

Campaign Plan 2.0:

Harnessing an SCP to Enhance the Chemical Corps RCP

By Lieutenant Colonel John D. Shank

The formalization of the Chemical Corps Regimental Campaign Plan (RCP) has done much for our strategic progress throughout the past 2 years. However, more could—and should—be done. To make the RCP more effective, we need to deliberately and systematically develop a supporting strategic communication plan (SCP).

An SCP can help set the conditions for success and arm organizations and individuals with the information needed to help the Chemical Corps achieve its RCP objectives. Organizations and individuals can assist by informing key decision-makers and helping to shape decisions that affect the Corps. An important component of an effective SCP is a matrix that shows key events and explains how those events interrelate and build upon one another throughout the course of the year. The desired end state for this coordinated and synchronized strategic communication effort would be an improvement in the ability of the Chemical Corps to accomplish the RCP objectives.

The RCP in Support of Guidance From Higher Levels

The RCP and supporting SCP must be nested in support of higher-level guidance and priorities provided by the President through the Department of Defense (DOD), the Chief of Staff of the Army, and the commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). During this fiscal year, all of these people and organizations have discussed areas and efforts that the Chemical Corps can—and should—support.

In the preamble to “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense,” President Barack Obama states, “As we end today’s wars and reshape our armed forces, we will ensure that our military is agile, flexible, and ready for

the full range of contingencies. In particular, we will continue to invest in the capabilities critical to future success, including . . . countering weapons of mass destruction [WMD] . . .”¹ In a supporting letter, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta indicates that the DOD strategic guidance will “preserve our ability to conduct the missions we judge most important to protecting core national interests” and one of the specific missions listed is “countering [WMD].”²

The DOD paper entitled “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense” discusses several priorities and efforts that the Chemical Corps should support via the RCP. The paper states that “In this resource-constrained era, we will work with [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] allies to develop a ‘smart defense’ approach to pool, share, and specialize capabilities as needed to meet 21st century challenges.”³ Countering WMD is a specialized capability that fits appropriately in this area. The paper also states that “The proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons technology has the potential to magnify the threats posed by regional state actors, giving them more freedom of action to challenge U.S. interests. Terrorist access to even simple nuclear devices poses the prospect of devastating consequences for the United States. Accordingly, the [DOD] will continue to enhance its capabilities, acting with an array of domestic and foreign partners, to conduct effective operations to counter the proliferation of WMD.” According to the section entitled “Primary Missions of the U.S. Armed Forces,” the joint force will need to recalibrate its capabilities and make selective additional investments to succeed in countering WMD. The paper indicates that “In partnership with other elements of the U.S. government, DOD will continue to invest in capabilities to detect, protect against, and respond to WMD use, should preventive measures fail.”

At the October 2011 Association of the U.S. Army convention, General Raymond T. Odierno, Chief of Staff of the Army, discussed several areas that could be supported by the RCP. One of the focus areas was the Army commitment to provide specialized, small-unit capabilities that could defeat potential adversaries. Most Chemical Corps capabilities fall within this area. General Odierno also discussed the need for the Army to be responsive toward combatant commanders and to engage with our allies while building partner capacity. These are areas that can be actively supported by the Chemical Corps. The questions are: Do TRADOC and the Army's senior leaders know how our Corps can assist in these efforts? And if not, how can we improve our strategic communication so that they understand our capability in helping to achieve Department of Army (DA) and TRADOC objectives?

The SCP and Chemical Corps Objectives

In conjunction with the RCP, a Chemical Corps SCP would help the Corps achieve its objectives. The SCP would provide leaders; chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) Soldiers; and civilians with the strategies and tactics necessary to effectively communicate with target audiences. Properly executed, the plan would focus RCP efforts; educate key leaders about the Chemical Corps and its mission; explain why leaders should support RCP efforts; and illustrate how, when, and where leaders could help. The SCP, which must be executed in conjunction with the RCP, would provide guidance to internal and external audiences.

Effective strategic communication of the RCP begins with the commandant's intent and key messages. Strategic communication objectives should be developed and coordinated to posture the Chemical Corps for future success. Some examples of SCP objectives include—

- **Objective 1: Educate key leaders and target audiences.** The focus of strategic communication efforts should be on the development of clear, distinctive messages to educate and inform. Countering WMD is a complex and difficult concept for even the most enthusiastic advocate to understand and explain. Additional time and attention should be paid to educating and informing those people and organizations who can directly influence decisions that affect the Corps. For example, because reducing the amount of time that a maneuver unit spends in an elevated, mission-oriented protective posture helps maintain combat effectiveness, the Maneuver Center of Excellence could serve as a strong advocate for equipment that allows for the rapid decontamination of vehicles. Leaders of the Fires Center of Excellence could serve as strong advocates for more enhanced projected obscuration rounds. But have these organizations been educated and informed? Have we helped them understand that it would be in their best interest (and that of the Army) to develop and field these specific capabilities?

- **Objective 2: Foster advocates for the Chemical Corps.** We must develop a specific action plan for coordination with organizations and people who may be inclined to support and serve as advocates for the Chemical Corps. The action plan should address the use of programs, events, and engagement opportunities to energize potential advocates to use their influence in helping to achieve RCP objectives and support the Army's overarching goals.
- **Objective 3: Retain current leaders.** It is just as important to retain quality CBRN officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) as it is to bring in new lieutenants and advanced individual training-qualified Soldiers. And it is less expensive to retain current CBRN Soldiers than it is to continually recruit and educate new prospects. Investing in our internal communication channels will help with this issue. It will also allow our CBRN warriors to be empowered, informed, and enthused about their branch and the Corps mission. Media exposure highlighting CBRN Soldier contributions and achievements is (with the proper operational security, foreign disclosure office, and public affairs office review and approval) a good way to promote pride in the Chemical Corps. It also aids in recruiting and retention efforts.

The Strategic Communication Audience

The identification of audience groups (including key organizations and individual stakeholders) is a critical component of designing an effective SCP. Some of the key organizations capable of influencing RCP success include the—

- Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics; Office of the Secretary of Defense.
- Joint Requirements Office, Joint Chief of Staff for Force Structure, Resources, and Assessment (J-8).
- Joint Program Executive Office for Chemical and Biological Defense.
- Defense Threat Reduction Agency.
- U.S. Strategic Command.
- Office of the Deputy Chiefs of Staff for Operations and Plans (G-3), Logistics (G-4), and Resource Management (G-8), DA.
- U.S. Army Nuclear and Combating WMD Agency.
- TRADOC.
- U.S. Army Maneuver, Maneuver Support, and Fires Centers of Excellence.

People within these organizations can influence the planning, programming, budgeting, and execution process cycle and the systems development and acquisition cycles. Stakeholders include organizations or individuals with a direct

interest, involvement, or investment in the Chemical Corps mission. CBRN officers and NCOs and members of the Chemical Corps Regimental Association are examples of stakeholders who could be provided with information and asked to support and serve as advocates for RCP efforts and goals.

Strategic Communication Planning

To reap the greatest benefit, strategic communication planning should occur in conjunction with operational planning. The SCP consists of a detailed plan containing written themes and messages for each particular key audience group, stakeholder, and event. The planners decide when, where, how, and to whom to most effectively present the message. Strategic communication planning is a holistic, effects-based endeavor that must be coordinated and synchronized in space and time. It is a process that works best with multiple forms of contact—just as with conventional battlefield planning. Using multiple forms of contact with several different mediums improves our chances of achieving the desired effects on the target—or, in this case, the target audience.

A key component of the SCP is a matrix that illustrates the key events and the interrelationships between important events that affect the directed mission. The planning, programming, budgeting, and execution cycle; the total Army analysis process; the combatant commander's joint priority list; and other major factors such as DOD/DA level policy statements can impact the RCP. Once the key events have been identified, the strategic communication planners hold a "targeting board" to nominate people (targets) and to identify strategic communication capabilities that can be directed against those targets. As an additional benefit, laying out a timeline and illustrating the interrelationships make it easier to educate the entire community of interest on the nature and schedule of priority events and it helps leaders explain the importance of completing a project by a certain date. It also helps ensure that conditions for the particular event are properly set.

Additional Resources for Strengthening the RCP and SCP

The Chemical Corps would benefit from receiving input on the RCP and the supporting SCP from external organizations and individuals. An outside perspective would provide valuable, additional insights into portions of the RCP that could be strengthened. An outside perspective wouldn't be required to come only from military organizations like TRADOC or the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center; it could also come from business or political leaders. For example, senior staffers from congressional offices are very familiar with how to plan, coordinate, and execute political campaign plans. Although there are differences between the Chemical Corps RCP and a political campaign plan, it would be interesting to observe whether the congressional staffers—after receiving an education on the RCP—could come up with new ways to approach problems. At the very least, it would be an

opportunity for us to reinforce our SCP themes and messages with the congressional staffers so that they will be better armed to support the Chemical Corps and the U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School (USACBRNS) in the future. It can be critical to have key congressional staffers who are armed with current facts and information present during budget discussions. According to Major General Thomas Spoehr (the former director of Force Development, G-8, DA), the most successful Army fiscal year 2013–2017 program objective memorandum organizations were those that had done their homework and had their facts ready to be presented at a moment's notice. An SCP would help ensure that the proper people have the facts and that they have been educated about the Chemical Corps efforts and how those efforts fit into the overarching Army plan.

Conclusion

Chemical Corps SCP is needed to solidify and focus the Corps, key leaders, and potential advocates on RCP efforts and goals. An SCP would have a synergistic effect. It would educate senior leaders and decisionmakers on what we are trying to do, and it would explain how our efforts are nested with the policy and strategic guidance issued by the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of the Army. Once organizations and individuals have been educated on the RCP and the countering WMD mission, they will likely be more willing to support Chemical Corps efforts and more willing to help us strengthen the defense of our Nation against WMD.

Endnotes:

¹President Barack Obama, preamble to "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense," 3 January 2012.

²Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, supporting letter for "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense," 5 January 2012.

³"Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense," DOD, January 2012.

⁴Ibid.

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