and activities must be consistent with that narrative. The NATO narrative, of **a democratic, multinational alliance uniting across borders to guard, with courage and competence, against threats to our homes**, has not changed. Moreover, the 2010 revision of NATO's Strategic Concept provided the opportunity and trigger to re-invigorate the NATO narrative and more clearly articulate NATO's relevance. The development and adoption of NATO narratives, led by NATO HQ and supported by ACO, is an essential component of StratCom planning. In each case, the narrative should be consistent with the core NATO narrative, establishing the link from messages and actions on the ground, to NATO's values, beliefs and strategic outlook.

3-4. **Political-Military StratCom Planning.** The SCPB and SCWGs provide the main, multi-disciplinary fora in which to discuss and develop political-military StratCom planning guidance. The top-level direction and guidance (D&G) for NATO's StratCom approach to a given crisis, mission or activity, will be issued by NATO HQ (PDD), ideally in the form of a StratCom Framework document. The framework supports a key aspect of StratCom, to link all levels of command to ensure a coherent effort, appropriate to each level – a kind of 'golden thread' from top to bottom. The Framework will articulate NATO's StratCom Objectives, its Core Message, StratCom Themes, Focus Topics and direction on the coordination of StratCom activities. It acts as a basis for more specific action plans. An outline StratCom Framework is at Annex A.

3-5. **SHAPE StratCom Planning.** SHAPE StratCom will support NATO HQ in developing Framework documents and ensure maximum transparency within ACO during this process to inform and enable parallel planning activity. The themes within the Framework must be interpreted appropriately at the strategic, operational and theatre level. SHAPE StratCom will ensure that NATO HQ StratCom D&G is accurately reflected in the Strategic Planning Directive,

SACEUR's CONOPs and SACEUR's OPLAN. NATO HQ StratCom D&G may also be supplemented by SACEUR. SHAPE StratCom is also responsible for ensuring coherence within the strategic planning documents between StratCom, military PA, Info Ops and PSYOPS. SACEUR's primary requirement is the imaginative and active utilisation of the StratCom themes to support development of actions and messages which reach out to, and influence, selected audiences. This will include explanations for and justifications of NATO's policies and actions, lethal or otherwise, to appropriate audiences. Led by SHAPE StratCom, ACO will also:

- a. Contribute to generating themes and messages, ensuring they reflect operational realities on the ground, and are regularly monitored and updated as needed.
- b. Identify StratCom opportunities and risks, and develop proposals for their exploitation and mitigation respectively.
- c. Pursue the integration of military leadership engagement plans with those of the civil and military leadership in NATO HQ, to maximise message coherence.
- d. As needed, develop ACO-level framework documents and other appropriate StratCom tools. This will usually apply to smaller missions and operations of significance to subordinate HQs, but where NATO HQ does not wish to closely engage. Such products will nevertheless fit within NATO HQ's overarching guidance.

3-6. JF/Component HQ StratCom Planning. Actions accompanied by themes and messaging provide the most powerful StratCom effects. Therefore, at the JF/Component level, StratCom planning should ensure a clear linkage between actions and messages. At JF/Component and operational HQs StratCom is also responsible for ensuring that Info Ops and PSYOPS activities are closely synchronised with JF/Component-led military PA activities, within the umbrella provided by NATO HQ, and SHAPE StratCom D&G. Coherence of actions and messages with the StratCom Framework is an essential requirement of planning at the JF/Component level. Key Leader Engagement at the JF/Component level should complement engagement activities at SHAPE and NATO HQ to ensure maximum effectiveness and message coherence. Theatre-specific StratCom direction and guidance will be provided on a case-by-case basis through SACEUR-approved OPLANs, SUPPLANs and Directives.

3-7. Measures of Effect/Assessment. Non-lethal effects are hard to assess, and there are limits to the degree that statistics can measure influence. In addition, lethal effects can generate 2nd and 3rd order influence and non-lethal effects. It is essential therefore to develop the means by which to assess the effectiveness of influence activities – on both opinions and behaviours of targeted audiences – in order to maximise their impact and to enable NATO to adapt messages and the means of delivery. In this area, there is a place for both objective and subjective analysis. In addition to assessing the impact of individual messages and/or actions, there is a requirement to assess the overall progress of NATO's collective StratCom approach. This requires a long-term approach with an acceptance that reliable results, if measurable, may only be visible over the long-term. The overall assessment should be held at the highest practical level and, fully utilising existing expertise and capabilities be based on the aggregate input of all involved headquarters and formations.

CHAPTER 4

DELIVERING EFFECTIVE STRATCOM

4-1. **Coordination.** In the information environment seemingly tactical events can have strategic impact, so, close coordination within and between headquarters is essential during the execution of StratCom responsibilities. Equally it is important to integrate non-lethal activities with lethal actions and ACO headquarters will establish appropriate coordinating mechanisms to achieve this. In order to provide a framework for coordination at the higher levels, a number of routine coordinating activities have been established (See Annex B). In addition to internal coordination, there is a need to maximise theme and message coherence across the Alliance and its Partners, to avoid public differences between NATO as a body and individual member nations. External coordination will be led by NATO HQ, supported by ACO as appropriate.

4-2. **Engagement and Empowerment.** The dynamic nature of the information era requires that ACO adopts a multi-faceted engagement process. Effective communication requires interaction, highlighting the need to listen as well as speak. In addition to managed engagement activities, specifically by senior leadership, nominated spokespersons and subject matter experts, ACO staff must be empowered to engage appropriately. Empowerment will amplify ACO messages and extend audience penetration. Traditional and internet-based information technologies must be utilised to maximise the impact of this new approach, and the associated risks actively managed by senior leaders. In this manner, ACO can transition away from a 'one to many' communications posture towards a 'many to many' engagement approach.

4-3. **Technology.** Traditional print, radio and television media continue to be vital, but Internet-based information technologies are increasingly dominant. These technologies are developing in rapid and often unpredictable ways that present conceptual, organisational and resource challenges. These technologies offer potential new ways of engaging with existing and/or new audiences such as the younger generation where developing and utilising social media venues facilitate substantive discussions between young military members and their civilian counterparts. Guidance on the use of social media within ACO is provided in ACO Directive AD 95-3.⁴ To meet this new challenge ACO will respond on two levels:

- a. Intellectual and organisational. ACO must create adaptable structures, and embrace innovative processes such as collaborative working, staffed by empowered individuals who are encouraged to be creative in responding to this changing environment.
- b. Resourcing. ACO must fund, equip and train to stay abreast of, and exploit, both traditional and new media.

4-4. **Capability Development.** The NATO Strategic Communications Military Capability Implementation Plan (CIP)⁵ provides the roadmap within which StratCom capability development will be taken forward within ACO, in close cooperation with ACT and NATO HQ. The CIP covers doctrinal development, process development, and StratCom education and training issues.

4-5. **Education & Training.** While ACT will lead on StratCom capability development, including specific education and training initiatives, ACO has a critical role to play in setting the

⁴ ACO Directive (AD) 95-3, Social Media, dated 3 Dec 09.

⁵ IMSWM-0051-2011(SD1), NATO Strategic Communications Military Capability Implementation Plan (CIP), dated 21 Apr 11.

requirements for the StratCom function and, as appropriate, supporting all the information disciplines. In addition, ACO StratCom staffs (along with NATO HQ staff where appropriate) at all levels will make a significant contribution to raising StratCom awareness within their own HQ and with external audiences, and in supporting the delivery of formal ACT-led StratCom education and training events. The effective creation of a StratCom 'mindset' requires that commanders, planners and operators understand the potential and limitations of StratCom and how best to use it. Led by SHAPE StratCom, ACO, working with ACT, will put a high priority on generating and maintaining this awareness. Led by SHAPE StratCom, ACO will also work with ACT in putting a high priority on supporting the increasing professionalization of all the information disciplines, in order to ensure commanders, operators and planners receive the expert advice they need and have the tools required to implement effective information campaigns.

OUTLINE STRATCOM FRAMEWORK

1. The StratCom Framework for major operations, missions or activities will be issued by NATO HQ (PDD) to provide top-level D&G for all associated NATO Public Diplomacy, PA, military PA, Info Ops and PSYOPS planning and activities. The purpose of a framework is to provide overarching guidance common to all in order to generate a 'golden thread' linking top to bottom. Each level of command will then create more specific messaging and implementation plans that are appropriate to their circumstances. For smaller operations, missions or activities subordinate HQs can generate their own frameworks, provided they are coordinated with SHAPE StratCom. The exact content of the framework will be dependant on the specific requirements of the operation, mission or activity, but it will routinely adopt the following format:

- a. Introduction. A brief background to the issue giving political and operational context and outlining future challenges from a StratCom perspective.
- b. Aim. The scope and duration of validity for the StratCom Framework.
- c. StratCom Core Message. Brief core message to underpin the StratCom approach to be adopted.
- d. StratCom Objectives. NATO's StratCom objectives for the operation, mission or activity. Objectives will routinely refer to friendly, neutral and adversary audiences.
- e. StratCom Themes. The (3-6) themes which are to be promoted in support of achieving the StratCom objectives. The themes are not messages *per se*, but are intended to identify the key understandings among audiences that NATO's integrated messaging and actions will seek to achieve.
- f. Focus Topics. Designed to complement StratCom Themes and to identify specific activities and/or calendar events around which focused StratCom action should be considered.
- g. Coordination. An overview of the key roles and responsibilities of specified headquarters in delivery of the StratCom approach.

2. Additional annexes can be attached as required, concentrating, as highlighted above, on more specific issues and implementation of the objectives, themes, and topics. These can include:

- a. Implementation plan. Using the framework guidance, specific actions appropriate to different levels of command should be developed to achieve the required effect. This can range from requirements for products and outputs to liaison mechanisms and detailed coordination.
- b. Key Messages. Although key messages will usually be issued at the time of framework promulgation they are likely to change in response to developments, whereas the Themes and Focus Topics are unlikely to change in the short term.

Periodic revision and re-issue of the Key Messages, or the development of a mission-specific Rolling Brief, will ensure that all stakeholders have up-to-date messaging available.

- c. Risk & Opportunities. Attached as an annex setting out the key StratCom challenges and opportunities, with appropriate actions for their mitigation or exploitation

ACO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATION

1. NATO StratCom Policy Board (SCPB). Chaired by ASG PDD and meeting quarterly. SHAPE StratCom Advisor, SHAPE CPAO, ACT, JFC/Component representatives (as required).
2. NATO StratCom Working Groups (SCWG). Co-chaired by ASG PDD and Secretary General's StratCom Advisor, and formed as needed to deal with specific topics. ACO represented by SHAPE StratCom Advisor, SHAPE CPAO, JFC/Component representatives (as required).
3. ACO-wide StratCom Meeting. Chaired by the SHAPE StratCom Advisor and meeting monthly. Membership of:
 - a) SHAPE: StratCom, PAO, Info Ops, PSYOPS.
 - b) JF/Components (routinely by VTC): StratCom Advisors, PAO, Joint Effects and Influence Branches (JEIB).
 - c) NATO HQ: IS PDD, IMS PA&SCA, IMS Info Ops.
 - d) ACT: StratCom, PAO.
 - e) At least quarterly CIMIC/CMI, INTAF/POLAD, OPS, CIMIC, Command Group will attend.
 - f) Multinational, NATO-linked Corps with StratCom structures can be invited.
4. Operations-specific StratCom VTCs. All significant operations, missions and activities will have regular VTCs involving representatives of the various information disciplines from each relevant level. This is to ensure the whole information community has a full understanding of the StratCom environment in the broadest sense. Such VTCs will also include as needed other HQ representatives.
5. NATO-wide StratCom conference. Held annually in spring/early summer for all StratCom stakeholders within NATO and selected external invitees, including academics, civilian contractors and national representatives.
6. Annual operational StratCom workshop. Led by SHAPE StratCom, to discuss operational-level issues.
7. Ad-Hoc StratCom seminars/Working Groups. Held as required, usually with participation from NATO StratCom stakeholders only, and designed to focus on specific issues/topics.
8. NATO StratCom Community of Interest. Sustained engagement, led by SHAPE StratCom, with internal and external StratCom stakeholders.