

WESTERN HEMISPHERE INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN PLAN

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## **Strategic Communications Campaign Plan for the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation**

### **1. Situation**

A. The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) was established in Jan. 2001 as an international professional education and training program located at Fort Benning, Ga. WHINSEC is governed by Title 10 USC 2166 of the FY01 National Defense Authorization Act, which states WHINSEC will "provide professional education and training to eligible personnel of nations of the Western Hemisphere within the context of the democratic principles set forth in the Charter of the Organization of American States, while fostering mutual knowledge, transparency, confidence, and cooperation among the participating nations and promoting democratic values, respect for human rights, and knowledge and understanding of United States customs and traditions, promoting peace and democracy in the process." DOD appointed the Army as executive agent for the institute in June 2001.

B. Spanish-language military education for the Army was previously fulfilled by the U. S. Army School of the Americas (USARSA). USARSA was closed in Dec. 2000. WHINSEC was opened to accomplish the same strategic engagement goal, but with a broader mission that addresses the post-Cold War environment in the Western Hemisphere. WHINSEC's charter from DOD incorporated changes addressing those things most criticized by opponents of USARSA -- namely mandating required human rights instruction, establishing a formal Board of Visitors, mandating an annual report to Congress on the institute and its curriculum, adjustments to control and oversight mechanisms for the institute, and related revised legislation of the statute authorizing the institute.

C. The School of Americas Watch (SOA Watch), a protest group of a few thousand members, since the early 1990s has opposed USARSA on the grounds that some past graduates of the school have committed human rights abuses against civilians and non-combatants in Latin America. The SOA Watch contends that the WHINSEC is still the School of the Americas under a different name and refuses to acknowledge its changes. Their well-organized opposition continues to target WHINSEC as it did USARSA as a visible symbol of what they see as a flawed U. S. policy in LATAM, and calls on supporters to lobby Congress and participate in annual protests to close the school.

D. HR 1810, a bill to close WHINSEC, was cosponsored by Representatives Jim McGovern (D-MA), Joe Scarborough (R-FL), the late Joe Moakley (D-MA), Connie Morella (R-MD), Christopher Shays (R-CT), and Lane Evans (D-IL) and introduced May 10, 2001. The bill states:

"To repeal the statutory authority for the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (the successor institution to the United States Army

School of the Americas) in the Department of Defense, to provide for the establishment of a joint congressional task force to conduct an assessment of the kind of education and training that is appropriate for the Department of Defense to provide to military personnel of Latin American nations, and for other purposes.”

As of April 15, 2002, 105 congressmen had signed on to support the bill, and thus appear to support closing WHINSEC. Congress remains a crucial audience.

## **2. Media Analysis and Public Affairs Research**

Evaluation of the effectiveness of WHINSEC and Army communications is vital to validating the strategic plan.

A. Research methodology. The research will characterize media coverage as balanced, positive or negative. Balanced coverage presents WHINSEC and the protesters' arguments equally without either side coming out ahead; positive coverage shows WHINSEC's strengths and possibly weaknesses or inaccuracies in the detractors' arguments; negative coverage will emphasize the protesters' arguments and possibly tie WHINSEC to alleged wrong doing or the alleged wrong doing of the School of the Americas.

B. Existing research. Annex C has results of research conducted to date on USARSA and WHINSEC communications in order to form a benchmark from which to evaluate the effectiveness of this SCCP.

## **3. Communication Objectives**

The following are the desired “end states” of WHINSEC communications.

A. Congressional audience will not support legislation to close the WHINSEC:

1) Key members/staffers are educated on the purpose and need for the WHINSEC.

2) The number of letters from constituents to Congress criticizing the WHINSEC is decreased.

B. Media coverage of the WHINSEC is characterized as neutral to positive.

C. At least half of the internal Army audience will know about the WHINSEC when surveyed.

D. Web site visits will increase by 10% each quarter. Time spent on responding to public inquiries about WHINSEC and USARSA will decrease with Web site and other tools in place.

#### **4. Key Audiences**

##### **A. External Audiences**

1) Congress – (primary audience for TRADOC/DA, secondary for WHINSEC)

2) State Department – (primary audience for TRADOC/DA, secondary for WHINSEC)

3) Greater Columbus, Ga., community (primary audience for WHINSEC, secondary for TRADOC/DA)

4) Human Rights groups

a) Religious organizations

b) Educational institutions

c) Think tanks

##### **B. Internal Audiences**

1) Soldiers – Army-wide

2) Soldiers – Fort Benning community

3) Soldiers – at WHINSEC

4) Family members of soldiers

5) Reserve Components

6) Retirees

7) DA civilians

8) Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs)

##### **C. DOD leaders and staff**

**D. Media**

- 1) National
- 2) Defense oriented
- 3) Foreign policy oriented
- 4) Religious
- 5) Educational
- 6) Latin American
- 7) Spanish Language (U.S. and abroad)
- 8) Canadian
- 9) Regional
- 10) Command Information publications

**5. Themes and talking points**

**A. WHINSEC-oriented themes**

1) **THEME #1 - WHINSEC fosters friendships among the nations of the hemisphere.**

a) **Talking Point 1: The global war on terrorism demonstrates the strategic need for strong diplomatic and military partnerships. WHINSEC is a crucial link with nations within the Western Hemisphere.**

b) **Talking Point 2: The 2002 Quadrennial Defense Review stated that peace and stability in the Western Hemisphere was in the U. S. national interest, and that the United States would honor international commitments ensuring the security and well-being of allies and friends.**

c) **Talking Point 3: The academic environment of the WHINSEC encourages relationships between military and civilian students and faculty dedicated to building stronger societies through constructive interaction and peaceful change.**

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### **2) THEME #2 – WHINSEC showcases Democracy in action.**

a) Talking Point 1: The institute promotes democratic values, respect for human rights, civilian/military cooperation and knowledge and understanding of United States customs and traditions.

b) Talking Point 2: WHINSEC teaches military subordination to civilian government.

c) Talking Point 3: To help strengthen democratic governments and as encouraged by Secretary of State Colin Powell, all Western Hemisphere nations must take concrete steps to increase the effectiveness of counter-terrorism forces and measures, enhance air and seaport security, tighten border controls and improve financial controls. WHINSEC offers or is developing courses in all these areas.

### **3) THEME #3 – WHINSEC was established by Congress and has transparency and oversight.**

a) Talking Point 1: Congress enacted and the President approved HR 5408 - Floyd D. Spence National Authorization Act for FY 2001 establishing the institute.

b) Talking Point 2: By law, the institute operates at the Department of Defense level, versus the U. S. Army level in the USARSA model. The Army is merely the executive agent for WHINSEC.

1) The law calls for a Board of Visitors (BOV), which provides external and independent oversight of the institute's operations. The BOV consists of members of the U. S. Congress, academicians and representatives from the Departments of State and Defense, U. S. Southern Command, and other stakeholders such as religious and human rights groups and nongovernmental organizations.

2) The BOV is free to examine any aspect of the institute they desire.

3) The BOV must submit an annual report to the Secretary of Defense with recommendations for the operation of the institute.

c) Talking Point 3: The legislation directly ties the mission of the institute to the principles of the Organization of American States Charter and focuses the curriculum on the need to seek multilateral solutions to emerging regional problems.

d) Talking Point 4: WHINSEC maintains this transparency with America's citizens -- the public is encouraged to visit the Institute and view each aspect of its operation.

3) **THEME #4** -- WHINSEC is just one example of the extensive international military education and training programs the DOD has worldwide.

a) Talking Point: DOD operates a total of six schools that concentrate on Latin America: The DOD Center for Hemispheric Studies (Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.); The DOD Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (Fort Benning, Ga.); The Inter-American Air Force Academy (Lackland Air Force Base, Texas); The Navy Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (Stennis Island, Miss.); The U. S. Army Helicopter School Battalion (Fort Rucker, Ala.); and The U. S. Army Helicopter Maintenance Company (Fort Eustis, Va.).

**B. USARSA-oriented themes:**

1) **THEME #1** -- WHINSEC is different than USARSA.

a) Talking Point 1: USARSA, which closed in Dec. 1999, served a cold war model. The WHINSEC curriculum addresses the security challenges shared in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by both the established and emerging democracies of the Western hemisphere.

b) Talking Point 2: Individual professional development courses out-number the combat-oriented courses taught in the past. Counter-insurgency and commando training have been dropped. Instead WHINSEC focuses on relevant security operations such as: Humanitarian Assistance, Disaster Relief, Drug Interdiction, De-mining, International Operational Law, Civil/military Cooperation, Inspector General Course, Senior Resource Management, and Respect for Human Rights (required by legislation).

c) Talking Point 3: Trainees include members of civilian governments and police forces. Training is expanding to include non-Latin nations such as Canada and the English-speaking Caribbean.

d) Talking Point 4: The faculty is reorganized and includes: a State Department Foreign Service officer as director of the civil-military studies department (to emphasize civilian control of the military); NGO representatives such as the International Committee of the Red Cross; other civilian government agency participation (such as Drug Enforcement Administration) where they have the primary expertise; and guest lecturers and research fellows that offer a broad range of views relevant to security issues.

2) **THEME #2** – USARSA served its purpose given the national security environment and foreign policy at the time. Opponents' use of USARSA as a symbol to criticize U. S. foreign policy is misguided.

a) Talking Point 1: While DOD would never condone the criminal acts that have occurred in Latin America in the past, there's no evidence that abuses were a direct result of training provided at the USARSA, as critics claim.

b) Talking Point 2: Twelve external investigations and inspections during the late 1980s and 1990s, including one by the General Accounting Office during 1996, looked at allegations against the old School of the Americas and found that instruction at the School was consistent with U. S. policy and U. S. Army doctrine, especially regarding respect for human rights. None found any substance to the many allegations made against the School of the Americas.

c) Talking Point 3: The training at USARSA, as at the WHINSEC, varied from a yearlong command and general staff college to weeklong motor maintenance courses. While opponents allege that the human rights abuses of certain Latin American military officials was a result of training at USARSA, many of those officials' contact with USARSA was limited to a few weeks, with decades passing between their attendance and their assumption of power.

d) Talking Point 4: The accusations made against the institute, (which were previously made against the now closed School of the Americas) are based more on myth than fact, and are used as a rallying symbol for a political movement whose disagreement is really over larger issues of U. S. foreign policy.

## **5. Strategies**

A. **Concept of the Operation.** The concept for the WHINSEC public information effort is to maintain a continuous, systematic stream of public information releases concerning WHINSEC activities to regional and national media. These public information releases, distributed at a rate of approximately once a week, will provide greater opportunities to expose both influencers and the general public to WHINSEC themes and messages. These public information releases will also create a continually-updating background file within media organizations that will provide a more balanced view of WHINSEC during peak communications situations. See Annex A for the menu of short-term actions that support the strategy. See Annex B for a public affairs event-planning format.



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B. The strategies below represent six broad communications approaches that, when synchronized among the various operational levels, will achieve the primary communications objectives described in section three. The various tactics that support these strategies are listed at Annex A.

1) Congressional education campaign: Leverage appointments of BOV members.

2) Enlist third-party (non-Army) public support for the WHINSEC. DA has the lead at the national level; WHINSEC has the lead at the local to Ft. Benning level. Other supporters: State Department; Key influencers – political, academic, religious; Regional centers of support; and NGOs.

3) Public appearances to openly debate/engage SOA Watch spokespersons.

4) Leverage media interest during annual Fort Benning protest. (focus interest on the institute vice the protesters).

5) Leverage high-profile events at WHINSEC that highlight the institute's value. Create an academic atmosphere for all to see. (academic learning vice military skills practice). Showcase as a promoter of regional cooperation in LATAM security issues.

6) Increase public awareness through Web-based information technology.

### **7. Solutions/Tactics**

A. See Annex A for the menu of short-term actions that support the strategy.

B. See Annex B for a public affairs event-planning format.

### **8. Measurement/Evaluation**

Continuous measurement and evaluation is required to determine the effectiveness of this plan and to identify to what degree activities contribute to the communications objectives.

#### **A) Short Term**

1) Resources: If not already so equipped, WHINSEC, CAC, TRADOC and OCPA will budget for and acquire a media monitoring capability within their respective PA organizations.

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2) Tasks:

a) TRADOC Public Affairs will conduct a media analysis every six months for review by the Strategic Communications Council (SCC). The analysis will review the number and quality (balanced, positive, negative; credibility of media source) of media reports mentioning WHINSEC or USARSA.

b) WHINSEC Public Affairs will conduct weekly media monitoring to track the number of placements of WHINSEC releases/communications in the media.

c) WHINSEC PA will monitor and track the number of visits to the Web site and report periodically to the SCC.

B) Long Term

1) WHINSEC Web site will feature a different survey question(s) periodically to quantify various audience perceptions about the Institute and specific issues.

2) OCPA Analysis branch will develop a strategy to conduct public opinion research to benchmark knowledge and perception of the WHINSEC among key audiences.

3) OCPA will solicit support from ARI to include survey questions about the WHINSEC on future Army surveys.

4) OCLL will monitor congressional legislation affecting WHINSEC and will report any significant changes to the SCC.

**9. The Strategic Communications Council**

A. The Strategic Communications Council (SCC) will be made up of at least one representative from the following agencies:

<b>Headquarters</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Participation</b>
Department of Defense	Dept of Defense Information	As needed
Department of the Army	DAMO-SSR	Permanent
	Office Chief Public Affairs	Permanent
	Office Chief Congressional Liaison	Permanent
TRADOC	Public Affairs Office	Permanent
Combined Arms Center	Public Affairs Office	Permanent
WHINSEC	Commandant	Permanent
	Public Affairs Office	Permanent

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B. The SCC will convene periodically throughout the year to gauge the effectiveness of the SCCP and to calibrate the plan in order to ensure the communications objectives are being met.

**10. Resources/ Budget**

A. The WHINSEC public affairs effort will need resources in both funding and personnel. The Department of the Army will interface to help with resourcing. The WHINSEC strategic communications council (SCC) will plan on the following anticipated annual requirement:

WHINSEC Contractor (HQDA level)	\$147,000
WHINSEC Web master (WHINSEC level)	\$ 50,000
Media monitoring software (HQDA and WHINSEC)	\$ 9,000
Survey/research vehicles (HQDA)	\$ 25,000
Printing costs (WHINSEC)	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$246,000</b>

**11. SCCP Points Of Contact.**

- A. OCPA: LTC Patrick Mackin, (703) 697-4109
- B. TRADOC: Mr. Ray Harp, (757) 788-3061
- C. CAC: MAJ Christopher Garver, (913) 684-1717
- D. WHINSEC: Mr. Lee Rials, (706) 545-1923