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TEN YEARS ON: THE EVOLUTION OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION OPERATIONS SINCE 9/11

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
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DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:

[There were no Documents submitted.]

WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING:

[There were no Questions submitted during the hearing.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING:

[There were no Questions submitted post hearing.]

TEN YEARS ON: THE EVOLUTION OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION OPERATIONS SINCE 9/11

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES,
Washington, DC, Tuesday, July 12, 2011.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 3:05 p.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Mac Thornberry (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MAC THORNBERRY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

Mr. THORNBERRY. I call the hearing to order.

And again, I apologize to the witnesses for the delay. But I appreciate you bearing with us during the time of votes.

I want to ask unanimous consent that my opening statement will be made part of the record, and since nobody else is here at the moment that seems to be without objection in the interest of time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Thornberry can be found in the Appendix on page 31.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. As you all know, this has been an important issue for this subcommittee for some time. And there had been meetings even in recent weeks I have attended where Members had expressed various opinions on whether the area of strategic communications particularly in terrorism is an area where it is appropriate or productive for the United States government to be involved.

And I think it is most appropriate for us to hear your views about whether we should be involved, how we are doing, and suggestions you have for the way forward.

So I understand Mr. Langevin and other Members are on their way, but in the interest of time let me go ahead. And I am going to turn to our witnesses to summarize their opening statements.

Without objection, your complete written statement will be made part of the record.

And I will turn to our witnesses—Ms. Rosa Brooks, professor of Georgetown University Law Center; Dr. Christopher Paul from the RAND Corporation; and Dr. Tawfik Hamid, senior fellow and chair for the study of Islamic radicalism at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies.

So, Ms. Brooks, we will start with you. Again, thanks for being here.

STATEMENT OF ROSA BROOKS, PROFESSOR, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER

Ms. BROOKS. Thank you.

Thank you, Chris.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now I can be heard.

It is great to have an opportunity to be here. And let me just start by saying, as you said, I am a professor at Georgetown. Until a few weeks ago, I was an official at the Defense Department, where I worked very extensively on strategic communication and information operations [IO] issues. But I should emphasize that although I am very happy to talk to the extent that I can about those issues if there is interest and questions, I am here today just in my individual capacity.

I believe Chris——

Mr. THORNBERRY. Would you pull the microphone just a little closer to you? It may be me, but——

Ms. BROOKS. Is this better?

I think Chris is going to talk a little bit about the origin of the term "strategic communication" and the various meanings it might have in some detail so I won't do much beyond saying that it is a bit of a corporate import. And indeed, people often use the term "strategic communications" with an "s" on it just to mean the plural of all the different kinds of public relations, marketing, advertising.

We have really struggled to give it a meaning at the Defense Department that adds some value that isn't the same, because I don't think it is particularly useful in the government context to have that term.

It is just redundant if it means the same thing as public affairs, plus public diplomacy, plus what we used to call psychological operations [PSYOP] and now call MISO—military information support operations. So we have really struggled to make it a somewhat more robust concept, one that emphasizes the importance of engagement, listening, understanding the perception of others and aligning all of our tools, our actions, as well as our words in order to influence perceptions in a way that is in our favor.

I think though that that corporate history of communication often creates a lot of misleading and overly simplistic impressions about what strategic communication can and can't do in the government context.

One of those impressions is that it is simple. It is like selling a soda. You want to be able to easily show success or failure. You want to be easily able to quantify it.

But in the context of national security and foreign policy objectives, it is not a soda. It is much more complex. People's bundles of cultural assumptions are very, very different. The timeframe for success is much, much longer. You are not talking about increasing sales over year one or year two. It is much harder to gauge. What you are doing is much more of an art than a science.

I think that one phrase that you still very, very often hear repeated is the famous one of Richard Holbrooke's, "How can the world's greatest communication society be out communicated by a guy in a cave?"

And I think that imbeds some of those assumptions that the skills of Madison Avenue and Hollywood in a subcultural vacuum can nonetheless significantly change the perceptions, attitudes and behaviors of many, many people around the globe.

Osama bin Laden, who, of course, was the man in the cave who Holbrooke was referring to, had a lot of advantages early on in a certain way when it came to strategic communication. One of them was the home court advantage.

Compared to us, he knew the language, the culture, the history, the narrative, certainly far more than we did. They say all politics is local. Maybe all strategic communications is fundamentally local, at least, to be successful.

He also had the underdog status, and I think we early on made a mistake and really playing into his hands, in some way giving him a prestige. The appearance of the whole U.S. military was preoccupied with this one man.

We had a platform already. We unintentionally raised it a little bit higher for him by seeming obsessed with one man, one organization at the expense of other issues.

With that said, Osama bin Laden in the end, I think, didn't out communicate anybody. By the time of his death, he had really sunk into much greater irrelevance. I think he was overtaken by the events of the Arab Spring, a multiplicity of other voices.

In a way he forgot that actions speak louder than words and that no amount of ringing appeals to Islamic unity or jihad could make up for the number of dead Muslim bodies in the streets and the squares in the Arab world and elsewhere. He was overtaken by many other voices that in many ways were rejecting extremism.

What does all these mean to the United States, very, very briefly?

I think there are some things when it comes to strategic communication that we need more of and some things that we need less of.

One thing that we need more of still is we are still in the process of reforming some of our internal structures in the government to diminish confusion about just what it is we are talking about when we say "strategic communication" or "IO" or these various other terms. We need to increase our coordination, training, et cetera.

We need to decentralize more and stop fixating on control of the message, which rarely works, and indeed, I think one of the reasons that we have seen, you know, in the Arab Spring, a multiplicity of voices, who aren't that interested in the issues that we were interested in, in the end become much more influential than our efforts to change the conversation ourselves.

We need more funding for good, old-fashioned public diplomacy, cultural exchanges, educational exchanges. They make a difference. They help with that decentralization by empowering those many other voices.

There is some risk in that. You sometimes empower people you are not going to like very much, but I think it is one of those tactical risks for strategic gain situations, and long term it pays off.

And we need more funding for linguistic training, regional area studies training.

What do we need less of? We need a little bit less of seeing all strategic communication through a counterterrorism lens. I think that that ends up doing us a disservice in our counterterrorism aims, ironically. I am happy to talk a little bit more about that.

I think we need little bit less of an obsession with metrics and assessments. It is very hard, in fact, especially in the short run, to evaluate the success of strategic communication campaigns.

I think we need less of a zero defect mentality. No question in my mind there are people in the name of U.S. government strategic communications doing stupid things right this minute. It is going to happen, but we can't throw the baby out with the bathwater when it does happen.

And finally, just the last point, I think that we need a little bit less obsession with who does what. One of the topics that in some ways I get most frustrated by is why is the DOD [Department of Defense] doing this when the State Department should be doing this in a different world. It seems to me if the phrase "whole of government" that we toss around a lot means anything at all, it has got to mean that when something is in the national interest, the government finds a way to do it.

In a better world, I think the State Department would be better funded, have greater capacity. We are not there yet. In the meantime, I think, very clearly it is among other things a military mission to use the tools it has to prevent conflicts when possible.

I will stop there. I know I have only skated over the surface, but I have used up my 5 minutes.

So, thank you very much. I am happy to talk more in the questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Brooks can be found in the Appendix on page 32.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

We are a little liberal on the 5 minutes, because I do realize this is a big topic and we are asking you to summarize your statement. But I appreciate you doing so.

Dr. Paul.

STATEMENT OF DR. CHRISTOPHER PAUL, SOCIAL SCIENTIST, RAND CORPORATION

Dr. PAUL. Thanks very much for inviting me here to testify today.

It was, in fact, in 2001 that Vince Vitto coined the phrase "strategic communication" for use in the government as we are talking about it today, while serving as the chairman of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Managed Information Dissemination.

So here we are 10 years later still using his phrase, but still struggling collectively to get our arms around the concept, let alone to do it well. So there is no official government-wide definition of "strategic communication." And in academia there is not an agreed definition, nor is there complete consensus about the boundaries of the concepts for agreements on priorities for moving it forward.

In my research I have observed at least three differences, real, actual tensions in how people conceive strategic communication. These are: first, attention between broadcast and engagement; second, disagreements over the desired degree of control of the mes-

sage, attention between balancing taped message automatons versus loose cannon in the ship of communication; and, third, attention between inform and influence.

And I think it is this latter tension that is the most significant and pernicious, a tension between those who admit that the goal of strategic communication is influence and those who hold that the goal is just to inform without influencing.

And I think this is a false dichotomy. Informing without influencing isn't possible. There is no such thing in my view as value-free information. Every provision of information depends on the attitudes and beliefs of the speaker and seeks to serve some purpose.

Letting the facts speak for themselves presupposes first two things: first, that the facts have something to say and, second, that there is something that the speaker wants said. Every provision of information is an act of persuasion.

Perhaps the more appropriate distinction to make would be between influence and manipulation. In my view, strategic communication should be unashamedly about virtuous persuasion, but should be completely devoid of falsehood, partial truths and spin.

A wide range of definitions could successfully cover the concept, as long as they respect what I call the unassailable core of strategic communication, which has four tenets. First, informing, influencing and persuading is important. Second, effectively informing, influencing and persuading requires clear objectives. Third, coordination and deconfliction are necessary to avoid information fratricide. And, fourth, actions communicate.

Now, this last point is particularly important, as far too often strategic communication efforts focus only on the traditional communicators and the traditional messaging to the exclusion of the messages and signals we send in other ways.

So, if a definition of strategic communication doesn't embrace those four points then in my view it is actually a definition of something else.

I have a vision of what successful U.S. government strategic communication would look like. In this vision we have clearly stated national objectives, which contain nested subordinate objectives, which contain nested intermediate objectives, nesting all the way down to the operational and the tactical level.

These clear statements make it easy to see where there is a way and a way for influence and persuasion to contribute and where there isn't.

In this vision commanders and decisionmakers have a communication mindedness. They consider the messages and signals that will be sent by their actions, their utterances, their plans, policies. Failing that—or as that is developing—these same commanders or decisionmakers have access to and respect for communication specialists, who advise them and sit at their right hand and bring the communication implications of their intentions to their attention.

In this vision everyone in government speaks not with one voice like a robot or a parrot, but with their messages aligned in the same direction, because everyone understands the nested objectives and, most importantly, how their own efforts contribute to those objectives and because they have or have access to the requisite communication training and cultural knowledge.

In this vision communication isn't exclusively one-way broadcast but also includes two-way communication, engagement and dialogue. In my vision this leads to policy shaped with our own interests, as well as the interest and preferences of others in mind. This is my vision.

To support my vision I have six recommendations. I will give you the headline for each and refer you to my written testimony for the details.

My recommendations:

First, specify information end states.

Second, build strategic communication following a crawl, walk, run progression.

Third, build strategic communication from the bottom up as well as from the top down. We do need further leadership and guidance in this area from the highest levels, but better training and better practices at intermediate and lower levels can make important contributions that should not be overlooked.

Fifth, make a distinction and separate virtuous persuasion from more pernicious deception and manipulation.

And sixth and finally, create and disseminate a government-wide definition of strategic communication.

I am happy to elaborate on anything I have touched on during questions and answers.

Thank you for your time today.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Paul can be found in the Appendix on page 49.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Dr. Hamid.

STATEMENT OF DR. TAWFIK HAMID, SENIOR FELLOW AND CHAIR FOR THE STUDY OF ISLAMIC RADICALISM, POTOMAC INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES

Dr. HAMID. Thanks a lot. It is a pleasure and honor to be with you today.

I will address first an important issue with the strategic communication, which is a need, and a vital need, for this topic in the war on terror, because the war on terror should not be seen as a war within a geographical border. We have seen terrorism developing from Afghanistan, Pakistan to homegrown terrorism in America here.

So I see that the war on terror should focus on what I call "Brainistan," the impulse of hatred that is created in the mind of some individuals and causes them to do terrorism. So, if we ignore this part of the problem, then we will have major difficulty, really, to defeat terrorism at the end.

The other point I would like to mention is that after September 11 there were several setbacks in the relationship between the U.S. and the Muslim world. And in response to this the United States tried several ways to improve its image in the Muslim world, what they call winning hearts and minds.

They used some phrases like "Islam is a religion of peace," for example, to satisfy the Muslim society. They avoided using certain expressions like the word "jihad" in official communications for the same reason.

And they also tried in some situation to show what I call culture oversensitivity, not just sensitivity, by having some U.S. diplomats wearing the hijab, for example, the Islamic scarf, when they visit Muslim countries, or sometimes the female military personnel will wear the hijab in Afghanistan to satisfy the local community, thinking that this will improve the image of the United States.

The outcome of many of these attempts were not really very significant improvement in the image of the United States in the Muslim world. I mentioned some reports in my statement to show that the outcome was not really so very promising of all these attempts.

Weaknesses in the U.S. approach, as I see them, include the following: failure to achieve what I call a critical balance or crucial balance between showing respect to the Muslim world and not being perceived as weak. So the balance here is needed.

For example, doing certain acts like the U.S. President, for example, bowing to the king of Saudi Arabia to show respect, he could have given him a hug, because bowing here can show sign of weakness that can impede the image of, the improvement of the image of the United States. In general the Muslim world prefers to have a strong friend rather than a weak friend.

The other point is failure to remove obstacles that impede the process of improving the U.S. image, like, for example, failure to weaken the radical, or inability to weaken radical Islamic ideology itself which is a main obstacle to improving the image of the United States in the Muslim world.

The ideology itself here is crucial. Without weakening it, the image of the United States will have always difficulty to be improved. And also failure to disassociate the U.S. government from the U.S. media in the minds of many in the Muslim world.

In our parts of the world we don't see the government here separate from the media, so the government can do great things to improve its image, yet we see someone in the media criticizing Islam, for example. This can ruin the whole image of the government. I believe sufficient effort should be given to disassociate the U.S. government from the media in the mind of many in the Muslim world.

The recommendations in general—I give the outlines—we should work at three levels: the level of improving the message quality itself via the text. Sometimes use some Islamic text to really improve the strategic communication. I give some example here. There is a need to use certain cognitive psychology tactics to improve the U.S. image to create positive links to the U.S.

Also, the U.S. needs to work on weakening the ideology of terrorism by properly calculated and adjusted psychological warfare operations. This is much more effective than just military confrontation. We need to balance this psychological warfare that is fundamental to weaken the mind of the terrorists.

And, finally, addressing the perception issue so whenever certain acts or deeds or statements are released, they should be carefully done or stated in a way to avoid being perceived as weak on the other side. So you can still show respect as you—great, it is great to show respect, however you should do it in a way without being perceived as weak.

These are the frames of recommendations, and I mentioned more details in my statement. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Hamid can be found in the Appendix on page 73.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

Excuse me.

Let me just ask each of you to comment on something I want to read, and then I will yield to Ranking Member Mr. Langevin.

This is a quote from an article entitled "Ending Al Qaeda" which appeared in the July/August issue of the American Interest. And it says, "The center of gravity in our struggle with Islamist terrorism concerns Al Qaeda's legitimacy in the context of Muslim perceptions of the West. Counter-narratives can enable Western and allied Middle Eastern governments to convince potential Al Qaeda recruits that violent extremism is both intellectually corrupt and politically counterproductive. If we combine these messages with a concerted effort to contest Al Qaeda's strategic communications mastery of the Internet, we can end recruitment. We can thus destroy Al Qaeda as a self-regenerating worldwide proselytizing organization. Alas, we are not doing this very well. In some respects, we are not doing it at all. We need to change our ways lest we come to regret an opportunity missed."

I would be very interested to know your reaction to those statements.

Ms. Brooks.

Ms. BROOKS. I think it is both true and untrue. I think we are contesting the Internet, probably not as effectively as we could and should be, but I think I won't go into detail, as you are probably already familiar with some of the Defense Department's efforts, as well as the efforts of other parts of the U.S. government, but it is certainly an area that is getting a tremendous amount of attention and we care about very deeply.

But the only part I would squabble with, I think, a little bit, we are not always the right ones to do it. And this goes back to the issue of who has the home court advantage, who has the right skill sets.

We often don't get it right, because we don't have the linguistic skills. We don't have the historical knowledge. And I think that there is a little bit of a Holy Grail fantasy that if we can only come up with this mystical alternative narrative, that somehow everyone will just say, "Oh, goodness me, extremism is a terrible idea."

I think that is dangerously simplistic. There is no Holy Grail alternative narrative that we will put out there and that the minute potential extremist recruits see or read they will go, "Gosh, I see the error of my ways."

It is so much more complicated than that and I think we barely understand the relationship between ideas, ideology, action, behavior, identity, group loyalties, family loyalties. All sorts of things can trump ideas.

That said, I think that what we do need to do—this goes back to a point, I think, that we have all made in various ways—is empower other credible voices to make those arguments in a multiplicity of different ways, some of which we won't like, some of which we won't like, but which in sum total—they will be con-

tradictory; it will be messy—but in sum total is often much more powerful in the Internet domain, as well as every other domain, than a controlled message to find *the* alternative narrative that we put out there.

And I think this is in some ways the positive and negative lessons for us of the Arab Spring: that you poll protesters in Tahrir Square and elsewhere in the Arab world, they are not that interested in the United States. That is not what was getting them out there in the public squares. That is not what was motivating them.

They weren't that interested in extremism either. They were there for economic reasons. They were there for political reasons. They were there, because they wanted futures and jobs and better educational opportunities. You name it.

And in some ways the best thing we could do is stand back, enable them to speak and shut up, other than saying, "We support you." So I think getting over the notion that there is some quick fix that we, the United States government, will find is something that we need to do and put more energy into empowering and enable others to speak, recognizing that sometimes we won't like what they have to say.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

Dr. Paul.

Dr. PAUL. I think the quote you read represents a laudable sentiment, but I think the devil is in the details.

So, first, I would like to reiterate that strategic communication is good for things other than just countering violent extremism. There is a whole host of foreign populations with whom we need to sustain positive relationships. And then it is a lot easier to prevent violent extremism before it starts by having a positive relationship and having started a dialogue long before something like that emerges.

Second, this is harder than it seems. As Rosa indicated, there is no silver bullet. There is a lot of cultural context and nuance. This is not a trivial undertaking that just involves getting a few right messages on the Internet, finding the right radical extremist boards and offering counter arguments.

And third, even if we become better at that and we do more in that domain, it is very likely that an organization such as Al Qaeda will have a residual radical hard core that no amount of persuasion is going to work on. And so there is going to need to be the—we can't talk our way out of this problem.

Absolutely, the strategic communication piece is critical both in terms of making progress, necking Al Qaeda down to the radical hard core, who will need to be incarcerated or eliminated, hopefully, in such a way that it doesn't engender further recruits, that that is framed in such a way as to be communicated as effectively as possible.

These are just the few things I wanted to observe.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Okay. Thank you.

Dr. Hamid.

Dr. HAMID. Absolutely.

I agree with the point that the counter narrative to Al Qaeda ideology has not been developed yet. And the United States may not be in a position or may not have the capability, really, to develop

it, because it depends on the culture, on the religious jargon, like, for example, here in the article mentioned, it is intellectually corrupt and terrorism and politically incoherent. This doesn't make much sense in the mind of the jihadists.

What makes sense in the mind of the Muslim world is if it is un-Islamic or Islamic. They think differently. They think in terms of religion. So, I believe a counter narrative has to be created, but the U.S. may play a supportive role here, not necessarily to get directly involved within the process of the production itself.

The second part is the use of Internet. It is crucial in winning the war on terror. First of all, it can help the reformation efforts. I wrote recently an op-ed to show that how the worst parts of the Muslim world when it comes to terrorism—Yemen, Somalia and Afghanistan, in general—are the lowest in using the Internet, in Internet penetration.

And not only that. The Internet can be used as a tool to launch a very powerful psychological warfare operation, as I mentioned, to fight here the impulse of hatred in "Brainistan," so psychological warfare by using the Internet.

The Internet is tremendous tool in our hands, but we need to develop the content that can be really effective, because what works in our mind does not necessarily mean it will work in their mind. So what we see effective and crystal clear it will work, may not work at all and may be actually doing the opposite, may produce the opposite of what we are expecting.

So we need really to go forward with using the Internet effectively to launch psychological warfare. However, we need to be very careful on the message and the content of the material to be effective on the other side. So I agree, really, with the view of the article.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

Mr. Langevin.

STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM RHODE ISLAND, RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank our witnesses for being here today.

Mr. Chairman, without objection, I would like to read my opening statement, then go into questions if I could?

Mr. THORNBERRY. Sure.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Again, thanks to our witnesses for your testimony. I found it fascinating so far.

And more than 2,500 years ago the great Chinese strategist, Sun Tzu, wrote, and I quote—"To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence. Supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting."

But his real words still hold true today. America's interest abroad is not simply to rely on breaking enemy resistance, but also in enabling people around the world to share in the American ideals of protecting life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Since the horrible attacks of 9/11, our country has been forced to turn its focus on battles abroad to seek justice against those who murdered nearly 3,000 people. And while we have had recent vic-

tories against Al Qaeda and its supporters, including the killing of Osama bin Laden and suppressing major elements of the Taliban, much of our effort has been falsely billed in the Muslim world as a quest for vengeance.

Now, some in the U.S. have fanned these flames with similar rhetoric, only sparking greater violence and outrage. It is a vital lesson for those seeking to maintain America's influence or leadership in the world community that words matter not only for the respect and image of our nation abroad but also our national security.

Now, strategic communication must be a whole of government effort that employs American values of justice and liberty to strengthen ties with our friends and allies and influence or disrupt our competitors and foes.

These goals are becoming increasingly difficult in a world of instantaneous global communication, where messages designed for one audience can easily spill over and be confused by another.

Furthermore, these audiences are not simply empty vessels. No communication takes place in a vacuum, and certainly any American engagement overseas can and will be spun and used against us.

We must also be aware that we are targets of other strategic communication efforts and must order our own impressions and views. Take, for example, the recent quote from the People's Liberation Army Chief General Chen Bingde, who during Admiral Mullen's recent visit to China, noted that America should reduce its spending on defense.

Should the statement be taken as a legitimate expression of Chinese concerns with a strong and well-funded military, or rather is it intended as ammunition for another audience in the U.S., who would seek to stop any defense efficiencies, despite a massive deficit owed largely to China and declining force responsibilities in Iraq and Afghanistan? This is just one of the main challenges facing our strategic communications abroad.

So with that, I just want to thank our witnesses, again, for your time today. Again, I have appreciated your testimony and look forward to continue to review the printed material that you have provided to us and I appreciate, you know, the challenges that we do face. The United States, obviously, has a good story to tell. It is a story of strength through pluralism and diversity and justice through fairness and compassion.

We must not lose the opportunities to tell the story when we are able, so that our actions abroad may be rightly interpreted as supporting the ideals upon which our Constitution was based and which we wish for men and women around the world.

With that, I would like to just turn to a question. Last Congress I introduced a bill to establish a quadrennial national security review that would basically take a whole of government look at our national security challenges and resources to meet these threats.

My question is, how should strategic communications be synchronized with direct and indirect efforts, such as humanitarian assistance operations? And will we benefit from a high-level look at these priorities and resources across the board?

Ms. BROOKS. Yes, we would.

I think that your idea of a quadrennial national security review is a very good one. I personally would also love to see us move towards a more unified national security budget, because I think that the increasingly archaic distinctions that we draw between what the State Department does, what the Defense Department does, which made sense in an era of rather different, more state-oriented threats, don't make much sense any longer.

And yet our committee processes here on the Hill, the way our executive branch is structured and certainly the way we present our budgets just sort of calcifies arbitrary lines that really are doing us a disservice.

And I think that any effort—I think we are still obviously very far away from that—but any efforts to force the executive branch as well as invite people here on the Hill and in the media to think of this as a unified set of problems, not as a, over here you have got State, over here you have got AID [Agency for International Development], over here you have got the Defense Department, would be very valuable.

I think that one of the tough institutional challenges that we face at the Defense Department and then I think is faced at every other executive branch agency has been sort of wresting strategic communication away from the communications experts, which is not to say that that is not extremely important.

But your point about how do we better synchronize it with humanitarian assistance and other issues really goes to a point that I made and that Chris also emphasized, that strategic communication, to be effective, is about aligning all of the tools at our disposal, our actions, as well as our words. And humanitarian assistance among other things can be a vital strategic communication tool. If we stick it off in a closet with public affairs, we don't tend to realize those synergies at all.

So I think that that is partly just a bureaucratic and structural challenge for us and some of the internal reforms that while I was at the Defense Department we worked on. We are very much geared at how do you integrate strategic communication thinking across the departments so that it is not deemed as it is on the sort of theory of every marine as a rifleman, everyone should be a strategic communicator and be thinking about those issues, but it is very hard to do.

Dr. PAUL. So a really excellent question, because it attacks two critical issues in this area—resources and this issue of synchronization of actions. So the question is very much mindful of the fact that actions communicate.

I will echo Rosa. Yes, more resources are necessary for this. When USIA [United States Information Agency] was disestablished, we lost as a nation a lot of capability in this area. Some of it was rolled into State. Some of it was just lost.

We have been building some capabilities in these areas, and I understand this is a time of fiscal austerity. And if public diplomacy and strategic communication are national priorities, and they should be, they need to be resourced like they are.

Now, turning to the coordination and synchronization issue, that is a real challenge. Something inside individual departments that can help is the development of communication mindedness. If the

people who are doing humanitarian aid, who are doing other kinds of policy have become conditioned to ask the question, what are the communication implications of what I am about to do and who else might I need to coordinate with, that will go a long way.

But at the end of the day, if there are different departments that have different portfolios, it is easy to say the phrase "whole of government." It is very difficult to actually do whole of government integration.

Part of the challenge there is within the executive departments. It is almost impossible for one executive department to have anything approaching authority over another executive department. The way it is structured just doesn't allow that.

So you definitely hit on the challenge. There are some possible solutions that can be achieved collaboratively and through training and through constant reminders of decisionmakers and reminders to decisionmakers and commanders that actions communicate and that these things need to be coordinated and integrated. But that is a real challenge and remains a challenge.

Dr. HAMID. Okay. Thank you.

Thanks for the question. I see two parts. My answer will be in two parts. The first is, when we have limited resources, I believe it is the time when we should focus on how to improve the efficacy and efficiency of using these resources. So it is not just the amount of resources. I believe what is more important is how to improve the same resources, even less resources, to be more efficient.

Regarding the synchronization of the strategic communications and the humanitarian effort, this is absolutely needed. In cognitive psychology models in memory, in human memory, there is a concept called or a theory called the spreading activation model that means that when you remember something like the word "red" you remember apple or red car or blood, some related information. All information are like a network of related data.

So when you remember in the Muslim world, for example, the word you say, it can be either linked to positive or negative things. Now it is more linked to negative things. That is why the image is not that good. The aim of using humanitarian aid can play a significant role in changing these links to make it positive.

I will give you an example that happened in our country, Egypt, my country, my original country, Egypt, that in the 1980s after Yom Kippur war, after long period of hatred to America during Nasser's time, the United States AID, USAID, used to send some chickens directly to the hands of people. And the color of the cover of the bag was—or the color of the bag there was something like the U.S. flag. It was not the flag, but with same colors. It represented America. We called it the American chickens.

And what happened when Egyptians used to eat these chickens—believe me, this was happening—we used to pray, say, "God bless America." The taste was so good, and it linked, it created a link in the human brain between the word "USA" and the good taste. So it was a positive link toward USA.

And during that time, the image of U.S. was marvelous. So synchronizing the humanitarian aid with strategic communication, they should work together, because you can use the humanitarian aid more effectively when you, for example, add the image of the

flag, and you can put the two flags of the two countries so that it is not misunderstood in a negative way. So it creates a link toward the flag of the USA, the USA via using humanitarian aid more effectively. So I fully agree with this point.

I call this chicken diplomacy, by the way.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you all for your answers.

I yield back.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. West.

Mr. WEST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member.

And thanks to the panel for being here.

And Dr. Hamid, I absolutely applaud you for your stance——

Dr. HAMID. Thank you.

Mr. WEST [continuing]. And your efforts.

I spent 22 years in the military. And as an artillery officer, one of the things that we saw develop was the understanding that you have lethal fires, but then you also have this thing called nonlethal fires. And when you do your strategic studies, they will teach you that there are four elements of a nation's power, and that is the DIME theory—diplomatic, informational, military and economic.

So I think one of the things we have not really been able to do a good job of is really understand how do we leverage the nonlethal fires, the information operations, as part of our national power. And I think that when you look at the fact that we continue to talk about a war on terror, and I think you will agree that terror is a tactic, so our nation cannot really fight against a tactic. That is something down the tactical level.

So I think we have missed the boat as far as our strategic communications, and until we can clearly understand and identify who the enemy is and their goals and objectives, that we are not going to be successful in bringing together a targeted, strategic type of communications message which, as you just said, should not be in the realm of communicators. It should be in the realm of operators. And I think that is an important thing.

So my question to you all is this. Do you think in developing a strategic communications plan—and we have been at this for 10 years now—that we have truly failed to understand the impetus behind which our enemy combats against us?

And also, I would ask a second question. Do you think we are narrowly defining our enemy because if Al Qaeda was to change their name tomorrow, does that mean that we have won?

Ms. BROOKS. That is a good question.

I think that, as you said yourself in your comments, terrorism is a tactic. It is not an entity called "terror." It is a method. It is an asymmetrical method of warfare, and those with less power will at times turn to it and that there is importance in being very precise about who we are talking about when we talk about the war on terror.

So to the question of, do we understand the impetus behind our enemy, is I think it depends which one. The Taliban is different from Al Qaeda. Al-Shabaab is different from main Al Qaeda. Hamas and Hezbollah are very, very different from Al Qaeda.

And I do think that we do ourselves a tremendous disservice when we lump them all together. They have elements in common, may draw on similar modes of support, may have similar ideolog-

ical elements, but they are not the same. The grievances, the issues that motivate their adherents are fundamentally different.

And I think that one of the, again, efforts that we have really certainly worked on, I know, during my time with the Defense Department, and I think that the U.S. in general has made some significant progress is in disaggregating and saying, "You know, you can't fight if you don't understand who you are fighting against." I mean, you know, again, we do ourselves a real disservice if we don't disaggregate.

Actually, if you will indulge me, one other metaphor I really wish we could put to rest is the war of ideas metaphor which, again, I think, as with the war on terror, tends to confuse us more than it actually enlightens us.

As we have said earlier, you know, there is no one meta-narrative that magically ends extremism or ends terrorism. We don't really understand the relationship between ideas and action.

There are lots of people who are exposed to and may be adherents of violent extremist ideas, but who don't become terrorists or don't fight against us. You know, to paraphrase the NRA [National Rifle Association] bumper sticker, you know, "Ideas Don't Kill People. People Do."

And we need to understand that I think at times the fixation on extremist ideology can really blind us to that sort of down and dirty work of really disaggregating and saying, "What is going on in this country in this province with this demographic group that is motivating them to take action against us," so that we can tailor our responses accordingly.

Dr. PAUL. I think the way you framed your question provides a really important frame, the separation between fires—lethal fires and nonlethal fires. In the military we really understand how to do lethal fires. There is a protocol, there are targets, there is a desired effect, there is a variety of different ammunitions that might deliver that effect. We know and we understand that.

Not so much in the nonlethal fire side, on the information operation side. It is harder to define the targets. It is hard to know what the desired effect really is. It is harder to articulate that, and it is harder to measure that.

So, bringing that up to strategic communication—you asked about strategic communication strategies and strategic communication plans—I think on some level it would be best if we didn't have a strategic communication plan, but just had a plan that included strategic communication.

One of the recommendations I make—and if you will indulge me for a moment, I will elaborate—is that we should elaborate information end states. This is a piece of advice that comes from Professor Dennis Murphy at the U.S. Army War College. It is one of the best pieces of strategic communication advice I have heard, so I try to repeat it whenever I have the chance.

Dennis Murphy says, "Hey, we should change the guidance for the commander's intent such that commander's intent be required to include an information end state."

So if the traditional commander's intent, to give a simple example, is remove—or the desired end state is remove the insurgent presence from village X, if an information end state is required, the

commander might also make clear "remove the insurgent presence from village X whilst retaining the attitude of noncombatants as neutral or better towards the friendly force."

With that caveat, with that extra information end state, now subordinates have a lot more clear guidance to execute on. And if they don't feel comfortable with the different approaches necessary to do that, then they know they need to reach outside their own stovepipe and go find someone who has that expertise.

Thank you.

Mr. WEST. Thank you.

Dr. HAMID. Thanks for the question.

Regarding the first question, have we failed in our strategic communications with information warfare, my answer is, yes, we certainly have failed. Until today terrorists are generated in higher rates. We have homegrown terrorism here in the United States in the last couple of years that exceeded previous 8 years since September 11. So certainly, the evidence is showing that we are not very successful on this front.

The other question, have we failed in defining, you know, the enemy, my answer is, certainly, yes. We failed basically to define the word "radical." We are fighting like radical Islam sometimes, and we say we support moderates.

But when you ask people how would you define "radical" and how would you define "moderate," what are the parameters. It is like a doctor going to do surgery for cancer without defining the criteria for cancer.

We failed to understand that relationship between the ideology and the actions. So we simply focus on like, the doctor focusing on the abscess and ignoring the diabetes that caused the abscess.

You treat the abscess, you have another abscess. You treat it again, you have another abscess. Until you recognize the underlying cause and the mechanism of diabetes, obesity, aggravating it, you see the holistic picture, then you cannot cure the condition.

And I see we ignore the common factor in all the groups whatever you call them, whatever their names are, they share one thing, a common ideology that tells them to kill the other or not to be tolerant to the other or to hate the other. And as long as we do not confront this ideology effectively and weaken it via education, via psychological warfare operations, via other means, we will not be able, really, to really control this problem.

Mr. WEST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to all of you for being here.

I appreciate you talking about the whole of government approach because, you know, for years that was very frustrating, because one, you know, you could really see why we needed to do that, and yet it was clear that we weren't quite there.

But, I wonder if you could—is there an example, a positive example of where that whole of government across entities and with proper communication occurred and could be looked at as—and actually we would have even the results of what that might have changed in terms of—so can we look to any of that? What do we

learn from that or what do we learn from the fact that we can't find an example like that?

Dr. PAUL. I have one. Unfortunately it isn't a U.S. one. But the Australian Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands, RAMSI, they went in there. It is a peace enforcement and governance restoration mission, I think, in the 2005/2006 timeframe. And they had amazing whole of government integration.

How did they do it? They had the three commanders on the ground, the representative of their foreign ministry, their state department, the police representative they sent and the military representative.

The three of them went around joined at the hip. If ever they spoke in public, one was at the podium, the other two sat behind him or her. If a question came up that required an answer that they hadn't already reached a consensus on, they would turn around and put their heads together and get the Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands answer. And so they always had integration.

That may not always be practical, but there is one example of success.

Mrs. DAVIS. Were they approaching that from the—were they understanding that within the context of strategic communication? Or they were doing that, perhaps they would say because it was the right thing to do, but because they needed to try and carry out a mission that required—I am thinking of, you know, the Africa Command, but maybe "command" is using the wrong word, you know, AFRICOM, but where we tried to put people forward who don't only represent the military, the Pentagon, and——

Dr. PAUL. They didn't use the phrase "strategic communication." They did it in the name of unity of command, which is an important strategic communication principle, and they were very mindful of the message their force and their actions were sending within the separate command stovepipes, within the military stovepipe, within their civilian police forces.

They were very cognizant of how their behaviors, how their dress, what kind of messages those sent to the civilian population. It was very important to them to not—to be internally consistent and not be contradictory.

So while they might not have used the phrase "strategic communication," I would argue that what they were doing was very much in that vein and with that intention, a whole of government continuity and coherence.

Ms. BROOKS. I think it partly depends on the scale. I think it is easier to find good examples on a very small scale than on a very large scale just because, you know, the nature of this is a big government, it is a big country, it is a big world, the bigger the issue.

Mrs. DAVIS. Right.

Ms. BROOKS. You can say, "Here are areas where we did better or worse," but it is very tough to say, "Here is a, you know, unequivocal, wholehearted success."

I can think of a couple of examples of things that I think that we got better or got right. I can think of more, but I will just mention a couple.

One which was something, a very difficult issue where I think we certainly got better, was in the context of civilian casualties in Afghanistan, where there was a very conscious shift, which was very much a whole of government shift, from saying our first reaction to press reports or other reports of civilian casualties caused by coalition forces is going to be to say, "We don't know what you are talking about. We are going to do investigation. They were all bad guys anyway. What do you mean," to shift to saying straight off the bat, everybody saying, "If our actions caused civilian casualties, we will do everything we can to correct it. We are so sorry if there has been any loss of innocent life. Nothing we can say can change the fact that people have lost loved ones. We know that."

I think that shift in itself was actually quite significant and took a real conscious effort to sound less defensive, to say, you know, loss of life is loss of life. It doesn't matter if it was justified. The grieving parents or relatives are still grieving. I think that was getting it better and in reaction to learning the hard way that we were getting it wrong.

Another more recent example of one, I think, all things considered, the government did a pretty good job with the death of Osama bin Laden. I think that we fumbled a little bit on the details of what happened in terms of how the story came out, but I think it was actually handled in precisely the right way across the government, which was supposed to say, "This is something we have been trying to do for a long time, we said we are going to do. We did it. This guy is a bad guy. He is not here anymore. Good thing."

But, also, without turning it into a moment of exulting in vengefulness or exulting in death, or lionizing him more than—inadvertently raising again the prestige and the profile of Al Qaeda, that it was the right degree of "bad guy, he is dead, we got him, we can do these things," but also sort of saying, "And, you know what, he is not that important anymore. Move on."

Mrs. DAVIS. Yes.

Dr. HAMID. I actually, I was going to give the bin Laden example also as a matter of cooperation, but I don't really have several other examples, really, in my mind about this sort of cooperation. I see from the other side that actions of the U.S. government seem to be disassociated from one another.

One part of the government is doing something. Another part is doing something else. Sometimes this is beneficial, because if someone did a mistake, the other one can try to correct it. But in general, things must be synchronized more effectively together, I believe.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, may I just ask one quick question, because I know we don't have too many of us here.

You know, I was really interested in your comments, Dr. Hamid, about weakness—respect and weakness.

Dr. HAMID. Yes.

Mrs. DAVIS. And particularly related to the hijab, the U.S. women going in——

Dr. HAMID. Yes.

Mrs. DAVIS [continuing]. And wearing——

Dr. HAMID. The hijab.

Mrs. DAVIS [continuing]. The hijab. And also thinking about how those of us who—women who go in also cover our heads. We don't really——

Dr. HAMID. Yes.

Mrs. DAVIS [continuing]. Wear the full, but we are told to do that, and we do that out of respect.

Dr. HAMID. Yes.

Mrs. DAVIS. Where is—how——

Dr. HAMID. Ah, how is it seen as weakness?

Mrs. DAVIS. Where does one go for that information?

Dr. HAMID. Yes. The other side simply sees it as you are subjugated to Islam. The word "Islam" means submission. It was supposed to be submission to God, but it is used politically in different ways to submit others to their values of their religion.

You see, the radicals everywhere are trying to submit other people to their will. In Somalia, from Afghanistan, the Taliban, even in the Salafis in Egypt recently were trying to submit others. So they see you have submitted to their value system. So you see, they are bowing to us. This is how they will interpret it. We are winning. We are victorious.

So whatever you do on one hand to really show victory and bring the psychology of defeat in the mind of the enemy, the enemy will always go and say, "Look, they are defeated. They are bowing to us. They are following our values."

So this is how it is seen as weakness. This is why what I am saying is to show respect, yes, absolutely, but be very careful of doing this without showing signs of weakness. So you can still achieve the positive value of showing respect to others and without the negative effect of showing weakness, and weakness from their side, from their point of view, not from your point of view. From your point of view you can't see it, but this is how it is seen on the other side.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And after this question I unfortunately have to depart for a meeting that I have in my office, but it is important to stay. And, you know, I am fascinated by the discussion here today, and I understand how important these things are and how they matter.

Obviously, the conflict in terms of where we are today has been years in the making, and particularly the conflict with violent jihad.

Dr. HAMID. Yes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. How do we really turn this around? And one of the things that really that I struggle with and I think we are all challenged by is the fact that if you look at, for example, throughout the Quran there are numerous examples where it actually calls for followers to commit violent jihad, that it calls for acts of violence——

Dr. HAMID. Yes.

Mr. LANGEVIN [continuing]. To subjugate. And it is almost a duty——

Dr. HAMID. Yes.

Mr. LANGEVIN [continuing]. To do that.

It is not like in some cases in the Bible, as I understand it, there are certain cases where there might be call for acts of violence, but they are almost subject to interpretation. It might be more vague than it is in the Quran, which seems to be very direct——

Dr. HAMID. Yes.

Mr. LANGEVIN [continuing]. In calling for acts of violence.

So, if that is the case, how do we turn this around? How do we win, you know, in the sense of—and achieve a peaceful outcome?

Dr. HAMID. Thank you for this question, this vital question. And I noticed, for example, I read the Bible when I was young, and in Deuteronomy you will find, for example, fight against Amalek, for example, specific groups. So it is not a general fight for everyone else.

But I will give you a personal story of mine. One day I was praying in Egypt when I was young, beginning my real story in religions and in thinking. And I read a verse in the Quran that says [Arabic]—"Kill the infidels wherever you find them."

And my conscience couldn't accept it, so I asked a Salafi friend of mine. His name was Ali. He was radical. And he said to me, "Yes, we have to fight the infidels, and it is obligation on us."

I went to a Sufi scholar, which is a mystical form of Islam. He said to me, "Just love every human being and be good with every human being." And this was not satisfactory. I said to him, "It is written. It is mentioned in the Quran. It is written here." He said to me, "[Arabic]," which means "in the day of judgment you will understand the meaning."

So, for me I was not so patient to wait for the day of judgment. I just followed the one who is giving me the literal meaning.

Later on in the reformation efforts I am doing, I realized that all the verses in the Quran that talk about jihad or violence use the expression "the" before the expression "infidels"—al-kafioun, al-moshaka. "Al" means "the" in Arabic. It is like telling you I am going tomorrow to a white house or I am going tomorrow to the White House. It is completely different.

Just emphasizing the value of "the" or "al-a" before the word "infidel" in the Quran can simply solve this problem, because once you say "the," you define the meaning, the violent text to this specific group in the early stages of Islam. You can't generalize it to everyone else.

So, there is a way within some linguistic analysis and interpretation really to limit the meaning of the violent jihad to some specific group only in the early stages of Islam.

So, it is certainly possible to, through different ways of interpretations, through language, to really limit. And you take it literally from me, all the violent text of jihad can be limited to the early stages of Islam without being currently applicable in our modern times.

So there are ways to do this. It is not impossible. It is certainly possible.

Ms. BROOKS. If I can add a thought on that, I think I defer to Dr. Hamid about all of this, and I am sure it is right that there is a segment of the population for whom that sort of textual analysis can make an enormous difference. At the same time, I think there is a real danger of placing too much emphasis on ideology.

Islam has been around for 1,500 years, more or less, and the rise of extremist Islamic terrorism is a pretty new phenomenon. And even today the vast majority of Muslims in the world have nothing to do with it.

So, I think, assuming that our problem is this pernicious ideology that comes out of the Quran can be very misleading, and this goes back to the earlier discussion of what is the relationship between ideas and behavior.

You know, for the average recruit to extremist action, it may have far more to do with what their brother suggested that they do or economic need or fear or anger about a very specific policy, whether it is of the United States somewhere.

They may be wrong. They may be misunderstanding it, but a perception about Palestine or Israel for instance. And I think that we would be wise to not overemphasize the role that ideology—religious or otherwise—plays in what are violent social movements that often have many complicated causes, some of which are nationalistic, some of which are economic.

You know, again, not to suggest that there isn't a very important role for a segment of people in doing that, but I sometimes think that we get so obsessed with that we have got to counter this ideology that we give too little attention to the other causes that motivate people to become a recruit.

I know that I am not an expert on radicalization, but I have colleagues who spent a great deal of time looking very concretely at case studies of how does person A end up being radicalized, and it is pretty rare that ideology has much to do with it, you know, except as kind of a blanket justification that becomes convenient when someone asks. It usually has much more to do with who their friends are, who is paying them, et cetera, et cetera.

Dr. HAMID. Yes. Would you mind?

I am not denying the role of other factors. There are other facts that can play a role. However, we should ask ourselves a basic question. Why the socioeconomic and political factors that some people say it makes someone a terrorist? Why they do not affect, for example the Christians in the Middle East, who live under the same socioeconomic and political circumstances. Like we haven't seen the Christians in Iraq, for example, being suicide bombing or beheading other people.

So it is obviously the problem is coming from specific group here. So, if the factor, the external factor was the true cause of the problem, it shouldn't distinguish between a Muslim or Christian or a Jew. It should affect all the population.

So you see terrorism development in any poor area, like from Brazil to India for example, but that is not the situation. That is what makes the ideology playing the pivotal role, but yet I am not saying it is the only role. There are other contributing factors.

Dr. PAUL. It is complicated. And I won't pretend to have the answer. I will make two observations.

First, given that this conflict was years in the making and did take a long time to brew, we should accept that it may well be years in the unmaking.

And second, that the kinds of things that will help are kinds of things we are talking about—promoting engagements, encouraging

shared understanding, trying to identify and emphasize shared values, share information, and better understanding of radicalization processes and connecting engagements and promotion of shared understanding in programs to try to diminish radicalization processes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Very good.

Thank you all for your testimony today. It has been valuable.

And, Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you. Appreciate it.

Ms. Brooks, you all were really talking about this, and I acknowledge that there is no one factor that makes one go blow yourself up. But certainly during the cold war, we fought an ideological struggle as well as had troops in Europe and nuclear weapons. You know, there was a multi-front sort of effort to combat the evil, I will say, that was coming out of the Soviet Union.

So isn't there an ideological aspect to the fight against those who want to come kill innocent people in the name of religion also?

Ms. BROOKS. Absolutely, and I don't mean to suggest that there is no ideological aspect. I think I would just emphasize what you just said. It has got to be a multi-front battle.

And I think that we err, I think, when we get a little overly simplistic and start thinking it is a magic bullet. If we could only refute the ideology, if we could only come up with the alternative narrative, that is when we start getting ourselves into trouble.

It is a component. The nature of the component is probably different with different groups of people. At risk of repeating myself, it is sort of disaggregate, disaggregate, disaggregate.

Mr. THORNBERRY. No, and I think that is a fair point. But I guess what we are trying to evaluate, as somebody said, 10 years on into this, is to what extent the ideological part of this is appropriate for the U.S. government and how well the U.S. government is doing it.

And I think at least both of you have said, it is not just a counterterrorism issue. There is a strategic communications element to a whole variety of engagement with the world.

Ms. BROOKS. Absolutely.

Mr. THORNBERRY. And I acknowledge that.

But I guess we are kind of taking the terrorism as a case study here today mostly. But as that passage I read indicates, at least there are some who believe that if we can be more effective, we can decrease Al Qaeda's recruitment and, to borrow a phrase, have it wither on the vine.

Ms. BROOKS. Yes. I think it is a question of balance, as ever. I mean, can we be more effective at exactly that? Should we be? Yes, absolutely. And I think that there are actually some very interesting projects, some of which you are probably aware of, for instance the center at West Point that I can't remember the name, Center for the Study of Terrorism, something like that——

Mr. THORNBERRY. Center for Combating Terrorism. Yes.

Ms. BROOKS [continuing]. That does these extremely interesting studies, close readings of documents released by leading Al Qaeda figures. It points out contradictions, et cetera, et cetera. It puts them up on the Web. That one tiny little project, which is not very expensive, actually there is some clear evidence that that makes a

difference, and it gets them very upset that for the segment of people for whom ideology is important, that that matters.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Yes.

Ms. BROOKS. And so, I don't at all mean to suggest that we shouldn't do it and that we shouldn't do it better. We absolutely can and should. I think it is just that when we overvalue the ideological component and forget to think about everything from that war via chickens, humanitarian assistance piece to——

Mr. THORNBERRY. Yes.

Ms. BROOKS [continuing]. To another piece of your question, thinking about what is it that we don't do that well but that other people can do much better, and this goes back to empowering other voices, empowering both the U.S. private sector, because there are just things that the U.S. government shouldn't do and——

Mr. THORNBERRY. Yes. I want to get to that whole subject in a second.

Ms. BROOKS. Yes.

Mr. THORNBERRY. But I take your point.

Dr. Hamid, we had witnesses at our last hearing——

Dr. HAMID. Yes.

Mr. THORNBERRY [continuing]. Who suggested that one of the most effective messages, whether it is from us or from others, is the idea that these terrorist acts kill innocent Muslims.

Dr. HAMID. Yes.

Mr. THORNBERRY. And so, the fact that you have innocent members of the same religion, who are being slaughtered——

Dr. HAMID. Yes.

Mr. THORNBERRY [continuing]. With these acts, do you think that is effective to use?

Dr. HAMID. Absolutely. Using this fact that the majority of the victims of terror are Muslims can be used effectively in strategic communications to show that the whole war against the terrorists is actually a war that protects the lives of many Muslim people.

And, ideally, if there is some moderate Muslims coming this whole image to support what the U.S. is doing against the terrorists, it's not just selfish action that only cares for the personal interest, but it is much broader than this. It is far more than just the security of America. It is security for the whole world, including many Muslim innocents.

In fact, one of the best ways to achieve this is to show the Muslim world the impact of terrorism on the Muslim society. One of the very sensitive areas is the impact on women. Many of the terrorist acts in Pakistan and Afghanistan ended in orphans or widows. Some of them, for example, had to do some immoral things because of the poverty and the need.

If these stories are emphasized to the Muslim world, they will really start to hate terrorism, and it can help a lot in preventing the process of radicalization. So, certainly, this is one of the most fundamental areas that could be used.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Dr. Paul, in your comments you said something about we need to make sure that what we do is more effective. Ms. Brooks says there is too much emphasis on metrics when we talk about strategic communications. My question is, how do

you know what is effective if you don't have some way to measure the results?

Dr. PAUL. Another really good question.

Yes, it is very difficult to do effective measurement in this area. When we look at industry, they are engaging in similar kinds of challenges, sharing ideas and engagement pathways. But at the end of the day, they have a sales metric. Either their product is being bought or it isn't.

It is much harder to capture measures globally. It is an area we can get better at. There is something to learn from industry. There is something to learn from social science. When I speak to junior officers about things that they can do in smaller areas of responsibly, I talk about field expedient measurements.

There is something to the old aphorism that the plural of "anecdote" is "data," that if you collect impressions, patrol impressions, crowd impressions over time, and plot those kinds of events against exogenous factors, significant events and other areas of responsibility—elections, things like that—and if you can plot a trend over time, then you can see and compare that to the kinds of things you have been doing.

And this is at a very small scale. There is some traction there. At the bigger scale, there is polling. It is not that we are completely ignorant of how to do measurement in this arena. There is room to get better and, of course, measurement isn't free.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Yes. Yes.

Ms. Brooks, let me go back to the private sector for just a second. One of the things that struck my attention years ago on this was someone I knew in the political consulting world went to run a campaign in a Muslim country successfully for president and then wanted to come here and offer his services to the United States government for free. I mean, he made all the money he needed to make, you know, but there is no way for him to plug in.

And in spite of knowing a lot of folks at the State Department at that time and around the administration, it was simply impossible. And so that is one of the reasons that somebody referred, I think, to the Defense Science Board study that I thought their suggestion of having a FFRDC [federally funded research and development center] that is separate from the government, where private industry could plug in, and some of those skills from Madison Avenue or international political consulting could be useful.

When you did your review for the administration, did that figure in at all or is that all a pipe dream, that government is government, private sector is private sector, and if you want to come work for government you have got to come be a civil servant or something.

Ms. BROOKS. I think on the level of principle, everybody agrees with that, that we ought to do more with the private sector, we ought to enable the private sector more effectively. I think where it breaks down is implementation, and I think it is quite shocking.

I think we literally just have astonishingly few vehicles to enable private sector action even when, as in your example, we have people literally coming to us, you know, from very large corporations, universities, non-government saying, "How can we help?"

We don't know what to do with them. We don't know what to tell them. We say, "Thanks, we will get back to you," and we never do, because we have no vehicles for using them.

That is for a lot of different reasons. Some of them are reasons of bureaucratic rigidity and the usual stupidity. It is not in any—you know, it doesn't help anyone to do it, so they don't. It is not their job.

Some of it has to do with legal and ethical restrictions that have been put there for very good reasons. It is if you are in the executive branch, it is actually quite astonishing when you make the mistake of asking a lawyer something like, "Well, could we ask Google to help us with," or whatever the question may be.

The answer is usually, "Don't even think about it. Don't you dare," often because of legislative restrictions that are in place to prevent conflicts of interest, et cetera, et cetera.

How we untangle that I don't know. But I actually think it would be—a fabulous project for folks here to undertake would be to really do an evaluation of both the sort of the bureaucratic reasons and the statutory reasons. But that is so hard, because I absolutely agree our greatest strength of the country is not our amazingly streamlined executive branch, sadly.

Our greatest strength as a country is our people and our organizations, and finding better and more effective ways to let them do what they are good at is something that strikes me as extremely urgent, and we are shockingly bad at it.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Yes.

Yes, Dr. Paul.

Dr. PAUL. If I may, in my written testimony there is a brief reference to the Woodrow Wilson Foundation or Institute for International Scholars, SAGE Initiative, Strengthening America's Global Engagement, that has taken about a dozen reports recommending reforms in public diplomacy and strategic communication, all of which advocate some kind of—like the Defense Science Board, some kind of semi-independent or independent entity.

They have been working since September of last year with a large consortium of think tanks, individuals from industry, from governments, from advertising, from academia, to synthesize some of the best ideas in a no kidding business plan for such an entity and hope later this year in a bipartisan way to advance such a thing.

If such an entity came into being, that would the perfect opportunity for a dollar-a-year man who wanted to come in and share expertise or provide skills to plug into that organization, making that expertise available to the government, leveraging the private sector, and getting public-private partnership benefits.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Yes, well, I look forward to seeing what they come up with.

Now to pass something through the Congress, we have the same jurisdictional issues that you referenced earlier, but I think there are a number of us at least who are interested in exploring that.

We haven't talked about Smith-Mundt, Dr. Paul. How big an impediment is that just being effective in our communication?

Dr. PAUL. It makes a difference. Just for background, the Smith-Mundt Act is actually the Information Exchange Act of 1948

amended a couple of times. The principal complaint about it isn't that it established the foundation for public diplomacy, which it did, but some of the later amendments prohibit dissemination of information intended for foreign audiences to the domestic U.S. public.

I was at a hearing for the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy earlier today. Sat next to me was Jeff Trimble, the executive director for the Broadcasting Board of Governors [BBG], the folks who do Voice of America and all the different Voice programs.

And he reported some sad instances where domestic populations, domestic radio stations and broadcasting communities within the United States, wanted to have access to BBG Somali language broadcasts or BBG Urdu language broadcasts for domestic populations and when they made a formal request to the BBG for those broadcast, the BBG, because of the statutory constraints, had to say no.

And he also related the sad story of just recently being abroad, being in Russia and talking to Russian administrators to try to encourage them to relax their policies regarding BBG products being disseminated in Russia. And the Russians pointed out, "Well, gee, you have the Smith-Mundt Act, so you can't show these broadcasts to your people. Why should we let you show them to our people?" To which he had no answer. So, there is a concrete example.

When you talk to folks from the Department of State, they don't see it as much of a constraint. They are more inclined to—in my experience to laugh it off as kind of historical oddity that doesn't get in their way very much. It gets in the way of BBG, and I have heard far too often of accounts of it getting in the way of the Department of Defense as well.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Yes. Yes. So have I. And it seems to me it is a great example of an outdated law that has not kept up with change in technology. When you think about the Internet and how Smith-Mundt can possibly apply to that situation, it makes no sense to me. And, you know, I continue to hope and think that common sense will prevail at some point.

Again, we are not interested in the government providing propaganda, as it is called, to try to influence decisions within the United States, but at the same time when you can't even communicate basic information because of this, it makes no sense at all to me either.

We may have a couple more questions that we will submit to you all in writing after we go through some of what we talked about. Again, let me thank each of you for being here and for your expertise and opinions that you have shared with us. This is a—as you can tell—as I think several of you said, it is harder than it seems. Recognize that.

On the other hand, that doesn't mean we should walk away from making the attempt, because I am of the view that it is an important component not only against the terrorists, but in a variety of aspects of U.S. foreign policy and national influence around the world. And we have got to get better at that.

So thank you again for being here.

And with that, the hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:24 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JULY 12, 2011

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JULY 12, 2011

Opening Statement of Chairman Mac Thornberry
House Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities
Hearing on the Evolution of Strategic Communication and Information Operations Since 9/11

July 12, 2011

For several years, this subcommittee has pursued the issue of strategic communications. Most of us agree that the United States will not be successful in stopping terrorists by traditional kinetic military operations alone. A key aspect of this fight is ideological, just as a key component in the Cold War was ideological as well. But during the Cold War, the U.S. engaged in serious efforts that were well funded and well organized, at least compared to today's efforts. Despite a host of reports over the course of two Administrations and a regular shuffling of bureaucratic chairs, there has not been a serious, coordinated approach to this ideological struggle, in my view.

There are definitely mixed views on this subject. Some believe that there is no place for the United States government in countering terrorist ideology; that it is a battle that must be waged within Islam. One recent witness expressed the opinion that we don't know enough to participate in the ideological battle and even if we did, anything associated with the United States government is suspect and cannot be effective.

Personally, I believe that engaging in the war of ideas is an essential part of what the U.S. must do to prevent the spread of radicalization that leads to violent actions. We face a determined, ruthless, adaptable enemy that uses terrorism as a tactic to advance their agenda. We will not defeat this enemy with military power alone. We must engage them—and engage them successfully—in the battle of ideas.

Beginning in 2005, I introduced legislation based on a Defense Science Board Study that would facilitate use of private sector expertise in this effort. Last year, I introduced legislation to update the outdated Smith-Mundt Act to better reflect modern communications channels.

There may well be other proposals that Congress can consider to help the U.S. be more effective in defeating the ideology of violent extremism.

We need an effective strategy and organization in place to make headway in this very difficult struggle. We must be able to understand the ideology of our adversary, develop the right message to counter it, communicate our message effectively within the cultural and historical context of the target population, and assess the results. We must also have the required determination and patience to allow our message to bear fruit.

Our witnesses today are well positioned to shed additional light on where we are and where we should be in this area.

"Ten Years On: The Evolution of Strategic Communication and Information Operations since 9/11"

Prepared Statement of Rosa Brooks
Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center

Testimony before the
House Armed Services Sub-Committee on Evolving Threats and Capabilities

July 12, 2011

Chairman Thornberry, members of the sub-committee and staff, I am pleased to have the opportunity to comment today on the evolution of US government strategic communication (SC) and information operations (IO) since 9/11.

I am currently a Professor of Law at Georgetown University Law Center, but I recently returned from a two year public service leave of absence to work at the Defense Department as a senior advisor to Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michele Flournoy. I had a range of responsibilities during that time, including responsibility for advising Under Secretary Flournoy on strategic communication and information operations issues, as well as responsibility for creating a new rule of law office.

In 2010, I headed a DoD-wide Front End Assessment study that evaluated DoD strategic communication and IO policy, definitions, oversight, resources and training. The conclusions of the Front End Assessment team led Secretary Robert Gates to order significant reforms, memorialized in his memo on this topic dated January 25, 2011, a memo I believe many of you have seen. While I do not intend to focus in these prepared remarks on the DoD-specific changes we spearheaded, I would be happy to provide any details during the discussion.

I know that members of this sub-committee are deeply committed to ensuring that reform of strategic communication organizational structures and policies remains a top priority for the executive branch. I have to confess that in my former role as a Defense Department official with responsibility for a range of SC and IO issues, I was not always wholly grateful for your interest: you and your colleagues on the House Appropriations Committee put the Department through the ringer with quite a lot of different reporting requirements. As a citizen, however, I am deeply grateful to you for having kept us on our toes— and occasionally held our feet to the fire. This is a vital area, and we can't afford either to ignore it or rest on our laurels.

I would like to begin today by looking briefly at the emergence of the concept of "strategic communication" within the US government, and talk about some drawbacks to

the term itself. I'd then like to highlight some of the lessons we can draw from the decade since 9/11, and I will close by offering some thoughts on the future.

Start with some semantics. The term "strategic communication" isn't particularly new; in the corporate world, it's been used for several decades to describe the cluster of activities relating to—for lack of a better phrase—making the corporate entity "look good." For corporations, it's pretty straightforward: the corporate goal is profit maximization, and while different corporations take different routes to maximizing profits, "looking good" is supported by marketing, advertising, public relations, community relations, and so on. "Strategic communication" became the umbrella term for these various activities—activities themselves distinct from underlying questions of product quality, etc. --and in the context of the corporate world there's absolutely nothing wrong with the term.

But whoever first decided to import the term "strategic communication" into the governmental context has a lot to answer for. I'm sure the importation of the term was well-intended, but to be honest, the term has caused far more confusion that clarity. This is so for two reasons.

First, the term gets used in so many different ways that by now no one really knows *what* it's supposed to mean. In the corporate context, having a concept that lacks precise meaning is fine, and it's equally fine for different organizations to use the term in different ways. And while fraud is illegal, we don't expect corporate strategic communications to refrain from mystification and exaggeration. (Who would buy Coke if Coke ads described it simply as "sweet, fizzy brown liquid that tastes somewhat like Pepsi, except some people like it better"?) But in the government context, in which truth is a fundamental moral constraint and in which policies must be set, budgets developed and authorities defended, it can be much more of a problem to have a term that's characterized by fuzziness rather than precision.

Specifically, in the government context "strategic communication" is often confused with related terms such as "information operations,' "public diplomacy" and "communications." It's important to draw some distinctions between these concepts, however, since otherwise we can start getting very muddled up, and conflate capabilities with processes, aspirations with tools for achieving those aspirations. We can start developing budget lines to support concepts that were meant to be merely explanatory, not activities unto themselves. Worse, we can end up deciding we need to create new and cumbersome bureaucratic structures to manage these supposedly new functions, without recognizing that such structures may be unnecessary, inefficient and duplicative. If importing the term "strategic communication" into government ends up meaning we create new structures that merely replicate the functions already performed by public affairs or public diplomacy organizations, we won't have gained much.

So if that's what strategic communication shouldn't mean, what *should* it mean? If the term strategic communication is going to mean anything *at all* in a government context,

it's got to mean something different from existing terms. To use another corporate term, the term "strategic communication" has to add value, or there's not much point.

So when I use the term "strategic communication," I want to make it clear that I am using the Defense Department understanding of the term, not the corporate understanding of the term. DoD defines strategic communication as "Focused United States Government efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable 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."

That's quite a mouthful, but it can actually be explained more simply. For DoD, and for me, strategic communication is a process—the exceptionally hard to achieve process of *communicating strategically.* It's not simply the conglomeration of several communication tools and capabilities. Public affairs and media relations are *tools*, capabilities that can support strategic communication. Traditional public diplomacy – cultural exchanges and radio broadcasting such as Voice of America—is also a tool that can support strategic communication. Information operations—the use of specific information-related capabilities in a military context to affect adversary decision-making – can also support strategic communication. But PA, public diplomacy and IO are not the *same* as strategic communication, and strategic communication isn't simply a matter of throwing all these tools at a particular problem.

At risk of sounding tautological, *strategic communication* is *communicating strategically*: it's the thoughtful integration of issues of stakeholder perception and response into policy-making, planning and operations at every level… and the orchestration of actions, images and words in support of our policy objectives. By its nature, strategic communication must be *receiver*-centric, rather than sender-centric. It's less about what *we* have to *say* than it is about considering what others *hear* and understand.

If you're still not sure what I'm talking about when I say 'strategic communication," think of it the other way around: ask yourself what "*un*-strategic communication" is. I'll give a very simple example: "un-strategic" communication is what happened when the Obama Administration conveyed a significant shift in our missile defense policy to our Polish allies, a shift that involved a decision not to carry through with previous plans to base certain missile defenses on Polish soil—and we managed to announce it more or less on the 70th anniversary of the Russian invasion of Poland.

Whoops. Our intended message—that we felt our new approach to missile defense would provide Poland with even *greater* security—was drowned out, for many Poles, by the unhappy juxtaposition of our changed policy and the anniversary of the Russian invasion. We said we were moving to a 'smarter, phased, adaptive" approach to missile defense. Many Poles heard "abandonment."

What would it have taken to communicate strategically, rather than un-strategically, about our changed missile defense strategy? Assuming that the missile defense strategy itself was sound, improved strategic communication would have required not simply better speeches and press statements, but more listening, more consultation, more engagement, and better planning.

I'm sure we can all think of plenty of other examples of *un*-strategic communication. So when I say "*strategic* communication," I don't mean public affairs or public diplomacy or information operations, though each is important. What I mean is that difficult but critical process of listening, engaging, understanding perceptions, and then trying, in an orchestrated way, to align a wide range of capabilities in order to affect people's perceptions in ways that advance our national interests.

It should go without saying that strategic communication is as much about what we *do* as what we *say:* your third grade teacher probably told you that "actions speak louder than words," and she was right. If the term "strategic communication" has any value at all in a government context, this is what it must mean.

That's enough about semantics. I said that there were *two* reasons to regret the importation of the term strategic communication from the corporate world to the government world. One is the semantic confusion I just discussed. But there's another reason, too, to feel some regret over the importation of the term strategic communication from the corporate world to the government world. And that's simply that the US government isn't a corporation. The US government doesn't exist to sell a product or maximize profits. Our mission is far more complex than the mission of a corporation, and as a result, the importation of the corporate term strategic communication can cause substantial confusion, leading to inappropriate assumptions about accountability, metrics, methods and timeframes.

Think of it like this: say your company makes SpritaPepsaCola. Say you want to expand SpritaPepsaCola into Botswana. You want convince people that SpritaPepsaCola is the best soda around, so you can sell more SpritaPepsaCola to more Botswanans. You want a full-throttle strategic communication campaign to that end. Simple.

Actually, of course, it's not all that simple. To sell SpritaPepsaCola to Botswanan consumers, there are all sorts of things you need to understand first. You need to figure out how loyal Botswanans are to other brands of cola; you need to understand the source and roots of that loyalty; you need to identify local bottlers, you need to figure out distribution routes, you need marketing campaigns, and so on. It all needs to be mutually reinforcing. All that, for a simple cola!

But even so, it's a simple cola, and at the end of the day, it's not that hard to tell if your strategic communication campaign is working. Are Botswanans buying more SpritaPepsaCola? This can readily be quantified. You can make fine-looking charts showing the delta in sales over a specified time period. And if you want to understand

why Botswanans are buying or not buying SpritaPepsaCola, you can always poll them, interview them, or conduct focus groups. Did your ad campaign lead them to buy more? Would they prefer that SpritaPepsaCola be a bit less sweet? No problem: the stakes or pretty low. Everyone likes to talk about cola; no one has much incentive to lie to you about whether and why they prefer Coke.

But US foreign policy and national security objectives are not like a soda. People in other countries support or oppose our foreign policy objectives for reasons that are far more complex than the reasons they buy a particular brand of soda. Policies are nuanced; sodas are simple. Soda sales are easily quantified, and when it comes to soda sales, we can relatively easily assess the relationship between stated attitudes and behaviors. With our national security objectives, it's a whole lot harder. What attitudes should we look at? How should we measure them? How is behavior linked to attitudes and opinions? What's the relevant timeframe?

These are hard questions, and much of the time, the answer is that we really aren't sure. Our strategic communication efforts often involve throwing a whole lot of spaghetti at a whole lot of walls, and hoping some of it sticks. In this case, the spaghetti is our words, our policies and actions, posters, billboards, radio shows, exchange programs, educational and cultural programs, and on the intel side, perhaps some covert efforts to influence attitudes in specific places. It's still all spaghetti, and frequently we just don't know which of it's going to stick.

But don't be too appalled by the metaphor. The spaghetti is often pretty good spaghetti, made with care and thought. If it doesn't stick, it's not necessarily because it's badly made. Strategic communication is hard because it's *hard*. Strategic communication is, in a fundamental sense, an *aspirational* concept. We're never going to get in 100% right; there are always going to be too many variables, many of them beyond our control. But as a government, we still have to try.

To make it more concrete, take the strategic communication challenge of reducing support for the Taliban among Afghans. Compare it to the strategic communication challenge of selling our fictitious soda.

In each case, we'll certainly try to use some of the same tools: press statements, community events, television and radio, engagement with key leaders/role models. But the "product" is far harder to define in the national security context: what are *we* selling? The stakes are higher, and the link between opinion and behavior is also far more complex: "support" for the Taliban can take many forms, from volunteering to fight for them to simply refraining from actively undermining them by aiding the Coalition instead. Support for the Taliban can have many motivations: loyalty, identity, ideology, fear, economic well-being. For many Taliban "supporters," opinions and attitudes about the Taliban may be far less important than economic necessity or day to day security.

There's an issue of time horizon, too: we want to change behaviors over the long term. There are far more options than cola/not-cola, or SpritaPepsaCola versus coke versus a local brand. There are far more actors in the field, and, to top it all off, it's far harder to get anyone to talk to us. The Taliban don't usually want to sit down in focus groups.

Add in the usual problems of barriers of language and culture, and you're looking at a multifaceted, constantly evolving challenge. Can we achieve strategic communication successes in that context? Definitely, and I would be happy to discuss some of those successes during the discussion time. Can we *reliably* achieve strategic communication successes across the board? Definitely not, and if we have unrealistic expectations about the ease or rapidity with which we can succeed, we will only undermine our own efforts.

So the second problem with importing the term "strategic communication" from the corporate world to the government world is that it creates the illusion that we are dealing with something that is relatively simple and straightforward, when in fact we're not. The term strategic communication thus lends itself to false analogies. Take the much-cited complaint, for instance, usually attributed to the late and lamented Richard Holbrooke, that a "man in a cave" was "out-communicating the world's leading communication society."

The "communication society" skills Holbrooke was referring to were of course mainly those of Hollywood and Madison Avenue-- communication skills that are not irrelevant to USG strategic communication, but that are also no panacea in the far more complex national security context. Being good at selling soda— or making movies people like to watch, or winning elections, for that matter— doesn't necessarily translate into being good at changing the complex, bundled attitudes and behaviors of millions of people in foreign countries.

And the "man in the cave"? That, of course, was the equally late but entirely unlamented Osama bin Laden, about whom it's worth noting two things. First, no wonder he appeared to be out-communicating us for a while there! He had the both the home court advantage and the underdog advantage. But second, bin Laden *didn't* out-communicate anyone, in the end. The Arab Spring left him behind, and in the end his death was almost anti-climactic-- his relevance was already so greatly diminished.

Let me pause on each of those points: what gave Bin Laden his initial strategic communication "edge," and why he lost it. Each has lessons for the US government as we go forward.

First, the home court advantage: to state the obvious, it's easier to change the minds and behaviors of people you understand. They say all politics is local: perhaps all strategic communication is fundamentally local, too. To sell SpritaPepsaCola—or al Qaeda, for that matter— it sure helps to know the human terrain, as the military puts it. It helps to know the local language, the history, the narratives that resonate in people's minds, the day to day pressures, the long-nurtured grievances, the cherished hopes. If you don't

know these things, you make mistakes (consider my missile defense example). You sound klutzy, overbearing, tone-deaf, or simply ridiculous.

It's also often easier to be the perceived underdog. In life as in sports, there's sometimes a tendency to root for the "little guy," and for a time, bin Laden managed to exploit this: There we were, the big, unilateralist United States, rich, fat and happy amidst a world of poverty and pain. For some populations in parts of the world that globalization left behind, it must have been easy to hate us; easy to take some pleasure, at least a bit of schadenfreude, as the world's largest military power flailed around, seemingly hopelessly, in search of one man. (That this one man was the scion of a vastly rich Saudi family and had powerful government backers was something bin Laden and has supporters tended not to emphasize).

So we shouldn't be surprised if bin Laden seemed to "out-communicate" us for a while. And we shouldn't waste time feeling hurt and misunderstood, either. Being a world power comes with a price: you're a lightning rod for animosity and global grievance. If anything, we should rather take comfort in the fact that relatively speaking, the US is getting off lightly: while today global publics remain quite critical of the US, a recent Gallup poll suggests they're even *more* critical of other candidates for global power status.[1] Compared to China, Russia, France, Germany, Britain and Japan, we're actually pretty popular.

More to the point, though, bin Laden didn't out-communicate *anyone* in the end. Even with his early home court advantage in the Muslim world – even with his early, if dubious, underdog status-- he ended up marginalized well before he ended up dead. His status and influence steadily declined after 9/11[2], as Arab and Muslim publics grew disenchanted with extremism and terrorism. Even amongst those who are still inclined to support extremist groups, al Qaeda has been significantly discredited; a December 2010 Pew poll found that al Qaeda enjoyed far less support in the Arab world than either Hamas or Hezbollah. [3]

This shouldn't surprise us. Since 9/11, al Qaeda-spawned terrorism has exacted a far more lethal toll on Muslim civilians than it ever did on the US or our Western allies. Maybe bin Laden never had a third grade teacher who explained that actions speak louder than words. In the end, al Qaeda's actions spoke for themselves, and no amount of ringing rhetorical appeals to jihad and Islamic unity could make up for the streets and markets awash in blood.

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[1] " Worldwide Approval of U.S. Leadership Tops Major Powers," Gallup, March 24, 2011, at http://www.gallup.com/poll/146771/worldwide-approval-leadership-tops-major-powers.aspx

[2] "Osama bin Laden Largely Discredited Among Muslim Publics in Recent Years," Pew, May 2, 2011, at http://pewglobal.org/2011/05/02/osama-bin-laden-largely-discredited-among-muslim-publics-in-recent-years/

[3] "Muslim Publics Divided on hamas and Hezbollah," Pew, Dec. 2, 2010, at http://pewglobal.org/2010/12/02/muslims-around-the-world-divided-on-hamas-and-hezbollah/

So what does all this mean for the United States? Looking back at the last decade, what did we do well, and what do we need to do as we move forward?

In the initial post 9/11 period, the USG made what I think was a major mistake in its strategic communication efforts. At a moment when global publics were shocked by 9/11 and poised to respond with sympathy, we conformed with a script that might as well have been written by bin Laden himself. We validated bin Laden's "special" status, and we began to view the world largely through the lens our of counterterrorism goals.

We raised our walls, making it far harder to foreigners—especially Arab and Islamic foreigners—to come to our shores, and thousands of Muslims already here, including many US citizens, found themselves treated as the potential enemy, pulled in for FBI questioning or in danger of losing their visas. Most of these Arab and Muslims had zero connection to terrorism, but in America right after 9/11, all Arabs and Muslims came under suspicion. At the very moment when we should have reached out in friendship to the millions of Muslims around the globe who condemned terrorism, we withdrew. This along greatly diminished the degree of global cooperation we received, particularly in Arab and Muslim communities.

Just as bad, we turned bin Laden into a larger-than-life bogey-man. By declaring ourselves at war with him, by focusing so many of our official statements on this one man, we elevated his stature, giving him disproportionate and unprecedented prestige. To be sure, he already had a platform. But we made it higher.

I want to be crystal clear here: Osama bin Laden killed thousands of American and others, mostly innocent noncombatants. He committed war crimes and crimes against humanity. But I do not believe he posed an existential threat to the United States. Yet in our early responses to him, we bestowed on him the very prestige he sought—we treated him like he was more powerful than Hitler and Stalin combined, like the most dangerous man in the history of the world. We acted as though the fate of our nation depended on our ability to find and kill that one evil man.

It didn't. Our nation has survived revolution, civil war, two world wars, the Cold War and nuclear stand-off. We have faced worse than al Qaeda before, and no doubt we will face worse again. But treating bin Laden—and al Qaeda—as existential threats gave him prestige and a powerful early recruiting tool with disaffected Muslim publics. Remember his home field and underdog advantage? Our own rhetoric and actions greatly boosted that advantage in the first years after 9/11. For a frightening few years, al Qaeda seemed poised to become one of the world's most rapidly metastasizing franchises, while the US' initial inability to capture bin Laden in Afghanistan, and our resulting pivot to war in Iraq, left many Middle Eastern observers concluding that a blinding obsession with Bin Laden was damaging our judgment and weakening our superpower status.

Meanwhile, our tendency, during that early post/9/11 period, to view the Muslim world mainly through an "are you with us or are you against us" counterterrorism lens alienated

many moderates. For a time, it seemed as if everything we did, from our foreign humanitarian assistance programs to our cultural exchange programs, was done solely to enhance our CT goals. This forced many around the world to make a choice: if the price of US assistance and cooperation was signing on, no questions asked, to a blank counterterrorism check, did working with the US make sense?

This period cost us dearly, and the costs were compounded by a number of events the loomed symbolically large around the globe. Abu Ghraib; black sites; allegations of torture. While the vast majority of our military and civilian personnel upheld the highest moral and legal standards, the well-publicized willingness of a few—including a high-ranking few-- to engage in and defend illegal activities enabled those in some quarters of the Muslim world to view America to as synonymous with abuse of power.

Fortunately, imbalances do have a tendency to rebalance, and two things happened that helped get us out of the hole we were in in 2004 and 2005. For one thing, bin Laden and al Qaeda began to overreach. They grew ever more brutal and undiscriminating; one 2009 study found, for instance, that 88% of those killed by al Qaeda attacks between 2004 and 2008 were Muslims.[4]

For another thing, we got smarter. Past the immediate shock of 9/11, we began to reassess our immediate responses, evaluate global reaction, and undo some of the damage we ourselves had unintentionally done to our own cause. We began to deemphasize the importance of bin Laden, depriving him of the prestige he so desperately needed. We began to shift, in Iraq and then in Afghanistan, to a more sophisticated strategy informed by counterinsurgency precepts. We began to emphasize the importance of establishing legitimacy and addressing genuine local needs.

These trends began in the last years of the Bush administration, and were continued under the Obama administration. Early symbolic action helped turn the page on some of the darkest post 9/11 moments, with Obama's January 2009 Executive Orders banning torture and secret detention facilities and mandating a review of US detention policy. Beyond that, the new Administration made a conscious decision to elevate the importance of strategic communication, appointing a high-level National Security Staff official with responsibility for USG-wide strategic communication.

Even more important, the White House, with the concurrence of all executive branch departments, made another key decision: while counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization would necessarily remain important goals of USG strategic communication, they would no longer be the centerpiece. As much as possible, we would try to disaggregate counter-terrorism from our broader programs and campaigns—we would stop viewing the world entirely through the often distorting prism of counter-terrorism. We would try, at least, to listen more and talk less, and to ensure our words and

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[4] "Al Qaeda kills 8 times more Muslims than Non-Muslims," Der Spiegel, Dec. 3, 2009, at http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,660619,00.html

actions were thoughtfully informed by a nuanced understanding of what other publics heard and understood.

In practice, this has had a number of very concrete manifestations. Direct CT-related communication efforts of course continued, particularly by DoD and the intelligence agencies; as long as terrorist organizations pose a threat, we will need carefully targeted programs aimed at those specific issues and audiences. But we also began focused efforts to move beyond the CT frame, and reach out—particularly to Muslims and Arabs, particularly to the educated and the young—over other issues of shared concern, such as science, technology, education, health care and entrepreneurship.

We also sought to decentralize our strategic communication efforts as much as possible. Strategic communication is inherently complex and risky in the 24/7 media environment: all it takes is one US representative saying "the wrong thing" and there's a global furor. (And that doesn't even need to be a government representative: witness the global furor, and lethal riots, triggered by Pastor Terry Jones' determination to burn a Koran). But at the same time, top-down messaging is doomed to failure in this messy, chaotic and democratic media environment. One lesson of the last ten years as that the risks of spoilers notwithstanding, we generally do better to empower more people—not just inside our government—to speak freely and engage freely than to try to "control" messages.

It's a question of accepting tactical risk to increase the likelihood of strategic gain. Our greatest strength, as a government and a nation, is our people, as quarrelsome, complicated and unpredictable as they often are. The more we find ways to have our people speak to the citizens of other nations, the more we form strong bonds, build trust, and build knowledge.

Right now, I believe we are still in an era of change and reform. The good news, I think, is that both on the Hill and within the Executive Branch, there is increasingly a shared understanding of the challenges ahead. Both the State Department and the Defense Department have made substantial structural changes in the last two years, designed to ensure that we will do a better job at strategic communication.

At DoD, SC and IO-related definitions and management structures have been clarified, and a DoD-wide coordinating body exists to address department-wide strategic communication challenges, At State, the creation of deputy assistant secretaries with specific responsibility for public diplomacy within each regional bureau is also a helpful change, and the new Counterterrorism Strategic Communication Center, led by Richard LeBaron, has sought to take an innovative and nuanced approach to CT-specific challenges. Within the executive branch, coordination mechanisms are fairly robust, both as a result of NSS-led interagency policy committee meetings and as a result of more informal groups that deconflict activities between agencies. Still, there is much more to be done.

Looking forward, let me emphasize some things I believe we need more of and some things we need less of. When it comes to strategic communication, organizationally we need to continue to improve internal USG coordination and training mechanisms. We need to trust each other more, which means, for the White House and for senior leaders in general, letting go of what sometimes seems from the outside like a fixation on controlling the message. Messages that are overly controlled are often not very persuasive or effective.

We also need to develop more sustained and robust mechanisms for linking up with the private sector. There are many things the US government can't, won't or shouldn't do, but that may be appropriate for NGOs, universities and corporations. Many private organizations are eager to play a role in US strategic communication, and Congress and the Executive Branch need to find better ways to serve as enablers of private activity.

We also need more old-fashioned public diplomacy: exchange programs, cultural programs, educational programs. People-to-people ties do matter, and we need to have more confidence both in our own people and in foreign publics. The budget cuts in public diplomacy program in the last decades have been nothing short of shameful, as well as deeply short-sighted. Foreign assistance, whether it takes the form of food aid or cultural programs, isn't an act of charity. It's a vital means of advancing our national interests, of building good will and developing the strong networks of friends and information sources that will stand us in good stead when hard times come-- as they will. Are there risks in greater openness, more exchanges and people-to-people ties? Certainly: every now and then, we'll trust someone we shouldn't trust, and pay a price. But as ever, it's an issue of accepting some tactical risk for strategic gain. In the long run, we isolate ourselves at our own peril.

Hard-head realists will argue that we shouldn't obsess too much about inducing foreign publics to "like' us. As long as they don't attack us or aid our enemies, say the realists, it doesn't much matter if other people like us or not. There is plenty of wisdom in this—if the protesters in Egypt's Tahrir Square reject terrorism, that's much more important than "liking" the United States.

But it's true only up to a point. An obsession with being loved and appreciated is not a good basis for strategic communication: sometimes people won't like our policies, and we will have principled reasons for being unwilling to change them, and that's that, and as it should be. But there is a difference between trying to generate a shallow "liking" versus trying to generate confidence and respect, even in the face of inevitable differences. There does appear to be a strong correlation between positive feelings about the United States and fewer attacks against US interests. Being liked is overvalued, and often impossible in a world where conflicting interest are inevitable. But efforts to build trust and understanding do pay off.

Increasing old-fashioned public diplomacy takes money and, at times, political courage. It's not easy to argue for increasing visas for people from Arab and Muslim countries

when letting in a single bad actor could lead to an intense backlash. It's not easy to argue for more funds for cultural activities or economic aid overseas when people are hurting here at home. But in each case, we need to understand our activities as investments that will pay off over a longer time frame. If we under-invest now, it will be too late later.

More generally, we must also ensure adequate funding for linguistic, regional and cultural training, both for our military and foreign service personnel, of course, but also in our civilian schools and universities more broadly. During the Cold War, the US Congress appropriated substantial funds for universities to start language and area training programs. Most of that money is long gone, and we risk having a population that can't find Iraq, Afghanistan or Libya on a map, much less hope to communicate with anyone from one of these countries—or from China or India or any number of key partner states or rising powers, for that matter.

Those are some of the things we need *more* of, as we move our strategic communication policy forward into this post-post-9/11 era. There are also some things we need *less* of. I've touched on them all already.

We need less fixation on terrorism. It's a threat, and an ongoing one, but an obsession with CT may blind us to other emerging threats and opportunities. Our strategic communication efforts should be just as focused on China, India and other rising powers as they are on terrorism, for instance—and the list goes on. We're in a an unpredictable, dynamic, multipolar world; any fixation on a single threat is dangerous.

We also need less of a zero-defect mentality. Effective strategic communication requires decentralization, which creates risk. We *will* make mistakes. Somewhere, right now, some US government employee is doing something dumb, maybe even illegal, in the name of strategic communication. It's just inevitable. But there's been a tendency, in the media and a bit here on the Hill, to throw the baby out with the bathwater: one foolish DoD radio spot? Slash the budget! One DoD contractor engaged in shady practices? Impose draconian new reporting requirements! I understand the temptation: no one hates idiocy in the name of strategic communication more than those government officials charged with defending and reforming US efforts. But you can't legislate against human stupidity or venality-- and while seeking accountability is always appropriate, we also need to keep things in perspective.

A corollary to this is that we need less obsession with metrics and assessments. Again, accountability is vital, but strategic communication is as much art as science, and it's part of the long game. One or two budget cycles may tell you very little. Congress and the public rightly demand transparency, but failure to document clear and immediate links between strategic communication efforts and outcomes should not result in instant budget cuts. Strategic communication success is hard to quantify, and may not become apparent for years or even decades. Some of the spaghetti will stick, and some won't, but that's not a reason to stop trying out new spaghetti recipes.

Finally, we need less naval-gazing obsession with who does what. One of the least productive diversions in the strategic communication game is the endless round of "why is DoD doing X when really *State* should be doing X?". We have real and urgent government-wide needs to develop effective strategic communication strategies, and from my perspective, squabbling over the roles of different executive branch agencies is a waste of time.

In an ideal world, State should be far better funded, and should be able to recruit and retain a far larger cadre of dedicated, well-trained officials. That would be nice, and I hope we will get there; those in Congress who would like to see the State Department do more than it currently does have a simple expedient, which is to give State some more money. But in the meantime, if the State Department lacks the funds or capacity to undertake programs or activities that are manifestly in the national interest, then of course other agencies should step in. If "whole of government" means anything at all, it must mean getting beyond petty squabbles about roles. The mission is too important.

Mr. Chairman and members of the sub-committee, I will close here. I have touched on a wide range of issues in these prepared remarks. Even so, I recognize that in many ways these remarks only scratch the surface, and my oral remarks will necessarily be even briefer. I hope that some of these comments provide useful fodder for further discussion, and I look forward to talking about these issues with you and your staff. Thank you once again for inviting me to share these views.

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From 2001-2006, Ms. Brooks was an associate professor of law at the University of Virginia. She has also served as a foreign policy columnist for the Los Angeles Times, Special Counsel to the President of the Open Society Institute, Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, a consultant for Human Rights Watch, a lecturer at Yale Law School, a Term Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and a fellow at the Carr Center at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Ms. Brooks has also served on numerous boards and advisory groups, including the Board of Directors of the National Security Network, the steering committee of the White Oak Foreign Policy Leaders' Project, the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on Fragile States, the board of directors of Amnesty International USA, and the Executive Council of the American Society of International Law.

Brooks has published numerous scholarly articles on international law, state failure, post-conflict reconstruction and the rule of law, terrorism and the law of armed conflict With Jane Stromseth and David Wippman, she is the co-author of "Can Might Make Rights? The Rule of Law After Military Interventions" (Cambridge University Press, 2006). Brooks received her A.B. from Harvard, followed by a master's degree from Oxford (where she was a Marshall Scholar) and a law degree from Yale.

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Current fiscal year (2011): ; **n/a**

Fiscal year 2010: ; **n/a**

Fiscal year 2009: . **n/a**

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TESTIMONY

Getting Better at Strategic Communication

CHRISTOPHER PAUL

CT-366

July 2011

Testimony presented before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities on July 12, 2011

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Christopher Paul[1]
The RAND Corporation

Getting Better at Strategic Communication[2]

Before the Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities
United States House of Representatives

July 12, 2011

Thank you for inviting me here to testify today.

In 2001, Vince Vitto, chairman of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Managed Information Dissemination, coined the phrase "strategic communication."[3] Here, ten years later, we are still using that term, but we still struggle to collectively get our arms around the concept, let alone do it well.

For example, in December of 2009 I joined a handful of other subject matter experts on strategic communication or public diplomacy for a discussion of the topic with the Director for Global Engagement at the National Security Council. At one point during this meeting we were going around the table describing the essence of strategic communication and the key elements for emphasis moving forward. As I listened to my colleagues, one after the other, I made an interesting observation: while no-one was actively disagreeing with or disputing the remarks of previous speakers, they weren't exactly agreeing, either. We were all talking about the "same" thing, but differently. I don't believe that experience was unique. I think here in 2011 one could empanel any group of 10 or so strategic communication experts and give them each five minutes to describe strategic communication and get 10 different descriptions, with a fair amount of overlap, to be sure, but with different points of central emphasis, different boundaries, different details; to be brief, differences real in their consequences, about what was described.

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[2] This testimony is available for free download at http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT366/.

[3] See the task force's report, *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Managed Information Dissemination*, Washington, D.C., October 2001. As of July 1, 2011:
http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/reports/ADA396312.pdf
I document and corroborate Vitto's originating claim in Paul, Christopher, *Strategic Communication: Origins, Concepts, and Current Debates*, Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2011.

There is no official government-wide definition of strategic communication. There is not an agreed definition in academia, either, nor is there complete consensus about the boundaries or agreement on priorities.[4] A lack of clear consensus and a troubled lexicon are significant challenges to progress in this area, and is why much of my writing and thinking on this topic relates to the concept itself and how we talk about it.

There is not consensus on the definition of strategic communication

In my recent book on strategic communication, I compile and review all the official and unofficial definitions of strategic communication I can find. There are a lot of them. They mostly agree, but not so much in the details or the boundaries. The boundaries matter, because sloppy boundary definitions lead to things that should be considered strategic communication being excluded, or things that should not be considered strategic communication being included.[5]

Beyond the unintended difference brought in by slightly different definitions, in my research, I have observed at least three real differences, actual tensions or disagreements in how people conceive of strategic communication. I discuss each below.

The tension between "broadcast" and "engagement"

Some proponents emphasize broadcast, others emphasize engagement. This difference in concept is most easily captured in caricature. Broadcast is traditional messaging, what former undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs James Glassman has called "the great megaphone approach" to public diplomacy. If we say our message louder, and clearer, on more channels, "they" will understand and strategic communication will have succeeded. Just articulating it in this way begins to expose some of the shortcomings of such a view.

In tension with broadcast is engagement: an emphasis on "the last three feet" of public diplomacy, establishing relationships, seeking two-way understanding, listening to what others in

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[4] See the discussion in Chapter Two of Paul, Christopher, *Strategic Communication: Origins, Concepts, and Current Debates*, Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2011

[5] An example of the latter is the "strategic communication" plans of the various military services. These service plans treat strategic communication much like broader and higher level definitions, with one major difference. Rather than declaring the objective of service strategic communication to be support for national policy goals, these plans instead serve the services' narrow parochial interests. Note that it is perfectly reasonable for the services to coordinate their messages in pursuit of a positive image with the American public, full information for congresspersons on proposed Army programs, more robust pools of recruits; it is just that in my view these activities should not be called strategic communication.

the world think and have to say. There is obvious good to engagement, but it cannot be wholly at the expense of broadcast. We need both, and we can get better at both.

Degree of control of the message: Balancing between taped-message automatons and loose cannon

Another critical tension in this discussion is the desired level of control over the message. At one pole is the desire for complete control of information, which harkens back to a different technological era, one before mass media and before social media. In this view, the themes and messages are centrally developed and all representatives of the government cleave exactly to the approved talking points. Caricaturized, this makes all representatives taped-message automatons, speaking the same three talking points in robotic unison.

While perfect control of messages would be both impossible and at least a little bit creepy, the other extreme is no more palatable. If every representative of the government says whatever they feel like saying, each becomes a potential loose cannon in the ship of communication. Contradiction and inconsistency would abound. The right answer, then, is a balance somewhere between the two extremes. There needs to be central guidance and coordinating mechanisms, but government personnel need the freedom to put what they need to say in their own words, and to respond to changing situations based on their own understanding of that situation, hopefully within a broader context of well articulated strategies and goals.

Inform versus influence

Perhaps the most significant and pernicious tension in the discussion is those who imply that the goal of strategic communication or public diplomacy is influence, and those who hold that the goal is just to inform, without influencing.

This is a false dichotomy. Informing without influencing is impossible; there is no such thing as value free information. Every provision of information passes on the attitudes and beliefs of the speaker or writer, and seeks to serve some purpose. "Letting the facts speak for themselves" presupposes that the facts have something to say, and that it is something the speaker wants said. Every provision of information is an act of persuasion.

There is, however, a line to be drawn between benign influence and manipulation. Deception, manipulation, propaganda: these are all inappropriate forms of influence that are unsustainable in the contemporary information environment (they will be exposed, usually fairly quickly), and

undermine the credibility of current and future messages and efforts. Strategic communication should admit to being about influence, but it should also contain a commitment to the truth, a commitment to credibility, and should be undertaken as "virtuous persuasion."[6]

The unassailable core of strategic communication

A wide range of definitions, boundaries, or preferences regarding the balance points listed could effectively enumerate strategic communication; the definition is less important than the concept. The concept, however, demands that definitions respect what I call "the unassailable core" of strategic communication.[7]

Informing, influencing, and persuading is important

The first part of the unassailable core of strategic communication is the belief that it is important to attempt to inform, influence, and persuade in pursuit of policy objectives. While there is a lack of consensus on the boundaries of and appropriate priorities for strategic communication, there is broad consensus that how we, the United States, present and describe ourselves to, and engage and communicate with, foreign audiences *matters for foreign policy outcomes*, now, and in the future. The foreign audiences of interest include current and potential adversaries, but are not limited to them. Strategic communication should not be thought of only as a tool for countering violent extremism, but as an important part of government efforts to speak to, listen to, engage with, and demonstrate good faith to all the people of the world. Now more than ever, it is the citizens of countries as much as countries' formal leaders that determine the course of nations and how U.S. policies are perceived and received, as has been dramatically highlighted by the "Arab Spring." Foreign perceptions and understandings of images, policies, and actions matter, the success of many policies is contingent on the support they receive from various populations, and perceptions are influenced both by what we do and what we say.

Effectively informing, influencing, and persuading requires clear objectives

Informing, influencing and persuading in support of national policy requires both that the policy objective be clear, and that it be clear how a certain set of audience attitudes, behaviors, or perceptions will support those objectives. I completely agree with Dr. Emily Goldman, who is currently part of the office of communication at United States Central Command, when she says,

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[6] For a more extensive discussion of the "inform vs. influence" issue, see Chapter Two of Paul, Christopher, *Strategic Communication: Origins, Concepts, and Current Debates*, Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2011.

[7] The unassailable core and the associated discussion come from Paul, Christopher, *Strategic Communication: Origins, Concepts, and Current Debates*, Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2011.

"Effective strategic communication requires clear, consistent core messages *that flow from policy goals*. [emphasis added]"[8]

It is critical both that the objectives be clear and that the desired effect sought through communication be clear. Vague goals like "win the long war" do not imply any observable or measureable indicators of progress, nor do they do much to allow the articulation of supporting objectives to which an influence campaign could connect.

Coordination and deconfliction are necessary to avoid information fratricide

Army Field Manual 3-13, *Information Operations: Doctrine, Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, defines **information fratricide** as "the result of employing information operations elements in a way that causes effects in the information environment that impede the conduct of friendly operations or adversely affect friendly forces."[9] When one piece of information a government or its forces provides contradicts or is otherwise inconsistent with another piece of information provided by that government, that is information fratricide. "Since each USG agency has its own mission, each habitually targets different audiences, with different messages, through different channels. By communicating different messages to multiple audiences at home and abroad, the USG risks the perception of being seen as disingenuous."[10] Getting every possible source of messages and signals in an enterprise as sprawling as the U.S. government to avoid contradicting each other is non-trivial. Nonetheless, integration, coordination, and deconfliction are central to strategic communication.

Actions communicate

Actions speak louder than words. This truism is absolutely central to an effective strategic communication construct. Any implementation of strategic communication that includes only traditional communication, such as messaging, press releases, media relations, etc. is all but doomed to fail. This holds true even if it includes non-traditional media, such as web or other technology new media/now media and individual engagement. To be successful, strategic communication must include the communicative content and signals of actions, images, and policies.

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[8] Goldman, Emily, "Strategic Communication: A Tool for Asymmetric Warfare," *Small Wars Journal*, October 6, 2007, p. 6.

[9] Headquarters Department of the Army, *Information Operation: Doctrine, Tactics, Techniques, and* Procedures, Washington, D.C., FM 3-13 (FM 100-6), November 2003, pp. 1-5.

[10] Ecklund, Marshall V., "Strategic Communications: How to Make it Work?," *IOSphere*, Fall 2005, p. 8.

"Actions" include not just policy actions, but a much broader set of behaviors, deeds, and undertakings by members and representatives of the government. This goes double for the kinetic actions (maneuver and fires) of military forces. If a picture can be worth a thousand words, then a bomb can be worth ten thousand.

The smart thinkers in this area realize that actions communicate, and I echo their call. Whether you think of it as minimizing the "say-do gap,"[11] or wish to discuss the "diplomacy of deeds,"[12] what we *do* matters at least as much (if not more) than what we say, especially for deployed military forces. Every action, utterance, message, depiction, and movement of a nation's military forces influences the perceptions and opinions of populations that witness them, both in the area of operations (first hand), and in the broader world (second or third hand).[13] The 2010 White House National Framework for Strategic Communication gets it exactly right: "Every action that the United States Government takes sends a message."[14]

If a definition of strategic communication doesn't embrace these four elements, then it is a definition of something else..

My working definition of SC is "Coordinated actions, messages, images, and other forms of signaling or engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives."[15]

However, as long as a definition respects the four elements of the unassailable core, it might be as good or better than mine. In fact, if we must, we can continue to operate without a good definition, and just with a somewhat shared understanding of the topic.

Strategic communication is vague – say what you mean

Much of the apparent disagreement and talking past each other that takes place in this arena stems from different discussants using the single phrase to denote different elements or aspects

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[11] Defense Science Board, *Task Force on Strategic Communication*, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, January 2008, p. 13.

[12] Gregory, Bruce, "Public Diplomacy and National Security: Lessons from the U.S. Experience," *Small Wars Journal*, 2008, p. 6.

[13] Helmus, Todd C., Christopher Paul, Russell W. Glenn, *Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theaters of Operation*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-607-JFCOM, 2007, p. 171.

[14] The White House, *National Framework for Strategic Communication*, Washington, D.C., March 2010, p. 3.

[15] Paul, Christopher, *Strategic Communication: Origins, Concepts, and Current Debates*, Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2011, p. 3.

of strategic communication. Strategic communication is a very broad term that is used to capture a wide range of concepts and activities. I see a simple solution. As the title of my 2010 *Joint Force Quarterly* article suggests, "Strategic communication is vague – say what you mean."[16] Much of this confusion could be avoided if those speaking or writing about strategic communication would add a qualifier to their uses of the phrase. Here are the most frequent denotations intended when someone says, "strategic communication," each of which can be used to better specify a use of the term:

- enterprise level strategic communication
- strategic communication planning, integration, and synchronization processes
- communication strategies and themes
- communication, information, and influence capabilities
- knowledge of human dynamics and analysis or assessment capabilities.

For the record, throughout this testimony, my references to strategic communication are almost all exclusively to enterprise level strategic communication.

A decade of reports, white papers, and opinions suggest a variety of different improvements to strategic communication and public diplomacy

Beginning with the 2001 report of the aforementioned Defense Science Board task force, the past decade has seen a host of white papers, reports, articles, and commentaries suggesting reforms and improvements for U.S. strategic communication and public diplomacy. In 2009, I surveyed and compared the conclusions and recommendations of 36 of these reports for a RAND study on the topic.[17] These documents contained many reasonable ideas and recommendations. Unsurprisingly, these reports often recommend very different things.

While there was no universal consensus, there were at least four commonly repeated themes in the recommendations.[18]

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[16] Paul, Christopher, ""Strategic Communication" Is Vague: Say What You Mean," *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 56, 1st Quarter, 2010, pp. 10-13. See that article for a detailed discussion of each of the five identified aspects or elements of strategic communication.

[17] Paul, Christopher, *Whither Strategic Communication? A Survey of current Proposals and Recommendations*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2009. As of July 1, 2011: http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/occasional_papers/2009/RAND_OP250.pdf

[18] Paul, Christopher, *Whither Strategic Communication? A Survey of current Proposals and Recommendations*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2009. As of July 1, 2011: http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/occasional_papers/2009/RAND_OP250.pdf

A call for "leadership"

Roughly one quarter of the 36 documents make an explicit call for "leadership." Leadership is in quotes because the different reports use it as shorthand for at least four different things: 1) presidential attention (which, to be fair, is desired by proponents in any issue area); 2) authority (no element of the government has any kind of enforceable authority over any of the various departments with shared responsibility for strategic communication); 3) good choices (bad policies cannot be well communicated), and 4) clear direction.

Demand for increased resources

The paucity of current resource levels for strategic communication and public diplomacy and recommendations for more was the single most frequent recommendation in the reports reviewed. There was broad agreement on the need for both increased personnel and for programmatic resources.

A call for a clear definition of overall strategy

Almost one-third of the reports reviewed make a call for clear strategic direction in this area. According to one commentator, without a clear strategy, "the leaders of each department, agency and office are left to decide what is important."[19] Most of the sources recommending clear strategy call for highest-level strategy, as well as strategy that goes beyond strategic communication: a clear foreign policy strategy that strategic communication can support.

The need for better coordination

Second in prevalence to increased resources for strategic communication is an admonition to coordinate better, with 19 of the reviewed documents making such a recommendation. Many sources lament the lack of coordination of U.S. government strategic communication efforts, both within and between agencies. Reports of information fratricide, where one element of the government (or of the military) makes a statement that contradicts or undermines messages from elsewhere in the government, abound.[20]

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[19] Borg, Lindsey J., *Communicating with Intent: DoD and Strategic Communication*, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air University, April 2007, p. 23. As of January 20, 2009: http://www.carlisle.army.mil/DIME/documents/strat_comm_borg.pdf

[20] Helmus, Todd C., Christopher Paul, Russell W. Glenn, *Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theaters of Operation*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2007, pp. 33-34. As of July 1, 2011: http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND_MG607.pdf

Many reports also call for a new organization

Many of the reports reviewed call for a new organization of some kind for the support or coordination of strategic communication or public diplomacy. Some kind of organizational change or addition is recommended by almost all of the reports. Consensus is less strong, however, on the specific organizational changes needed. These include:

- creation of a new government agency
- creation of a new independent supporting organization
- reorganization within existing organizations
- rebalancing authorities between government agencies
- creation of new advisory or coordinating positions.

The proposals with the greatest potential traction are those advocating the creation of a new independent supporting organization. These include the "institution for international knowledge and communication" recommended by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Commission on Smart Power;[21] the "Center for Global Engagement" proposed by the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication;[22] and the "USA/World Trust" proposed by Kristin Lord of the Brookings Institution.[23]
Specific details differ, but all proposed organizations would:

- Be independent or semi-independent
- Conduct research and analysis
- Serve as a repository of expertise
- Tap and engage the private sector
- Advise government officials

One or more of the proposed organizations would also

- Be a hub for the exchange of ideas (both within and outside of government)
- Conduct experiments or pilot communication programs

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[21] Center for Strategic and International Studies, Commission on Smart Power, *A Smarter, More Secure America*, Washington, D.C., November 2007, p. 48.
[22] *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*, Washington, D.C., January 2008.
[23] Lord, Kristin M., *Voices of America: U.S. Public Diplomacy for the 21st Century*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 2008.

- Promote and invest in innovative communication technologies
- Provide grants and venture capital to endeavors that advance its objectives

The proposals tend to emphasize the benefits of public-private partnerships and to focus on things the government struggles to (or simply cannot) do itself.

Where are we right now with the strategic communication enterprise?

Department of State

In the government, the U.S. Department of State (DOS) should be the home of robust strategic communication and public diplomacy capabilities, the source of related strategies and themes, and prominent in efforts to coordinate and deconflict.
Instead, department-wide, the term strategic communication is shunned in favor of public diplomacy, and public diplomacy takes a backseat to traditional state to state diplomacy. The fact that the undersecretariat for public diplomacy and public affairs is once again vacant since the 24 May resignation of Judith McHale speaks volumes.[24]

There have been improvements at State. I have lectured repeatedly on this subject at the Foreign Service Institute, and I have heard from the action officer level that there is more attention to, better guidance for, and more freedom to pursue public diplomacy than there was previously.

Department of Defense

Rosa Brooks, whose testimony directly preceded mine, has just come from a prominent coordinating role for strategic communication in the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). I defer and refer you to her testimony regarding the current state of play in DoD.

Based on my research and awareness, I see strategic communication as a point of emphasis in DoD. More commanders at more levels are making strategic communication a priority. All of the combatant commands have established some sort of structure for the coordination of strategic communication.

The last few years have seen several improvements. The Strategic Communication Capabilities Based Assessment was completed in 2010, which paves the way for identified gaps to be addressed in formal DoD planning and resourcing processes. There has been some

[24] Kamen, Al, "McHale Leaving State Department," *The Washington Post*, May 23, 2011. As of July 1, 2011: http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/mchale-leaving-state-department/2011/05/23/AFF8D39G_story.html

consolidation of oversight of strategic communication within the office of the secretary of defense (OSD), to include movement of strategic communication and information operations oversight out of OSD (intelligence) into OSD (policy). This consolidation still leaves multiple (but fewer) principals with responsibility for strategic communication, including representation in OSD (public affairs) and on the Joint Staff.

There are, however, still concerns in the broader force at lower echelons. Outside the strategic communication cognoscenti, there is a general lack of certainty about what strategic communication really is and how to do it. Subordinate formations still decry the lack of guidance for strategic communication and the lack of higher level themes and messages (echoing the cries for clear strategy from numerous reports on strategic communication, and the requirement for clear objectives as part of the unassailable core of strategic communication, as articulated earlier in my testimony). Room for improvement clearly remains.

Find the Right Balance Between Civilian and Military: Don't Just Strip the Department of Defense of Capabilities to Inform, Influence, and Persuade

Regarding the balance between Defense and State, right now "American public diplomacy wears combat boots."[25] That is, the Department of Defense employs the majority of the resources (funding, manpower, tools, and programs) used for U.S. government efforts to inform, influence, and persuade foreign audiences and publics. Most of us agree that this is not the ideal state of affairs. The Department of State or another civilian agency should have the preponderance of the United States' capabilities in this area. Both the White House and DoD concur.[26] This would, of course, require substantial changes at State, in terms of orientation, priorities, and in the level of funding and capabilities available for public diplomacy and strategic communication. This also begs two questions: what is the right balance between civilian and military capabilities, and how do we get there?

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[25] Armstrong, Matthew, "Operationalizing Public Diplomacy," in Nancy Snow and Philip M. Taylor, eds., *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 63.

[26] See White House, *National Framework for Strategic Communication*, Washington, D.C., March 2010, and Kushlis, Patricia H. and Patricia Lee Sharpe, "Public Diplomacy Matters More than Ever," *Foreign Service Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 10, October 2006, p. 32.

The balance between the Department of State and the Department of Defense is not "zero" on the Department of Defense side

Imagine that, in some foreseeable future, DOS's capabilities become sufficiently robust to meet baseline steady-state needs on a global level. *DoD will still need to retain significant capability in this area.* Why? There are at least two significant reasons.

First, actions communicate, and DoD *will* continue to act. It will need capabilities to support planning and coordinating the communication content of those actions, and it will also need (at a minimum) the communication capabilities to explain those actions and encourage the favorable perception of those actions.

Second, DoD's responsibilities for responding to contingencies necessitate that it retain its inform, influence, and persuade capabilities. Even the most robust State Department that anyone imagines will still lack the kind of surge capacity and expeditionary capability needed to adequately respond to the crises and contingencies that our military is asked to prepare for. When the U.S. military presence in a foreign country goes from negligible to massive, who will be alongside the operating forces, explaining (and seeking to make palatable) their presence? The answer is: military communicators. If all the military communicators went away, who would conduct critical inform, influence, and persuade missions at the dawn of an emergent crisis? The answer is: no one. And that is why the appropriate balance of such capabilities between DoD and DOS is not "zero" on the DoD side.

How do we get from here to there?

Right now, Stateis not capable of meeting global steady-state strategic communication and public diplomacy needs of the United States. How might State's capacity be increased and resources transferred from Defense without creating gaps in service that would come at the expense of the national interest or military lives?

If the Congress is overzealous in stripping capabilities from DoD before State is ready to receive or recreate them, there is a very real possibility that the operation will be a success, but the patient might die anyway.

The right answer is to slowly and thoughtfully migrate some of DoD's public diplomacy capabilities over to DOS. This is exactly what the White House has proposed. As noted in the *National Framework for Strategic Communication*, "We recognize the need to ensure an appropriate balance between civilian and military efforts. As a result, a process has been initiated

to review existing programs and resources to identify current military programs that might be better executed by other Departments and Agencies."[27]

DOS should have the preponderance of inform, influence, and persuade capabilities and resources in the U.S. government. *This should happen without an overall diminution of the capabilities available.* Before DoD capabilities are reduced, DOS will require increased resources and improved organization. While DOS is improving its ability to meet the country's international inform, influence, and persuade needs, further growth can come from the direct transfer of selected DoD programs to DOS. Such transfers can increase in size and scope as DOS gains experience, and as its ability to manage and plan for these programs and capabilities improves. Finally, when it becomes clear exactly which capabilities DOS will and will not be able to develop or take over, it will be time to take a hard look at remaining DoD capabilities to determine which have been made redundant by DOS and which simply cannot be replaced by a civilian agency.

At the end of this process, all parties would like to see greater U.S. capability to inform, influence, and persuade abroad, with the Department of State as the robust leader of American public diplomacy and the Department of Defense as a valued and supporting partner. Get the balance right, and get there the right way.

Movement in the private sector

But this is not just about the government, military or civilian. As mentioned earlier in my testimony, many of the reports on strategic communication and public diplomacy reform propose a new organization of some kind, with a public-private partnership, independent of (but with an important relationship with) government, being the best idea. What is going on in the private sector?

I have been involved in the SAGE effort (Strengthening America's Global Engagement) hosted by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars seeking to prepare a detailed business plan and proposal for just such an organization. Current plans are to announce and roll-out the proposal later this year.

While there are many entities in the private sector that contribute to public diplomacy or citizen diplomacy in one way or another, my understanding is that there is limited coordination between them, and limited connections to government. Of possible concern is the fact that *Business for Diplomatic Action* closed its doors on December 31 of 2010.

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[27] White House, *National Framework for Strategic Communication*, Washington, D.C., March 2010.

My vision for strategic communication

I have a vision of what successful strategic communication would look like. In this vision, we have clearly stated national objectives, which contain nested subordinate objectives, which contain nested intermediate or supporting objectives, nesting all the way down to the operational and tactical level. These clear statements make it easy to see which objectives can be realized through influence or persuasion, and which can be supported through such efforts.

In this vision commanders and decision-makers have a "communication mindedness" and consider the messages and signals their actions, utterances, or planned policies send. Failing that (or as that is developing) these same leaders have access to (and respect for) communication advisors who sit at their right hands and bring communication implications to their attention.

In this vision everyone in government speaks not with one voice like some kind of robot automaton, but with their messages aligned in the same direction, because everyone understands the nested objectives and how their own efforts support those objectives, and because they have (or have access to) requisite communication training and cultural knowledge. In this vision communication is not just one-way broadcast, but is true two-way communication, engagement, or dialogue. In my vision this leads to policies shaped with our own interests as well as the interests and preferences of others in mind. This is my vision.[28]

Recommendations

To support progress toward this vision, I have seven specific recommendations.

Specify information endstates

The single best piece of advice for improving strategic communication that I have encountered comes from the U.S. Army War College's Professor Dennis Murphy. He suggests that all statements of commander's intent should also include a commander's desired information endstate.[29] The inclusion of an information endstate will guide subordinate plans such that they

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[28] Vision extracted from Paul, Christopher, *Strategic Communication: Origins, Concepts, and Current Debates*, Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2011, p. 174-5.

[29] See Murphy, Dennis M., *Fighting Back: New Media and Military Operations*, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Center for Strategic Leadership, United States Army War College, November 2008.

comply with the commander's stated intent, and provide just a little bit more guidance and context for subordinates in their autonomous decision-making in support of the mission.

Here is an extended hypothetical example. The traditional commander's intent might include the endstate: "remove the insurgent threat from village X." Subordinates executing on this guidance, depending on the existence of other standing orders or rules of engagement, might conceivably have the whole military toolbox open to them: they could level the village, cordon and search, or a variety of softer approaches. Now imagine the implications if the following information endstate is additionally specified: "If possible, leave the population of village X neutral to our presence." That significantly changes the approaches subordinates are likely to take. It also allows the commander to assign explicit priorities to kinetic vs. informational outcomes, or short-term vs. long-term. There may be other types of cases where informational endstate does not matter to the commander, and in those cases the commander's intent can note that fact. In the vast majority of situations, however, that will not be the case. If commanders think about and are explicit about communication and information endstates, their subordinates will have no choice but to do so as well. Under this construction, while the commander accepts responsibility for conceiving the information endstate, his subordinates naturally accept more responsibility for achieving it than they would be forced to if it were left unstated.

This recommendation is obviously explicitly aimed at the DoD, but has applicability for senior leaders and decision-makers throughout the government, too.

Nest strategies and goals

My vision of strategic communication includes purposiveness and intentionality in communication at all levels. To communicate in the national interest is easiest when the national interests are specified and include clear goals at each level. What is missing is a subordinate set of goals to connect from national strategic guidance (which is often vague) to operating organizations. In the presence of clearly articulated national objectives and intermediate or supporting subordinate goals, the talented men and women of our government and our armed forces will surprise us with how diligently and effectively they inform, influence, and persuade in support of those goals.

Build strategic communication as a crawl, walk, run enterprise

As we try to get better at strategic communication, we need to remember that Rome wasn't built in a day. There are many gaps between what we currently do well in this arena and all the things we would like to do well in pursuit of a fully mature vision of strategic communication. It follows from this insight that there should be a logical progression toward closing gaps and building

capabilities related to this area. To propose such a progression, I borrow from an often used military training metaphor: the crawl, walk, run progression. Before you can walk, crawl; before you can run, walk. When we consider all of the things that could go into strategic communication, rather than getting into an argument about which ones are most important, I propose instead we ask: Which ones are easiest and which ones are foundational for, or logically prior to, the others? In short, which do we need to develop to progress to the crawl level of strategic communication, and which should be considered part of the higher walk level, or the highest run level?
I recommend that first we focus on being intentional and deconflicted in our own messaging and signaling. Then incorporate consideration of other participants in the information environment, consider cultural contexts, listen, and conduct true engagement. Finally, move to full integration of messages and signals, realize complex influence models, and seize the initiative from adversaries.

Build strategic communication from the top down as well as from the bottom up

Many of the calls for reform in this area emphasize guidance, leadership, and strategic direction coming from the top. I also advocate top-down progress in this area, but when I speak about strategic communication to embassy staffers or company and field grade officers, I emphasize the prospects for bottom-up progress in this area as well. Even in the absence of clearly articulated higher level goals and subordinate objectives, improvement can be made in nesting goals. I encourage personnel at all levels to embrace strategic communication and to write clear goals for their inform, influence, and persuade activities. Personnel at all levels should seek to connect their goals to the goals one level up. If goals are not clearly articulated at that higher level, personnel can request that clear objectives be developed, but should not wait for that to happen. Instead, I encourage subordinate personnel to articulate their own goals and make them point toward what they think the goals should be at the higher level. If those at higher levels do not agree, that can only further incentivize them to actually state their objectives. If the community of practice begins to build nesting goals from the bottom up (or from the inside out, or whatever), eventually the authorities at the top of these organizations will harness those connections with guidance in the form of clearly articulated goals of their own.

Separate black from white

While inform and influence cannot be meaningfully separated, truth and falsehood can. Lies, deception, and manipulation cost credibility when uncovered. In the contemporary global information environment, the prospects for keeping such acts under wraps indefinitely is increasingly low. Further, the fact that some communicators (notably psychological

operations/military information support operations) have falsehood in their doctrinal toolbox is a barrier to collaboration with other communicators.

If we must retain "black" information capabilities (and I accept that there are compelling arguments for doing so), carve them off and sequester them from other sources of messages and signals. Do not have the same organizations and personnel conducting both truth-based and false messaging. Retain some kind of conduit or connection between those who deceive and manipulate and the rest of the communication community for deconfliction and coordination purposes, but keep such "black" information capabilities small and away from the light. Freeing routine communication conduits from the suspicion of falsehood both internally and externally will increase credibility and make coordination and integration easier.

Specifically, psychological operations (now military information support operations) should be doctrinally and organizationally divided to separate those who inform, influence, and persuade using true information and attributed sources, from those who manipulate, mislead, and misattribute. This small residual could have a pernicious sounding name, like "information manipulation" or... psychological operations. The firewall should be between military information support operations and this black capability, not between public affairs and military information support operations.

Create and disseminate a government-wide definition of strategic communication

I strongly recommend that the White House or the National Security Council publish a formal definition of strategic communication that is intended to apply to all executive departments and agencies. Provided it is a good definition (and I understand that is a somewhat risky proviso), this would end efforts by relevant agencies to avoid strategic communication by pleading that it is not what they do, and would end debate within departments (notably the Department of Defense) by providing a single definition which must be adhered to. Unity of understanding can only help unity of effort.

If such a definition cannot (or just will not) be produced, then as a fallback position I continue to advocate that everyone add qualifiers to make clear what element or aspect of strategic communication they intend to discuss when they use the term – say what you mean!

Whatever you want to call strategic communication, don't throw the baby out with the bathwater!

I am not indelibly committed to the term "strategic communication." I do, however, have a strong commitment to the notion that the United States should be thoughtful, purposive, and coordinated in efforts to inform, influence, and persuade foreign populations in pursuit of national policy objectives. If strategic communication as a term is too vague, too contested, or becomes politically untenable, abandon it. Just do not allow the underlying effort to coordinate government impact on the information environment to be lost too.

In closing, I thank the Subcommittee for inviting me to testify. I hope the foregoing discussion of strategic communication is useful to your important deliberations.

RAND OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS. EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS.

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One Page Bio

Media Resources

This researcher is available for interviews.

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BIOGRAPHY

Christopher Paul is a social scientist at the RAND Corporation. Prior to joining RAND full-time in July 2002, he worked as an adjunct at RAND for six years and on the statistics faculty at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 2001–02. Paul has developed methodological competencies in comparative historical and case study approaches, quantitative analysis, and survey research. Paul received his Ph.D. in sociology from UCLA.

RECENT PROJECTS

- Strategic communication in counterinsurgency
- Urban flashpoints
- Future needs for operations in cyberspace
- The organization of Marine Corps intelligence
- Shaping perceptions and behaviors of non-combatant populations

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Christopher Paul, "As a Fish Swims in the Sea: Relationships Between Factors Contributing to Support for Terrorist or Insurgent Groups," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 33(6):388-410, 2010

Christopher Paul, "Strategic Communication is Vague: Say What You Mean," *Joint Force Quarterly*, (56):10-13, 2010

Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, RAND Corporation (MG-964), 2010

Christopher Paul, *Whither Strategic Communication? A Survey of Current Proposals and Recommendations*, RAND Corporation (OP-250), 2009

Christopher Paul et al., "Identifying Urban Flashpoints: A Delphi Derived Model for Scoring Cities' Vulnerability to Large Scale Unrest," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31(11):981-1000, 2008

Christopher Paul, *Information Operations - Doctrine and Practice: A Reference Handbook*, Praeger, 2008

Todd C. Helmus, Christopher Paul and Russell W. Glenn, *Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theaters of Operation*, RAND Corporation (MG-607), 2007

Christopher Paul and James J. Kim, *Reporters on the Battlefield: The Embedded Press System in Historical Context*, RAND Corporation (MG-200), 2004

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Witness name: Christopher Paul

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

○ Individual

◉ Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented: RAND Corporation

FISCAL YEAR 2011

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
1	DoD	$27,721,000	NDRI
1	U.S. Army	$19,202,000	Arroyo

FISCAL YEAR 2010

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
1	DoD	$49,600,000	NDRI
1	U.S. Army	$28,096,000	Arroyo

FISCAL YEAR 2009

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
1	DoD	$49,700,000	NDRI
1	U.S. Army	$31,680,000	Arroyo

Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

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Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2011): See Attached;
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List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

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Fiscal year 2009: See Attached.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

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Fiscal year 2010: $77,696,000;
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Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
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Fiscal year 2009:_____.

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US Strategic Communications and Information Operations with the Muslim world:

By:

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After September 11th, the relationship between the US and the Muslim world suffered several setbacks. Many in the Muslim world interpreted the "War on Terror" as a war against Islam. In response, the US government tried in different ways to "Win the Hearts and Minds" of Muslims.

Attempts of the US to improve its image included the following:

1- Statements to emphasize that the war on terror is NOT a war against Islam.
2- Using expressions such as "Islam is the Religion of Peace" to improve relations with Muslims.
3- Media efforts to improve the US image in the Muslim world such as Hi Magazine, Al-Hurra TV, and Radio Sawa.
4- Addressing the Muslim world with specific speeches such as President Obama' speech to the Muslim world in Cairo.
5- Expressing respect to Muslim leaders via gestures (e.g. The US president excessive bowing to the Saudi king to show respect).
6- US female diplomatic representatives Diplomats and military personnel to Muslim countries showing respect to Muslims by wearing the Hijab.
7- Supporting Muslims' desire to build the mosque at ground Zero, encourage Muslim women to wear the Hijab, and to collect the Zakkat by Islamic organizations (Obligatory Islamic Tax for Muslim).

8- Standing against burning the Quran in Florida.
9- Celebrating with Muslims by inviting their representatives to Iftar dinner at the White House during Ramadan.
10- Avoiding using certain expressions such as the word "Jihad" or referring to the radical Islamic ideology as a cause for the problem of terrorism to appease 'moderate' Muslims.
11- Burying Bin Laden in an "Islamic" manner to show respect to the Muslim world.

The outcome of the previously mentioned approaches has been disappointing and the US image in the Muslim world has not improved in a significant way after using such approaches (See 1, 2, 3 below).

Weakness and Limitations of the formerly mentioned US approach includes:

1- Failure to create the proper and needed balance between showing respect to Muslims and being perceived as 'weak' in the Muslim world. The latter impedes the winning of hearts and minds strategies. Some of the previously mentioned approaches (such as the bowing of the US president to the Saudi king, the use of the Hijab by US female military personnel in Afghanistan and by US representatives) portrayed the US in a weak manner that could have impeded the ability of the US to improve its image, as the Muslim world prefers the strong rather than the weak friend.
2- Failure to understand that improving the image of the US in the Muslim world is more dependent on modifying the process of thinking and perception among Muslims than on merely changing US policies. Modifying the thinking process among Muslims needs proper support for effective education that encourages critical thinking and logical- rather than emotional-analysis within Islamic societies.
3- Lack of an effective counter messaging system to respond to negative rumors about the US that spread in the Muslim world.

4- Failure to recognize and address the role played by radical Islamic teachings in impeding the efforts to improve the US image in the Muslim world.
5- Insufficient utilization of Arab Americans to improve the US image in the Muslim world.
6- Failure to dissociate the US government from the US media in the mind of Islamic societies. Many Muslims in these societies judge US government by what is written or published in the US media. For example, if the media criticized or insulted Islam many in the Muslim world perceive it as if the US government is insulting Islam. Addressing this issue is fundamental to improving the effectiveness of "winning hearts and minds" strategies.
7- Lack of properly planned psychological operations to weaken radicalism in the Muslim world. Such operations MUST be done in a covert manner.

Recommendations to improve the US strategic communications (SC) and Information operations (IO) with the Muslim world:

1- SHARING COMMON HOPES AND DREAMS: Sharing common hopes and dreams of decreasing suffering all over the world can be achieved for example, via creating a common dream for both the Arabs, US, and the rest of the world to end poverty and cure disease. Being part of a bigger dream gives the Arabs a feeling of respect and encourages them to feel that they are inseparable and important part of the world community.

2- FIGHTING TERRORISM MUST BE PORTRAYED AS A JOINT EFFORT: Since the victims of terrorism are predominantly Muslims, fighting terrorism must be portrayed as a joint effort between the US and the Muslim world rather than a unilateral US approach.

3- RESPECTING THE ARAB WORLD, WITHOUT SHOWING WEAKNESS: This crucial balance is needed as showing respect to others is vital to win their hearts and minds but showing weakness encourage the Islamist radicals to do more violent acts.

4- REMOVING PAST OBSTACLES TO GOOD RELATIONS: Removing the obstacles that still exist from the past relationship is important. If these obstacles are not removed, they will always impede attempts to win the hearts and minds of the Arab world. Many of these obstacles are based on misconceptions. For example, many in the Arab world think that the U S treats the Arabs badly and discriminates against them. The use of facts to fight these misconceptions e.g. by sharing statistics to prove that the income/education of the Arab Americans is higher than average, can help remove this obstacle.

5- EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING: Showing empathy and understanding of the sufferings of young Arabs and desire to help relieve this suffering is one of the factors that can initiate a positive relationship with the US.

6- REDUCING MISUNDERSTANDING: Clarifying areas that causes misunderstandings and cause more hatred to the US. For example, many in the Arab world think that the US government has full control over the media and what is written in the books and magazines in the US. For this reason, they blame the US government for any book or comment in the media that insults Islam. Clarifying that the US government has NO control over such issues and that the statements of the Government never insulted Islam, can help build a new relationship where the US government is seen as responsible only for its statements and cannot be held responsible for what the media says. The latter issue is crucial as a lot of hatred to the US is because the people judge the US government by the actions of individuals or the media.

7- CLARIFYING ISSUES: Giving better explanations for US actions and positions. For example, one of the main obstacles to improve the relationship between the US and the Arab street is what Arabs describe as the Pro Israel US foreign policy. This issue can be better explained to the Arab street by clarifying that this position is NOT based on hatred to the Arabs but rather on a strong belief that the existence of Israel beside the Arabs in this area will be useful for both parties and will actually encourage economic growth to the whole area that will ultimately benefit the Arabs as

well. US support for Israel can be partially explained in the context that it is not based on hatred to the Arabs but in fact it is based on a better vision for the area and love (NOT hatred) for the Arabs as well.

8- SET HIGH STANDARDS: Set high expectations for the Arab and Muslim world. This is most important as the Arabs can do better when others set high expectations from them. For example, asking the Arabs to protect their Christian minorities will not be as effective as telling them that the world is not expecting from the Arab world anything less than being a role model to the world in caring for its religious minorities. Setting high expectations from the Arabs- rather than instructing them to do something- can be an excellent way to motivate them to be better.

9. QUOTING SELECTED ISLMIC TEXT-A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION TOOL: The use of Quranic verses in the strategic communications with the Arab and Muslim world can on one hand show Muslims how the US respect the Islam and on the other hand can help to counterbalance the common believe in the Arab/Muslim world that the US hates Islam. Furthermore, this approach can encourage Muslims to apply the Quranic verses that promote tolerance to and peaceful co-existence with the others.

Using appropriate quotes from the Quran can help Muslims accept the U.S. interpretations of issues and events. For example, the following verse in the Quran "Verse 6:164:

"No one can be hold responsible for the actions of another."

This reference can be used to help Muslims stop judging all the American people and hating them based on the actions of individuals (e.g. The Florida Pastor who burned the Quran) or groups that insult Islam in the US.

Osama Bin Laden recent death at the hands of U.S. Navy Seals provides another opportunity to quote the Quran to support U.S. Action: the Quran Verse 2:179 reads:

"In the Law of taking the life of murders there is (saving of) Life to you."

10. GETTING CREDIT FOR DOING GOOD: A larger portion of US aid should be in the form of grants that can go directly to hands of people to create a direct positive relationship to the US. For example, in the early 1980s, US support for Egypt included chickens that were wrapped in bags with colors that looked like the US flag. This helped create a mental link between the good taste of the Chickens and the US and ultimately made many Egyptians at that time start to perceive the US in very positive manner. Creating such mental links to improve the image of the US is possible via the use of certain cognitive psychology tactics such as the 'Spreading Activation Model".

Fighting in Brainistan

Effective "Mind War" strategies to weaken Islamic Radicalism MUST be added to the formerly mentioned approaches. Better use of the Internet to fight Radicalism in the Muslim world is also crucial element in this psychological war.

Understanding Islamic culture and types of Muslims is also vital to develop effective strategic communication approaches. A simplistic visual analysis of Islamic culture can be illustrated using five concentric circles that represent categories.

The outer circle consists of "cultural Muslims," who follow their religion in a somewhat superficial manner. They consider their religion a part of their culture, but do not necessarily read much about their faith or practice their religion actively. Islam simply forms a framework identity for the social activities they engage in or identify with.

The second circle is occupied by "ritual Muslims" that mainly practice the five pillars of Islam and are against violent edicts of Shariah laws (such as stoning for adultery and killing apostates).

The third circle represents "theological Muslims," who study in greater depth Islamic texts and are interested in implementing Shariah law to replace the secular law of the land. This group can represent a major threat to values of liberty and the stability of the free world once their percentage exceeds a certain threshold in the society.

The fourth circle represents "radical Muslims" who accept and promote using force to subjugate others to their beliefs.

The final and innermost smallest circle represents terrorists, who represent only a very small fraction of Islamic society but who are ready to sacrifice their lives to attack others and have the potential to do major harm.

Strategic communication efforts MUST be tailored and customized for each of the above mentioned groups.

Finally, The US needs to work at 3 levels to improve its strategic communication capabilities with the Muslim world

1- The message that they sent to the Muslim world.
2- Removing the obstacles (such as Radical Islamic Ideology) that prevent the effectiveness of the message.
3- Changing the perception of the Muslim world to the US message via education and psychological operations.

Defeating Islamist terrorism relies on our ability to win the war not only in Afghanistan and Pakistan but predominantly in "Brainistan" via effective Strategic Communications and Information Operations.

References:

(1) http://pewglobal.org/2011/05/17/arab-spring-fails-to-improve-us-image/
(2) http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1512/restoring-americas-reputation-globally-gains-may-be-fragile
(3) http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703499404574558300500152682.html

Dr. Tawfik Hamid is an Islamic thinker and reformer, and one time Islamic extremist from Egypt. He was formerly a member of a terrorist Islamic organization Jamaa Islamiya with Dr. Ayman Al-Zawahiri, who later became the second in command of Al-Qaeda. Some twenty-five years ago, Dr. Hamid recognized the threat of radical Islam and the need for a reformation based upon modern peaceful interpretations of classical Islamic core texts. Dr. Hamid's work focuses on providing a fresh and theologically valid interpretation of the Quran to counterbalance radical teaching.

As the Daily Express (UK) wrote, "Dr. Hamid has predicted the attacks on the twin towers, Madrid and London." After September 11, Dr. Hamid decided to speak out through western broadcast and print media. He has appeared on shows spanning the spectrum from CNN to Fox News, and his articles and Op-Ed pieces have appeared in publications such as the Wall Street Journal, the New York Daily News, and the Jerusalem Post. Dr. Hamid's exceptional knowledge of the jihadi mindset has caused him to be invited as a guest speaker at private and governmental fora around the world. Dr. Hamid has a unique insight into the minds of radical terrorists and hopes to share ways in which we can positively influence their way of thinking and end their violent actions.

Dr. Hamid, who is also known as Tarek Abdelhamid, has a medical degree in internal medicine and a Master's degree in cognitive psychology and educational techniques. He is the author of the book *Inside Jihad*.

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 112th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Armed Services Committee in complying with the House rule. Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness's personal privacy (including home address and phone number) will be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness's appearance before the committee.

Witness name: Dr. Tawfik Hamid (AKA Tarek Abdelhamid)

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

(•) Individual ✓

( ) Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented: ——

NA

FISCAL YEAR 2011

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant

FISCAL YEAR 2010

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant

Dr. T. Hamid

FISCAL YEAR 2009

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant

NA

Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Dr. T. Hamid

NA

Federal Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

List of subjects of federal grants(s) (for example, materials research, sociological study, software design, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Dr. T. Hamid