Strategic Communications

an Introduction

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Agenda

1. Introduction to the Centre
2. Strategic Communications
3. Information Confrontation
4. Main Projects
Introduction to the Centre
NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence

- Established by Latvia on 1 January 2014
- Accredited by NATO on 1 September 2014
- Member nations:
  - Estonia
  - Finland
  - Germany
  - Italy
  - Latvia
  - Lithuania
  - Netherlands
  - Poland
  - UK
Our Mission

is to contribute to the Alliance’s communication processes by providing

• comprehensive analyses,
• timely advice and
• practical support
to the Alliance.
Our strength...

...is built by multinational and cross-sector participants from the civilian and military, private and academic sectors and the usage of modern technologies, virtual tools for analyses, research and decision making.
Strategic Communications
How Do We Communicate?

- Verbal and **non-verbal**
- Body language
- **Both humans and organizations**

> "One cannot, not communicate!"

Paul Watzlawick

1921—2007

Austrian-American family therapist, psychologist, communications theorist, and philosopher
One cannot not communicate

- Presence – Posture – Profile
  - From tactical to strategic level
  - Tactical actions with strategic effect
Words and Deeds

All actions, lethal and non-lethal, have an effect on the information environment, either in a positive manner, in closing the say-do gap, or negatively by contradicting the message to audiences within and outside the Joint Operations Area.

NATO Strategic Communications Handbook

Our adversaries will always exploit situations when
our words are contradicting our actions!

vs.
What is so unique in Information environment (comparing with 1990)?

- Internet
- Cell phone
- Social media
- Smart phones
Information Environment #2

- Any decision or action can be discussed globally, instantly
- Now everybody has chance to be heard (influence the governance)
- Anybody can comment on anything
  - No gatekeepers anymore (*death of expertise?*)
  - Trolling
  - With what intent?
Information Environment and military

- All our mistakes in the missions will be immediately known back at home
  - and often interpreted differently from the mission area...
- Can we just forbid?
Definitions (StratCom)

The **coordinated and appropriate** use of NATO communications activities and capabilities – Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs (PA), Military Public Affairs, Information Operations (Info Ops) and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), as appropriate – **in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities**, and in order to advance NATO’s aims

PO (2009) 0141, 29 SEP 2009
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NATO StratCom

- The purpose of NATO StratCom is to:
  - facilitate the coordination between the information disciplines
  - throughout all levels,
  - both horizontally and vertically
  - synchronise information disciplines with manoeuvre operations
  - in order to ensure clear, credible, and timely messaging aligned with the NATO narrative

- StratCom is process manager, thus requiring supporting staff and structure to ensure the process stays on track

- StratCom as a mind-set should promote broader understanding of communication
  - One cannot not communicate...
Narrative Led Operations...
Strategy and Narrative Implementation and Execution
Information Confrontation
Information Confrontation!

Just some examples for nowadays threats
Internet Trolling

Trolling

• “Natural” net phenomena
• Non-ideological
• Purpose – emotional attack

Hybrid-trolling

• Propaganda tool
• Political/military aim driven
• Diverse agenda
Internet Trolling

Trolling “role models”
- “Blame USA” conspiracy troll
- “Bikini troll”
- Aggressive troll
- “Wikipedia” troll
- Troll “with attachment”

Translation: very interesting – experts try to cheat normal people, telling that only Russia is guilty... [etc.]
Main conclusions:
- Russian trolling is identifiable - around 3% trolled web comments;
- Focus on political news (Ukraine, EU, USA);
- Latvian society overall resistant to trolling messages;
- Most vulnerable group: seniors (poor knowledge of Internet media);
- Most dangerous: less emotional trolling messages (links from Wikipedia, news sites)
ISIS uses slick marketing techniques, including this online magazine, to spread its message online.
Effects in Western Countries

• ISIS has been targeting Western recruits with social-media campaigns, slickly produced videos, and English-language publications.

• The Westerners joining the conflict are predominantly young men, though there are increasing reports of women and even children traveling to the region.
Main Projects
Main projects

- Russia was prepared to launch a new form of warfare in Ukraine (hybrid) where information campaign had the central role.
- Russia is heavily employing its on historical memory-based narrative.
- Intensive use of deception.
- Compatriots as a tool for Russian politics.

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Questions?!