



# The Information Warfighter Exercise Wargame

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## Player's Guide

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# The Information Warfighter Exercise Wargame: Player's Guide

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## 1. Introduction to IWX

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Welcome to the wargame portion of the Information Warfighter Exercise (IWX). This *Player's Guide* is both an introduction to and a reference for the wargame. Please read this guide before the game and keep it to refer to during the game.

The purpose of the IWX is to give you an opportunity to employ operations in the information environment (OIE) theories, tactics, doctrine, and techniques in a fast-moving, competitive, notional scenario. In the game you will play the role of either a BLUE (Marine Corps) or RED (adversary) staff member. Together with your team, you will compete to plan and apply information-related capabilities (IRCs) to influence, inform, or deceive in support of operations. Your adversaries will be planning and acting to undermine you and to defeat your side's operation. Staff members and experts from an exercise control (EXCON) cell will serve as referees and provide feedback during and after the event.

### 1.1. Where to Turn for Help

Each team will have an embedded EXCON representative who will help guide the players through gameplay and answer questions. Role-players for the operations officer (S3) and intelligence officer (S2), as well as subject-matter experts from the Marine Corps Information Operations Center (MCIOC), and possibly supporting organizations, will be available to respond to queries and adjudicate issues. This *Player's Guide* should provide answers to most basic gameplay questions.

### 1.2. Your Team and Your Role

The IWX splits participants into two competing teams. Your team is the Information Operations Working Group (IOWG) or OIE operational planning team (OPT) within a BLUE or RED staff.

Before beginning the game, you should have already received a block of instruction on OIE and information about the scenario mission and

maneuver plan, and had an opportunity to plan and prepare an OIE concept of support. If you do not have a reasonably well-fleshed-out OIE concept of support prior to the start of the wargame, you may struggle!

You will rotate roles within your team throughout the event. Each team member will be given an opportunity to brief an action from your plan and defend the action in a debate with an adversary staff representative. You will report to the S3 role-player on your staff and try to convince the S3 to approve and support the elements of your plan. Your primary responsibility will be to apply effective OIE tactics, tools, and techniques to support your command's main and supporting efforts. Specifically, your team will need to do the following:

1. Clearly describe your target, target audience (TA), or audience and the desired effect.
2. Continually reassess the information environment and adapt to friction and the fog of war.
3. Make sound and effective arguments for the employment of IRCs.
4. Describe the effects and outcomes you want to inflict on the adversary.
5. Describe the effectiveness of your defensive IRC activities.
6. Brief clearly and effectively and be prepared to answer difficult questions.
7. Argue successfully against the opposed team.

### 1.3. What Is a Wargame?

If you are familiar with wargames, please skip to the next section. A wargame is generally a competitive tabletop or computer game designed to help players think through difficult military problems without actually expending resources, fighting, and suffering casualties. Wargames are therefore primarily *learning events* that allow you to safely make mistakes and try out innovative actions with no real risk. Wargames are often played around one or more tables, with a map or game board at the center of the table. Players control limited resources, such as military units, or, in this case,

leaflet drops, radio broadcasts, key leader engagements (KLEs), etc., and seek to defeat an opposing team in a turn-based contest. An *adjudicated* wargame like the IWX wargame has a team of staff members and experts on hand to guide the game from turn to turn and resolve the outcomes of player actions. Adjudicated games allow the players to focus more on the scenario and less on the rules of the game.

#### **1.4. Play the Scenario, Not the Game**

This wargame is a learning opportunity for you and for your teammates. You will learn most effectively if you immerse yourself in your staff role and stay focused on effectively applying information power. Some wargamers become distracted by rules and exert energy trying to defeat the game rather than the adversary; playing that way runs counter to the purpose of the IWX. Accept that you will not master the rules of the game, even by the end of the event, and that some events will be determined partly by chance through dice rolls. Ask questions and allow the staff to help you with the game mechanics while you stay focused on your role. Be willing to make mistakes (or experience bad dice luck), and then improvise, adapt, and overcome. Intend to prevail because of your ideas and plans, not because of gamesmanship.

#### **1.5. Compete Respectfully**

Some players' competitive drives can lead them to behavior that runs counter to what is ideal for the success of the wargame as a training event. For example, players sometimes "fight the scenario" and engage in extended disagreements about what is fair or realistic, or become hostile and argumentative toward members of the opposing team. Guard against letting your competitive instincts get the better of you. You are encouraged to compete, debate, and disagree with the other side (and sometimes even your own side!), but only in an appropriately respectful way.

## **2. General Overview of Gameplay**

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Each team will have responsibility for generating a plan for OIE to support the objectives of the force of which they are notionally a part. The larger plan for the operation, including the overall commander's intent and scheme of maneuver, is largely fixed and is part of the planning context. Teams of players should be bringing a well-developed concept of support to the wargame from the prior segment of IWX. Your team may be asked to give a confirmation brief of this plan prior to the start of the game. If that will be required, someone from EXCON will let you know. During the wargame, players will be called on to add details to this plan, amend the plan dynamically in response to in-game events, prepare discrete game actions as part of plan execution, and make cogent arguments in favor of their team's actions and against the actions of the opposed team.

### **2.1. Layout of the Gaming Area**

Each team (BLUE and RED) will have a separate team room (their *planning space*) in which they will discuss options, draft plans, rehearse briefings, and role-play as IOWG or OIE OPT staff members. Team rooms will have a map or game board that displays friendly forces, noncombatants, and current estimates of enemy forces and their positions, as well as at least one whiteboard or easel, notetaking material, and game forms. An EXCON representative will be present in each team's planning space most of the time.

The EXCON will staff a central room (the *engagement space*) in which the two teams will come together for adjudication. The map or game board in the central room will display units from both teams. In the engagement space, EXCON staff and role-players will control and moderate discussion, guide the progress of game turns, adjudicate actions, and facilitate learning.

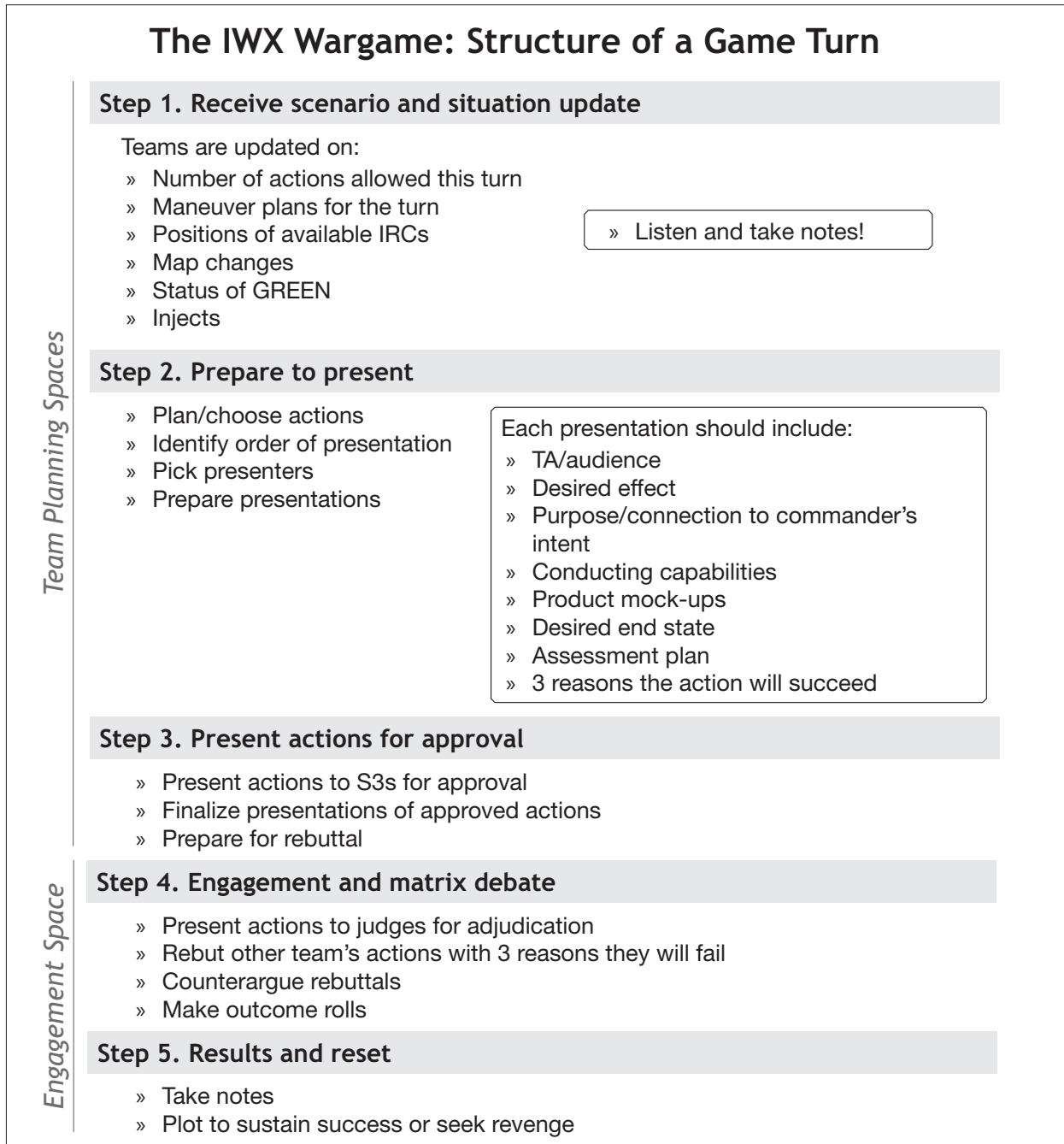
## 2.2. Introduction to Gameplay

The wargame will consist of six turns, with each turn composed of five steps. Each turn should take between **3.5 and 6 hours** to complete and is scheduled to occupy either the morning or evening of an exercise day. During each turn, both sides execute all five steps. Steps are executed simultaneously (that is, both teams do Step 1 at the same time, and then both do Step 2 at the same time, etc.). Teams alternate in presenting actions during

Step 4, engagement. The figure below summarizes the events that will take place during each step and the activities that you and your teammates are responsible for.

The five steps of a game turn are as follows:

1. Receive scenario and situation update
2. Prepare to present
3. Present actions for approval
4. Engagement and matrix debate
5. Results and reset.



## 3. Step 1: Receive Scenario and Situation Update

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### 3.1. Overview of Step 1

In Step 1, the two teams, each in their separate planning spaces, receive an update on the current state of the operation. This briefing will include any changes to their side's operational plan in order to help inform OIE planning. It will also include the location of available IRCs.

On some turns, EXCON may introduce *injects*—essentially, surprise developments in the scenario. If there are any injects for the turn, they will be announced during this step.

So, the Step 1 overview summarizes the current game state and lays out the intended destination for the turn for each side. **Take careful notes during Step 1!**

## 4. Step 2: Prepare to Present

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### 4.1. Overview of Step 2

In Step 2, teams prepare their actions for the turn. This step takes place in each team's planning space. Teams prepare an oral briefing for each action for their S3 and also build their arguments supporting these actions. Teams prepare mock-ups of any products involved in their proposed actions. The presenting player for each action rehearses their presentation and makes sure they are ready to offer compelling explanations and arguments. Teams may ask questions of EXCON personnel in their team rooms, and, if necessary, might send their team leader to the EXCON control room with requests for information (RFIs).

#### 4.1.1. Step 2 Rule: Team Actions

The number of actions allowed may vary from turn to turn and will be specified in the Step 1 briefing; it's usually either two or three per team. Teams may wish to prepare an extra action in case one of their proposed actions is not approved in Step 3.

Actions begun in a previous turn and continued in a later turn must be presented again for approval in Step 3 and presented for adjudication in Step 4 of the later turn. Actions that were not approved in a previous turn may be presented again. Actions that failed in a previous turn may be presented again.

#### 4.1.2. Step 2 Rule: Rotation of the Presenting Player

Each team action is presented by a single player. That player is the **presenting player** for that action and must be the one who briefs that action in Step 3 and Step 4. **Players must rotate presentation** through the entire team before someone may present a second action; everyone should get a chance to brief.

#### 4.1.3. Step 2 Rule: Preparing a Presentation

The presenting player must be prepared to verbally explain and justify a proposed action to the S3 role-player in Step 3. To present a candidate action, players should have prepared oral remarks. Players may choose to enhance their oral presentation with slides or support their oral presentation with tokens or other representations to be placed on the game board (or moved on a digital game board). Action proposals must include everything in the sidebar on the next page. The focus is and should remain on the verbal presentation, not on any supporting materials or slides.

The presenting player should rehearse their presentation, time permitting, so that other team members can provide them with feedback and to maximize their preparedness for Step 3.

#### 4.1.4. Step 2 Rule: Repeated, Recurring, or Ongoing Actions

Players may wish to conduct actions from previous turns again in later turns. If a team wishes to repeat or continue an action, they need to present it again for approval in Step 3 and present it as part of engagement in Step 4. If little has changed, then repeat presentations may be somewhat abbreviated. However, if something significant about the environment or execution is different, the team should be prepared to make a full presentation of the action.

### 4.2. Step 2 Outputs

Step 2 should produce a set of proposed actions ready to be presented to the S3 role-player in Step 3. These actions should be composed of some or all of these elements: notes for briefing; slides; markers, tokens, or symbols on the game board; and mock-ups of any products to be used as part of the action.

## 5. Step 3: Present Actions for Approval

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### 5.1. Step 3 Overview

Step 3 takes place in each team's planning space. For each proposed action, the presenting player describes the audience and intended effects, capabilities involved, and details of (planned) execution. A different presenting player presents each candidate action. The S3 role-player approves or disapproves each action.

### 5.2. Step 3 Inputs

Teams must provide candidate actions ready for presentation and including all of the elements listed in the box at right.

### 5.3. Step 3 Activities

Players will present candidate actions to the S3 role-player for approval. Each action will be presented by the presenting player for that action. Present the actions in the order in which they are scheduled to begin. Unlike the presentations in Step 4 (when *only* the presenting player may address the judges), in Step 3 the presenting player must take the primary role in the presentation, but other players on the team are allowed to help in answering S3 questions.

If an action is a repeat action from a previous turn (either because the action is ongoing, the action was not previously approved, or the action was previously attempted but was unsuccessful), then the same presenting player who previously presented the action must present it.

The S3 will determine whether each action is approved or disapproved. If the action requires permissions or capabilities from higher levels, the S3 may require you to make an *outcome roll*, with a *target number* determined by the difficulty of getting the approval or capability sought (see the discussion in Section 6.2.6).

Players should take notes on the feedback they receive from the role-player S3. These notes can help them refine their presentation of the approved actions in Step 4, or help them refine actions that were not approved should they wish to propose improved versions of those actions in later turns.

## Elements of an Action Proposal

### Type of Operation:

- » Influence, inform, or deceive

### Type of Action:

- » New or continuing
- » Open or secret

### Task:

- » Target/audience to be influenced, informed, or deceived (and location)
- » Effect desired, including the location, time, and duration of the effect

### Purpose:

- » Purpose of the action and how that purpose contributes to the commander's intent and the scheme of maneuver

### Method:

- » Forces or capabilities that will conduct or contribute to the action, where they will be located, how they will get to that location from where they started, when activities will occur, and how long activities will last
- » Products: mock-ups of any products that the action requires, such as leaflets, radio scripts, storyboards for video production, KLE talking points

### End State:

- » The desired end state, including *what failure will look like* and *what success will look like*
- » An assessment plan, including measures of performance (MOPs) and measures of effect (MOEs), how those measures will be collected, and how long after the activities measures will be reported

### Why This Action Will Be Successful:

- » Finish with a clear list of at least three reasons the action will succeed (only 3 reasons can be presented in Step 4, but more might be presented in Step 3).

After receiving approval for their actions for the turn, players will make any final adjustments to the presentation of the actions (including narrowing down the reasons that the action will succeed to exactly three reasons) for Step 4.

### 5.3.1. Step 3 Rule: Battle Drills

Players may also wish to share any battle drills developed as part of their plan with their S3. If you have battle drills that are approved and for which you can show documentation, you can make reference to them during rebuttal and counterargument during Step 4.

### 5.3.2. Step 3 Rule: Repeated, Recurring, or Ongoing Actions

If a team wishes to repeat or continue an action from a previous turn, they need to present it again for approval in Step 3. The presenting players remain the same as for the original action.

### 5.3.3. Step 3 Rule: Re-Presenting a Previously Disapproved Action

For actions that the S3 disapproved in a previous turn but recommended for further development, the presenting player remains the same; that is, if an action is not approved during Step 3 in one turn and is presented for approval again in a subsequent turn, it must be presented by the same presenting player.

## 5.4. Step 3 Outputs

Step 3 should produce a number of approved actions for the team that the presenting player for each of those actions will present in Step 4. Step 3 may also produce one or more candidate actions that are not yet approved but could be approved in future turns for the team to continue to refine.

## 6. Step 4: Engagement and Matrix Debate

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### 6.1. Step 4 Overview

Step 4 is the most exciting part of the wargame. In it, all players from both teams come together in the engagement space and alternate presenting actions previously approved by their S3 role-player in Step 3. The same presenting player that presented actions in Step 3 presents them in Step 4.

Each presenting player must also present three reasons why they believe their action will be successful. The opposing team then has a few minutes to discuss and then present three reasons why they believe the action will be unsuccessful or less effective than the presenting player has indicated. Finally, the presenting team can make up to three counterarguments. EXCON will then adjudicate the outcome of the action.

### 6.2. Step 4 Inputs

Step 4 is where all the outputs of the previous steps come together and the turn is adjudicated.

#### 6.2.1. Step 4: Player Conduct

Step 4 is exciting and is where the outcomes of actions are decided, in part by debate and argument. **All players should remember to be professional and polite at all times** throughout the game, but especially during Step 4. Treat the members of the other team as you would members of your own planning staff when wargaming courses of action or sharpshooting ideas: You can disagree, and you can even heatedly disagree, but you should disagree with respect for your colleagues and fellow players. Also, there are many participants and moving parts in Step 4; if you aren't involved in important and game-relevant discussion, try to keep the side chatter to a minimum.

#### 6.2.2. Step 4: Order of Presentation

Teams alternate presenting actions. If either team has a greater number of approved actions, the team with the greater number of actions to present will go first. If teams have an equal number of actions approved, which team goes first will be decided by roll-off (that is, a representative from each team rolls the dice), with the winner of the roll-off

choosing whether their team will present first or second.

Teams present actions in the order in which they are scheduled to begin, and in the same order in which they were presented in Step 3.

Actions are *not* assumed to be simultaneous. Actions presented first are assumed to have begun first. Actions with lengthy durations are assumed to overlap other actions with lengthy durations.

Under certain circumstances, EXCON may dictate that actions have to be presented in a certain order.

Once the order is set, the presentation and debate between the teams will unfold for each action. The various substeps are timed to ensure fairness and to keep things moving. The steps follow this order:

- First team presents (5 minutes—described in Section 6.2.3)
- Second team prepares rebuttal (4 minutes—described in Section 6.2.4)
- Second team rebuts (2 minutes—also described in Section 6.2.4)
- First team prepares counterargument (2 minutes—described in Section 6.2.5)
- First team counterargues (1 minute—also described in Section 6.2.5).

### 6.2.3. Step 4: Presenting Team Presents

Action presentations may take no more than 5 minutes and will be controlled by a timer; any material not presented within the time limit will be excluded from consideration.

Only the presenting player may present. That player may consult quietly with other members of their team during their 5-minute presentation period, and other team members may help with audiovisual display (advancing slides, handing around sample leaflets, adjusting pieces or icons on the game board), but only the presenting player may speak to the judges about the action. Begin by stating the type of operation (influence, inform, deceive) and the type of action (new, continuing, secret) for the judges. Remember that the presentation should include any products that the action requires, such as leaflets, radio scripts, story boards for video production, and KLE talking points.

**Conclude the presentation with a list of three reasons why the action should succeed.**

### 6.2.4. Step 4: Non-Presenting Team Rebutals

When the presenting player concludes their presentation, the timer is immediately reset, and the opposed team has a total of 6 minutes to prepare and offer their rebuttal (divided into a 4-minute preparation period and then a 2-minute period for the statement of rebuttals). A single spokesperson must deliver all three rebuttal reasons. The rebuttal consists of three (and only three) reasons that the proposed action will fail or be less successful than the presenting team indicated. This is a presentation of reasons, *not* a counteraction. Rebuttal reasons may not include things that the non-presenting team would like to do to counter the action *unless* their approved actions or plans include a battle drill that would be triggered by the action (if that is the case, the S3 role-player should verify). If the non-presenting team has not completed their rebuttal when the time allotted elapses (barring special circumstances as determined by EXCON lead), they must immediately stop.

As players, **don't fight everything**. The goal of the rebuttal and the counterarguments is just to make sure that both sides of an issue get presented and that the judges are thinking about the relevant factors and facts. If something makes sense and is probably going to work, concede that and maybe try to argue why it isn't going to work as well as the presenting team indicated it would.

### 6.2.5. Step 4: Presenting Team Makes Counterarguments

When the non-presenting spokesperson concludes their rebuttal, the timer is immediately reset, and the original presenting team has up to 2 minutes to quickly prepare their counterarguments, and then 1 minute to present them. All team members may contribute to the preparation of the counterarguments, but only the presenting player may address the judges. Counterarguments are limited in scope to being responses to the rebuttals from the non-presenting team. New points or issues may not be raised; only disagreements with or refutations of the rebuttal arguments are permitted. As is the case for the rebuttal arguments, counterarguments may not be actions—it is *counterargument*, not *counteraction*. Only actions that are part of documented and approved battle drills may be pre-

sented as a counterargument. No more than three counterarguments may be offered. That could be one just one counterargument, or one counterargument for each rebuttal reason, or three counterarguments directed at a single particularly telling rebuttal argument.

### 6.2.6. Step 4: Presenting Player Makes an Outcome Roll

After hearing the presentation, rebuttal, and any counterarguments, the EXCON panel of judges will announce a target number and any bonuses or penalties to the roll. The target number combines a difficulty score (from 1 to 10), a quality of planning rank (from 1 to 5), and bonuses or penalties based on debate performance for each action as assessed

by the EXCON panel of judges. Low target numbers are preferred!

The presenting player will then make an outcome roll. An outcome roll involves rolling three dice, adding them up, adding or subtracting any modifiers, and comparing the roll total to the target number. See the explanation below for more detail on the procedure. Basically, roll the dice and the EXCON narrator will tell you what happens.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At the option of EXCON, each team may have one or more “rerolls” available to them. These rerolls are just what they sound like: a do-over or a mulligan. The following rules apply to rerolls: (1) When using a reroll, the new result is final—even if it is worse than the initial roll. (2) When using a reroll, all three dice are rerolled (not just one or two). (3) Rerolls can only be used on rolls made by the team using a reroll—you cannot use your reroll to force the other team to reroll. (4) Rerolls may not be used by either side in a head-to-head action.

## Making an Outcome Roll

We roll three six-sided dice in this game to determine the success of an action. The dice are meant to simulate chance and factors beyond the control of the players and their role-played command staff.

### Outcome Roll Procedure:

To make an outcome roll, use the following procedure:

1. EXCON announces a *target number*—the number that must be equaled or exceeded by the outcome roll in order for the activity to succeed. Target numbers will vary based on the difficulty of the action, quality of planning, and the matrix discussion.
2. EXCON announces any bonuses or penalties to be added to or subtracted from the roll, based on circumstances or player efforts.
3. Roll the dice!
4. Add up the three dice, then add bonuses or subtract penalties, to get your outcome roll total.
5. If your total roll meets or exceeds the target number, you have succeeded! If it is less than the target number, your action has failed. (Depending on the specific game rules laid out by EXCON, you might have the opportunity to reroll.)
6. EXCON determines the degree of your success or failure based on the difference between the target number and your outcome roll total.

### Example:

During engagement (Step 4 in the wargame) a player from BLUE presents an action. After hearing the presentation and matrix discussion, the EXCON judges determine that the target number for the outcome roll is 12. The judges also note a special circumstance not covered in their criteria and announce that BLUE receives a roll penalty of -1.

The presenting player rolls the three dice and gets:



The dice add up to 15, from which 1 is subtracted because of the penalty. The outcome roll total is 14.

The outcome roll total (14) is greater than the target number (12), so the action succeeds!

The degree of success of this outcome roll is “success by 2” because the roll total exceeded the target number by 2. EXCON will determine whether success by 2 constitutes a “partial success,” a “full success,” or an “astounding success” depending on the action type and circumstances.

### Tip:

When rolling and adding three dice, you have about a 91% chance of rolling 7 or higher, a 50% chance of rolling an 11 or higher, and about a 16% chance of rolling 14 or higher.

### 6.2.7. Step 4: Head-to-Head Actions

Sometimes the two teams will end up seeking to affect the same audience or will seek to achieve directly opposed effects. When this happens, EXCON will announce that there are head-to-head actions. Instead of following the normal procedure, head-to-head actions follow the sequence outlined here.

One team (determined by EXCON) presents their action in the usual way, in 5 minutes. Instead of the normal rebuttal procedure, the second team gets 4 minutes to prepare their three rebuttal reasons and add them to their presentation. **The second team may not change their proposed action in any way in response to first team's presentation.** After their 4 minutes to prepare their rebuttal, the second team then presents their action and their three-reason rebuttal in a timed period of 6 minutes. Then, the first team gets to prepare (4 minutes) and present a rebuttal (2 additional minutes) of the second team's action and offer counterarguments of the second team's rebuttal (so, three reasons why the second action will fail *and* up to three counterarguments for the rebuttals offered about their own action). Finally, the second team gets 2 minutes to prepare and then an additional minute to present a final counterargument (up to three counterarguments specific to the rebuttal). EXCON will then confer and announce bonuses or penalties to both teams' rolls. Presenting players from both teams roll the dice and add or subtract any bonuses or penalties. The team whose total roll (plus bonuses) is higher wins the head-to-head action; results will be announced by EXCON.

### 6.2.8. Step 4: Secret Actions

When one team conducts an action that should remain unknown to the opposed side (or the result of the action should), all players should be informed of this by EXCON. In such cases, EXCON will explain which information is “scenario knowledge”—things the IOWG would be aware of in real life—and which is “player knowledge”—things that the players got to see adjudicated because this is a game, but that in the context of the scenario should remain shrouded by the fog of war and the limitations of assessment. Players

should draw on only on “scenario knowledge” in planning their actions and are prohibited from drawing on “player knowledge” of the other team's activities. EXCON may remind (or re-inform) players of this prohibition after the discussion and adjudication of any highly secretive action during Step 4. **What happens in the engagement room stays in the engagement room!**

## 6.3. Step 4 Outputs

Step 4 should produce notes on the actions completed, their success or failure, and their outcomes as described. Final dispositions of actions as adjudicated on the game board should be recorded and left in position to allow a cohesive narrative in Step 5.

## 7. Step 5: Results and Reset

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### 7.1. Step 5 Overview

Step 5 begins immediately on conclusion of the resolution of the final action taken during Step 4 and occurs in the engagement room. The players get to relax for a few minutes while EXCON completes Step 5, recording all outcomes, narrating the results and consequences of all effects, and determining their impact on the overall progress of the operation.

### 7.2. Step 5 Inputs

Step 5 immediately follows Step 4, and players do not provide any new inputs to this step.

### 7.3. Step 5 Activities

Players should be attentive and take notes. Players should get fired up to either follow up their successes and stick it to the other side, or to lick their wounds and get back on their feet.

### 7.4. Step 5 Outputs

Step 5 produces an updated situation to inform the next turn, including possibly durable changes to the game board and adjustment of the expected track for maneuver. Step 5 produces notes and records for after-action review and subsequent turns.

## Elements Required in an Action Presentation

### **Type of Operation:**

- » State the type of operation: influence, inform, deceive, etc.

### **Type of Action:**

- » State the type of action: new or continuing, open or secret.

### **Task:**

- » State the target audience\* to be influenced, informed, or deceived, and their location.
- » State the effect desired, including the location, time, and duration of the effect.

### **Purpose:**

- » State the purpose of the action and how that purpose contributes to the commander's intent and the scheme of maneuver.

### **Method:**

- » State the forces or capabilities that will conduct or contribute to the action, where they will be located, how they will get to that location from where they started, when activities will occur, and how long activities will last.
- » Provide mock-ups of any products that the action requires, such as leaflets, radio scripts, video production storyboards, key leader engagement (KLE) talking points, etc.

### **End State:**

- » State the desired end state, including *what failure will look like and what success will look like*.
- » Describe an assessment plan, including measures of performance (MOPs) and measures of effect (MOEs), how those measures will be collected, and how long after the activities measures will be reported.

### **Why This Action Will Be Successful:**

- » Finish with a list of at least three reasons the action will succeed.

\* Sometimes the subject of an action should not be referred to as a target audience, such as when seeking to protect the friendly force or the American public from disinformation or manipulation.

## 8. Example of Play from a Player's Perspective

To give you a better feel for how a typical game might go, here is an example of play, narrated by a notional player.

Nineteen of us arrived at IWX last week and started receiving a bunch of good blocks of instruction on OIE. Midweek they told us that the whole second week would be a wargame and that we'd be developing an OIE concept of support for our side in the wargame. They broke us into teams; I'm on the BLUE team, which means that I'm one of 10 marines playing as part of the OIE OPT for a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). The other 9 participants in our IWX class are playing as the RED team, which means they're like an OIE OPT for the Centralian 17th Mechanized Infantry Battalion. The mission of the Combined Joint Task Force—of which the MEU is a part—is to land in Montanya (a U.S. partner nation recently invaded by Centralia), secure an airfield, a port, and the nearby city to protect the welfare of the Montanyan population, roll back Centralian forces, and enable follow-on operations.

We spent the last few days of the first week going over all the intelligence we had on Montanya and the Centralian forces, familiarizing ourselves with the MEU's planned scheme of maneuver, and working on our OIE concept of support. We finished up our plans on Monday, gave a confirmation brief, and started the wargame on Tuesday. I guess it is true what they say about no plan surviving contact with the enemy, because things have not been going our way. Right away, turn 1 included an inject that one of our forward companies had gotten pinned down at an intersection, lost several of their Light Armored Vehicles, and taken heavy casualties. That forced changes in the planned scheme of maneuver (but all of that was taken care of by EXCON), but it also forced changes in how we were supporting that scheme of maneuver. We scrambled and adjusted our planned actions to re-target locations where our marines actually were (rather than where they were supposed to be if they had advanced on schedule), and came up with a clever feint and supporting information efforts to relieve some of the pressure on the marines fighting at the intersection.

Now, it is Wednesday morning of the second week of IWX, and we've just started turn 3. We just got the update brief from the S2 (the player's guide I have calls the update briefing "Step 1"). As we feared, Regional Highway 2, the route toward the nearby city from the airfield we've secured, is congested by refugees. That's okay, I'm on it. It is my turn to present, and now we're in Step 2 and

I'm refining my briefing for the S3. The action I'll be briefing is a multi-capability effort designed to clear the route so the MEU can advance unimpeded while simultaneously directing local Montanyan civilians to a disaster relief site the civil affairs folks are establishing on the other side of the airfield (by the civilian terminals, and accessed by a different route than the one the MEU intends to use to advance).

Time is called to start Step 3, and we all stand as the S3 role-player comes into the room. Since I'm briefing first, I start with a quick review of the situation and orient everyone to the BLUE team game board. I point out the airfield, where MEU elements are at or near the airfield, and the big blue arrow showing the intended line of advance. Then I point out the cluster of civilian icons along that route and note that this is the problem this action is intended to address. I also point out where the relevant information-related capabilities are: the icon for the civil affairs detachment and their relief center, the icons for the military information support operations (MISO) loudspeaker teams and the mobile broadcasting capability, and back on the ship the location of the production shop that will produce the leaflets I'm going to propose we drop.

With the stage set, I then describe how we're targeting two audiences: civilians who have evacuated and civilians who have remained at home along and adjacent to Regional Highway 2. Radio messages, loudspeaker broadcasts, handbills, and leaflets, all in the Montanyan language, will instruct civilians to shelter in place to avoid injury from fighting in the area, and will instruct those who cannot remain in place or those who need medical assistance to proceed to a displaced persons and aid site on the north side of the airport, with instructions regarding the roads to use to get there. I have mock-ups of the leaflets and handbills, and a storyboard for the radio and loudspeaker broadcasts.

I finish by explaining that the desired end state is dramatically reduced traffic on Regional Highway 2, with a secondary effect of increased civilian awareness of and activity at the civil affairs relief site. I list measures of performance (MOPs), which include number of leaflets dropped in the target zone, hours of radio broadcast, and hours of loudspeaker broadcast. Measures of effectiveness (MOEs) should be observable by reconnaissance assets or through overhead imagery, and also reports from executing units: What do the loudspeaker detachments see happening when people hear their messages? What level of activity does the civil affairs detachment observe?

The S3 nods approvingly, and then asks if there is time to get all of these MISO products approved.

It is a good question. I say that yes sir it is all good to go, as all the messaging is within the

bounds of pre-approved MISO products and series. MISO always has a standard set of pre-approved series aimed at civilians: “stay” messages (shelter in place), “go” messages (evacuate, with instructions on where to evacuate), and messages about humanitarian relief and where to go to get it.

The S3 then asks me if I have my three reasons this action will succeed ready to go for the engagement step. I do have them ready, and I share them.

The S3 approves my action. After a brief from another team member, the S3 approves a second action as well, then departs. We have about 15 minutes left before we’ll head to the engagement room for Step 4. We take turns trying to think of stuff the other team might say in their rebuttals, stuff about why our actions might not work, and things we might say in our counterarguments.

As we enter the engagement room, there is an excited hush. The engagement game board is a giant laminated plotter map that covers most of the floor. The judges sit behind a table at the end of the room, flanked by the S2 and S3 role-players for both sides. The timekeeper (who operates the big countdown clock), the narrator, and some other EXCON personnel (including the GREEN representative) sit at another table perpendicular to and on the right of the judges. Our whole team sits in chairs along one wall, and the other team sits along the other open wall.

The head judge calls engagement to order. The S2s both stand and give a quick overview of the current location of both sides’ forces and the current status of the operation. It is always interesting to see the hybrid view of both RED and BLUE situational awareness. I know that “what happens in the engagement room stays in the engagement room,” but it is still interesting to see where the RED forces actually are and what their maneuver intent for the turn is.

The head judge calls the team leaders up to determine the order of actions. The head judge has had input from both S3 role-players so knows at least the broad outlines of the actions we’ll present. Apparently, none of the actions are head-to-head and there are no special sequencing requirements, so we’ll present our actions in alternating sequence depending on who rolls highest. Our team lead rolls highest, so my action, action BLUE 1, is first.

The timekeeper starts the clock, and it begins to count down from 5 minutes. As the clock ticks down, I lay out the details of the action pretty much the same as I did for the S3, and I pass the mock-ups up to the judges. I stand on the plotter map and use a pointer to show where the different capabilities will be, and where the different drop zones and broadcast areas are. I finish well before my time expires with the three reasons this action will succeed. First, I note that the people are scared and confused

and that these products offer trustworthy information and clear guidance and so should be effective. Second, I note that the two behaviors we’re promoting (stay in place or head to a relief site) are probably things many members of the target audience were considering doing anyway, and our messaging just provides more information and instructions regarding that decision. Third, I note that the action will succeed because so many members of the target audience will get the message, sometimes repeatedly and through multiple media: We’ve got a bunch of different communication modes that we’re employing.

I thank the judges and sit down. My team lead flashes me a “thumbs up.” The timekeeper resets the clock to 4 minutes, and the head judge instructs the RED team to prepare their rebuttal. They circle up and begin to discuss furiously. We huddle up as well and discuss some of the possible lines of rebuttal the other team might use.

The timekeeper calls “time” and resets the clock to 2 minutes, beginning the rebuttal countdown. The RED team representative stands and offers three reasons they think the action will fail. First, she notes, the messages are all clearly from the U.S. force, and the United States is not a credible messenger in this area. Second, even if this action makes some people shelter in place and draws some away to the north side of the airfield, the general level of panic among the civilian population is still going to leave Highway 2 too congested to allow the MEU to advance. Third, she says, she and other teammates know that MISO messages take a long time to produce and approve and asks how long we’ve been planning on this action, and if that includes enough time for product approval?

I stand to launch my counterargument, but before I start the timekeeper waves me back to the team and reminds me that we have 2 minutes to discuss our counterarguments before I make them. The timer starts ticking down from 2:00. It doesn’t take us long. We discuss for less than a minute, and I then announce, “I’m ready.” The timekeeper resets the clock to 1 minute, starts the timer, and says, “Proceed with counterarguments.” I offer my two counterarguments, noting that in fact our intelligence summary indicates that the United States is well liked and well respected in this part of Montanya, so messages from U.S. forces should be viewed as highly credible. And, even though this action is a relatively new development in our plans, based on observing displaced persons clogging roads, as I told the S3, MISO always has messages of this sort as part of their pre-approved materials. I retake my seat.

The judges briefly confer, making notes on their scorecards. The head judge asks the room, “Well,

which is it? Is something like this part of a pre-approved series, or not?" Several of my teammates nod and say, "Absolutely," but it is firmly sealed when one of the other EXCON personnel, a MISO subject-matter expert, confirms that such products are typically pre-approved. One of the other judges asks about timelines for developing, printing, loading, and distributing leaflets. I don't know the answer, but one of my teammates does, and his timeline is confirmed by that same MISO expert. The head judge turns to the GREEN representative on EXCON. The GREEN rep says he doesn't have any questions but that he wants to confirm that the United States is well regarded in this region of Montanya, so messages from the USMC should not be viewed as inherently lacking credibility.

The judges confer and work on their scorecards and we talk quietly to each other; the debate seems like it went our way, and so did the judges' questions and observations. Maybe we'll get a nice, low target number.

The judges complete their scorecard and the head judge signals for attention. The head judge announces that, after considering the difficulty of achieving the effect desired, the quality of planning demonstrated, and the outcome of the debate, the consensus target number for this actions outcome roll will be seven. The whole team is pleased. Seven is the lowest target number we've had for any action so far, so we have a really good chance of success.

I step forward toward the dice. My action, my chance to roll. I roll all three dice. They come up 4, 4, 2—a total of 10. Ten is not that great a roll, but it is good enough here, as it beats the target number by 3. The judges check their sheets to compare the roll total with the margin of success they identified for this action. The head judge announces, "Full success." The narrator begins an explanation of events in which the delivery of all the different messaging products goes off without a hitch, and within a few hours, the number of civilians on Highway 2 decreases, with the general flow of traffic moving more toward the north side of the airfield. Although there is still some congestion on Highway 2, he says, the MEU will be able to advance as planned.

Step 4 proceeds with a RED presentation, then our team's other action, and finally RED's final action. Our other action and one of RED's actions both fail, but RED gets a partial success with a fake atrocity video and is starting to build growing indignation both back in Centralia and in the international community. I'm already starting to think of things we might do to help head that off.

In Step 5, the narrator summarizes all of the consequences of the actions and wraps up the maneuver progress for the turn. The MEU is able to advance into the outskirts of the city, meeting the commander's objective for the turn, but it is clear that the atrocity video is going to demand our attention next turn.

## A Player Presents an Action in Step 4, Engagement, During IWX 20.2





The Marine Corps Information Operations Center (MCIOC) conducts an Information Warfighter Exercise (IWX)—an event designed to provide training on operations in the information environment (IOE)—one to two times per year. MCIOC asked RAND to help develop a structured wargame for IWX with a formal adjudication process. This document contains the ruleset developed, playtested, and implemented during the 2020 IWX cycle.

The IWX wargame is an opposed event in which two teams of players compete in and through the information environment to better support their respective sides in a notional scenario. Teams represent an Information Operations Working Group (IOWG) or information-related Operational Planning Team (OPT), or its adversary force equivalent, as dictated by the scenario. During the game, each team generates a plan for OIE, and players are then called on to add details to their plan, amend that plan dynamically in response to in-game events, prepare discrete game actions as part of plan execution, and make cogent arguments in favor of their team's actions and against the actions of the opposed team. A panel of expert judges uses a structured process and a random element (dice) to adjudicate the success or failure of actions drawn from the players' plans.

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