Rhetorical Charms: The Promise and Pitfalls of Humor and Ridicule as Strategies to Counter Extremist Narratives

by H. L. Goodall, Jr, Pauline Hope Cheong, Kristin Fleischer and Steven R. Corman

"Mubarak dies and meets former Egyptian presidents Anwar Sadat and Gamal Abdel Nasser in the afterlife. They ask him: "Poisoned or assassinated?" "Neither," he replies. "Facebook."
– Joke widely distributed on Facebook/Twitter during the 25th January revolution.

Abstract

In this article we provide a brief account of the uses of humor, in particular satire and ridicule, to counter extremist narratives and heroes. We frame the appeals of humor as "rhetorical charms," or stylistic seductions based on surprising uses of language and/or images designed to provoke laughter, disrupt ordinary arguments, and counter taken-for-granted truths, that contribute to new sources of influence to the globally wired world of terrorism. We offer two recent examples of how the Internet in particular changed the narrative landscape in ways that offer potent evidence of uses of humor to remake extremist heroes into objects of derision. We also caution those who would make use of humor as a strategic communication device to take into account the negative side effects and unexpected consequences that can accompany such uses.

Introduction

One of the more interesting rhetorical aspects of public protests is the use of humor and ridicule to generate laughter and to promote solidarity among protesters. These "rhetorical charms,"[1] or what we define as "stylistic seductions based on surprising uses of language and/or images designed to provoke laughter, disrupt ordinary arguments, and counter taken-for-granted truths," include time-tested methods of humor such as satire and ridicule, but also include creative appropriations and uses of graphic icons and images that further demean the object of the ridicule, such as a dictator or a known terrorist or a violent extremist group.

For example, when protesters in Cairo raised placards emblazoned with the face of then President Hosni Mubarak together with an easily recognized Kentucky Fried Chicken logo, the image linked his continued reign to U.S. influences as well as branded and demeaned Mubarak as a coward, a "chicken."   For the protesters in Cairo as well as for mediated audiences worldwide who supported the uprising, iconic images such as this one were both humorous and disruptive to the narrative being spun by the dictator about his demand to stay in power.

Yet, for those individuals, government leaders and other dictators who identified with Mubarak, as well as for those who feared the collapse of his regime out of a fear of a radical Muslim takeover of Egypt, the image was surely demeaning, but decidedly not as humorous. So it is that

the uses of humor to satirize, ridicule, or otherwise to make fun of or to demean leaders and other public figures such as known terrorists and violent extremist groups can be problematic. Furthermore, in today's media-saturated political environment marked by the Internet, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and other user-generated content resources for creating and circulating messages to counter official pronouncements or even to ridicule mainstream news feeds, what we have is humor as a rhetorical device that, as Kenneth Burke famously expresses it, simultaneously "unites and divides."[2]

In this article we provide a brief account of the uses of humor - in particular, satire and ridicule - to counter extremist narratives and heroes. We begin with a short history of these communication devices and offer an important caution about what happens when humor backfires. Then we offer two recent examples of how the Internet in particular changed the narrative landscape in ways that offer potent evidence of uses of humor to remake extremist heroes into objects of derision. We summarize what we have learned by creating a comparison of the effects of humor to that of "narrative IEDs" (improvised explosive devices). And we conclude with a metaphor—a playful balloon that masks an exploding clown face—that we feel captures both the promise and the pitfalls of using humor as a counter-terrorism communication strategy.

The Use of Satire and Ridicule

One of the common critiques of U.S. strategic communication efforts has been that Al-Qaeda is "winning" the war of narratives. [3] The "extremist narrative" (as if there is only one) is simple, effective, and powerful in constructing a world view that frames and justifies their actions. [4] That worldview is constructed out of storylines that suggest:

> "[T]he world is corrupt and that the nations of the Arab and Muslim world have fallen from the path of "true" Islam. … [That] the Muslim world exists in a state of ignorance (*jahiliyyah*) like that which existed on the Arabian Peninsula at the time of Islam's birth, . . . [and that] all "apostate" leaders of Arab and Muslim nations [should be treated] as enemies of God. … [It is a narrative] that define[s] the West, and particularly the United States, as an enemy (the archetypal Crusader) that can only be eradicated by a military jihad, and that serve[s] as a means of recruitment into an ideological alliance that promotes the love of death and the inevitability of victory through martyrdom." [5]

Efforts at countering that narrative have been met with mixed success. One tool of countering these narratives that – while slowly gaining acceptance among analysts and some researchers [6] – has yet to gain mainstream acceptance, is that of employing *ridicule* in an offensive capacity (no pun intended).

The use of ridicule in warfare is hardly a novel idea. Many a regime or leader has banned humor at its expense in the hope of quelling dissent, recognizing that being able to laugh at something or someone inherently diminishes the power of the ridiculed. In pre-Islamic Arab and early Islamic societies, poets were considered extremely dangerous for their ability to spread satire and ridicule against an adversary. Indeed, in many conflicts, poets were often targeted for assassination to prevent them from mocking the attacker. Two examples of "dangerous" poets

during the Prophet's lifetime were al-A'sha and Ka'b ibn Ashraf. As Islamic scholar Daniel C. Peterson noted:

> "To have a successful poet in a rival tribe satirizing one's tribe or clan in memorable and repeatable verses was a curse like no other, and was deemed an injury as serious as, if not more serious than, a defeat in literal battle. For a successful poet was not merely one enemy. As his verses began to be adopted and repeated by others, he became many foes" [7].

Satire and ridicule as both offensive and defensive tools have existed in the United States since the Revolutionary War. The role of propaganda in the conflict between the young colonies and the British crown has been well documented. Facing an army that was significantly larger, better trained and better equipped, those factions pushing for American independence recognized the value of ridicule. [8] The iconic lyrics of "Yankee Doodle" originated as a song sung by the British ridiculing American troops, only to have it embraced by the colonists themselves. [9] Another example is "My Country Tis of Thee," which was the music of Britain's National Anthem, "God Save the Queen."

Satire was also employed defensively during the Second World War, when American public ridicule of the German Nazis and Japanese Fascists was common. Popular propaganda at the time depicted Japanese soldiers as brutish and ape-like and Hitler's appearance and manner were common targets. [10] This included depictions of the Nazi leader by comedians such as "The Three Stooges," in, for example, their classic "minisode" "I'll Never Heil Again"(< http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-opehtzq7Es >). As Waller points out, "ridicule can be a defensive weapon if it helps calm the fears of the public at home and give hope that they can indeed defeat the enemy." [11]

Given this background, perhaps the most effective use of ridicule is when it is directed at a domestic audience. Waller points to the example of *Team America: World Police,* a show produced by the creators of the adult cartoon *South Park* that features puppets saving the world. The movie parodies Al-Qaeda and North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il, two subjects not generally considered as comedy fodder. The Team also created a controversy over the depiction of Mohammad in a bear suit, as well as a sequel fearing the Prophet as Santa Claus, but it was cancelled. The image of suicide bombers as inept and ridiculous is also a part of a popular ventriloquist act called "Achmed the Dead Terrorist" by comedian Jeff Dunham. While some audiences may not see suicide bombers as something to laugh at, Daniel Byman and Christine Fair argue:

> Even in the aftermath of the botched Times Square bombing earlier this spring, the perception persists that our enemies are savvy and sophisticated killers. They're fanatical and highly organized—twin ideas that at once keep us fearful and help them attract new members… but the quiet truth is that many of the deluded foot soldiers are foolish and untrained, perhaps even untrainable. Acknowledging this fact could help us tailor our counterterrorism priorities—and publicizing it could help us erode the powerful images of strength and piety that terrorists rely on for recruiting and funding. [12]

The use of ridicule and satire to demonize the image and denigrate the skills of enemies on home audiences serves obvious ideological ends. However, making use of those communication

strategies to combat violent extremism abroad can be problematic. Humor as a weapon has a sharp double edge and that may account for some of the reluctance to view it as a valid tool of strategic communication. Hence any discussion of employing ridicule should include a caution about the dangers of its misuse. Just as an off color joke can offend your co-workers or sour a personal relationship, humor has the potential to be divisive and motivating in ways that are detrimental to larger policy goals.

While political cartoonist Patrick Chappatte [13] points out the power of cartoons to create peaceful discussion in politically violate climates, the events surrounding the cartoons published in 2005 by Danish article *Jyllands-Posten* [13] provide clear evidence of the accompanying risk. The collection of images created by various artists which were intended to depict the Prophet Muhammad satirically – in one case wearing a turban shaped like a bomb – became a highly divisive symbol that was framed in many instances as an expression of the struggle between "free speech" and "traditional Islamic views." [14] What started as public anger from the Danish Muslim population spread – along with the cartoons themselves – provoking physical violence and riots in several countries. [15]

The artists and editors of the article may have been attempting to make a statement about freedom of speech and the dangers of Islamist extremism, but in doing so, they attacked something held sacred to all Muslims. The "Danish Cartoon Controversy" is but one example of how satire and ridicule operating as "rhetorical charms" by appealing to a sense of humor held by some citizens may also have the equipotential to organize sentiment of extremists against those who dare to deploy it.

Yet despite the very real need for caution in employing ridicule, there exist equally real opportunities for its effectiveness. Analysis of Al-Qaeda and its ideological affiliates in recent years has highlighted a shift in structure and narrative focus. [16] As Jarret Brachman pointed out, Al-Qaeda and its ideological affiliates are much more active these days on the Internet. They have increased their efforts at building support, creating online communities, recruitment and mobilization, not just of audiences in the Middle East, but in Western countries as well. "The jihadisphere is now teeming with aspiring pundits -- fresh voices trying to make it big and establish a popular online following." [17]

This switch in narrative focus as well as in choice of medium provides an excellent opportunity to reconsider the deployment of ridicule strategically. As Brachman argued, "we are now highly effective in targeting individuals and organizations, but where the USG's efforts are weakest is in countering the movement." [18] It is in countering "the movement" that ridicule may be most effective. The late bin Laden himself was quoted as saying he feared humiliation before death. [19] In an online environment of venerating certain figures such as the late Anwar al-Awlaki, ridicule has the potential to undercut and destroy the image of "martyrs." [20]

It may seem at first glance that ridicule is a tactic that is not available to government communicators. While it is certainly true that there may be more constraints on governments, such a consideration does not rule out its use. This is certainly true in the case of so-called "black propaganda" where the government does not reveal itself as a source. In the infamous COINTELPRO articles, for instance, the FBI wrote: "Consider the use of cartoons, photographs, and anonymous letters which will have the effect of ridiculing the New Left. Ridicule is one of

the most potent weapons which we can use against it" [21]. But even in cases where the government is an acknowledged source, ridicule is used. Leaders such as Hugo Chavez and Mahmoud Ahmedinejad routinely employ ridicule to criticize the United States.

In 2011, a unit of the State Department employed a very effective ridicule strategy against Al-Qaeda. The terrorist organization was notoriously irrelevant in the Arab Spring protests, and indeed had predicted that such efforts could never succeed against the "apostate regimes." After the protests in Egypt and elsewhere proved this wrong, the Digital Outreach Team - an above-board unit that promotes U.S. positions and policies in foreign language social media - produced a set of three videos pointing this out. They include clips of Ayman al-Zawahiri saying protest would never work intercut with scenes of jubilant Egyptians after the overthrow of Mubarak, and clips of Osama bin Laden watching videos of himself in his compound while the Arab Spring protests raged [23].

Two Recent Examples: Noordin Top and Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab

The recent developments in the so-called Web 2.0 (new and social media) including blogs, video blogs (vlogs), social networking and interactive forum sites facilitate increased user-generated and participatory communication. In the process, the identity of media audiences becomes more complex as online users simultaneously act as producers, distributors and critics. The hybrid and dynamic "prosumption" (consumption and production) process, thus potentially increases the agency of individuals in finding, communicating and circulating information about terrorism, counter-terrorism and political affairs, as well as increases the exposure and interactivity between micro- and macro-level agencies as non-state actors join the communication fray. [24]

Given that the meaning of "truth" is often a key feature of hegemonic struggles, examining prosumption practices can help us understand the competing co-presence of state, alternative and insurgent "truth perspectives" and how these get narrated and circulated or transmediated online across multiple media platforms as memes. In particular, the use of humor and ridicule in online texts has been and can be appropriated to propagate satirical or hostile narratives about terrorism and their agents.

For example, our recent examination of rumors surrounding the death of one of Southeast Asia's most notorious Islamist extremists, Noordin Top, showed that prosumption of rumors regarding Top's sexuality based on a post-mortem pronouncement of sodomy and homosexuality in 2009 allowed him to be cast as a sexual deviant. [25] Online manipulation of official images of Noordin feminized him by adding a *jilbab* (headscarf), long hair or rouge to his cheeks. Other prosumption *YouTube* video and blog content took it further into the realm of ridicule by portraying Noordin in a variety of ridiculous disguises including a mash-up image of Noordin appearing as pop icon Michael Jackson who was similarly rumored to be homosexual.

Our analyses highlighted how these transmediated examples helped his critics and counter-terrorist interests portray Noordin as a perverse hypocrite. Notably, unlike other terrorist leaders who have garnered laudatory acclaim after their death, Noordin's image was not ascribed with the appearance of green birds that are posited to hold the souls of Muslim martyrs. In this case, it

appeared that ridicule was a potent means to belittle a key terrorist leader and weaken the appeal of his legacy among contested populations.

In another instance, we observed how humor and ridicule was applied to mock the identity and actions of the twenty three years old Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who tried to detonate an explosive device on board a Northwest airlines passenger flight bound for Detroit, on Christmas Day 2009. [26] Our analysis of multiple YouTube, blog and tweet texts associated with this "underwear bomber" or "crotch bomber" showed how multiple online prosumers focused on the amateurish tactics of his attack and how he was a failure. Several online articles also suggested that Abdulmutallab was an evil and morally lax agent, by ridiculing his impure desire for martyrdom. By implication terrorism was ridiculed as a futile enterprise. These examples exemplify how online storytelling may reinforce stigma related to terrorism, amplify negative images associated with insurgents and further shift the public perceptions of terrorists and their operations.

Of course, the use of such tactics is not without risk. Since narratives of ridicule circulate in a complex system, their effects are often unpredictable. We have already citied the case of "Yankee Doddle" being launched as a ridicule campaign by the British, only to be appropriated by the colonists who were its erstwhile targets. There is also the risk that a ridicule attempt may flop, making the author of it look, well, ridiculous. And, as ridicule is often based in humor, its use may give the appearance of making light of a serious situation. Yet it seems to us that these are risks worth taking because in large part the power of terrorist groups is their ability to project menace and inspire fear disproportionate to the actual threat they represent. [27]

Another argument in favor of the use of ridicule is that effective strategic communication in a complex system requires risk-taking. In simple communication environments it is possible to isolate single variables – for example acceptance of a claim – and systematically work to affect that variable through trial-and-error learning. But a complex communication environment presents a "rugged landscape" where the only rational approach is variation over a wide range of tactics in search of one that works, [28] even though many of those attempts might fail. Given that the ridicule approach has been rarely tried, its use deserves wider consideration.

Rhetorical Charms and Narrative IEDs

Daniel Bernardi, Pauline Hope Cheong, Chris Lundry and Scott Ruston argue that rumors in a war zone operate very much like narrative IEDs (improvised explosive devices) in that they are relatively low-cost weapons that circulate unexpectedly among lay peoples. [29] Much like their literally explosive cousins, rumors can instill fear and be dangerous, particularly in times of conflict and information uncertainty. As such, the collateral damage caused by a rumor and the high likelihood of its narrative spread throughout a community or region (or globally, via the Internet) is very hard to counter with traditional forms of communication. Reasoning and argument, even when firmly based on the "truth" of a given case, are seldom served as effective remedies for rumors.

Similarly, the deployment of ridicule, satire, and/or other forms of humor may serve rhetorical ends by disrupting the existing narrative terrain and thereby organizing resistance to extremist

stories and actions. But, as we have pointed out, rhetorical devices have the capacity—indeed the likelihood—of both uniting and dividing audiences from intended consequences, and, in the case of the latter, not only of enlarging the narrative playing field but also introducing negative responses that are themselves unstable and open to interpretation and change.

It is also important to recognize the intercultural dynamics of humor since the use or "sense of humor" is context-dependent. The enactment of satirical messages may function in a different way, even fail to elicit laughter if values like respect and honor are observed in cultures that are more group- or hierarchy-oriented. Persons of varied cultural backgrounds may also attribute different intentions (if any) to the use of disparagement humor. As humor can also be a means of both emphasizing and diminishing group boundaries, there are good reasons then, to further examine the relationships between humor and intercultural communication.

In one sense the deployment of a satirical poem about the fecklessness of an extremist bombing attempt, or the creation and dissemination of an image that ridicules a terrorist's masculinity, is like dropping a playful clown face balloon that masks an explosive device into a bar fight: it is another form of a narrative IED and there will be collateral damage. Yes, it will disrupt the fight, at least for a while, as most of those who witness it laugh at the very absurdity of it, others can become enraged at the same image. But when the fight resumes there will be those who remake that clown face into further disparagement of the Other as well as those who see in it a disparaging of their own face and with it a preferred end to the narrative that shapes and gives meaning to their lives.

As we were completing this article the January 25th revolution in Egypt was one year old and the use of humor and ridicule in celebrations of it were everywhere apparent. From hand drawn street signs depicting "Muuhbarak" as a "Laughing Cow," complete with the image of the French cheese to nuanced uses of the Arabic language to denigrate him to Facebook and Twitter disparagements and calls for his immediate resignation, what we all saw was the deployment of these communication techniques as strategies designed to organize, expand, and make visible and audible the desired end result: the end of a tyrant's regime.

Yet there was something else. In addition to the uses of humor and ridicule were the protesting crowds of hundreds of thousands of Egyptians in the streets and in Tahrir Square. It was the fact of their active presence coupled with their firm non-violent stance that significantly altered Egyptian history. Their uses of humor, satire, and ridicule while remaining non-violent was part of a strategy for countering tyranny, as was their use of social media and the coverage of al Jazeera television.

But were these strategies what Malcolm Gladwell calls "the tipping point?" [30] Probably not. The success of the revolution had more to do with the full-voiced presence and unity of purpose for all the world to see that left no other legitimate course of action but resignation for a leader so obviously despised by his people and so unsupported by his allies. In the end, making fun of him was just part of the mix, whether as "Muuhbarak" the laughing cow or as Mubarak the Kentucky Fried Chicken, but those images were important to the morale of the people in the streets as well as for the resistance message it sent around the world.

That those mediated images and the disruptions they caused contributed to the spread of popular uprisings in (as of this writing) Yemen, Libya, and Syria cannot be denied, as protesters in those

countries all point to the success of the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt as motivators for their actions. Yet it is obvious that we need more in-depth studies of the uses of humor and ridicule, of images and icons, used to combat violent extremism as well as to take down dictators. These amusing, seductive, explosive "rhetorical charms" may disrupt the narrative landscape, but more importantly they also contribute to it new resources that then help to persuade others to act, one way or another. And that is something we need to understand more fully.

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Notes

[1] The term "rhetorical charms" is our invention but the association of rhetorical devices with "charm" has a long history. For example, St. Augustine of Hippo in *On Christian Doctrine*, (Book Four; published in 426 CE), encourages preachers to make full use of "rhetoric's charm" so long as they do not use rhetoric to promote falsehood. W. Brockriede, "Arguers as Lovers," *Philosophy & Rhetoric, 5*, 1972, pp. 1-11, adapts a Platonic conception of three rhetorical stances—"rape, seduction, and love" to express how "charm" is a major characteristic of rhetorical seduction, a relationship of speaker to audience that relies on deceit, fallacies, and the bedazzlements of language and style. More recently, R. P. Hart's *Modern Rhetorical Criticism, 3rd. ed.,* Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2004, pp. 177-209, uses the concept of rhetorical charm to characterize the appeal of mediated political figures who rely on charisma, simplicity of argument, and humor to influence audiences.   Our use of the term "rhetorical charms" draws upon all three of these standards—the seductive character of surprising/graphic depictions; the simplicity of the humor used to influence audiences, and the caution that such depictions ought not be used to promote falsehoods.

[2] K. Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*. New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1950, pp. 55-59.

[3] F. J. Cilluffo, & D. Kimmage, D. How to beat Al-Qaeda at its own game. *Foreign Policy, April 2009,* http://www.foreignpolicy.com; accessed February 11, 2011.

[4] R. B. Furlow and H. L. Goodall, Jr., (in press). The war of ideas and the battle of narratives: A comparison of extremist storytelling structures. *Cultural Studies—Critical Methodologies, 11*.

[5] J. Halverson, J., H. L. Goodall, Jr., & S. R. Corman. *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism.* New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2011, p. 13.

[6] See, for example, J. Brachman, J., The Approach is Catching On, *Jarret Brachman,* 2010, accessed February 11, 2011, from http://jarretbrachman.net/?p=710 and D. Byman and Chr. Fair, The case for calling them nitwits. *The Atlantic, May 2010,* http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/05/the-   case-for-calling-them-nitwits/8130/ accessed February 11, 2011.

[7] D. C. Peterson, *Muhammad: Prophet of God*.   Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2007, p. 13.

[8] P. M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind.* Manchester University Press, 2003.

[9] M. Waller, *Fighting the War of Ideas like a Real War.* Institute of World Politics

Press, 2007, p. 103.

[10] M. Waller, 2007. - In this case, it extended to overt racist imagery and stereotyping. Please note that we are *not* advising the use of racists depictions of Arabs, merely pointing out the range of ridicule and satiric options that have been deployed over time.

[11] M. Waller, 2007, p. 100.

[12] D. Byman and Chr. Fair, 2010.

[13]] P Chappatte, The Power of Cartoons. Lecture in *Ted Talks*; accessed February 25, 2011 at http://www.ted.com/talks/patrick_chappatte_the_power_of_cartoons.html.

[14] BBC.co.uk. Muslim cartoon row timeline. *BBC Online, 2006*, January 19, 2006; accessed February, 2011 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4688602.stm. It is also worth noting that this same group created a show based on a depiction of the Prophet Mohammad wearing a bear suit, which then prompted RevolutionMuslim.com and Abu Talhah Al-Amrikee to make threats against the lives of Matt Stone and Trey Parker, the show's creators, saying they would end up like Theo Van Gogh, as well as to Comedy Central (the cable company hosting the show). A second episode was planned that featured he image of Santa Claus standing in for Mohammad, but it was cancelled. For a full account, see http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/22/south-park-mohammed-censo_n_547484.html.

[15] M. Kimmelman, M., A startling lesson in the power of imagery. *The New York Times* Online, February 8, 2008; accessed February 11, 2011. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/08/arts/design/08imag.html?ref=danishcartooncontroversy

[16] BBC.co.uk. Muslim cartoon row timeline. *BBC Online*, January 19, 2006 accessed February, 2011 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4688602.stm

[17] J. Brachman, J., Al-Qaeda's armies of one. *Foreign Policy,* January 22, 2011. Accessed February 2011. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/01/22/al_qaedas_armies_of_one?pag   e=0,1. See also F. Burton, F. and S. Stewart, S., Al-Qaeda and the tale of two battlespaces. *STRATFOR,* October 1, 2008; accessed February 2011. http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20081001_al_qaeda_and_tale_two_battlespaces.

[18] J. Brachman, op. cit. (2010a).

[19] Idem.

[20] BBC.co.uk. Text: 'Bin Laden Tape.' *BBC Online*, January 19, 2006; accessed February 28, 2011 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4628932.stm.

[21] J. Brachman, You too can be Awlaki. *Cronus Global*, January 24, 201; accessed February 28, 2011 http://jarretbrachman.net/?p=1157.

[22] W. Churchill and J. Vander Wall. *The COINTELPRO Articles: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars against Dissent in the United States*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2002.

[23] See, for an example: https://www.youtube.com/embed/q2DaOa-x7w0?rel=0.

[24] P. H. Cheong and C. Lundry. Prosumption, Transmediation and Resistance: Terrorism and Man-hunting in Southeast Asia, *American Behavioral Scientist,* in press.

[25] P. H. Cheong and C. Lundry, in press.

[26] P. H. Cheong and C. Clow. Understanding the Digital Transmediation of Terrorism: (Re)presentation of the "Underwear Bomber" in new and social media. Article presented at the Terrorism and New Media: Building a Research Network conference, Dublin City University, Ireland, 8-9 September, 2010.

[27] C. R. Sunstein, C. R. Terrorism and probability neglect. *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty*, 26, (2-3), 2008, pp. 121-136.

[28] S. R. Corman, S.R. D. J. Dooley, K. J. *Strategic Communication on a Rugged Landscape: Principles for Finding the Right Message*. Report #0801, Consortium for Strategic Communication, Arizona State University, 2008; accessed February 28, 2011 at: http://comops.org/article/121.pdf.

[29] D. Bernardi, P. H. Cheong, C. Lundry, and S. Ruston, S. Explosive Narratives: Rumors, Islamic Extremism, and the Struggle for Strategic Influence. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, in press. See also C. Lundry and P. H. Cheong, Rumors and Strategic Communication: The Gendered Construction and Transmediation of a Terrorist Life Story. In T. Kuhn (ed.). Matters of Communication/Matters of Engagement. NJ: Hampton Press, in press.

[30] M. Gladwell. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co, 2002.