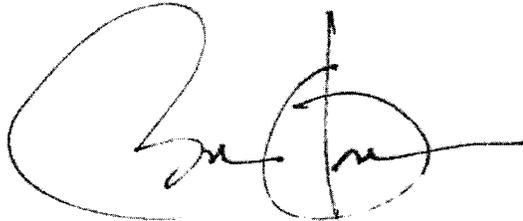


THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. President:

Pursuant to section 1055 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, I am providing a report on my Administration's comprehensive interagency strategy for public diplomacy and strategic communication of the Federal government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Gates", written in a cursive style.

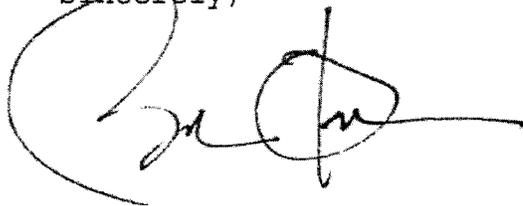
The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Dear Madam Speaker:

Pursuant to section 1055 of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009, I am providing a report on my Administration's comprehensive interagency strategy for public diplomacy and strategic communication of the Federal government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be Barack Obama's signature, written over the word "Sincerely,".

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-0508

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Purpose of Report

The Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 requires the President to submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on a comprehensive interagency strategy for public diplomacy and strategic communication.

Executive Summary

Across all of our efforts, effective strategic communications are essential to sustaining global legitimacy and supporting our policy aims. Aligning our actions with our words is a shared responsibility that must be fostered by a culture of communication throughout the government. We must also be more effective in our deliberate communication and engagement, and do a better job understanding the attitudes, opinions, grievances, and concerns of peoples -- not just elites -- around the world. Doing so is critical to allow us to convey credible, consistent messages, develop effective plans and to better understand how our actions will be perceived.

Our study has revealed the need to clarify what strategic communication means and how we guide and coordinate our communications efforts. In this report, we describe "strategic communication" as the synchronization of our words and deeds as well as deliberate efforts to communicate and engage with intended audiences. We also explain the positions, processes, and interagency working groups we have created to improve our ability to better synchronize words and deeds, and better coordinate communications and engagement programs and activities. These changes are already producing visible results; however, we still have much ground to cover.

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. This process includes an interagency working group tasked to develop short-, medium-, and long-term options for addressing issues pertaining to budgets, personnel, and future programs and activities.

Defining Strategic Communication

Over the last few years, the term "strategic communication" has become increasingly popular. However, different uses of the term "strategic communication" have led to significant confusion. As a result, we believe it is necessary to begin this report by clarifying what we mean by strategic communication. By "strategic communication(s)" we refer to: (a) the synchronization of words and deeds and how they will be perceived by selected audiences, as well as (b) programs and activities deliberately aimed at communicating and engaging with intended audiences, including those implemented by public affairs, public diplomacy, and information operations professionals.

- Synchronization. Coordinating words and deeds, including the active consideration of how our actions and policies will be interpreted by public audiences as an organic part of decision-making, is an important task. This understanding of strategic communication is driven by a recognition that what we do is often more important than what we say because actions have communicative value and send messages. Achieving strategic communication, in this sense, is a shared responsibility. It requires fostering a culture of communication that values this type of synchronization and encourages decision-makers to take the communicative value of actions into account during their decision-making. The most senior levels of government must advocate and implement a culture of communication that is reinforced through mechanisms and processes.
- Deliberate Communication and Engagement. The United States Government has a wide range of programs and activities deliberately focused on understanding, engaging, informing, influencing, and communicating with people through public affairs, public diplomacy, information operations and other efforts.

To be clear, we are not creating or advocating for the creation of new terms, concepts, organizations, or capabilities. We are, for the purposes of this report, clarifying different aspects of strategic communication. In short, we have taken steps to reinforce the importance of synchronizing words and deeds while simultaneously establishing coordination mechanisms and processes to improve the United States Government's ability to deliberately communicate and engage with intended audiences. The steps we have taken have already borne fruit, but both of

these tasks are complex and we acknowledge that more remains to be done.

Strategy for Synchronization

Synchronizing deeds and words to advance United States Government interests, policies, and objectives is an important part of effective strategic communication and strategy more generally. In the past, the burden for synchronizing words and deeds has often been placed on the shoulders of the communications community, which only controls and executes a subset of the capabilities and activities that need to be synchronized. A key lesson we have learned is that actions well beyond those managed by the communications community have communicative value and impact.

Every action that the United States Government takes sends a message. Synchronization is therefore a shared responsibility that begins with senior leaders and specifically Department-level leadership. They must foster a "culture of communication" that recognizes and incentivizes the importance of identifying, evaluating, and coordinating the communicative value of actions as a proactive and organic part of planning and decision-making at all levels. The communications community supports senior leaders by leading the development of mechanisms and processes that enable and sustain synchronization. These mechanisms include processes designed to: ensure strategic goals and messages are well understood at all levels; raise awareness about the communicative impact of decisions and actions; emphasize the importance of considering such impacts proactively; and ensure that forums exist for deliberating these impacts on high-priority issues and coordinating actions with deliberate communication and engagement.

Strategy for Deliberate Communication and Engagement

Deliberate communication and engagement with intended audiences is an important part of the United States Government's ability to meet its national security goals and objectives. Programs and activities focused on communicating and engaging with the public need to be strategic and long-term, not just reactive and tactical. They should also focus on articulating what the United States is for, not just what we are against. For example, our efforts to communicate and engage with Muslim communities around the world must be defined primarily by a

focus on mutual respect and mutual interest, even as we continue to counter violent extremism by focusing on discrediting and delegitimizing violent extremist networks and ideology.

Deliberate communication also helps establish the strategic messages against which our actions are often judged by the public, and deliberate engagement helps identify how our actions are being interpreted and perceived. It is vital that the United States is not focused solely on one-way communication, which is why we have consciously emphasized the importance of "engagement" -- connecting with, listening to, and building long-term relationships with key stakeholders.

The communications community is comprised of a wide variety of organizations and capabilities including, but not limited to: public affairs (PA), public diplomacy (PD), military information operations (IO), and defense support to public diplomacy (DSPD). Planning, development, and execution of engagement programs and activities need to be better coordinated, integrated, and driven by research, information, and intelligence. Steps are being taken to do this, including by specifying roles and responsibilities within departments and across the interagency, piloting an interagency planning process for key policy priorities, and strengthening the coordination of and improving access to relevant research, information, and intelligence.

Interagency Planning and Coordination

Strategic Planning

Across the United States Government, there are a variety of perspectives, models, and approaches used in strategic planning. Over the past year, the interagency communications community has been piloting an intuitive planning process for national-level priorities that attempts to bridge the individual processes of departments and agencies and allows both traditional and non-traditional partners to voluntarily bring their respective capabilities to affect common objectives. This process will be utilized for planning communication and engagement regarding strategic policy priorities. We will continue to monitor, evaluate, and adjust this planning process as necessary.

National-level Interagency Coordination

Interagency Policy Committees (IPCs) led by the NSS coordinate the development and implementation of national security policies by multiple agencies of the United States Government. The Strategic Communication IPC is the main forum for interagency deliberation and coordination of national security policy

relating to strategic communications issues. The Strategic Communication IPC also provides policy analysis for consideration by more senior committees of the NSC/HSC system and ensures timely responses to decisions made by the President. The Strategic Communication IPC forms Sub-IPCs as required.

Operational-level Interagency Coordination

The Country Team and the Joint Interagency Coordination Group are the two standing interagency coordination bodies at the operational level. One holds operational responsibility, while the second serves to advise planning efforts.

- The Country Team, headed by the chief of the U.S. diplomatic mission, is the United States Government's senior coordinating and supervising body in-country. Achieving strategic communication, including through synchronization of words and deeds, as well as the effective execution of deliberate communication and engagement, is the responsibility of the Chief of Mission.
- Joint Interagency Coordination Groups (JIACG), established at each Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) headquarters, coordinate with United States Government civilian agencies to conduct operational planning. JIACGs support day-to-day planning at the GCC headquarters, and advise planners regarding civilian agency operations, capabilities, and limitations. While the JIACG has no operational authority, it does provide perspective in the coordinated use of national power and can serve as a referral resource for military planners seeking information and input from communication practitioners in theater or at the national-level.

Information, Intelligence, Research and Analysis Support to Deliberate Communication and Engagement

Information, intelligence, research, and analysis are key enablers for policy development and strategic planning. Various agencies and offices across the United States Government support efforts to communicate and engage with publics by conducting research and analysis on foreign public opinion, key audiences, the most effective mechanisms for communicating with and engaging them, and violent extremist communications and messages when appropriate. However, these efforts should be better coordinated and easier to access, especially in the field. The United States Government's efforts to communicate and engage with foreign publics should be shaped by information, research, and analysis about key audiences.

Priorities for Strategic Communication

Although the United States Government carries out deliberate communication and engagement worldwide, the priorities for our communication and engagement efforts are the same as overall national security priorities. Communication and engagement, like all other elements of national power, should be designed to support policy goals as well as to achieve specific effects to include:

- Foreign audiences recognize areas of mutual interest with the United States;
- Foreign audiences believe the United States plays a constructive role in global affairs; and
- Foreign audiences see the United States as a respectful partner in efforts to meet complex global challenges.

Our communication and engagement with foreign audiences should emphasize mutual respect and mutual interest. The United States should articulate a positive vision, identifying what we are for, whenever possible, and engage foreign audiences on positive terms. At the same time, our countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts should focus more directly on discrediting, denigrating, and delegitimizing al-Qa'ida and violent extremist ideology.

Resources

It is essential that we balance and optimize investment across the communications community. Resource decisions and applications must be shaped by national priorities and be consistent with existing roles and missions and the capacity of each stakeholder to effectively execute validated tasks and programs. Accountability, assessment, and reporting are critical aspects of our newly established planning process to ensure all major deliberate communication and engagement efforts are coordinated and effective.

We are aware of concerns that the resources for our efforts need to be "re-balanced" according to established roles and responsibilities. An interagency working group has been formed to evaluate military communication and engagement programs, activities, and investments to identify those that may be more appropriately funded or implemented by civilian departments and agencies, especially outside theaters of conflict. This review will be framed by four inter-related elements key to the success

of "re-balancing" our programs: (a) how best to allocate financial resources; (b) how quickly to streamline or eliminate programs to reduce unnecessary duplication; (c) how to ensure we preserve important military communication and engagement capacities; and, (d) how best to expedite revitalizing and strengthening civilian department and agency capabilities, both qualitatively and quantitatively, to enable them to effectively execute these programs and activities.

Roles and Responsibilities

National Security Staff

The Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications (DNSA/SC) serves as the National Security Advisor's principal advisor for strategic communications. The Senior Director for Global Engagement (SDGE) is the principal deputy to the DNSA/SC. Together, they are responsible for ensuring that (a) the message-value and communicative impact of actions are considered during decision-making by the National Security Council and Homeland Security Council, (b) the mechanisms to promote strategic communication are in place within the National Security Staff (NSS), and (c) similar mechanisms are developed across the interagency. The DNSA/SC and SDGE are also responsible for guiding and coordinating interagency deliberate communication and engagement efforts, and execute this responsibility through the NSS Directorate for Global Engagement (NSS/GE) and through the Interagency Policy Committee (IPCs) on Strategic Communication, which they chair.

Department of State

The Department of State carries out Public Diplomacy as an essential part of foreign policy. Public Diplomacy (PD) within the State Department is led by the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (R). The Department of State distinguishes between Public Affairs, which includes outreach to domestic publics, and Public Diplomacy (PD), which seeks to promote the national interest of the United States through understanding, engaging, informing, and influencing foreign publics, and by promoting mutual understanding between the people of the United States and people from other nations around the world.

- The Office of the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs engages functional and regional

bureaus within the Department of State to ensure coordination and integration between policy, communication, and engagement objectives.

- The Under Secretary's Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (R/PPR) provides long-term strategic planning and performance measurement capability for public diplomacy and public affairs programs. The Under Secretary's Policy Planning Staff oversees implementation of the Department's global strategic plan for public diplomacy and devises plans for discrete events such as Presidential speeches and initiatives and long-term engagement on such areas as climate change, non-proliferation, and global health issues. To achieve these objectives, R/PPR ensures coordination among global PD resources, including the Bureaus of International Information Programs (IIP), Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), and Public Affairs (PA), and Public Affairs Officers at overseas missions.
- The Global Strategic Engagement Center (GSEC) supports interagency efforts on global engagement and strategic communication. GSEC represents the State Department in the coordination of communications and engagement planning and activities by contributing to the discussions in, disseminating the decisions of, and executing projects as requested by the IPCs for Global Engagement and Strategic Communication. GSEC promulgates interagency decisions and objectives to relevant bureaus and offices in the Department of State and connects decision-makers with government-wide expertise on strategic communication.
- The Public Diplomacy Office Director (PDOD) is the senior U.S.-based PD official in each geographic regional bureau and the International Organizations bureau of the Department of State. PDODs are responsible for integrating communication into decision-making and helping to ensure policies and plans developed at the bureau-level are coordinated with deliberate messaging and engagement programs and activities. PDODs manage and supervise the operations of their respective bureau's PD office. They work closely with Public Affairs Officers overseas, the regional bureau leadership, other bureaus, and the Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs to develop PD strategies for their regions and formulate and implement PD initiatives. In conjunction with their bureau Front Office and Executive Office, PDODs

propose and manage regional PD budgets and the assignments process for staffing PD positions in the bureaus and the field. The PDOD reports to the bureau Deputy Assistant Secretary designated to oversee PD and PA.

Department of Defense

The Department of Defense (DOD) is a key contributor to our communication and engagement efforts. The key elements of DOD involved include, but are not limited to: information operations (IO), defense support to public diplomacy (DSPD), public affairs (PA), and civil affairs (CA) -- all working together to accomplish military objectives that support national objectives.

- The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)) is the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense for all matters on the formulation of national security and defense policy, and the integration and oversight of DoD policy and plans to achieve national security objectives.
- The Senior Advisor to the USD(P) advises the USD(P) on strategic communication and heads the OUSD(P) Global Strategic Engagement Team (GSET). This team is tasked with facilitating the strategic communication process within OUSD(P) and liaising with other DOD components as appropriate.
- Primary responsibility for Defense Support for Public Diplomacy is placed with the appropriate regional and functional offices within OUSD(P).
- OUSD(P) DASD for Plans has the primary responsibility, in close coordination with CUSD(P) GSET and OASD(PA) for ensuring that guidance for strategic communication is included in strategic planning guidance documents, such as the GEF and Global Force Posture, and for reviewing Combatant Command plans directed by the GEF to ensure strategic communication considerations have been integrated in the plans.
- Within OUSD(P), the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict and Interdependent Capabilities (ASD (SO/LIC&IC)) serves as the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense on Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict

matters. The ASD (SO/LIC&IC) exercises policy oversight for Psychological Operations (PSYOP) activities within the DoD, including Military Information Support Teams. ASD (SO/LIC&IC) is responsible for development, coordination, and oversight of the implementation of policy and plans for DoD participation in all United States Government combating terrorism activities, including programs designed to counter violent extremism. The ASD (SO/LIC&IC) coordinates closely with the OUSD(P) GSET.

- The USD(I) is the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense for Information Operations (IO). DOD Directive 3600.01 defines Information Operations as "the integrated employment of the core capabilities of Electronic Warfare (EW), Computer Network Operations (CNO), Psychological Operations (PSYOP), Military Deception (MILDEC), and Operations Security (OPSEC), in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities, to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own." The USD(I) exercises authority for oversight of IO in coordination with the USD(P) and other OSD offices. OUSD(I) also works with the Military Departments to develop an Information Operations Career Force. Information operations personnel are key participants in the strategic communication process at Combatant Commands and across the Department.
- The ASD(PA) is the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense for communications activities including, but not exclusively, DOD news media relations, public liaison, and public affairs. ASD(PA) conducts short-, mid-, and long-term communication planning in support of policy objectives. These plans are coordinated extensively across the Department, and with interagency partners as applicable. ASD(PA) also coordinates media engagement and prepares speeches and talking points for the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and OSD principals, provides media and audience analysis for use by DOD components, and approves public affairs guidance for the Combatant Commands and other DOD components.
- The Joint Staff contributes to the communications enterprise at many levels. The Current Operations Directorate (J-3) provides Information Operations (IO)/Psychological Operations (PSYOP) expertise and advice to leadership to achieve national, strategic, and theater military objectives. The Plans and Policy Directorate

(J-5), in conjunction with the Combatant Commands and Services, develops policy guidance, strategic plans, and enduring communications themes and narratives for senior leadership, based upon policy guidance and directives from OSD. The J-5 also serves as the Joint Staff representative in the interagency process.

- The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Public Affairs Office (CJCS PAO) is the principal staff assistant and advisor to the CJCS for news media relations, public liaison, and public affairs.
- DOD's Global Engagement Strategy Coordination Committee (GESCC), created in June 2009, is evolving into the central body for facilitating the strategic communication integrating process within the Department. The GESCC meets on a biweekly basis to identify emerging issues, exchanges information on key actions being worked across the staffs (including strategic communication studies, reports and long-term planning documents), and facilitates the proper integration and deconfliction of DOD activities. The GESCC is co-chaired by OUSD(P) and OASD(PA), and brings together all of the key DoD offices mentioned above (OUSD(P), OASD(PA), OUSD(I), Joint Staff). Other regular GESCC attendees include representatives from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology & Logistics. Other DOD offices, including Combatant Command representatives, are invited to participate in GESCC meetings and GESCC representatives and also work closely with the Department of State's Global Strategic Engagement Center.

Broadcasting Board of Governors

The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) is responsible for non-military, international broadcasting sponsored by the United States Government, including the Voice of America (VOA), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), Radio and TV Martí, and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN)—Radio Sawa and Alhurra Television. BBG broadcasters distribute programming in 60 languages to an estimated weekly audience of 175 million people via radio, TV, the Internet and other new media. The BBG works to serve as an example of a free and professional press, reaching a worldwide audience with news, information, and relevant discussions. An independent federal agency, the BBG is headed by a nine-person bipartisan board that

serves as a firewall against political interference in the journalistic product. The Secretary of State delegates her ex officio seat to the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

United States Agency for International Development

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) works to inform recipients and partners of U.S. humanitarian and development aid initiatives. USAID directly engages with local stakeholders as part of development and foreign assistance activities. USAID also designs and implements communications capacity building programs including infrastructure development and media training.

Intelligence Community

In its role as the head of the Intelligence Community (IC), the Office of the Director for National Intelligence (ODNI) is responsible for coordinating the efforts of intelligence agencies to conduct research and analysis on foreign public opinion, communication modes and mechanisms, and violent extremist communication as appropriate.

National Counterterrorism Center

The Global Engagement Group in the Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning at the National Counterterrorism Center coordinates, integrates, and synchronizes United States Government efforts to counter violent extremism and deny terrorists the next generation of recruits. The Global Engagement Group operates in accordance with Section 1021 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act and the direction provided by the National Implementation Plan. Utilizing these unique authorities, NCTC often serves as the interagency coordinator for counterterrorism-related deliberate communications and engagement planning efforts at the request of the SC IPC, NSS, and individual departments and agencies.

Other Departments and Agencies

Other departments and agencies with specific subject matter expertise and related communication and engagement capabilities may be asked to participate in communication and engagement strategy development and implementation as needed.

Measuring Success

It is important to the effectiveness of our programs that we develop the capacity to measure success and emphasize accountability. Measuring the results of a plan or activity requires the identification of indicators for the plan or activity's investment, products, and outcomes. These indicators are evidence of the activity's achievements and can be used to build assessments of costs and benefits over time. There are two types of indicators. Measures of Performance (MOP) show the amount of investment compared to the quantity of product produced by an activity. Meanwhile, Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) give some insight into whether a plan, program, or activity is achieving the desired impact.

In measuring success, the greater emphasis should always be on obtaining valid, accurate measures of effectiveness, since they help determine which efforts deserve continued funding; which efforts should be used as templates for future efforts; and which efforts should be adjusted or even abandoned. Programs that are meeting performance metrics but are not having the desired effect should be re-evaluated. In choosing the most appropriate indicators, departments and agencies should consider all relevant subject-matter expertise and should involve all relevant stakeholders. Program development should also include specific budgeting and resourcing for measurement activities that are needed to evaluate success.

There are difficult challenges to measuring the success of communication and engagement efforts. First, these efforts often target audiences' perceptions, which are not easily observed and, therefore, not easily measured. While there are some methods of measuring success, such as opinion polling, these methods are subject to many different types of uncertainty and margins of error and, therefore, cannot accurately predict behavior. Second, it is difficult to isolate the effect of communication and engagement from other influences including other policy decisions. Lastly, communication and engagement effects are long-term and require persistent measurement. Because of these challenges, it is best to develop phased, layered plans for measuring success that are specific to a given plan or program.

Assessment of the Need for an Independent, Not-for-Profit Organization

The National Security Staff currently sees no need to establish a new, independent, not-for-profit organization responsible for providing independent assessment and strategic guidance on strategic communication and public diplomacy, as recommended by the Task Force on Strategic Communication of the Defense Science Board. At this time, the existing enterprise either already meets or is working to meet the recommended purposes of the organization prescribed by the Task Force as follows:

- There are a variety of offices across the United States Government that provide an abundance of information and analysis on a regular basis to civilian and military decision-makers on global public opinion; the role of culture, values, and religion in shaping human behavior; media trends and influences on audiences; and information technologies. However, this information and analysis could be better coordinated and shared across the community. An additional entity would only produce more information and analysis to be coordinated and made accessible. The Strategic Communication IPC has formed a Sub-IPC on Information, Research, and Analysis to better coordinate and aggregate relevant information and analysis, and develop mechanisms for improving access across departments and agencies.
- As stated previously, an interagency process for communication and engagement planning was formalized and approved by the Strategic Communication IPC in November 2009. This process allows the interagency to develop strategies to address current and emergent areas of national security concern.

The ability to establish public-private partnerships is a critical issue. However, at this time, there are a number of key pending reviews, including the Presidential Study Directive on Development and the Department of State's Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, that are examining the issue of public-private partnerships. As a result, we do not believe this report is the correct mechanism for addressing the United States Government's abilities to form public-private partnership.