

**2.2.24 Please provide 2 examples, which demonstrate the capacity for innovative approaches to the conceptual development and delivery of Stratcom activity**

1. **General.** InCoStrat directors have successfully demonstrated two innovative approaches to the conceptual development and delivery of STRATCOM activity. In addition to using mainstream and social media as channels for communication, we use **innovative technology** with broader distribution mechanisms to expand our reach into previously inaccessible audiences.

- a) *Guerrilla Campaign. Use the media to create the event.*
- b) *Guerrilla Tactics. Initiate an event to create the media effect.*

**2. Supporting Evidence.**

a) **Guerrilla Campaign: Geneva II January 2014.** We exploited the concentrated presence of journalists to put pressure on the regime and to support a humanitarian effect in Homs.

1) **ISIS & Assad – two sides of the same coin.** The guerrilla campaign fuelled the emerging debate around the relationship between the regime and ISIS, drawing particular attention to crimes against humanity.

a. **Action.**

- I. We produced postcards, posters and reports to draw behavioural parallels between the regime and ISIS, playing to the commonly-held belief that a latent relationship exists between the two
- II. We provided a credible, Arabic-English speaking Syrian spokesperson to engage the media



b. **Effect.**

Major news outlets, such as **Al-Jazeera America** and **The National** published our posters. We conducted interviews with a wide range of prominent newspapers and major international and Syrian news channels, among them: **The Times, The Guardian, CNN, The New York Times, The Washington Post, BuzzFeed, Al-Jazeera, Suriya Al-Sham, Orient.**

2) **Break the siege in Homs.** The guerrilla campaign sought to draw attention to, and avert the impending humanitarian catastrophe inside besieged Homs.

a. **Action.**

- i. We connected international journalists with Syrians living in besieged Homs. This included arranging an interview between **Channel 4** and a **Homs doctor** highlighting the humanitarian catastrophe inside the besieged city.
- ii. The active facilitation of news stories initiated the narrative around Homs, which had previously been side-lined by media focus on the conference itself.



b. **Effect.**

The traction around the besieged Homs story gave the FSA a spotlight to offer its assistance to aid convoys, which in turn allowed us to **introduce DFID to the appropriate FSA commanders** and the Supreme Military Council to issue a Press Statement outlining its support to providing security for aid convoys. **Ultimate result: the Homs siege was broken and aid was provided.**

b) **Guerrilla Tactics: Assad war crimes currency – July 2014.** (This campaign has just started).

a. **Action**

- i. We produced mock Syrian currency, altering certain details to highlight the war crimes committed by the regime. Each note (we used three denominations) is titled: "Assad War Crimes" or "Be on the right side of history". The traditional background picture was changed to a picture depicting the aftermath of a barrel bomb attack or victims of torture. We replaced the picture of Hafez Al-Assad with a silhouette of a nondescript individual and the details of a mid-ranking officer who has been reported as having committed war crimes.
- ii. The notes are due to be smuggled into regime-held parts of Syria, i.e. central Damascus, Lattakia, Aleppo, Hama, once formal clearance has been authorized by HMG officials.

- iii. We will engage the international media to create a story around the event to draw wider attention to the war crimes.

**b. Effect**

- i. The message to the regime: covert but active resistance continues in regime-held areas.
- ii. The message to the wider Syrian audience: perpetrators of war crimes will be held to account at all levels of the hierarchy.
- iii. The media event will keep regime perpetration of war crimes in the spotlight at a crucial time when media attention has shifted almost exclusively towards ISIS and some influential voices are calling for co-operation with the Syrian regime to combat ISIS.



**Technology: Breaking through barriers to access**

3. In addition to these two specific examples of STRATCOM activity that we have delivered in Syria, we have developed other concepts, which harness the power of emerging technology to target hard-to-reach audiences. Specifically, we focus on those in areas under ISIS control and those under the ‘pro-regime’ umbrella. This includes the following:

- a. Long distance sound commanders (loud speakers) to communicate with regime soldiers in battle, or in their barracks, or at military air bases.
- b. Mass SMS messaging: enables communication to citizens and military personnel (i.e. anyone with a mobile phone) in regime-held areas.
- c. Mobile phone and computer apps: interactive reporting apps to give better atmospherics on the situation inside Syria.
- d. Increasing communication capability in refugee camps through an integrated communications system, i.e. each new family receives a mobile phone/tablet computer with apps giving them camp news, appointment making facilities, access to educational programmes. The technology can be utilized as a reporting mechanism when they return to their battle damaged homelands. The system could be enhanced to provide an electronic means of payment in camps.

**Responding to change: from Geneva II to combatting ISIS**

4. Since our directors began supporting STRATCOM’s activity in Syria three years ago, the political, military and humanitarian circumstances inside and outside Syria have changed dramatically. Most dramatic has been ISIS’s emergence as an external threat to regional stability and international security, as well as an internal threat to minority and moderate Sunni populations and to a broader political solution.

5. The investment in the stringer and reporting networks across the country has enabled our directors to stay attuned to shifts inside Syria. For example, we have expanded our Kurdish networks in North-East Syria to better understand and reflect the increasing significance of Kurdish resistance to ISIS. Our team has bolstered its already developed networks in East Syria (al-Raqqa, Dayr al-Zawr) and has established a network in northern Iraq, in order to better understand and respond to complex ground realities, including ISIS’s popularity in certain areas.

6. The networks are multi-functional which enables us to use them creatively: for example, in addition to providing understanding and a channel to influence in Eastern Syria, our staff are currently using our networks to map tribal relationships, in order to support a programme on tribal outreach. The evidence suggests that ideological support for ISIS in the tribal regions of the East remains at most 30%. In our assessment, undermining ISIS’s core capability to recruit (locally and internationally) requires an ability to undermine the perception – and the reality – of their strength and control on the ground. Our team are working to understand the factors critical to drawing tribal support away from ISIS and the mechanisms for doing so, with the aim of designing STRATCOM activity to create effects that support an international political effort.

7. The InCoStrat team is well positioned to deal with all elements of STRATCOM activity; from support to the Syrian political opposition at Geneva II and the creation of a humanitarian event on the ground, to focus on countering violent extremism in Syria and Iraq. We draw on a wealth of experience in handling rapid shifts in focus: over 80% of the partnership has previous experience in political and CVE projects in Iraq, Yemen, North Africa, Sudan, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

**All the networks are active and ready for further use with minimal additional investment.**

**A Partner spent four years in Iraq developing and supporting the implementation of a DoD STRATCOM programme for CVE and a joint DoD/DoS training programme for Iraqi Security Forces in CT and special**