HANDBOOK

Division Commander's Guide

to Information Operations in OIF and OEF

Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

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Foreword

Warfare in the 21st Century necessitates a complete shift in the way we think and the way we fight. More than ever, the use of nonlethal effects is having a profound impact on conflicts. Much of today's battlefield is in the minds of the public, shaped by the spoken word, cyberspace, media, and other means of strategic communications, as well as by our physical actions. Consequently, melding information with physical operations may very well be decisive in counterinsurgency and other stability operations. By melding information operations with physical operations, the division commander, who is executing a war against an insurgency and simultaneously attempting to pacify a populace, can gain the respect, compliance, and support of the people who may tip the balance in his favor. The enemy has become adept at all means of communications, in particular information operations, and uses his actions to reinforce his message. As a result, he influences not only the indigenous population but also the world as a whole. We must, as an Army, use all of our resources in a coordinated effort to regain the initiative and become proactive on the 21st Century battlefield.

This handbook is designed to provide you, the Division Commander, with a short guide to plan, conduct, and assess operations, ensuring effective integration of physical and information operations. Major points in this handbook are:

- The ability of the enemy to generate popular support is his center of gravity.
- All actions, lethal and nonlethal, impact either positively or negatively on his center of gravity.
- Commanders must define a clear end state for their operations and the intermediate goals to achieve it.
- The intermediate goals equate to actions and perceptions of the people in the area of operations.
- The means of achieving these goals include all lethal and nonlethal means at the Division's disposal, including key leader personal engagements.

Regaining the initiative in the information fight requires adaptive and creative leaders who can effectively integrate information operations with all the warfighting functions into a seamless plan.

William B. Caldwell, IV
Lieutenant General, US Army
Commanding

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Introduction

The enemy in both Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) clearly conduct operations for the information value they provide. It is a war of attrition against our will. They will stop at nothing to defeat or diminish our message and its importance. This attrition of the will involves the coalition societies and governments as well the indigenous population and its government. The playing field is not level and favors the insurgent. They operate inside the society with intent to influence and control the people. The coalition forces are outsiders. They bring their varied cultures, traits, languages, and understanding to the indigenous population's environment, and they are seen as occupiers. In the face of this reality, the coalition often conducts operations without recognizing and integrating the informational impacts of the lethal and nonlethal means employed. This handbook highlights best practices used by senior tactical commanders in theater to integrate information and physical operations. The intent of this handbook is to aid deploying senior commanders in developing guidance and conducting operations in the current operational environment. This handbook provides tools commanders can use to maximize the effectiveness of their operational plans and achieve their desired end states.

As always, new ways of thinking about operations stretch established doctrine. Counterinsurgency (COIN) is a battle for information and influence. The center of gravity is the popular support of the people, and both the coalition and the insurgents work hard to influence that support. The coalition's goal is to destroy the insurgents' ability to gain this popular support by stopping the insurgents' acts of violence and their manipulation of the population.

"We are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle for the hearts and minds of our Umma." **Ayman al-Zawahri to Abu al-Zarqawi, 2005**	**"Regardless of the value we place on IO, the enemy has made it clear that his key to victory is the domination of this most critical line of operation."** **Major General Peter W. Chiarelli** *Military Review*, **September-October 2007**

Early in predeployment training, effective units integrate planning, execution, and assessment of information operations. Continuous consciousness of the information aspects of all combat and noncombat actions contributes to the commander's planning and targeting processes.

Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, states that in COIN the enemy's ability to generate and sustain popular support is usually his center of gravity. By extension, the friendly center of gravity is the support of the people for the government and the coalition. Every action must be measured by its impact on these centers of gravity. Division commanders focus on influencing many groups in their areas of operations (AOs) in many ways. The general population must be influenced to support the coalition and the government. Lawless elements must be influenced to stop actions that contribute to the insecurity of the population. Religious, tribal, and political leaders must be persuaded that the best hope for their people is to support a stable government that allows religious, economic, and political freedom. To

influence these groups, division commanders employ a number of tools. They make use of some aspects of information operations (IO) (particularly psychological operations [PSYOP] and deception operations).[1] They use other classic influencing means such as civil-military operations (CMO), military support to public diplomacy, and public affairs (PA). They use lethal and nonlethal operations to defeat insurgents and also to influence the population to withhold support from the insurgents and transfer that support to the coalition and to the government. There is not a doctrinal term for this grouping of domains. In a perfect world, this grouping would simply be called operations, but the term influencing operations is sometimes used in theater to emphasize the reason the unit conducts these operations. To be consistent with emerging doctrine, this handbook will not use the term influencing operations but rather discuss how operations influence targeted groups.

> **"I am absolutely convinced that we must approach information operations in a different way and turn it from a passive Warfighting discipline to a very active one. We must learn to employ aggressive information operations."**
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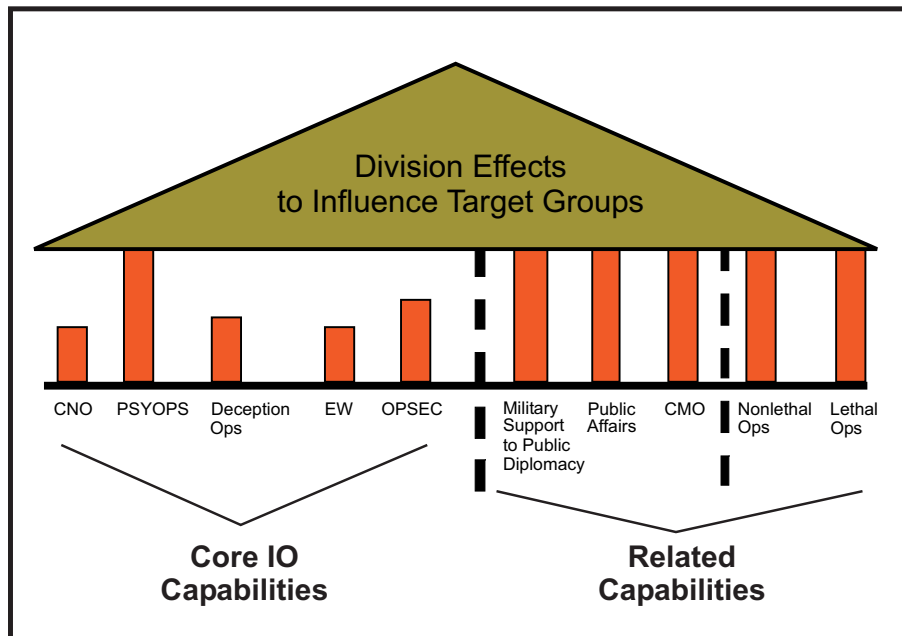> **Lieutenant General Thomas Metz, *Military Review*, May-June 2006**

Figure 1. Relative contribution to influencing groups to achieve division goal

This handbook focuses on:

- Formulating the desired end state.

- Identifying target audiences.

- Identifying the means to influence each target group.

- Developing division guidance.

- Focusing on the end state.

- Integrating all tools into the targeting process.

Formulating the Desired End State

The first step is to formulate the desired end state and break it into intermediate goals. In COIN, the desired end state is that the people support the government and withhold support from the insurgents. This is a long-term end state and will not be completely achieved in a single deployment. An aggressive, yet achievable, portion of that end state must be articulated to focus the efforts of the division.

> **"The information environment is just as much a part of the battlespace as the physical environment, and commanders at all levels must plan to operate in both environments simultaneously."**
>
> **Lieutenant General Raymond T. Odierno**
> **Commanding General, Multi-National Corps-Iraq, November 2007**

The intermediate goals are not necessarily enemy positions to seize or forces to destroy as in military operations of the past. Often these intermediate goals will consist of positive actions by a segment of the society. These positive actions are influenced by their perception of what is in their best long-term interest – it could be supporting a democratic government that allows religious, economic, and political freedom. An intermediate goal could be simply a lack of attacks by the enemy. Any group of people or organized body/cell in the AO can be a target group. The operational art is identifying the intermediate goals that add up to achieving the desired end state. Many methods and tools are available to the commander to achieve the desired end state and to impact target groups. Persuade, deter, convince, empower, confuse, or co-opt are key effects that commanders will try to achieve through lethal and nonlethal actions. Whatever the method, it must build on other actions to reach the desired end state.

Identifying Target Groups

The next step is identifying the target Groups that make up these intermediate goals. Division commanders must identify the key leaders and groups in their AO.

When identifying target groups, consider the following groups and leaders:

- **Leaders**:

    ° Religious leaders (*imams* and *sheiks*)

    ° Local politicians

    ° Tribal *sheiks*

    ° Cultural leaders

    ° Police and military leaders

- **Population**:

    º Local and regional population

    º Insurgents

    º Criminal elements

    º Security, police, and border forces

    º Popular icons

    º Writers

    º Editors

The fact that some leaders/opinion makers are both targets to be influenced as well as the means the division will use to influence other target groups confuses many. The dual nature of the target can complicate the process when the staff tries to tie the targets to the means used to influence their perceptions and actions.

Other factors also affect how key leaders and public opinion perceive actions and their effects. The perception of reality is as important as the reality itself.
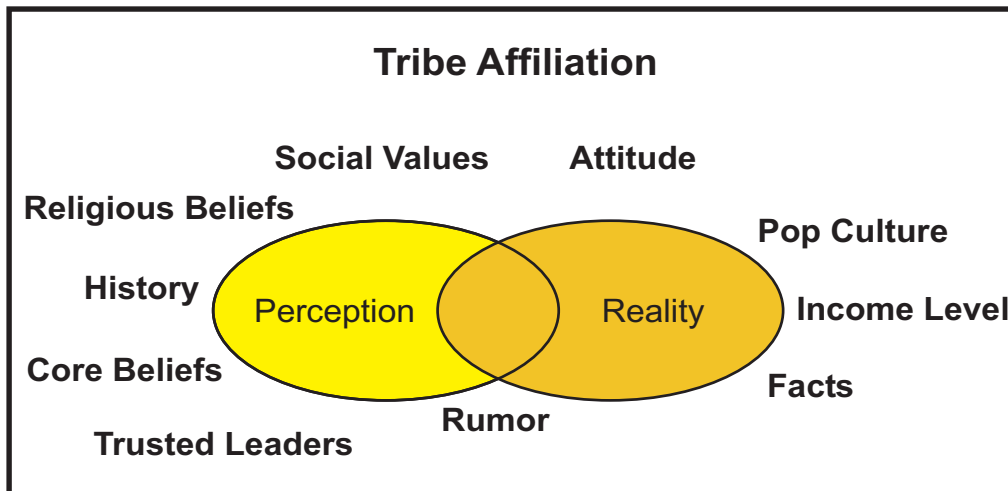

Figure 2. Factors shaping perception and reality

Getting each target group to the intermediate goal requires a clear set of events with an explicit or implicit message that achieves the desired perceptions and actions. At this point, the focus must be on the required message, not the means. The clearly developed message must:

- Be culturally appropriate to the audience (best to use trusted locals to get this right).

- Move the target group to the desired perceptions and actions.

- Be simple enough to be easily promulgated by all available means.
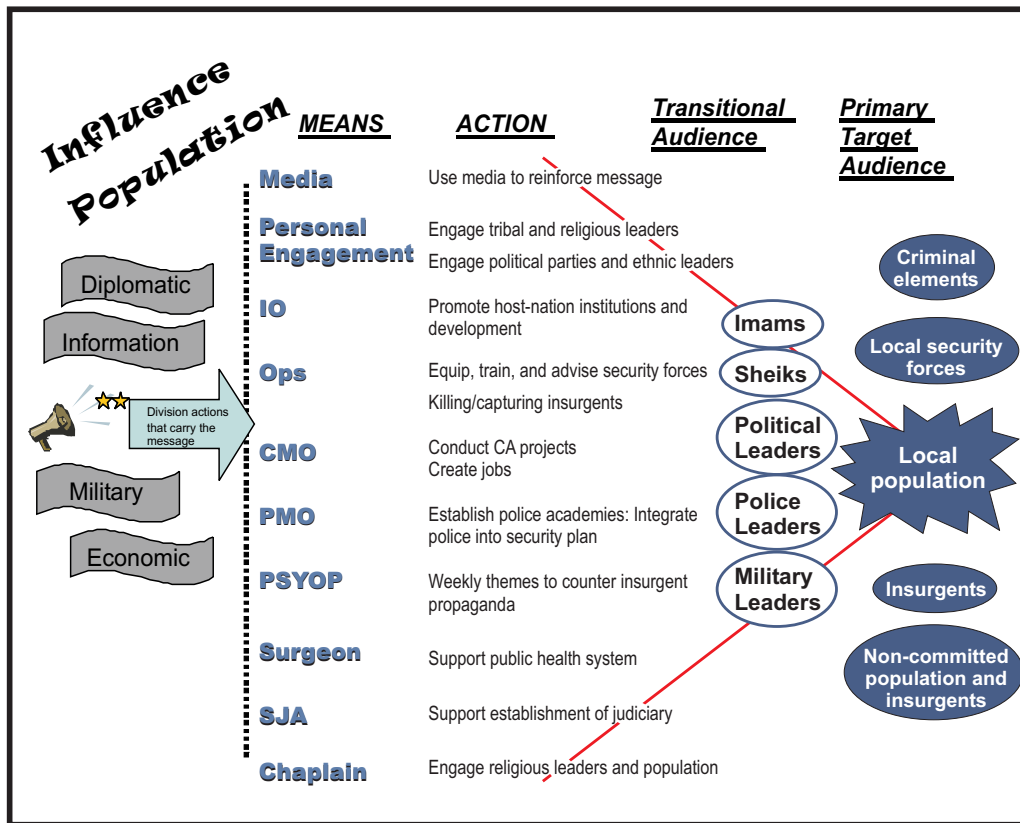
Figure 3. Influencing the population

Identifying Means to Influence the Target

Identification of a target and the division message often suggest the means and the actions to influence the opinion makers, who in turn disseminate the division's message to influence the target group.

The next step in the process is to identify the means and actions to carry the message to influence the target group. Consider the following elements and venues when selecting a means and required action:

- Media (local, regional, international, U.S.):

    º Radio

    º Television (satellite and terrestrial)

    º Print

    º Internet

- Commander engagement:
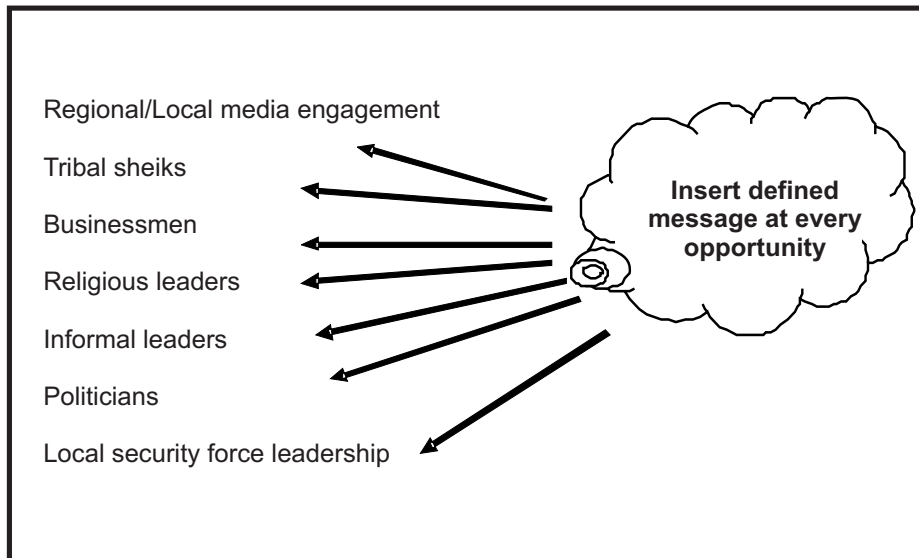

Figure 4. Defined message

- Operations:

    º Lethal operations and nonlethal operations

    º Arrests

    º Patrols (Soldiers are the best ambassadors)

    º Military and police training

    º Training volunteer security forces

- CMO:

    º Money (to kick start economic development)

    º Civil projects

- Medical health services:

    º Medical civic action programs

    º Veterinary services

- Staff judge advocate:

    º Engage Iraq and Afghani judicial system to improve justice practices of detainees and other legal issues.

    º Reduce crime through the institution of the rule of law.

- Chaplain: Engage religious leaders and population.

- Other venues:

    º Coffee houses

    º Markets

    º Cultural sites

    º Other places rumors spread

> **"Although IO and PA officers, effects coordinators, and others provide critical staff support to the information campaign, commanders must take the lead and be intimately involved in ensuring that the information aspects of military operations are considered in every action we undertake."**
>
> **Major General Peter W. Chiarelli**
> ***Military Review*, September-October 2007**

Developing Division Guidance

As in high-intensity operations, the division commander's role in influencing target groups when planning and executing COIN operations is critical. The only difference is that in COIN:

- People are the objective.

- Messages are the weapons.

- Media, CMO, face-to-face contacts, lethal and nonlethal combat operations, and patrols are the avenues of approach.
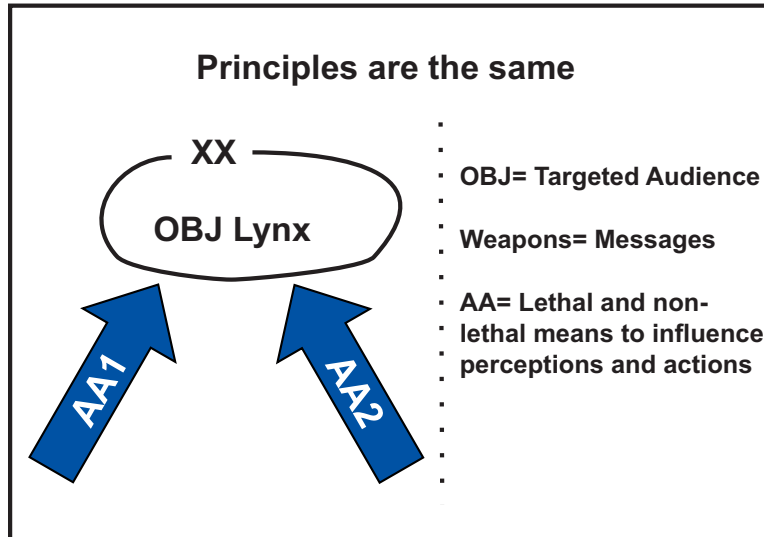
Principles are the same

XX

OBJ Lynx

AA1

AA2

- OBJ= Targeted Audience

- Weapons= Messages

- AA= Lethal and non-lethal means to influence perceptions and actions

Figure 5: Relationship between high-intensity and COIN concepts

When constructing division guidance consider the following key tenets:

- Execute every operation that increases security, economic viability, or quality of life aggressively.

- Deeds speak louder than words; however, words are required before, during, and after actions to achieve the desired effect and prevent the "hijacking" of the message.

- Bullets carry their own messages, and sometimes bullets may be the best way to influence the target group. If so, take action, but evaluate the cost and benefit of **each action** in terms of its effect on the support of the people, the coalition, and the insurgents.

- The division must engage all top-tier opinion makers and audiences in the division AO, the brigades engage the second tier, and so on. Plan regular contact each with a defined purpose.

- Identify and target tribes, clans, and religious, ethnic, and social groups that must be influenced appropriately and actively.

- Leverage all communications means aggressively. The first one to the microphone wins when an insurgent attack occurs. Have a battle drill ready. A host-nation face is the best, but any coalition face is better than an insurgent's. When units help care for the wounded, they send a clear positive message that the insurgents are the bad guys.

- Focus on the end state and the message – the means will change. If an approach does not work, change it and keep changing it until it works, then pile on.

- Do not delay in taking action for fear of negative repercussions. The division can stand a mistake, but it cannot stand inaction.

- Soldiers must understand their roles as ambassadors to the indigenous people. The division builds trust with the population every day with everything it does.

- Operations to influence disparate audiences are decentralized, and units must be able to react, when required, to enemy actions. Rules and a framework are necessary, but initiative and improvisation must be encouraged.
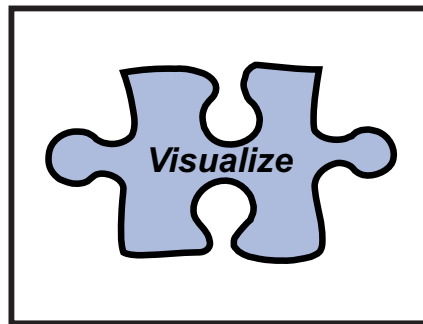
- Be prepared for operations conducted by higher or adjacent units that may inadvertently interfere with the division message. Coordination can lessen the number of occurrences, but it will happen. The division must be ready to react by communicating with the affected audience quickly and honestly.

The published division guidance must clearly articulate the commander's:

- Visualization of the information environment.

- Description of what must happen to accomplish the end state.

- Direction of intent, planning guidance, and priority intelligence requirements (PIR).

- Criteria for assessing the success of efforts.

The commander's visualization must address the information environment:

- What achievable end state environment, conditions, and perceptions are required for successful mission accomplishment?

- What information operations directives have been provided by higher headquarters?

- To what extent is influence achievable within the AO?

- For what period of time is influence possible?

- How does the division aggressively engage the enemy and the population that supports him with all available means and maintain that influence to preclude the enemy message supplanting its own?

- How does the unit achieve and maintain influence at decisive times and locations to ensure the military operation moves the population toward support of the government and coalition?

- Which portion of the lines of operation will the division pursue, and which portions will brigades pursue?

- What exactly can the staff do to affect the operations positively or negatively, and what guidance or policies are needed to allow the staff to act?

- How does the division anticipate the extent to which the threat can render its information campaign ineffective, and what must be done to counter these efforts?

- How does the division react to targets of opportunity presented by the enemy, such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), chemical attacks, assassinations of local leaders, etc.?

- What influence "battle drills" are planned and authorized?
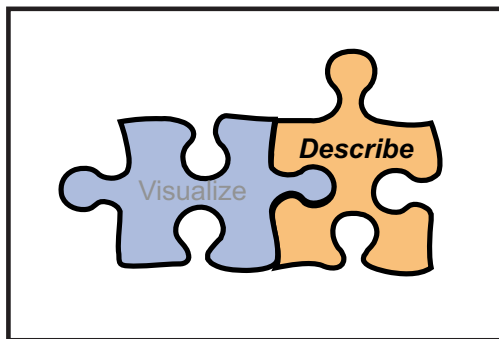
The commander must clearly communicate what the division units must do to accomplish the end state:

- What are the mission, key tasks, and desired end state; and who must be influenced, how, and by whom?

- How will the available influence elements (combat power, CMO, media) be integrated into the battle plan?

- What PIR are required that directly affect decision making, enable successful execution of operations, and are focused on target groups and end state?
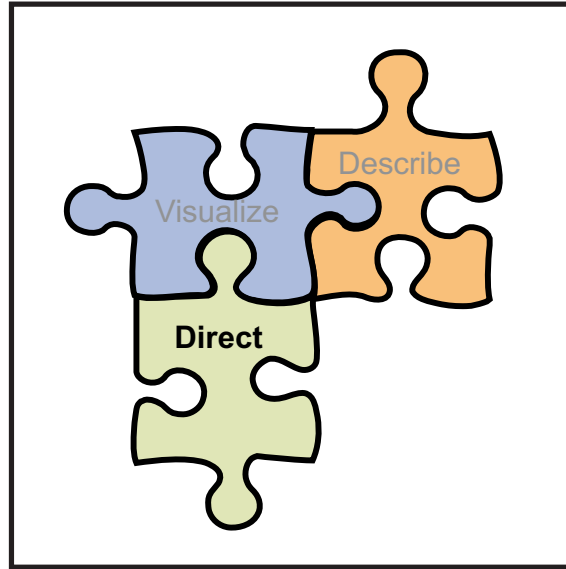
Success depends on command emphasis, direct involvement, a clear commander's intent, planning guidance, and PIR:

- Commander directs what end states (perceptions and actions) are desired and what messages are to be disseminated to achieve division goals and to support efforts from higher headquarters.

- Commander directs how to influence target groups and how related activities will be synchronized to mass effects by building trust and confidence; communicate information; promote support; counter enemy propaganda, misinformation, rumors, and confusion; and reduce fear and apprehension.

- Commander actively bridges the potential "stovepipes" among G2, G3, G4, G7, G8, G9, and PA to ensure coordination and synchronization.

- Commander establishes priorities for collecting, processing, and disseminating PIR.

- Commander synchronizes subordinate units' efforts with the efforts of his headquarters.

- Commander supports subordinate units by providing unit enablers, such as intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance; PSYOP; human intelligence (HUMINT); money; combat camera; and public affairs detachment, along with others.
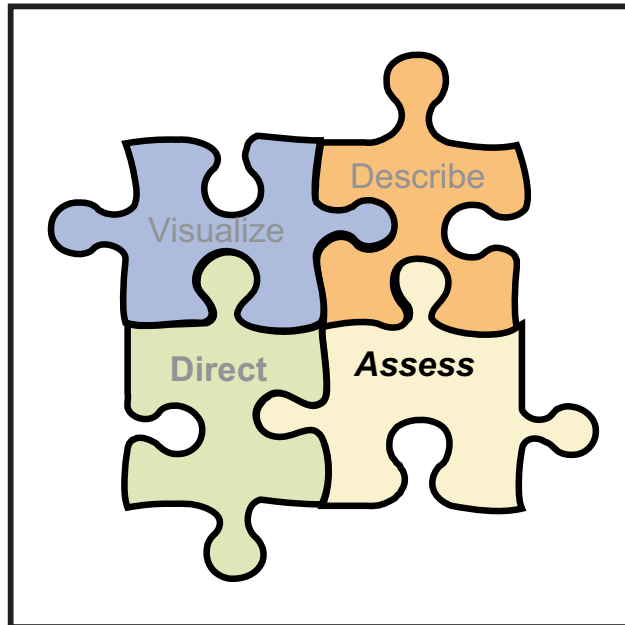
Without assessment, the commander cannot really know how his efforts are impacting the enemy's center of gravity. Assessment should be integral to every battle-rhythm cycle:

- Assessment criteria must be measurable and tied to intermediate goals and end states.

- Subordinate units must understand the criteria they are collecting data against. All echelons of command should share analysis of data.

- Assessments should be as objective as possible.

- Incorporating assessments from other agencies, both governmental and nongovernmental, into a division assessment helps provide context for an overall assessment.

- All assessments must account for cultural biases of those personnel collecting the data and analyzing the data. Use of a Red Team in assessments may uncover weaknesses in logic of the assessment and provide opportunities for the threat to exploit these weaknesses.

- Friendly, adversary, and neutral diplomatic, informational, and economic actions in the operational environment can impact military actions and objectives. When relevant to the mission, the commander also evaluates the results of these actions.

- Fit the plan to the circumstances, not the circumstances to the plan.

Focusing Planning on the End State

To influence the targets and achieve the intermediate goals that will result in the desired end state, all operations must be planned with the influencing aspects of the actions in mind. The division commander drives the operations that take place and must ensure that:

- All lethal and nonlethal combat operations are derived from an assessment of their influencing effects as shown in Figures 6 and 7.

- All opinion makers are specifically targeted for influence by someone in the division.

- The G2 develops a demographic analysis of the AO and population to enable targeting.

- Planning for influence aspects of all actions is integrated into the staff process.

- The plan to influence each target individual and group is manageable and achievable.

- The focus is on the targeted audience's current attitudes and needs and is culturally appropriate.

- The message continuously beats the enemy to the punch. If the message follows operations, it is too late.

- Long lead times are anticipated and incorporated into plans; "flash to bang time" of actions intended to influence can be quite long compared to traditional lethal operations.

At all levels, IO must be nested in the higher headquarters' campaign plan. It must be a natural out flow from the national command intent and interagency strategic communications plan. These coordinated actions will guide how we respond to stability operation requirements and determine how we combine lethal and nonlethal force at each level of operations.

In today's operational environment, an amalgamation of many intelligence disciplines contribute to planning for nonlethal and lethal combat operations. Just as the need to combine lethal and nonlethal planning is key to the commander's effects process, the integration of traditional and non-traditional intelligence collection and analysis is essential upfront in the planning and throughout execution.
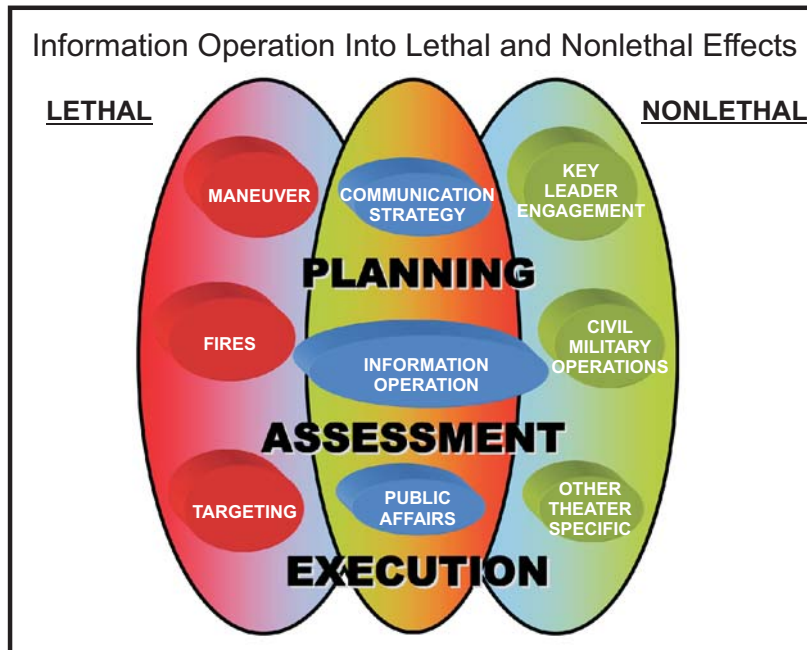
Figure 6. Selection of the mix of lethal and nonlethal action

Key indicators of an integrated plan include:

- Clearly identified and targeted individuals and audiences.

- Evidence that the unit appreciates the physical as well as the influence effects on each target.

- PIR that include the temperament of the target group.

- An allocation of all means to influence the perception and actions of individuals and audiences. (Nothing should be held in reserve; however, priorities should be clear to allow rapid reallocation.)

- Subordinate commanders who know the identity and temperament of key opinion makers in their AO, as well as key groups (tribes, clans, religious, and ethnic groups), how they overlap, how to influence them, and who is responsible for each.

- A plan to increase the indigenous participation in operations that influence individuals and groups over time.

Integrating All Tools into the Targeting Process

This handbook presents a way to identify target groups and the means to influence the target, develop division guidance, and incorporate influencing operations into planning. All of these make up the "decide" step of targeting (using the decide, detect, deliver, and assess [D3A] construct). The commander must integrate influencing considerations into the entire targeting process by incorporating them into the D3A phases as well.

Some targeting principles for division operations include the following:

- Focus division efforts on targets that cannot be reached effectively by subordinate echelons.

- Division targeting staff, in concert with subordinate echelons, define where the handoff of targeting efforts occurs for each target.

- Continuing to incorporate the doctrinal steps of D3A.

- Prior to execution in a COIN environment, continue to refine targeting data; however; the basic steps of targeting remain the same.

- Similar messages can be perceived very differently by different audiences. The potential for negative effect on varied audiences is inevitable. Avoid or mitigate these effects by developing plans before conducting the operation.
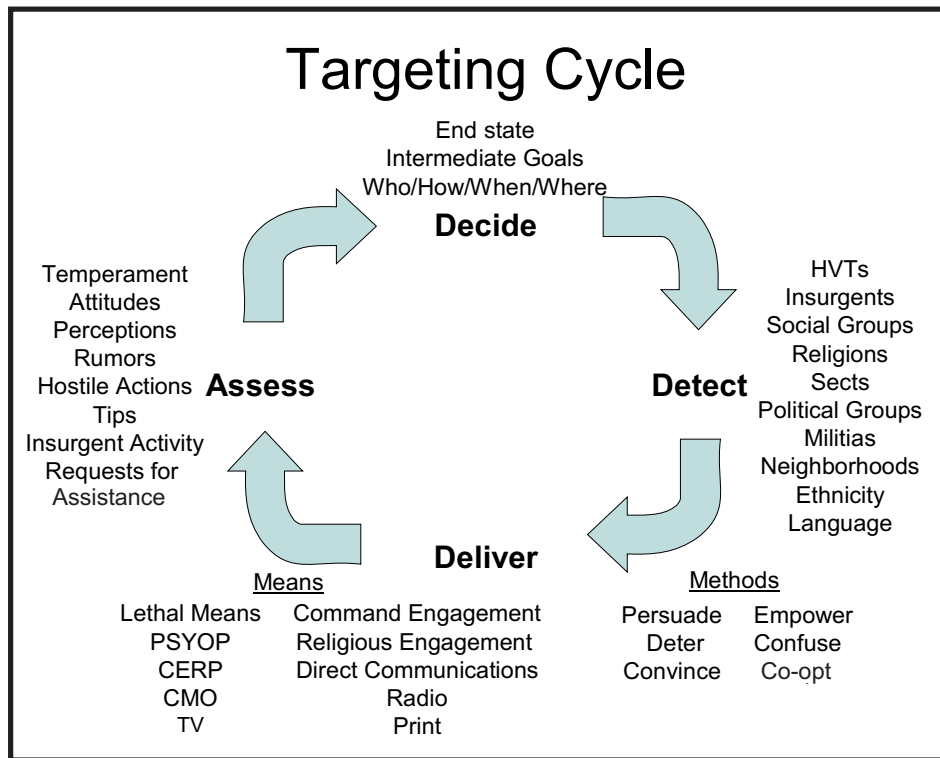

Figure 7: Tools integrated into the targeting process

The skills for detecting targets are still required because lethal operations will be conducted; however, additional skills, such as gauging the temperament of individuals and groups, are required. Most of these groups will not be trying to evade the coalition. They may just be trying to get by day-to-day, and they may not be forthcoming or positively disposed to provide information to the coalition. Too much focus on behaviors, especially at the individual level, could cause a negative effect.

The greater challenge will result from the need to "detect" the susceptibility of a particular audience to be influenced. Uncovering this receptiveness to influence may point to the best means to target that particular audience. The factors that influence perception and reality are the target refinement data that will better focus the means chosen to deliver a message, as well as the message itself, to the particular target.

Delivering messages requires coordination between systems, many of which may be unfamiliar to the division before it deploys. Messages can be transmitted by both lethal and nonlethal means as shown in Figures 6 and 7. Messages have a way of "bleeding over" between audiences, and the effect on one audience may be very different from the effect on another. Take care to select means that minimize this bleed over or to mitigate any negative effects. Transmit via several different means (depending on the receptiveness of the target group) to a variety of audiences and execute many actions to achieve the desired goal.

Throughout this process, the division staff must assess all targeting actions as well as changes in the targeted audience brought on by other events:

- Assessment must account for the perceptions of the targeted audience as opposed to the staffs' subjective assessment.

- Some measurable factors are shown in Figure 7. The list is certainly not inclusive but is indicative of factors being measured in theater.

- These factors should feed the commander's overall assessment of the targeting process and form the foundation of any re-attack or adjustment of the message or the means.

- Assessment without baseline data is meaningless. No real assessment can take place unless there is a concerted effort to organize for assessment in the "decide" phase of D3A before any actions have occurred.

> **"Commanders might also look closely at any National Guard and Reserve units attached to them during deployment. Many of the Soldiers in these units already have unique skill sets (e.g., law enforcement, finance, computers and telecommunications) that make them excellent choices to serve as intelligence augmentees."**
>
> **Colonel Ralph Baker, *Military Review*, March-April 2007**

Conclusion

A commander's understanding of the relationship between information operations and physical, military operations has drastically changed. He can no longer see them as opposite sides of the operations coin – looking at one side when he plans lethal operations and the other side when he plans "everything else." Successful commanders see both types of operations as bricks that build on one another to achieve a desired effect. Gone is the day that killing an enemy is an effect. Now killing an enemy is a means to achieve an effect like any nonlethal operation.

Operations focused on influencing the will of the indigenous people, the enemy, and the world community are more than enablers in the Global War on Terrorism; they are the decisive actions. A bullet that hits its target but causes other, unintended consequences could be as debilitating to the effort as a real or manufactured scandal or a tactical defeat. Commanders have to recognize the intended and unintended effects of their lethal as well as nonlethal actions.

Staffs coordinate actions, but integrating information and physical operations is "Commander Business." Successful commanders in theater are training their subordinates to think how every action affects the support of the people they are trying to influence. Commanders then give their subordinates latitude and top-cover to operate effectively. The playing field is often tipped in favor of the insurgent; he selects his time and place of attack and calls off attacks if the calculus is not favorable. Despite this, decisions made quickly on the scene by junior leaders and commanders can turn the enemy's attacks against him in the only area that is truly decisive, the minds of the people.

> **"IO is not everything, but everything we do has an IO effect"**
>
> **Comments from a Field Grade Officer in OIF 2005**

Endnote

1 The other aspects of information operations, computer network operations, electronic warfare, and operational security may come into play but are not part of the cognitive influencing aspects of IO. They have distinct roles in COIN that will be covered in another handbook.

References

Key references, handbooks, publications, and articles pertaining to IO and leveraging IO include:

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Combat Studies Institute (CSI)

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Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate (CADD)

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Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO)

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United States Army Information Operations Proponent (USAIOP)

USAIOP is responsible for developing and documenting all IO requirements for doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities; managing the eight personnel life cycles for officers in the IO functional area; and coordinating and teaching the qualification course for information operations officers. Find USAIOP at <http://usacac.army.mil/CAC/usaiop.asp>.

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