

# STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION – A NECESSITY IN TODAY’S AGE

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## Introduction

*‘Ashwatthama Hataha Iti, Narova Kunjarova–Ashwatthama is slain, whether human or elephant’<sup>1</sup>*

- Mahabharata

These words, in the Indian culture, have over the centuries symbolized ambiguity in a message. In the mythological Mahabharata, Dronacharya took supreme command of the Kaurava army after the fall of Bhishma and led the Kauravas in battle for five days. Though of advanced years, he was everywhere in the field and displayed such fierceness that the Pandavas reeled under his attack. Lord Krishna then pointed out that defeating Drona would not be possible if the strict rules of war were followed. He therefore advised the Pandavas to target Drona’s will to fight. The Pandavas bided his words and the above words were spoken by Yudhishtra to communicate to the warrior that his son had been killed.<sup>2</sup> These words changed the course of the war and the rest is history.

Documented history verifies that by about 300 BC, Alexander the Great had conquered almost the entire known world. The brilliant and charismatic leader subdued adversaries by disseminating exaggerated accounts of his savagery and prowess. Alexander instructed his armorers to construct oversized armor breastplates and helmets that would fit “giants,” men 7 to 8 feet tall. In the evening before battle, the oversized armor was left out on the fields, inspiring terror in his adversaries.<sup>3</sup>

A millennium later in the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD, Genghis Khan, leader of the Mongolian Empire, was favourable to defeating the will of the enemy before having to attack a settlement. Tales of the encroaching horde were spread amongst the villages and created an

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<sup>1</sup>C. Rajagopalachari. Mahabharata, edited by Jay Mazo, International Gita Society, Chapter 90

<sup>2</sup>Ibid

<sup>3</sup>Ronnie S. Stangler, MD ‘PSYOPS: Psychological Operations’, Disclosures, Medscape General Medicine (2003), [http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/449268\\_2](http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/449268_2)

aura of insecurity that undermined the possibility of future resistance.<sup>4</sup> The Khan also employed tactics that made his numbers seem greater than they actually were. During night operations he ordered each soldier to light three torches at dusk to give the illusion of an overwhelming army and deceive and intimidate enemy scouts. He also sometimes had objects tied to the tails of his horses, so that riding on open and dry fields raised a cloud of dust that gave the enemy the impression of great numbers.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1990-1991 Gulf War, pamphlets were distributed by allied forces targeting the will of Iraqi soldiers. These pamphlets were estimated to have reached 98% of Iraq's 300,000 soldiers and helped induce a large numbers of Iraqi soldiers (estimated at 100,000) to desert or surrender. During capture, many soldiers were found clutching pamphlets or hiding them in their clothing.<sup>6</sup>

More recently, ISIS is expertly using hip-hop music and even video games to

successfully recruit young people and children to their violent cause. ISIS social media machine is sophisticated, prolific, and unprecedented. “They are shooting out into the ether-sphere thousands and thousands of messages a day, over 90,000 a day and it's to millions of people across the globe,” John Carlin, the head of the US Justice Department’s National Security Division told ABC News Correspondent Pierre Thomas. “What they are trying to do is to convince young people to go slaughter civilians in a vicious war.”<sup>7</sup>

Exposure of the Indian youth to inimical elements such as ISIS, externally sponsored terrorists, separatist and fanatic elements operating within India is one of the biggest worry faced by Indian administration today. With lakhs of students seeking higher education abroad, and sizable expat community in countries where Jihadis operate with impunity, cases of our youth joining ISIS and its reflections in the form of the ISIS flag flown openly in the Valley

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<sup>4</sup>David Nicolle, *The Mongol Warlords: Genghis Khan, Kublai Khan, Hulegu, Tamerlane*, Firebird books (2004) p.21

<sup>5</sup>George H. Quester, *Offense and Defense in the International System*, Transaction Publishers (2003). p.43.

<sup>6</sup>Ronnie S. Stangler, *op.cit*

<sup>7</sup>Jack Cloherty, Pierre Thomas, Jack Date and Mike Levine , “ISIS Propaganda Machine Is Sophisticated and Prolific, US Officials Say”, ABC News, May 7, 2015, 9:27 PM, last accessed 09 Jul 2015,

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/isis-propaganda-machine-sophisticated-prolific-us-officials/story?id=30888982>

are worrying signs and should be a wake-up call for the Indian establishment.

All the incidents highlight the fact that through the ages and spectrum of conflicts, systematic and coordinated use of effective communication has been instrumental in shaping the immediate and extended environments and used to influence the heart and minds of own, allies and opponent's.<sup>8</sup>

However, it seems that despite this knowledge, we in India are unable to communicate our intentions in the right manner most of the times. This statement can be justified through the recent incident of floods in J&K. The Indian Govt/ Army went all out to provide disaster relief to all of Srinagar. However, the goodwill was shortlived and within a fortnight the people were again agitating against the Govt of India/ Army. Thus, it is clear that despite best efforts the system has not been able to win over the hearts and mind of the people of Kashmir and convey to them that their betterment and welfare is the country's interest. Clearly, we have not been able to

communicate with them effectively. The same could be said about the way we are handling the situation in North East or Maoist LWE within the country and the way we influence the littoral nations of the IOR. It can very well be assumed that in the spectrum of Management of Peace, our policies, infrastructure and execution have always seemed incoherent and inconsistent between the polity and people. These are not very encouraging indicators for Transition to Conflict and Management of Conflict that we need to also master.

It is widely repeated that in the coming years, the future of South Asia will depend in large part on India. As the largest country in the region, its choices and actions will condition the policies of its neighbors and of the non regional powers that have a stake in the subcontinent. India's policies are likely to affect actors well beyond South Asia as well. India's choices and actions will affect the life chances of over one billion Indians and perhaps another two billion people around its periphery from Afghanistan and Pakistan in the west, to Nepal and China in the north,

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<sup>8</sup>*Military Affairs Centre, IDSA, "Net Security Provider: India's Out-of-Area Contingency Operations", Magnum Books Pvt Ltd, Oct 2012, pp 63-71.*

to Bangladesh and Burma in the east, and a number of other countries in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean littoral.<sup>9</sup> Resurgent India has occupied the centre-stage of global politics and the world is watching how India will act in the years to come. Observers of India claim that Indian diplomatic direction, motive and thereby the rhetoric have changed considerably since the end of the Cold War. This change in perception has come about by the way India has communicated its intentions. However, whilst there has been a noted improvement in the way we are sending out messages, there is scope for improvement. What is left to ambiguity are the basic perceptions and precepts of India’s intentions, and how India is likely to behave over the next decade or so. It is left to speculation whether we are doing enough on the global level and do we have the potential to better ourselves. Winston Churchill is said to have observed that the principal difference between management and leadership is communication. Traversing the road towards the ‘Leadership Status’, India needs to overhaul its communication

mechanism and communicate its intentions effectively so as to meet the global expectations. Therefore the need of the hour is to incorporate an effective system into the national framework, which would ensure that we are able to convey the right message to our allies and opponents for action taken at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. This is ‘Strategic Communication’ in its most basic form.

The question ‘What is Strategic Communication?’ can bring as many answers as the number of people being asked. Differing perspectives of the concept are common among public relations professionals, marketing staff, strategic planners and government agencies. So what exactly is Strategic Communication?

### **Understanding Strategic Communication**

**Basic Concept.** The idea of Strategic Communication is to identify the core political objective, craft a strong policy narrative and align all diplomacy and

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<sup>9</sup>Kanti Bajpai, *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances & Alliances*, (Carlisle USA, SSI of US Army War College, Nov 2002),245.

communication programmes to target specific audiences using the most appropriate and effective media available.<sup>10</sup> To begin with, communication, when discussed in the context of Strategic Communication, refers to all the words, images and actions that are perceived and interpreted by audiences. Strategic Communication is not limited to media activities. It relates to intra, immediate, extended and ether environment. Strategic communication comprises of four main components: information operations, psychological operations, public diplomacy, and public affairs. Next, Strategic Communication reaches various audiences, not all of which are intended: the national population and the foreign population, including allies and enemies. A third point to note is that Strategic Communication is an inter-ministerial and inter-governmental concept.<sup>11</sup> The use of Strategic Communication within the framework of national policy interests and capabilities is an element that needs attention, a dedicated policy

and an apparatus that supports intelligent application.”<sup>12</sup>

**Definitions.** Surprisingly, unlike many other ideas, which have been selectively germinated by the Western World in Indian mindset, the concept of ‘Strategic Communication’ has been insulated and there are no courses on offer for India on this subject. Resultant absence of “Indigenised definition” forces one to analyse the existing ones from published sources abroad. These are as follows:-

- The US Department of Defence (DoD) states ‘Strategic Communication’ is “focused governmental processes and efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen or preserve conditions favorable to advance national interests and objectives through the use of coordinated information, themes, plans, programs and actions synchronized with other elements of national power.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Military Affairs Centre, IDSA, op.cit.*

<sup>11</sup> *Anais Reding, Kristin Weed, Jeremy J. Ghez “NATO’s Strategic Communications Concept and its Relevance for France”, Rand Corporation Report, 2010, pp 7-9.*

<sup>12</sup> *Military Affairs Centre, IDSA, op.cit*

<sup>13</sup> *Lindsey J. Borg, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF, “Communicating With Intent: DoD And Strategic Communication” (Graduation Thesis, US Air University, 2007), p.4.*

- The US President in the National Framework for Strategic Communication of 2010 defined Strategic Communication as “the synchronization of words and deeds and how they will be perceived by selected audiences, programs and activities deliberately aimed at communicating and engaging with intended audiences, including those implemented by public affairs, public diplomacy, and information operations professionals.”<sup>14</sup>

- NATO defines Strategic Communication as “The coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communication activities and capabilities of 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.”<sup>15</sup>

- Rand Research Team defines Strategic Communication as “a process designed to coordinate communications (words and deeds)

between inter-ministerial actors and to reinforce their strategic effect.” To achieve this, Strategic Communication exploits all existing expertise, to be found in the various information and communication departments. The aim of Strategic Communications is to promote behaviour in target audiences that is favourable to the actors’ objectives and, thereby, to shape the operational environment.<sup>16</sup>

**Objective.** The objective of Strategic Communication is to make national communication more influential, by influencing the way audiences think so that their behaviour is more favourable to the national objectives. It is important to note that Strategic Communication is intended to influence not only audiences’ attitudes but also their behaviour.<sup>17</sup>

### **Strategic Communication .... The Need of the Hour**

National security is best described as a capacity to control those domestic and foreign conditions that the public opinion of a given community believes

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<sup>14</sup>White House, *National Framework for Strategic Communication*, Washington DC (2010), p.2.

<sup>15</sup>NATO *Strategic Communications Policy*, SG(2009)0794, Brussels, 14 Sep 09, IMS Control Nr: 109005112.

<sup>16</sup>Anaïs Reding, *op.cit.*

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid*

necessary to enjoy its own self-determination or autonomy, prosperity and wellbeing.<sup>18</sup> It is the foremost duty of any nation to ensure the survival, development and realisation of the national aspirations. Nations employ various instruments of national power for achieving the National Security. Hard and Soft Power are two means of ensuring national security.

Soft Power is a concept developed by Joseph Nye of Harvard University to describe the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce, use force or give money as a means of persuasion. Nye explained that with soft power, “the best propaganda is not propaganda,” further explaining that during the Information Age, “credibility is the scarcest resource.”<sup>19</sup> The term is now widely used in international affairs by analysts and statesmen. In 2007, CPC General Secretary Hu Jintao told the 17th Communist Party Congress that China needed to increase its soft power. Former US Secretary of Defense

Robert Gates spoke of the need to enhance American soft power by “a dramatic increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security – diplomacy, strategic communications, foreign assistance, civic action and economic reconstruction and development.”<sup>20</sup>

In 1993, when the futurist Alvin Toffler wrote the “Third Wave,”<sup>21</sup> e-mails from individual homes was an enigma. However, in today’s world, the nature of creation and propagation of information and knowledge has transformed. Information or knowledge can be propagated in a matter of minutes if not seconds and the propagation of misinformation or correct information can bring organizations to their knees. In his stimulating book “The Sling and The Stone,” Colonel Thomas Hammes has elucidated numerous examples how wars fought under 4GW were won or lost in the minds. He states the 1968 Tet offensive was a tactical victory for

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<sup>18</sup>Maier Charles S, “Peace and Security For The 1990s” (unpublished paper for the MacArthur Fellowship Program, Social Science Research Council, 12 Jun 1990). Joseph J Romm, *Defining National Security: The Nonmilitary Aspects*, (New York, Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 92

<sup>19</sup>Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (Basic Books, 1990). He further developed the concept in his 2004 book, ‘Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics’.

<sup>20</sup>Tom Shanker, “Defence Secretary Urges More Spending for US Diplomacy,” *New York Times*, November 27, 2007, accessed Jul 10 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/27/washington/27gates.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/27/washington/27gates.html?_r=0)

<sup>21</sup>Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave* (New York: Bantam Books, 1980).



Americans but a strategic disaster.<sup>22</sup> The future business/ war strategies would not be limited to knowledge, but need to be centered on the process of ‘ideation’ – Conceptualisation, germination, creation, development, expansion, manipulation and termination of ideas.

As India embarks on the developmental highway and aims to transform itself as a regional/super power we need to address our internal and external challenges by formulating and implementing strategy and policy frameworks to shape the minds of allies/ neutral/ foes, ‘conflictors’/ competitors/ collaborators. In addition to targeting root causes and other enablers which can qualify as a threat to national security, there is a need to develop an effective counter strategic communication plan, which exploits the weaknesses and contradictions in the enemy’s communication. Propagation of own ideas aligned to our national interest, is vital in winning the conflict in the present and future scenarios.<sup>23</sup>

In Indian strategic circle there is an acute shortage of literature on the central theme brought out in the preceding paragraphs. Additionally, the fragmented nature of Indian ideologies, diversity of culture, language, social, economic and political compulsions and incoherent approach by various instruments of the national power presents an ideal opportunity to any inimical individual/ organisation or nation to exploit our strategic weaknesses. It is, therefore, imperative for our decision makers to prepare for such future challenges. The feasibility of utilising Strategic Communication as an enabler of national objectives is, therefore, imperative and essential.

### **The Way Ahead**

Strategic Communication as an operating philosophy has been incorporated in the decision making apparatus of the US, UK and NATO. Each country/ organisation has a specific Strategic Communication Command, which ensures that

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<sup>22</sup>Col Thomas X Hammes, USMC, *The Sling And The Stone: On War In The 21st Century* (New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2012), pp 58-59.

<sup>23</sup>Dr. Carsten Bockstette, “Jihadist Terrorist Use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques”, *George C Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Occasional Paper Series No. 20, December 2008, ISSN 1863-6039*



Strategic Communication is an essential element of every policy and implemented at all levels of policy making. In the Indian context, according to a former Home Secretary, a strategic communication model loosely exists within the aegis of the Government of India which comes into prominence during crisis situations. This model includes SOPs for contingencies, but the problem lies solely with implementation. He remarked that “no one reads the handbook and this, more often than not, leads to chaos and duplication of work, which in turn sends out mixed or contradicting messages.” More importantly, he also adds, “there is a clear lack of leadership which is necessary to ensure that once a policy is decided the mandate does not change, and all means necessary to communicate the political objective are not held hostage by pressures of fractured domestic politics.” In the absence of a clear line, confusion persists which is exploited by the media.<sup>24</sup>

In one of its reports, IDSA has proposed a Strategic Communication structure for an Out of Area

Contingency (OOAC) operation to ensure efficiency (refer Figure).

However, the proposed model has been suggested for an Out of Area Contingency and concentrates predominantly on Strategic Communication as the domain of communicators and media officials and as an activity to be managed within each department rather than as an inherent part of cross governmental policy and strategy.

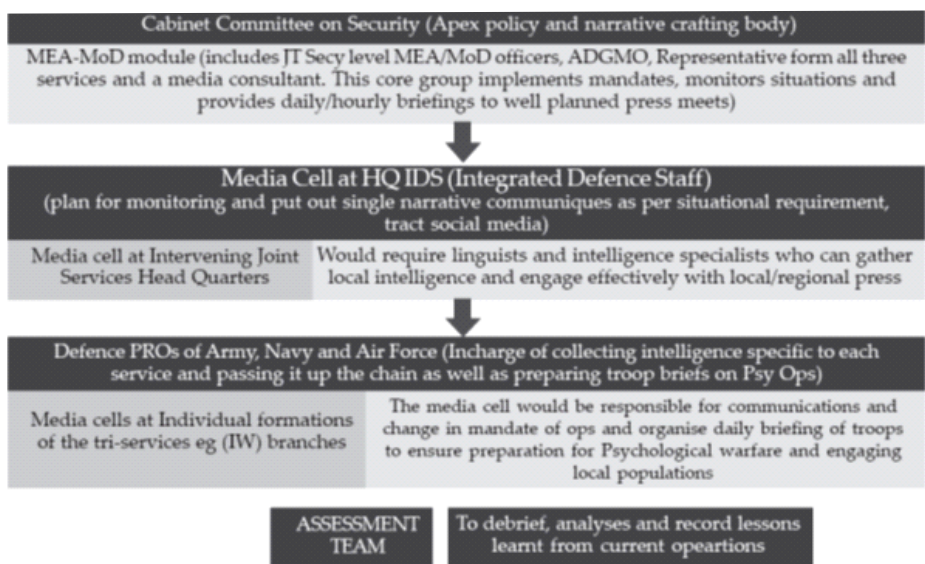
Strategic Communication on the other hand is more encompassing and just as national strategy exists in the form of several plans running concurrently, strategic communication also must operate in a number of domains and in several different ways. It has different levels and players who have to be interlinked with each other to ensure effective communication. The key actors in this strategy are:-

- Leaders at the ‘heart of the government’ who devise policy and strategy.
- Communicators exploiting different media to communicate and articulate this strategy.

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<sup>24</sup>*Military Affairs Centre, IDSA, op.cit*

## Strategic Communication – A Necessity in Today’s Age



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Figure : Strategic Communication Structure, Especially For OOAC Operations<sup>25</sup>

- Agents who enact the strategy through their actions.
- The advocates or stakeholders beyond government who, though not directly developing national strategy and its accompanying narrative, are integral to its realisation, whether consciously or otherwise.

With so many different layers of governance involved and employed in these activities, the question to be asked is how can such a complex

activity be managed effectively? Where should strategic communications be located within government? To answer these questions and to lay the framework for Strategic Communication the following is proposed:-

- Development of a politically conducive culture for Strategic Communication through strong leadership.<sup>26</sup> A good culture mandates that people at all levels both civilian and military must be empowered,

<sup>25</sup> *Military Affairs Centre, IDSA, op.cit*

<sup>26</sup> *Paul Cornish, op.cit, pp 17-24*

trusted and taught to be strategic communicators in order to ensure the message has the widest possible reach and influence. Developing the right culture also necessitates that response of target audiences and adversaries and facts on ground be given due importance and encouragement.<sup>27</sup>

- Once strategic communication is incorporated as a policy, it should be a visible feature of the activity of each department of the government. While it is agreed that each governmental department has its own approach and cannot implement or communicate in identical manner, yet it is true that these departments cannot operate in complete isolation either. Policies and strategies overlap, and the actions and messages of one department of government can either reinforce or undermine those of another. Hence, effort has to be made for achieving cohesion amongst the various departments. All government agencies have to have their messages aligned in the same direction, because everyone understands the nested objectives and how their own efforts support those objectives. As part of this, there is a need for a central body of some sort to

coordinate efforts and create a regular forum for those involved in developing, implementing and articulating policy and strategy.

- Once any cross-departmental government policy is drafted, it should be communicated through strategic communications experts. It would be the responsibility of these experts to take the complex policy and shape a message that is accessible and appropriate for the relevant audience and communicable via the most appropriate medium. Furthermore, while it is understood that there might be good reason to withhold classified or sensitive information, incomplete, willfully misleading or inaccurate stories can do as much harm to broader national strategic objectives as no information at all.

- The relationship between the message and the medium through which it is conveyed also needs to be given due importance. While the government may be the source of the national policy, it is the media that provide the lens through which a message may be viewed. Thus, in an obvious way, media is the key vehicle

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<sup>27</sup>Paul Cornish, *op.cit*, pp 17-26

for articulation of the national narrative. In the age of the 24-hour news cycle the power of the media to connect with and inform domestic and foreign audiences in real time should never be under-estimated. For many people, the media – including print, broadcast, online and social networks – are the main point of entry to understand government policy and its implications for their lives and well-being. As audiences see and hear events unfold in real time, the news of any development, whether accurate or inaccurate, will often spread more rapidly by social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook than by traditional news outlets. Governments cannot ignore this phenomenon, any unwillingness or failure to communicate will not be neutral and will be a message in its own right. The absence of a response from leading political figures within a certain period can almost say as much as a formal statement, and the space left by them will inevitably be filled by others willing to comment. Unlike most of the important countries, India does not have a media channel (private or govt owned) to influence the domestic/world opinion in its favour (US has CNN, UK has BBC, Russia has RT,

Qatar has Al Jazeera, Germany has DW, France has France 24, Euronews). We need to empower DD so as to make it a powerful channel. It is also necessary to identify key opinion formers and influencers within different sections of society to support the narrative. These people can communicate a narrative or objectives more subtly and sensitively to local communities and may have credibility as a result.

- Another means of effective communication is action. All action has a communicative value and conveys a message. Hence the potency of action should not be under-estimated. As key agents of foreign policy, the armed forces are particularly aware of the significance of how each action conveys a message which can have diplomatic consequences. Those on the ground will be able to see more clearly how policy translates into reality and should provide feedback on where the policy could be improved or reshaped to greater effect. Without a full understanding of the context of operations and the narrative behind it, there is great potential for political damage in operations. Hence, it is imperative that personnel should

generally be given the responsibility to act in accordance with a central vision and expected to use their local knowledge to determine how best that central vision can be realized, relayed and interpreted to local audiences.

- If strategic communication is an instrument of national strategy then it should include not only the political and military leadership but also, in its more subtle form, teachers, trade officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private organizations and others who might operate, either consciously or otherwise, in the space of national strategy and in the pursuit of the national interest. The role of these stakeholders is especially important in circumstances where strategic communications require subtlety of message and where the intended influence and outcome should not be seen as connected in any way to government interests or aims, for fear of further alienating the audience. This is pertinent to foreign affairs in particular, where political and diplomatic sensitivities on the ground can make it difficult for governments to act overtly or be seen to be influencing

domestic populations or events. The private sector in particular can play a role in strategic communications, with notable examples in conflict stabilization and transformation. The involvement of the private sector brings a different set of skills to the field and may help to depoliticize and demilitarize strategic communications by operating outside government messaging. The private sector can not only help to shape the political and social landscape but can also provide a link between ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approaches if coordinated with national strategic objectives.<sup>28</sup>

## **Conclusion**

*There are but two powers in the world – the sword and the mind. In the long run, the sword is always beaten by the mind.*

*- Napoleon Bonaparte*

In conclusion, it has been the aim of the author to raise the awareness level of the role and potential of strategic communication as a means of delivering policy. The common refrain that forces should also seek to win ‘hearts and minds’ as a means to deliver

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<sup>28</sup>Paul Cornish, *op.cit*, pp 17-26.

enduring peace and stability speaks of the importance of non-military means and ‘soft’ power in connecting with populations both at home and abroad. Strategic communication, correctly understood, is an integral part of this approach. The article seeks to clarify how strategic communication can help government manage and respond to current and future security challenges. It places strategic communication at the heart of the development and implementation of national strategy, and argues that it must be the business not only of the highest levels of government but of all its constituent pillars (including the armed forces, diplomacy, trade and aid).<sup>29</sup> Recent developments suggest that the military is becoming increasingly aware of the importance of engaging with media and shaping perceptions and narratives. However, despite seminars and conferences, more needs to be done by MoD and the military to continue this process. There is, thus, a vital need to concentrate on this aspect, otherwise military victories can be perceived as strategic failures.<sup>30</sup> The potential of strategic communication

remains under-exploited. If properly understood and designed, strategic communication is not just about words, explaining intentions or actions, but should also be about achieving the required ends of national strategy, not least by exploiting the communicative power of military and non-military deeds.<sup>31</sup>

Strategic communication also supports another critical strategic commodity – influence. Strategic influence is wholly dependent on effective coordination across and beyond government in order to achieve national strategic goals. Given the centrality of influence to national strategy, a strategic communication framework must be intrinsic to strategic planning and policy preparation and implementation. What is needed is a shared strategic communication mindset, integral to every department of state and at every level of national policy and strategy. Strategic communication should be visible from the outset in the activity of each government department, in a number of ways. First, there should be evidence

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<sup>29</sup>*Military Affairs Centre, IDSA, op.cit.*

<sup>30</sup>*Paul Cornish, op.cit, p 39.*

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*

of a high-level understanding of the broader effects that policies should and might have. Second, there should be sensitivity to the possibility of a variety of interpretations and implications of policy in different quarters. Third, there should be an awareness of the influence required to achieve consensus and support for any given policy. And finally there should be recognition of the affected stakeholders and audiences, whose support will be necessary for the fulfilment of given national strategic objectives and government policies. Effective strategic communication is a two-way process, relaying the reactions and views of the various audiences involved. This audience feedback should inform the periodic adaptation and adjustment of policy and strategy.

More ambitious still, strategic communication could be understood as going beyond media messaging to help develop a targeted campaign of behavioural or social change informed by close knowledge of the audience. It must be tailored and shaped to serve the strategic political objectives set at any given time. Rather than being limited to a semi-detached supporting role of communicating a separate and inflexible national strategy, they should therefore be seen as enablers of national strategy. Moreover, if strategic communication is to be truly national, they must reflect not only government policy and an executive message but a national narrative that is understood, owned and endorsed across society.<sup>32</sup>



### ***About the Author***

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<sup>32</sup>Paul Cornish, *op.cit*, p 39.