



COORDINATION MEETING ON STRATCOM TRAINING FOR UKRAINE, GEORGIA AND MOLDOVA

Background

1. As part of its on-going capacity building programme, NATO COE hosted a co-ordination meeting in Riga on 19 Feb 15. This document summarises those discussions and suggests the next steps to be taken by attendees.

Summary of discussions

2. The requirement for Strategic Communication (StratCom) capacity building differs in form, content and urgency country-by-country depending on the internal political situation (for example, Ukraine's needs are determined primarily by the ongoing crisis and Moldova's ability to engage actively is affected by the formation of the Government) as well as the level of the ambition for EU or NATO integration. There are however similar challenges which are shared by all 3 nations, chiefly the influence of Russian propaganda due to:

- Lack of effective cross-government StratCom
- Lack of strong national media
- Increased activity of Russian "agents of influence" (NGOs, media, political forces, church)

Challenges for Ukraine

3. The following specific Ukrainian challenges were identified:

- Inability of Ukrainian media to provide sufficient reach for the south/east of the country; vast reach of media originating from Russia; lack of strong Public Broadcaster
- Population located in the east and do not want/cannot leave the conflict zone
- Lack of state key leadership engagement to communicate in person with regional audiences
- Lack of ability of the state key leadership to raise the population's spirit despite repeated heavy losses in the east
- Lack of tangible results of either Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) or government reforms
- Lack of success stories
- Lack of trust of the population of the south/eastern regions in the central government
- Increased popularity of the Russian leadership among the population of the south/east of the country

4. From these issues specific Ukrainian StratCom problems were identified:

- Weak Public Affairs capacity in the ministries and weak organisational structure for StratCom implementation; no government “champion” for StratCom
- Lack of cross-government work and coordination
- Lack of understanding of the importance of national narrative
- Unclear role of the newly established Ministry of Information; lack of cooperation with other government structures
- Lack of existence and understanding of unified terminology on StratCom among government employees, politicians and media
- Lack of senior management and political level understanding of importance of StratCom and unwillingness to implement changes (however, mid-level management and working level are keen; in addition civic society has become strong and can be utilized for encouraging change)
- Target Audience Analysis (TAA) capability – critical
- Need to embed StratCom in National Security Strategy
- Need to develop local StratCom training capability for government structures

Challenges for Georgia

5. The following specific Georgian challenges were identified:

- Attempts to cut deeper into Georgia proper by the Russian occupying forces of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions
- Intensified cooperation agreements between Russia and Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions which are interpreted by Georgian government as de-facto annexation of these territories by Russia
- Instability in the region: Ukraine, North Caucasus, Nagorno Karabakh
- Increased anti-EU and anti-NATO propaganda efforts instigated by Russia via mass media and NGOs
- Ethnic minorities exposed to Russian language media (largely without proper Georgian language knowledge)
- Participation and human losses in ISAF mission
- Disappointment of the society with the Wales Summit in terms of MAP and necessity to explain benefits of the Substantial NATO Package for Georgia
- Promotion of Russian World values by the Orthodox church
- Terrorism and ISIS (incl. Georgian citizen involvement in ISIS)

6. From these issues specific Georgian StratCom problems were identified:

- Following Constitutional changes - lack of clarity on the division of power and responsibilities between President and Prime Minister, including subordinated agencies National Security Council and relatively newly established State Security and Crisis Management Council
- Insufficient organisational structure for StratCom implementation; no government “champion” for StratCom
- Lack of cross-government work and coordination
- Lack of transparency of government work (cooperation with civic society)
- Weak public diplomacy efforts of the current government
- Lack of analytical capability in the government structures

Challenges for Moldova

7. The specific challenges faced by Moldova are:
 - Crisis in Ukraine may result in Russian attempt to destabilize Odessa in order to cut through to Transdnistria
 - Inability of the central government to control Moldovan-Ukrainian border
 - Presence of Russian troops in Transdnistria with large potential to increase their numbers under the current agreement between Moldova and Russia
 - Russian propaganda influence on ethnic minorities (via mass media, NGOs and the Orthodox church)
 - Negative attitude of Russian-speakers to Euro-Atlantic integration of Moldova
 - Division in Government's executive branch which prevents speaking in one voice
8. From these issues specific Moldavian StratCom problems were identified:
 - Weak Public Affairs capacity in the ministries
 - Weak organisational structure for StratCom implementation; no government "champion" for StratCom
 - Lack of cross-government work and coordination
 - Role of National Security Council still under discussion

Next Steps

9. The afternoon session was chaired by Dr Steve Tatham, the contracted COE Subject Matter Expert for StratCom and TAA. In his briefing he suggested that delegations may wish to consider some self-help issues, specifically:
 - a. Commission in-country research to determine: metrics of Russian Propaganda penetration such as depth, breadth, believability, authority and alternatives. He expressed the view that it was easy to say that Russian propaganda was effective, detailed research may prove otherwise.
 - b. Lack of interest by organic media. Dr Tatham emphasised the need for enduring relationships of trust to be built between government media individuals and media; this worked best on a one-to-one level with both participants having both something to gain and loose.
 - c. Although not discussed at the time delegations may wish to consider hosting private briefings by independent external experts to organic national media on the Russian information threat to ensure that they are robust in fact checking.
 - d. He cautioned upon an over-reliance on polling noting that Polls are highly time dependent and can be influenced by the manner questioning was conducted or phrased.
 - e. He emphasised the absolute requirement for TAA. The Ukraine delegation reinforced this by stating that the TAA undertaken in Donetsk had elicited previously unknown information of strategic importance.
10. Meeting participants then discussed specific issues for assistance:
 - a. Mentoring. This issue was raised by Mr Mark Laity (SHAPE) and different ideas discussed. The principle seemed to gain some interest, and Ukrainian MOD receiving mentoring from JIAG (UK MOD) was mentioned as a past successful experience.

- b. Training in TAA. Director COE highlighted that COE would be hosting a Train-The-Trainer TAA course in June and July in Riga provided by IOTA-Global and Strategic Communication Laboratories Ltd (SCL) and that downstream COE staff hoped to deliver some TAA familiarisation to participants although this would not be a full training programme.
- c. Nations may wish to consider commissioning their own independent TAA arrangements in advance and NATO COE is happy to advise if required.
- d. Acceptance of Ukrainian, Georgian, Moldovan students on StratCom related courses at the NATO School or in the UK which may include Train the Trainer element.
- e. Capacity building via product oriented solutions. This idea was proposed by the manager of the NATO-Georgia Professional Development Programme and its idea is that training will be most effective if it is tailored around a specific Georgian output or goal.
- f. Awareness raising of senior and political leadership. The idea of very senior NATO / donor nation personnel explaining the importance of StratCom to delegate nations was discussed, the idea being to establish a senior champion / sponsor to promote StratCom activity.
- g. Improvement of skills and infrastructure. This may include external visits to NATO countries to view StratCom structures.
- h. Expert assessment of existing structure for StratCom implementation and development of recommendations for improvement through inwards visits by COE / donor nations.
- i. Experience sharing with Allies and Partner countries; Best practice meetings.
- j. Creation of online Community of Interest.
- k. Joint training or experience sharing with all 3 countries and foreign experts in Riga or elsewhere.
- l. More structured assistance through the Nordic-Baltic 8 initiative
- m. Support via NATO Professional Development Programmes.
- n. Structured participation in the StratCom Partnership project proposed by Ukraine.
- o. Support to local media and civic society – strengthening capability to provide viable information alternative, resistance to Russian propaganda, deconstruction of myths and lies.
- p. Increased knowledge of Russian information activities – strategy, tactics, tools. There is now a significant body of knowledge and research being undertaken into Ru Information activities and this could be collated into a corpus of reference texts for delegate nations.
- q. Capacity to manage critical incidents in information sphere through specialist training by COE / donor nations.

11. Using the Matrix below (page 6) delegate nations Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are invited to express their preference for further capacity building activities and return to the COE. In expressing an opinion or requirement nations are requested to provide as much additional information as possible. For example, it would be helpful to know the agencies and approximate number of people that you wish training to be delivered to and in what time frame. An appropriate point of national contact (name; telephone number and email address) would also be helpful for each request. Please provide as much information as possible. On receipt of this matrix COE will engage with donor organisations and plan training serials.

12. Recipients are requested to return the completed matrix **by Friday, 13 March, 2015** to the contact email addresses indicated below.

COE Points of Contact:

Contracted SME for StratCom and TAA

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DELEGATE NATION_____ (insert country)_____ TRAINING REQUIREMENTS MATRIX

	Proposed Activity	✓	Preferred Time for Activity (starting mid-April 2015)	Comments and additional details (please use additional pages if required)
A	Mentoring			
B	TAA Familiarisation Training			
C	Commission organic TAA			
D	Attendance on international courses			
E	Product Orientated Solution			
F	Senior Education			
G	Improvement of structures External visits			
H	Improvement of structures internal visits			
I	Experience sharing			
J	Online community of interest			
K	Joint training of several countries			
L	NB8 Format assistance			
M	NATO PDP Format assistance			
N	Ukraine StratCom partnership project			
O	Support to organic media			
P	Awareness of Russian Information Activities			
Q	Critical incident training			
R	Other(s) – please list by adding new rows			

When completed please return to: E.Lange-Ionathamishvili on Elina.Lange@stratcomcoe.org and copy to Dr S.Tatham on steve.tatham@iota-global.com

