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All of the constructs in this vision are mine alone and therefore all of the inaccuracies, faulty logic, and errors are mine as well. This vision of an alternate future may be more of a fantasy than a potential for reality, but there are certainly aspects of a “communication transformation”—of the uses of information to fully enable soft power that demand rigorous analysis and, ultimately, transformation.

No other nation has the technological capability that the United States does, no other organization can plan like the U.S. military. No other service has as much capacity for public information, particularly in the number of public affairs units and the quality of Public Affairs professionals, as does the U.S. Army. IO, PSYOPS, and PA all share some elements of a common skill set in the uses and delivery of information—whether to educate or inform or influence, and a common commitment to implementing the Commander’s intent as well as an unflinching commitment to the truth. Just as Public Affairs is not the sole path for an officer to become a senior Strategic Communications Officer, neither is Information Operations. IO should never supervise PA and vice versa.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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## CHALLENGE TO CHANGE: DEVELOPING LEADERS FOR THE NONKINETIC FIGHT

**Major General Mari K. Eder, USAR**

*Strategic communication is vital to U.S. national security. It is an increasingly powerful, multi-dimensional instrument that is critical to America’s interests and to achieving the nation’s strategic goals.<sup>1</sup>*

### **A Week At Fort Knox.**

The general officers and senior colonels juggled their coffee cups and blackberries, mingling in the hallway just inside the DA Secretariat’s office suite. Several stood at the window, watching a light snow fall on the Kentucky landscape. The electronic sign was already flashing at the door: “Board in Session! No admittance!” Even though it is now

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication, January 2008, p. 10.

a few years old, on January 22, 2015, the Human Resource Command's Headquarters building at Fort Knox, KY, still looked new.<sup>2</sup>

There were 15 board members, all carefully selected based on their background, experience, and knowledge of the varied applications of information in military support to public diplomacy (MPD), civil affairs, information and psychological operations, and public and community affairs. The members represented the related career fields included in the young cohort, commonly referred to as the Combined Information Team (CIT). Still other board members represented the combat arms branches and were selected to represent the Combined Arms Team.

All of the CIT board members also had extensive command experience and many were experienced in leading complex, multinational, strategic communications planning efforts, operations, and integrated joint and combined campaigns. All were there to serve on the 2015 Non-Kinetic Effects Command and Key Billet Selection Board. They had traveled to Fort Knox over the weekend, most from within CONUS, but also from as far away as USAFRICOM and theaters in the Middle East and South America. One colonel had arrived late on Sunday due to flight delays in Argentina.

Just after eight a.m. on Monday, the 2-week board convened and members took the oath required of all Army Selection Board members, and the Human Resource Command (HRC) staff began its program of opening briefings on the board processes.

The Board President, Major General Goodfriend opened with the following comments:

Ladies and Gentlemen, I know you are excited to have the privilege of sitting on this board. The transformation of our Army's information enterprise has enabled us to break down the stovepipes and silos that previously existed and move forward rapidly with the integration of broad and effective information programs. For many years we focused too narrowly on terminologies and the capabilities of our equipment, and not enough on the innovation and creativity of our people. Career information officers were focused on hardware and information delivery systems rather than the act of crafting information products with intent and design. Frankly, I never cared whether communication had a "s" on it or not. It never was about the machine that delivers information.

The members laughed as they recalled the artificiality of that old construct.

"It has been a hard road to get to this point," General Goodfriend reminded them.

Internally, there was terrific resistance to developing the capabilities of these related career fields and giving them the resources necessary for success. We had to force change within the Army.<sup>3</sup> Externally, we've had to deal with significant opposition in the mainstream media, though not so much from the general public. It took a massive public education effort, and as you may recall, early exposure of that thankfully unsuccessful terror attack in 2011 that opened the door to a greater understanding of the power of strategic communication. Only in the past three years have the White House, State Department and the Department of Defense been able

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<sup>2</sup> The 2015 Command Board is a fictional construct, developed to illustrate how an integrated systems approach to building a communications enterprise could fully leverage and connect the Army's information capabilities. This is a vision for one potential approach.

<sup>3</sup> A summary of the changes made within the Public Affairs career field follows.

to move beyond old urban myths and fears of propaganda and news manipulation to the new and level information playing field where we stand today.

What do Americans abhor? What did we fear? Being manipulated . . . or being influenced? After all, we are influenced every day and the complexity of dealing with all of the challenges we face in a loud, crowded, and dangerous information battle space, whether at home or abroad, make coordination difficult and cooperation among the varied elements of our joint force nearly impossible.

The board recorders exchanged telling glances. Several of the majors were well aware that General Goodfriend was renowned for his gift of rhetoric. He liked to talk and the story of America's effort to manage its information capabilities was a particular favorite. Once on a roll, he would recite the entire history of the fight to win hearts and minds at home and abroad, while along the way citing every government advance and setback of the past 10 years to manage Information Operations (IO), PA, and Psychological Operations (Psyops) in a generally recognized and accepted manner. Once he began to discuss the Office of Strategic Influence under Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, the recorders settled in, knowing he was good for at least 20 minutes more of discourse on history.

Later, several recognized the end of the presentation was approaching as Goodfriend's tone shifted and his pace changed from that of the classroom lecture to a discussion of definitions of the career fields.

"The definitions of each are on your board reference cards. They are clear and unambiguous."

Truth is the foundation of all of our communication efforts, whether in a press conference, a brochure, blog entry, tweet, or community meeting. All elements of our combined information team work together to prevent, to deter, and to fight to achieve victory. Let me remind you that no one career field or specialty is the 'right' road to success. In some cases an IO officer may not have had sufficient broadening experiences to compete successfully for some of these IO or SC positions. In other cases you may think a PAO is not ready for command. Pay careful attention to the senior rater comments; these and your own best judgment should be your guide.

One of the junior board members, a brigadier general representing the Field Artillery, interjected. "Sir, there are still comments about how IO leeches into public affairs and undermines our credibility in dealing with foreign audiences. How can Strategic Communications as a capstone concept ever separate . . ."

He wasn't able to complete his question. General Goodfriend held up a hand.

Let me give you an example you can understand. Let's say a Maneuver Enhancement Brigade Commander is an Aviation branch officer. He has at least three subordinate battalions. One is Engineer, one is Military Police and one is Chemical. Do you think the Engineer unit tries to do the mission of the MP unit? Does the Chemical unit attempt to do the EOD mission? The same is true of IO and Public Affairs. Their capabilities are different. Complimentary but different. This is exactly why we now teach much more about the non-kinetic fight in our professional schools, from the Basic Officer's Leadership Course (BOLC) forward and in every part of the NCO education system.

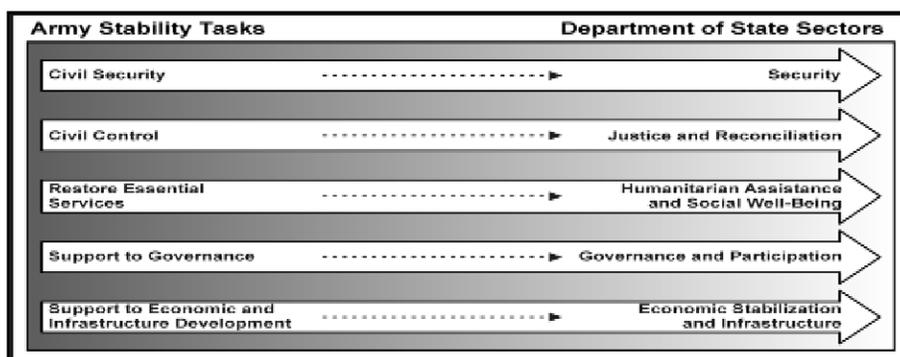
Goodfriend paused, looked around the table and then continued.

You all have the latest version of DA Pam 600-3 on your desktop and version 4 of FM 3-0 for reference. The CSA's memorandum of guidance is likewise your guide as we select these senior officers and civilians for command and key billets in our Army, DoD, and State. I expect that you will see varied backgrounds and experiences with no clear-cut career pattern that can be identified as a 'standard.' That is a good thing. These senior leaders are different from those like us, who still recall being told we needed to stay on only the operational path, to be an S-3 or an XO to succeed.

## A “Whole of Government” Approach

*“Within the context of current operations worldwide, **stability operations are often as important as—or more important than—offensive and defensive operations.**”*

*FM 3-0, Introduction*



“With that, ladies and gentlemen, let’s get to work.”

Board members nodded their agreement. They were there to determine the fully qualified and best qualified Army colonels (year groups 1990-1992) to be named to the more than 30 different commands and key billet positions available in FY15. There were commands available in Civil Affairs, Psyops, and IO. For the first time, this board would likewise consider Public Affairs colonels for the PA functional commands in all Army components. All functional areas also had selected key billets they had carefully designated over the past several years for priority fill.

Finally, the board would also select colonels for the available key Strategic Communications positions in the unified commands and joint task force organizations worldwide. Qualified officers from any of the above fields were eligible to compete.

They were also aware of the careful timing associated with each position turnover and the Senior Leader Development Office (SLDO) requirement for every colonel selected for command or a key billet at this level to attend the Non-Kinetic Commander's Pre-Command Course (NKC-PCC) at the DoD Center for Communications Excellence, at Fort Meade, MD. The center was established at Fort Meade in 2012 to take advantage of the aggregate experience and capabilities of the various commands and capabilities at Fort Meade. These include the Asymmetric Warfare Center, which served as an integrator for the Psyops and IO portion of the course, along with the First IO Command. DoD's Defense Information School (DINFOS), which taught the Strategic Communications, messaging and message integration, and professional ethics portions of the courses, and the Army Reserve's First Public Affairs Support Element (PASE) Command, which taught how to apply and integrate PA aspects of information to the overall information campaign.

As often happens during many boards, the staff had briefed board members on Monday that there would be some "special boards" for smaller groups of members to vote later in the week. On Thursday, after the voting on the main body of candidates had ended and the staff was reviewing the tally for ties to be broken and system accuracy, the 15 board members found that they had been broken into several smaller groups. The recorders instructed each group separately on their additional responsibilities.

### **Special Boards.**

One of those special boards, composed solely of general officer members, was charged with reviewing the files of those Public Affairs Officers who would be departing command or key billets in the summer of 2015 to determine the best officers to nominate for the key joint PA billets in OSD (Public Affairs) and in the unified commands and with the State Department. The unified command Public Affairs Director positions were all flag officers (07) and the Navy had occupied the majority of these jobs since their inception in 2012. While the jobs were flag billets, they were actually brevet promotions. An officer going to one of these jobs for a 3-year tenure would have the option of retiring at flag rank at the end of the tour or reverting to the grade of 06 in order to continue to serve. Many thought that Army officers had a very good chance of capturing at least four of the seven positions coming open in 2015.

Certainly those who were competitive for the positions believed that holding this joint job would place them in good stead for consideration for the position at the height of the Army's PA field, the Chief of Public Affairs. Beyond that, there were two new two-star PA positions in DoD, and, pending approval for FY16, a pinnacle three-star position as Commander of the Defense Media Activity and PDASD(PA).

Other specialty boards were considering IO colonels for select positions in the J-39 staffs of the unified commands and those with embassy or state department experience for key billets on J-5 staffs and within the POLAD offices of the unified commands.

Finally, there were also several special boards to select high performing Department of the Army civilians for certain designated positions determined key to developing strong Senior Executive Service (SES) candidates.<sup>4</sup> Serving Army SESs also participated in these boards as directed by the Civilian Senior Leader Management Office (CSLMO). The civilians competing on these boards were all volunteers for the fast track, nearly all had deployment experience and were resident SSC graduates. They had all signed mobility agreements at the beginning of their careers, and the Army's Civilian Talent Management Office (CTMO) managed their careers and schooling. There was particularly tough competition for the senior-level PA positions, and all of the civilians competing had signed mobility statements and agreements for short-term developmental assignments as available. They represented a young and aggressive career civilian population. Since the mass departure of career Army civilians in 2011 (popularly referred to as the BRAC Massacre),<sup>5</sup> the civilian component of the Army was still rebuilding. The civilian force of 2015 however was young, aggressive, innovative, and very committed to the ideal of government service.

A Joint Staff initiative likewise was beginning to mature. A number of GO/FO billets were interchangeable with SES Corps members, permitting the best qualified individual to be selected. This effort, initiated with a pilot study in 2012, was a great morale boost for the senior civilian leadership throughout the Department.

Three of the most visible positions in DoD's Strategic Communications field included the position of Chief of Staff to the DASD (PD) in USD(P), Director of Counter Terror Information Planning (CTIP) within the office of the ASD for Homeland Defense (HD), Director of Strategic Outreach for the Secretary of the Army, and Director of Strategic Communications in OSD(PA). Previously one had been filled by career diplomat from the State Department. Other coveted positions included Deputy Director of Strategic Communications at the National Security Council (NSC), Communications Director at the Counter Terror Center (CTC), and the new communications director positions added to the Ambassadors' country teams in over 25 countries and whose development had been designated as vital to America's interests.

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<sup>4</sup> Twenty positions were designated as key Army Communications Enterprise Positions (ACEP) billets in 2012.

<sup>5</sup> The "BRAC Massacre," also known as the "BRAC ATTACK" refers to the exodus of thousands of Army civilians from the rolls as the physical moves required by the Base Realignment and Closure Act of 2005 occurred in 2010-11. June 30, 2010, was termed "Black Friday," since on this day over 25,000 Army civilians alone left government service, swelling the retirement rolls.

Information Tasks

“In modern conflict, information has become as important as lethal action in determining the outcome of operations. Every engagement, battle, and major operation requires complementary information operations to both inform a global audience and to influence audiences within the operational area . . .”

FM 3-0, Chapter 4

<i>Task</i>	<i>Information Engagement</i>	<i>Command and Control Warfare</i>	<i>Information Protection</i>	<i>Operations Security</i>	<i>Military Deception</i>
<i>Intended Effects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform and educate internal and external publics</li> <li>• Influence the behavior of target audiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degrade, disrupt, destroy and exploit enemy command and control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect friendly computer networks and communication means</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deny vital intelligence on friendly forces to hostile collection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confuse enemy decision-makers</li> </ul>

**Public Affairs Career Field Redesign, 2009-2012.**

There was a major emphasis on giving serious consideration to developing the non-kinetic fight, beginning with the administration’s focus on fiscal restraint for military spending in 2009. In some areas this translated into a major redesign of several career fields. While information operations had developed into a robust Army capability during the years 2004-07, public affairs appeared to lag behind. The specialty itself had become even narrower during the preceding decade and produced officers who often appeared more rigidly identified with the function of conducting media relations and writing sluggish press releases, than with overall coordination of internal and public information activities.

The redesign:

- Established PA functional commands in each component to improve training readiness and mission alignment with DoD and Army. Because the size of the force had long meant PA units were “under the radar,” the change also facilitated command and control, equipping and manning.
- Increased the number and capabilities of Army PA NCOs to enable them to have leadership and career broadening opportunities. The NCO corps had been decimated in the 1980s and had never recovered from the grade cuts.
- Established 10 additional CSM positions in the PA field to support the new commands and provide senior NCO leadership to the field. The force structure bill payer for this, and the NCO Corps growth was the U.S. Army Field Band. The band was quietly disestablished in 2010 and its absence went largely unremarked across the Army.

- Enhanced the career opportunities and talent development and management for Army civilian public affairs professionals.
- Established the Public Affairs Branch, to enhance its capabilities and to standardize the training and education opportunities for Army soldiers, NCOs, and officers with that of the other services.
- Modified career paths to develop more broadly capable public affairs officers, competitive with those who served in the information operations field.
- Standardized the communications graduate degree program with that of the other services. This was done to enable Army public affairs officers and civilians to obtain a 1-year graduate degree in either (a) Mass Communications Management, or (b) Strategic Communication. The Navy was designated to serve as executive agent for officer education, based on its success at San Diego State University. NCOs could likewise pursue a 1-year graduate degree in Convergence Communications or New Media. The Air Force was selected to manage enlisted education for the services and based its programs on the success at Syracuse University.
- Restored emphasis on professional Training with Industry programs, as a follow on to deployment experiences, at the grades of 04/SFC/YA-3 in all components.
- Moved the proponent for Combat Camera from the Army Signal Corps to the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, bringing it structurally in line with how the other services operate. Command and operational oversight for Combat Camera operations in all services transferred to the Defense Media Activity Command in 2011.
- Merged the two public affairs enlisted specialties into one, a general communications specialist, one who could write, speak, photograph, record, and transmit information, using varied multimedia. This merger simplified training in convergence communications and strengthened skills in new media.<sup>6</sup>
- Changed course curriculum in the PA, IO, CA, and FAO fields to include a basic awareness and understanding of each of the other areas as complementary and supporting elements of the non-kinetic fight.

## **The Way Ahead or Back to the Future II.**

Friday morning at 10:00 a.m., Human Resources Command (HRC) Commander General Bestfriend entered the board room to conduct the report-out and to adjourn the board. All of the board members expressed their confidence in the board process and in the fairness of the selections and results. In open discussion they commented on several other points that they wanted to emphasize to the Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Army. First, they could see that the Public Affairs branch establishment and career field

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<sup>6</sup> The changes in combat camera and the merger of enlisted specialties reduced the training burden on the Defense Information School (DINFOS) and permitted the curricula to support all services equally. This freed up intellectual capital and following accreditation in 2010, the School's Interactive New Media Department became a state of the art reference in university mass communications programs nationwide.

redesign was bearing fruit. Officers were broadly skilled, deeply experienced, and extremely competitive for the available communications enterprise command and key billet positions. Several remarked on the integration of civilian talent into the pool of senior leaders as a major factor in increasing overall career field professionalism and as a testament to the diverse capabilities of the civilian workforce. A final point was delivered by the board president.

I was most reassured to see how the increase in professional education on the non-kinetic fight continues to pay benefits for the entire communications enterprise, and really for our Army as a whole. The internal competition is virtually nil and the cross fertilization between those with attaché experience to those who have experience in State, or tactical IO operations, or with the Armed Forces Network news . . . well, it is coming together. I am most encouraged.

The strong network of our communicators and their abilities *as a team* to shape a public discourse about our Army is a testament to their creativity, ability to operate comfortably with a variety of social media and their willingness to work together as a combined information team. I read about some truly remarkable achievements in the evaluation reports of these officers and civilians. I am confident we are moving forward.

And so it was. So it must be.

## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS 06 COMMANDS AND KEY BILLETS<sup>7</sup>**

First Public Affairs Command (USAR)

Second Public Affairs Command (AC)

Third Public Affairs Command (ARNG)

Commander, Joint Public Affairs Support Element (Joint, nominative)

Commander, Defense Information School (Joint)

Director, Army Public Affairs Center

Commander, Defense Media Activity Command (Army Element)

Director of Media Relations, OSD(PA) (Joint, nominative)

## **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS 06 COMMANDS AND KEY BILLETS<sup>8</sup>**

Director Strategic Outreach, Office of the CSA

Chief of Staff to the DASD(PD)

NSC Deputy Director of Communications

CTC Director of Communication

Unified Command Deputy Director of SC

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<sup>7</sup> Not all inclusive.

<sup>8</sup> Not all inclusive. More continue to be developed as the information career field.

## 2015 ACRONYMS

ACCP	Army Communications Enterprise Positions
AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
ASD (HD)	Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense
BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure
CIT	Combined Information Team
CTIP	Counter Terror Information Planning
CSLMO	Civilian Senior Leader Management Office
CMF	Career Management Field
CONUS	Continental United States
CTMO	Civilian Talent Management Office
DASD(PD)	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Diplomacy
DASD(PA)	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs
DINFOS	Defense Information School
DMAC	Defense Media Activities Command
HRC	Human Resources Command
IO	Information Operations
MPD	Military Support to Public Diplomacy
NKE	Non-Kinetic Effects
NKC-PCC	Non-Kinetic Commander's Pre-Command Course
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PDASD(PA)	Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs

PSYOPS	Psychological Operations
SLDO	Senior Leader Development Office
SES	Senior Executive Service
USD(P)	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

**2015 COMBINED INFORMATION TEAM CAREER DEFINITIONS  
BOARD MEMBER REFERENCE CARD**

Strategic Communication: (DoD) Focused U.S. Government processes and efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable to advance national interests and objectives through use of coordinated information, themes, plans, programs, and actions synchronized with other elements.

Public Affairs: (Joint) Those public information, command information, and community relations activities directed toward both the external and internal publics with interest in the Department of Defense.

Information Operations: (DoD) The integrated employment of the core capabilities of Electronic Warfare, Computer Network Operations, Psychological Operations, military Deception and Operations Security, in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp adversarial human and automated decisionmaking while protecting our own.

Psychological Operations: (DoD) Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives.

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