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SHAPE.
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Perception becomes reality...

THE AIM:

• To put information strategy at the heart of all levels of policy, planning and implementation, and then, as a fully integrated part of the overall effort, ensure the development of practical, effective strategies that make a real contribution to success.

• Trying to shape the INFORMATION battlefield – the new frontline...
  ...matching actions and words
  ...recognising every action sends a message
  ...but actions don’t always speak for themselves and need shaping
  ...getting the operators to value AND USE information effects as naturally as artillery or airpower

• With soft power we live in a world of greys and probabilities, with no monopoly on power. We must **abandon the delusion of control for the reality of influence** - and adapt our systems and mindsets accordingly.
Perception becomes reality...

- A fragile peace deal
- 30 days to disarm
- Malign actors in government
- NATO force a last resort
- No-one disarms if they’re fighting
Perception becomes reality...

The STRATCOM MINDSET...success is in the mind

- If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.  
  ‘The Thomas theorem’. WI Thomas, 1923

- Machines don’t fight wars. Terrain doesn’t fight wars. Human’s fight wars. You must get into the minds of humans. That’s where the battles are won.

  Col John Boyd, USAF military theorist and thinker.

- Wars today cannot be won without media. (Media) is directed to the heart rather than the body. The weapon is directed to the body. If the heart is defeated the battle is won and body is defeated.

  Abdul Sattar Maiwand, administrator of the ‘Islamic Emirate Website’

- Winning the battle of perception is key...we win when the people decide we win.

  General Stan McChrystal, former ComISAF

- We are in a battle, and more than half of this battle is in the battlefield of the media. And we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma.

  Ayman al-Zawahiri, in a letter to al-Zarqawi

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The Media Challenge
- Speed
- Bad news
- Ubiquity
- Personalisation
- Attention span
+ social media!

The Insurgent
What can we learn?
- StratCom driven
- Fast
- Fluid and flexible
- Network based
- Cultural awareness
- Strong narrative
- Simple messages
- Sustained messages
- 24/7 on the ground

Mission command?
Perception becomes reality...

The five SSSss:
- Simplify
- Shorten
- Share
- Sustain
- Staff
Perception becomes reality...

1. SIMPLIFY !!!!! – don’t confuse complex with clever
Perception becomes reality...

1. SIMPLIFY !!!! – *don’t confuse complex with clever*

- If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.
- Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex. It takes a touch of genius to move in the opposite direction.” – Albert Einstein

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Perception becomes reality... SIMPLIFY

He and his team gathered in the boardroom to brief the new DVD-burning programme.

They'd brought page after page of mock-up screen shots showing the new program's various window and menu options.

Then Steve comes in. He picks up a marker and goes over to the whiteboard...

He draws a rectangle. “Here’s the new app. It’s got one window. You drag your video into the window. Then you click the button that says burn. That’s it.”

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Perception becomes reality...

2. SHORTEN

• “The length of this document defends it well against the risk of being read.”
  
  *Winston Churchill*

• “I didn’t have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead.”

  *Mark Twain*

3. SHARE

• All organisations need to be understaffed to the point where they will share not fight over turf and territory.

• “It takes a network to defeat a network”

  *General Stan McChrystal, former ComISAF*

• “A man can achieve an awful lot if he doesn’t mind who gets the credit.”

  *Anon*
Perception becomes reality...

4. SUSTAIN

• We didn’t fight the Vietnam war for nine years, we fought the same war for one year nine times.

  \[\text{Variously attributed (also to ISAF)}\]

• The ‘good ideas’ fairy is more visible than the worker bee but achieves less.

  \[\text{anon}\]

• “It's not that I'm so smart, it's just that I stay with problems longer.”

  \[\text{Albert Einstein}\]

• “Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration”

  \[\text{Thomas Edison}\]

5. STAFF

• If a task hasn’t got someone’s name against it then it won’t get done.

• “I learned later in life that we have a tendency to deal with any new situation by reorganising. Also I learned what a wonderful method this is to give an illusion of progress while in reality it creates chaos, inefficiency and demoralisation.”

  \[\text{Attributed to Gaius Petronius, Roman civil servant, 66AD}\]

• No structure however bad can entirely defeat good people, but no structure however good can make up for bad people. People first.
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Simplicity, enemy of complicated schemes. One should outbid the contrary...

RATHER THAN TRY TO OUTBID HIM IN THE COMPLICATIONS, ONE SHOULD SIMPLY APPLY THE PRINCIPLES OF MILITARY ETHICS:

1. To do everything through "channels" in order to expedite decisions;
2. When an enemy short-cuts to be taken, he must not be left out of the elaboration of the decision, but, to the contrary, he must be involved.

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(8) Be worried about the propriety of any action as is contemplated by the jurisdiction of the group or whether it might conflict with the policy of some higher command.
### Perception becomes reality...

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Perception becomes reality...

• A crowded info space: PD, PA, InfoOps, PSYOPS
  • Influencing v informing. Dogma v doctrine.

• ACO Directive 95-2:
  • “In cooperation with NATO HQ, the coordinated and appropriate use of Military PA, Info Ops and PSYOPS which, in concert with other military actions and following NATO political guidance, advances NATO’s aims and operations.”
  • Balances direction with enabling other HQs to exercise Mission Command

• Some Quotes:
  Such is the importance of information ...that, on occasion, policies and actions will even need to be adapted in response to the imperatives of StratCom.

At all levels within ACO StratCom is a Command responsibility and a Command Group function.... subordinate HQs are to create or adapt information coordination structures...appropriate to their particular circumstances.

StratCom...demands innovative working processes... flat, network structures...collaborative working through a Community of Interest approach....
Traditional coordination to ‘doctrine’
Trend in operational level coordination...
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- Classification
  - Go unclassified and use open source – use need NOT to know

- Location, location, location
  - Be close to the commander and the operators
  - Co-locate all the information actors
  - Get out of the bubble

- Working practices
  - Access to the boss
  - Conscious think long-term and big picture
  - Coordinating authority to go with responsibility
  - StratCom must be integral to targeting policy
  - Develop networks, socialise, open door policy
  - Encourage ideas and use outsiders
  - Mission command

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- Keep it simple, eg StratCom frameworks
  - Create ‘The Golden Thread’ to link top & bottom
  - Look for commonality/resonance
  - Broad enough for multiple audiences and actors, specific enough to be useful
  - A basis upon which to build and sustain

- Frameworks – not just messaging:
  - Objectives: What do we want to achieve?
  - Themes: What is the image we need to project?
    - Resolve, unity, clear strategy, realism and momentum
  - Focus Topics: What areas help us achieve the aim?
  - Co-ord: Who needs to be involved and how?

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Perception
“...the battlefield isn’t necessarily a field anymore. It’s in the minds of the people. It’s what they believe to be true that matters.”

Adm. Mike Mullen

Simplify
“Everything in war is simple, but the simplest thing is difficult... difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of friction... this is proof enough of the superiority of the simple and direct over the complex.”

Clausewitz, On War

Questions?