

# Commandant's Note

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## INFORMATION WARFARE The Next Dimension

Information warfare has existed as long as man has waged war. The information war burgeoned during World War II, when the keepers of the information key were the cryptographers, for it was they who both encoded our own operational documents and decoded those of the enemy. Captured German and Japanese naval codes enabled America and the Allies to read our adversaries' mail, as it were, for a long time, and the information gained led to victories on the ground, in the air, and at sea. The massive British effort on the Ultra Project laid bare the Germans' main cryptographic system, saved countless lives from D-Day forward, and set the stage for major defeats of German forces. Conversely, denial of intercept traffic caused us to be caught off guard. As U. S. Air Force Chief of Staff General Ronald R. Fogleman pointed out in an address called *Information Operations: The Fifth Dimension of War*, "...the Germans gained tactical surprise at the Battle of the Bulge by shutting down the communications lines we had tapped. They had gone to other tactical comm[unication] systems to send messages. And our lack of information played a role in the Germans' success."

The importance of a synchronized, executable information operation is as critical today as it was during World War II. In fact, a common theme in our lessons learned conferences, work groups, panels, and visits is that we are continuing to struggle with the definition, planning, and execution of information warfare in current operations. In Iraq, the impact of the 11 critical variables of the contemporary operating environment on the population has been particularly illustrative and has been magnified by information efforts that support the disparate agendas of the multiple enemies of stability. Both the noncompliant forces and the Coalition depend on the host nation's population for labor, security, intelligence, and — most importantly — legitimacy. Failures in information operations can have a devastating effect on these efforts.



Our adversary plans and fights asymmetrically. In order to stem the tide of insurgent attacks and win the support of the population, we must become equally asymmetric. We must communicate our intentions and counter the enemy's propaganda machine to further stability efforts, gather intelligence, and deny the enemy the means of waging war. One initiative might be to position forward operating bases away from host nation population centers to reduce the perception that we are an occupying power. Such a move diminishes perceptions of a disparity between our lifestyle and that of the host population. Likewise, it will reduce the vulnerability our forward operating bases have experienced with mortar attacks, vehicle-borne explosive devices, OPSEC, and disinformation. This initiative, and the many others like it, developed by agile thinking and adaptive commanders helps us isolate this parasite-like enemy that terrorizes and misleads the population in order to gain support for his agenda.

Let there be no doubt that we are fighting an adaptable and cunning enemy. He has transitioned from cell phones to sermons to graffiti as a means to communicate with his followers. In Iraq, we have undertaken civic action projects and erected signs to show U.S. and Iraqi government efforts to improve citizens' quality of life. The insurgents, in turn, have resorted to the simple expedient of painting over these signs and claiming credit for the work themselves. We must quickly identify the information efforts of the enemy in order to alter their effect and exploit them in our favor if possible. Commanders must synchronize their civil affairs, security, public affairs, psychological operations (PSYOPS), intelligence and cultural support assets available to gain the effect desired in our battlespace. Too often we're finding efforts to use informational power uncoordinated. For instance, during Operation Iraqi Freedom we had an incident of an airborne radio broadcasting platform enticing Iraqi citizens to come out of their homes to celebrate their freedom, while the ground maneuver

commander was using his PSYOPS detachment to tell noncombatants to stay indoors to avoid being mistaken for enemy combatants. We must also recognize and mitigate the unintended second and third-order effects of all our kinetic and non-kinetic actions directed against the enemies of democracy inside and outside of Afghanistan and Iraq. Two examples of how we can achieve this are providing commanders with nonlethal technologies and more precision munition options to minimize collateral personnel or material damage. These efforts give commanders on the ground options to shape public opinion derived by some of our necessary kinetic actions. Specifically, we must avoid information fratricide by working with our sister services, allies, and other agencies to provide the commanders both material and nonmaterial solutions to our information management dilemmas. At a minimum, we must identify the informational fratricide risks in our actions and mitigate their adverse impacts. In addition to synchronizing our internal PSYOPS, PAO, and Intelligence efforts in our own formations, we must coordinate and synchronize the efforts of everyone in our AO. This includes our sister services, governmental and non-governmental agencies, international agencies, and host nation forces. Unity of command and unity of effort within each commander's battlespace is the objective.

The Iraqi insurgents' ability to capitalize on our information miscues — albeit somewhat unsophisticated — can be effective. Recently, U.S. units raided and seized an enemy facility disguised as an Islamic school, or Madrassa, capturing weapons, documents, and enemy personnel. Seizure of the structure required force entry techniques, which damaged the door. When U.S. forces later returned to the site, the door had been repaired and insurgents were undoubtedly propagating the belief that the U.S. destroys schools, while they care enough to repair them. To be sure, such incidents are only skirmishes in the information war, but we must deny the enemy every opportunity to present America and her

armed forces in a negative context. We employ footage of large scale operations to illustrate our commitment and preponderance of force, while he claims it to be arbitrary violence of an occupying force. The enemy violates generally accepted rules of war by militarizing religious facilities and storing weapons, ammunition, and explosives in them, but local media assail us for returning fire against such facilities or discovering and publicizing such violations. Quickly acting and reacting to these allegations is essential, but our information operations must not be limited to minimizing the effects of enemy attacks; we are doing far too many positive things in the nations where we are deployed to let them go unreported. We have to tell our story. The Army and Marine Corps work with imbedded reporting is one example of how to show our point of view where previously our media was steered by the agenda of others. While it is important for our audience here at home to see the positive, progressive aspect of operations overseas, it is equally important that the people of Iraq and Afghanistan and those of the region understand the magnitude of our commitment. Similarly, we must demonstrate our resolve through every informational means available to show our adversaries that we are in the fight for the long haul and that it is costly if he persists in pursuing his illegitimate agenda.

Information operations are a combat multiplier that we must employ if we are to engage and defeat an enemy whose ability to fight asymmetrically may well be his greatest — and perhaps only — advantage. We must integrate all of our assets into our operations, consider their consequences, and synchronize our efforts. We are fast learners, and our success in seizing and retaining the initiative in this dimension of combat is limited only by our own imagination. Learn from an imaginative and resourceful enemy; study what he has done up to now, but look as well for the things he has not yet tried.

Follow me!

*A PSYOPS Soldier hands out newspapers during a patrol in Mosul, Iraq.*

Sergeant Jeremiah Johnson

