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14. ABSTRACT To remain a viable force projection option for senior military commanders and policy makers, the MAGTF must be capable of projecting into the information environment (IE). The authorities to execute IO plans, the deconfliction of IRCs, and, often, the assets required to project into the IE, are held at the combatant command and higher. Without representation in the appropriate Joint offices, programs to specifically support MAGTF operations are not being produced. With proper manning and training, the Marine Corps can better project in the IE if it places trained and experienced personnel in joint IO billets. Further, characterizing the IE requires interaction at the point the IE meets the physical environment; an IE reconnaissance capability is required. To effectively project into the IE the MAGTF will need a dedicated PsyOp Force; to rethink and perhaps restructure intelligence support to understanding the IE; develop a method for reconnoitering the IE; and the appropriately trained personnel in key billets at the Marine Component Commands, potentially the Theater Special Operations Command, the Combatant Commands, the Joint Staff J-39, the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy.					
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Preface

This research is based on my recent experience as an Information Operations (IO) and Military Information Support Operations (MISO) officer with a Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF). This was not the first deployment I had working in the IO field. However, the Africa Geographic Combatant Command was far less developed in terms of the authorities and resources to conduct IO than other theaters; this created challenges new to me in integrating IO into MAGTF operations. Because of this, the SPMAGTF, while manned and trained, did not have the requisite knowledge or authorities to effectively traverse the IE. In this study, I set out to understand what can be done to better prepare for operating in this environment.

Executive Summary

Title: MAGTF Projection in the Information Environment

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Thesis: To remain a viable force projection option for senior military commanders and policy makers, the MAGTF must be capable of projecting into the information environment (IE).

Discussion: The Information Environment (IE), crosscutting all domains and having no geographic boundary, is inherently joint. As such, authorities to execute IO plans, the deconfliction of Information Related Capabilities (IRCs), and, often, the assets required to project into the IE, are held at the combatant command and higher. Without representation in the appropriate Joint offices, programs to specifically support MAGTF operations are not being produced. With proper manning and training, the Marine Corps can better project in the IE if it places trained and experienced personnel in joint IO billets. Further, characterizing the IE requires interaction at the point the IE meets the physical environment; an IE reconnaissance capability is required.

Conclusion: To effectively project into the Information Environment the MAGTF will need a dedicated PsyOp Force; to rethink and perhaps restructure intelligence support to understanding the IE; develop a method for reconnoitering this environment; and the appropriately trained personnel in key billets at the Marine Component Commands (MARFORs), potentially the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC), the Combatant Commands, the Joint Staff J-39, the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD(SOLIC)), and the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy (OSD(P)).

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Introduction

The MAGTF must be capable of projecting into the information environment (IE), if it is to be a viable force projection option for senior military commanders and policy makers. To evaluate the ability of the MAFTG to project into the IE it is necessary to assess current MAGTF IE capability. Although not a doctrinal description of the IE, the IE can be described in terms of content and flow. To give the research scope, this study will focus on the MAGTF's abilities to develop content for dissemination into the IE; specifically, Psychological Operations (PsyOp) and briefly Strategic Communication. This analysis seeks to address two questions sequentially: First, what capabilities organic to the MAGTF are ready, capable, and authorized to project into the IE? Second, what shortfalls exist in manning, training, equipping, and authorities that prevent the MAGTF from sufficiently projecting into the IE?

The nature of war has not changed but, as it has sense the beginning of recorded history, the character of war has.¹ This change is addressed in two documents, on which this study is grounded. The first document is the Marine Operating Concept (MOC), signed by Commandant of the Marine Corps General Robert Neller in September 2016. This operating concept states the Marine Corps of 2025 will be manned, trained, and equipped to conduct “maneuver warfare in the physical and cognitive dimensions of conflict to generate psychological, technological, temporal, and spatial advantages over the adversary.”² The second document, signed by the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) James Mattis in September 2017, elevates “Information” to the level of a joint function.³

The Marine Corps does not exist because of savvy branding and the Marine Corps does not exist simply because the American public wants it to. The Marine Corps exists

to fulfill statutory requirements unique to maritime-based ground combat power. The Marine Corps will:

[B]e so organized as to include not less than three combat divisions and three air wings, and such other land combat, aviation, and other services as may be organic therein. The Marine Corps shall be organized, trained, and equipped to provide fleet marine forces of combined arms, together with supporting air components, for service with the fleet in the seizure or defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign.⁴

Simply stated, the Marine Corps exists as a force projection capability available globally for rapid response.

To satisfy this requirement, the Marine Corps must be prepared to meet any adversary in any domain that intends to impede or pose risk to the accomplishment of this mission and related tasks. The MOC and the SecDef memo⁵ recognize the effect information has on the character of warfare and provides direction for how the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Marine Corps will fight and win in this space. In order to meet these demands the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) must be examined to determine if it is properly manned, trained, and equipped to project into the Information Environment (IE)?⁶

The “M’s” contribution to the “I”

National power can be categorized into four facets: Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economic (DIME). Some military experts, diplomacy practitioners, and academic thinkers are weary of military involvement in the “I” aspect of national power. It is worth a brief discussion of the validity of the “M’s” contribution to the “I” before further examining the need and ability of the MAGTF to project into the IE.

It has been suggested the best way to approach shaping the world in the twenty-first century is to revitalize a US political warfare enterprise. What is political warfare? In 1948, George Kennan described political warfare as a nation's use of its influence instruments to achieve national objectives short of open conflict. Angelo Codevilla defines political warfare as, "the marshaling of human support, or opposition, in order to achieve victory in war or in un-bloody conflicts as serious as war." These definitions help to narrow the scope of military involvement in this arena.⁷

Political warfare demands a closer relationship between political means and the means to make war; suggesting the "M" cannot operate independent of the "I." More holistically, it suggests none of the four facets of national power can operate without impacting the others. The "political warfare" pairing implies an integration between the political and the military efforts during peace to achieve not only military but political objectives; this thought causes discomfort to some. In critiquing the military's involvement in functions traditionally executed by the Department of State (DoS), Brian Carlson noted:

[W]hen the military is the messenger, American international engagement wears a military uniform. Hard as it is for many Americans to realize, people in other countries often may not regard the military—ours or theirs—as bearers of good tidings, providers of peace, or sources of security and stability. If the United States uses its military to do diplomacy, deliver humanitarian assistance, implement economic development projects, vaccinate the herds, and provide medical treatment to the children, what does that say about the role of the military in any given society?⁸

Utilizing information towards accomplishing military or diplomatic objectives, then, has become a significant discipline in bridging civilian and military spheres.⁹

Contemporary reexaminations of Clausewitz axiom suggest a different relationship between politics and war than had been previously held. James Holmes discusses the significance of a mistake in the common translation of Clausewitz' *On War*. Where most English language translations of the book discuss "war as politics *by* other means," Holmes asserts the translation should read "war as politics *with* other means."¹⁰ This difference, he argues, significantly changes the temporal and physical relationship between combat and non-combat functions across government. Temporally, this suggests the US military has a greater role both before hostilities begin and after they conclude. Physically, this new translation suggests a greater use of the military as a political tool beyond simply military objectives but for political effect.

Michel Foucault goes further in muddying the relationship between politics and war. While examining the relationship between power dynamics and war, Foucault suggests a complete inversion of Clausewitz' axiom. For Foucault, power exists in the absence of armed conflict and is best understood as a continuation of the objectives of war. From this point he states, "politics is [therefore] the continuation of war by other means."¹¹ Many of Foucault's conclusions are dubious; however, his observations are certainly interesting. This idea is not too far from the assertion in Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication-1 (MCDP-1) *Warfighting*, which states, "war is a violent struggle between two hostile, independent, and irreconcilable wills, each trying to impose itself on the other. War is fundamentally an interactive social process."¹² Remove the word "violent" from *Warfighting* (or redefine violence) and the implication of war as a social process involving the imposition of "will" is not far from Foucault.

Foucault described three implications of this inversion: 1) political relations are anchored in relationships of force established through war; 2) political struggles during peace are echoes of armed conflict; and 3) war will only come to an end with the suspension of the exercise of power.¹³ The third point is certainly debatable and a bit irrelevant to this discussion. The first two, however, are entirely pertinent to the use of political power and the concept of political warfare.

Right or wrong, the sheer presence of the US Military has an enormous effect on the strategic IE.¹⁴ Policy makers often position military forces for political effect. Even short of combat, the US Military has an enormous, yet often uncoordinated, impact on the political calculations within a given country. Thoughtful integration of military activities into political warfare efforts is necessary to achieve international political objectives. But, are those forces equipped to shape and exploit vulnerabilities within the IE at the tactical level for operational and strategic effect?

MAGTF IE Capabilities

While every action has an impact on the IE not all Marines are charged with direct impact via message dissemination. There are only two Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) with the training and authority to disseminate content: Psychological Operations (PsyOp) Forces and Communication Strategy (CommStrat) Specialists. A third discipline, Deception Planning, also generates content to a limited degree but there is no MOS specifically tied to this function.

The Communication Strategy and Operations field within the Marine Corps is a new field consuming the old Public Affairs (PA) and Combat Camera (COMCAM) fields. This field is responsible for:

1. Advising commanders and staffs on communication strategy matters.
2. Developing and integrating communication plans.
3. Communicating with internal, domestic, and foreign (e.g., host-nation, coalition, adversary) audiences.
4. Producing written and visual information products in order to build understanding, credibility, and trust with audiences critical to mission success.¹⁵

The combining of PA and COMCAM, while in its infancy, appears to be wise in that it matches up the strategists, the former PA officers and specialists, with the content creators, the COMCAM photographers and videographers.

The effectiveness of the Communication Strategists in influencing foreign audiences hinges on his or her access to foreign publics. This access will wax and wane relative to the point on the Range of Military Operations (ROMO) continuum the military finds itself operating.

In a permissive environment, the Communication Strategist will find local and foreign correspondents moving between military and civilian activities with ease. Their interest in military operations may be much lower, however. Additionally, the more permissive an environment the more unlikely the MAGTF will be the lead agency leaving the Communication Strategist activities subject to the approval of the US ambassador, or his representative, in addition to the local commander.

To be effective in gaining the ambassador's approval, coordination and cooperation with the DoS public affairs counterpart at the embassy is vital. Communication coordination may be done by a joint task force staff, a component command, or by the combatant command.¹⁶ However, as the MOC points out, information moving at the speed of the internet is outpacing our decision making cycle.¹⁷ While synchronization must be maintained up and down the chain-of-command, relying on an often task saturated higher headquarters to synchronize is inadequate. Communication Strategists must be given direct liaison authority (DIRLAUTH) with their DoS counterparts as far in advance as possible of arriving within a host nation. Additionally, Communication Strategists should be incorporated in an advance party so to facilitate the shaping of the IE as early as possible.

The other content developing field are those Marines trained to conduct Psychological Operations. Psychological Operations are defined as:

[P]lanned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals in a manner favorable to the originator's objectives.¹⁸

To conduct PsyOp effectively in support of his or her objectives a commander must have specialized intelligence regarding cultural and media analysis, authorities, qualified personnel, unique resources, and the confidence necessary to support the semi-independent actions of PsyOp personnel.

There has been some confusion regarding the differences and similarities between PA and PsyOp. It is worth clarification before moving forward. Public Affairs are "communication activities with external and internal audiences;" a broad definition.

PsyOp's definition is vague but can be deconstructed to align with the doctrinal process used to achieve the behavior change described in its definition.¹⁹

“Planned Operations” suggest a process by which PsyOp are executed. The meat of this process is the 8-step Target Audience Analysis Model (TAAM). This model is developed from a sound interdisciplinary process incorporating tested concepts borrowed from the fields of psychology, sociology, and anthropology.²⁰

“Selected truths” tell us two things. First, some process exists to select some information for dissemination over others. And second, PsyOp is *truthful* but may omit some truths from its messages. Before dissemination, products go through a rigorous testing first through a PsyOp murder board before being tested against a panel of members made up of the intended Target Audience (TA). PsyOp Marines are trained in several methods to conduct these panels.

“To ultimately change behavior” tells us the greatest distinguishing characteristic between PA and PsyOp. PsyOp Marines exist to induce specific, observable, and measureable behavior change.²¹ Through a targeting process, PsyOp Marines identify current behaviors in the battlespace, recommend desired behaviors consistent with support to the accomplishment of our commanders' mission, narrowing of potential target audiences by identifying psychological vulnerabilities, and then maneuvering against those vulnerabilities in both the physical environment and the IE. PA certainly has an implicit targeting process, but no such explicit targeting process.

The robust PsyOp process requires highly trained and experienced specialists. It has unique intelligence requirements for both planning and assessments. It requires positioning PsyOp forces in a way that allow them access and regular interaction with the

TAs the commander requires to be influenced – this often means linguist support. And these operations must be conducted under proper authority.

Target Audience Analysis

The fundamental document for the execution of PsyOp is the target audience analysis worksheet (TAAW).²² Based on modern theories of communication and social psychology,²³ the relationship between nodes within a network determines the impact information has on the network;²⁴ this is why, in PsyOp, targets are considered in terms of an entire audience. What, then, are the PsyOp intelligence requirements necessary to develop a TAAW? FM 3-05.301 *Psychological Operations Process: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, describes the process to plan, conduct, and assess the effectiveness of a PsyOp series. For this review, it is this document that will be the primary source for understanding PsyOp intelligence requirements.

The TAAW is developed using the eight-step Target Audience Analysis Model, referred to as the 8 Step TAAM. The 8 steps are:

1. Identify and refine Target Audiences (TAs)
2. Determine effectiveness
3. Identify conditions
4. Identify vulnerabilities
5. Determine susceptibility
6. Determine accessibility
7. Develop PsyOp arguments and Psychological Actions (PsyActs)

8. Refine assessment criteria

The TAAW is an academic style document that analyzes a TAs susceptibility to behavior modification relative to its current behavior. This process, and the document it produces, may look like an intelligence process or product but it is actually a targeting product used to turn High Payoff Targets (HPTs) into High Value Targets (HVTs). Some of the 8 steps are completed through a review of academic literature related to the operational environment in addition to intelligence documents and Publicly Available Information (PAI). One of the distinguishing characteristics of the TAAW is the analysis is based on contrasting a TAs current behavior with the desired behavior.

The PsyOp planner starts by looking to the intelligence products produced by his or her own intelligence section. FM 3-05.301 describes the need for a standard Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, and Infrastructure (PMESII) analysis adding an Environmental analysis.²⁵ This PMESII analysis requires a PsyOp specific perspective to each of these facets of the battlespace.

It is important for intelligence analyst to understand that PMESII information is valuable to the PsyOp planner predominantly as it relates to characterizing and understanding networks; these networks will become the TAs PsyOp will target. Once PsyOp planners have a basic understanding of the networks – formal or informal – that exist within a given area they can draft their Potential Target Audience List (PTAL). The PTAL is very similar to a HVT list that intelligence analysts develop as part of the targeting process. Narrowing the PTAL into targetable TAs is a critical part of Target Audience Analysis and is

similar to turning HVTs into HPT.²⁶ In PsyOp, HPTs are those HVTs that, if influenced, will support the accomplishment of the commander's mission. To narrow the PTAL into TAs PsyOp planners first attempt to understand which potential target audiences, if influenced, will have a positive impact on the commander's objectives.

To further narrow the PTAL, PsyOp planners look not just to which audiences will have a positive impact but also which audiences are vulnerable to influence. In this step the planners seek to identify leaders and "Key Communicators."²⁷

To maneuver in the information environment against a network the PsyOp planner needs to understand who within the network wields influence. For example, in identifying "leaders" as it relates to political or military aspects, the analyst must consider an individual's influence over a particular population; one's billet does not necessarily equate to influence. In many cases, for example, a particular staff officer or action officer may exert more influence over his or her organization than a line and block chart describing the connections within the organization may suggest. Not all nodes within a network – in the example above, a hierarchical network – are equal. Describing an individual's influence over a network is a particularly challenging PsyOp requirement to satisfy.

Understanding the nature of networks in terms of the influential nodes is critical to understanding the vulnerabilities within a network. This process allows for the narrowing of PTAs to TAs to meet commander's objectives. This is

similar to the way targeting officers align High Payoff Targets to High Value Targets.

Determining effectiveness is largely a function of the PsyOp section. This step assesses the positive impact a successful PsyOp series would have on the commander's objectives. If a TA can be influenced but such influence does not support the commander's mission, planning shifts to focus on a TA that will serve our purposes. There are key questions the PsyOp planner must ask the intelligence section. All behaviors PsyOp seek to affect must be specific, observable, and measurable. If the intelligence assets are not positioned to observe the new behavior and assess the frequency of that behavior, directly or indirectly, then, again, the focus shifts to a program that can be assessed.

A key aspect of behavior modification is conducting a cause and effect analysis of current behavior. Cause and Effect analysis is done by examining the conditions under which a behavior occurs; in doing so the PsyOp planner breaks the conditions into two subfields: internal and external conditions. By understanding the conditions that cause behavior a plan can be developed to manipulate the physical and information environments towards the desired effect.

Vulnerabilities within a network regarding key communicators were identified in step 1 of the TAAM. In this step the PsyOp planners identify vulnerabilities of the TA in regard to shared motives.²⁸ These vulnerabilities are assessed in terms of their relationship to the conditions identified above. PsyOp planners then begin to develop plans to manipulate conditions, appeal to motives, or both to affect behavior change.

In this step PsyOp planners evaluate the likelihood the TA will adopt the desired behavior by assessing the perceived risks and rewards of the behavior. It is important to note that a TA may want to adopt a particular behavior but the risk in doing so could mean becoming ostracized or even face physical danger. Conversely, adopting a new behavior might be completely inconsistent with deeply-held values despite there being significant reward for doing so.

During this step an assessment of the TA media consumption is made. PsyOp planners are interested in literacy rates, the various types of media consumed, the time that these mediums are accessed, and what trust does the TA place in particular media.

During this step, PsyOp planners develop a logical argument incorporating appeals to the TAs vulnerabilities and recommend PsyActs to manipulate the conditions that underlie the current behaviors.

During this step criteria for determining success or failure are finalized. Intelligence requirements are written to collect on the TAs behavior change. And other methods are identified; for example, if the desired behavior is to increase participation in the democratic process, ballots may be counted. This type of assessment can be conducted without the use of formal intelligence capabilities.

MAGTF Intelligence and Target Audience Analysis

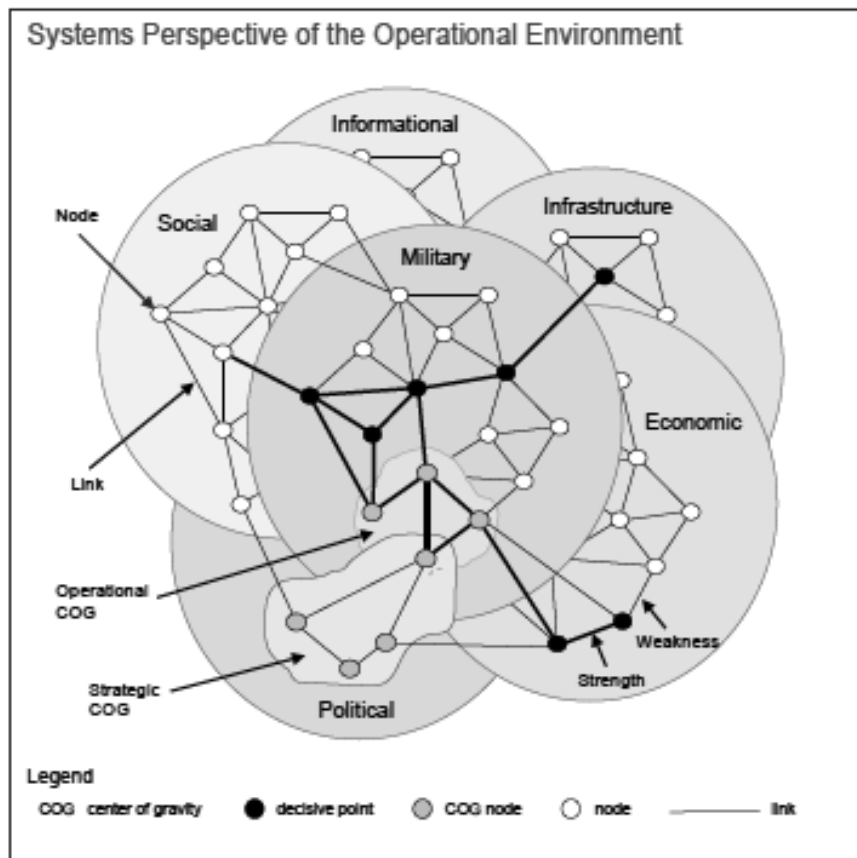
Intelligence and operations have a relationship of mutual support.²⁹ The relationship between intelligence and Psychological Operations is no different.

Intelligence support is more necessary in some of the above steps than others. In examining the 8 step TAAM, the 4 general requirements listed below emerge as areas intelligence analysts can assist in target audience analysis:

1. Characterizing the TA (a social network),
2. Positioning to observe specific and measurable behaviors
3. Cause and Effect analysis
4. Understanding the media consumption and patterns of the TA

Network analysis is not something new to the MAGTF's intelligence analysts. However, the PsyOp requirements ask for those networks to be characterized in ways that are unique.

Systems Perspective of the Operational Environment³⁰



Networks within the operational environment rarely operate in isolation. The links between networks often, but not always, perform a function within a larger system. Having a systems perspective of the operational environment helps the analyst, the PsyOp planner, and ultimately a decision maker, appreciate “relationships and interdependencies within and between interrelated PMESII” nodes.³¹

Social systems are particularly complex consisting of numerous subsystems composed of subordinate layers.³² Determining the node-link relationship in social systems is no easy task, yet is vital to the PsyOp targeting process. Completing a “node-link relationship” analysis to develop a systems perspective is a key aspect of targeting as it helps to identify the center of gravity and critical requirements. In analyzing social systems, the links between nodes may not be physical, but rather expressed through shared values, motives, or beliefs.³³

Without being positioned to observe behavior change, PsyOp is not possible. Intelligence support to this aspect of PsyOp requires close coordination between the PsyOp and intelligence section. The PsyOp planner must have a basic understanding of what capabilities are available, while the intelligence section must appreciate the collection of what might otherwise seem monotonous or unimportant.

The intelligence support for understanding causes and their effects on the TAs is vital. Providing assessments of the external causes in terms of situations and events provides PsyOp planners with an understanding of current behavior as

well as an understanding of what conditions can be manipulated in the physical environment to achieve the desired behavior modification.

The PMESII, along with other intelligence products, help the PsyOp planner understand the external causes of a particular behavior. For example, famine, a lack of security, etc. are aspects of the physical environment that impact a TAs behavior.

PMESII may also help with understanding internal conditions but these are harder to determine. Internal conditions are those attitudes, values, and beliefs that contribute to a TAs behavior. To assist in understanding these aspects of the cause of behavior, PsyOp specific collection requirements may need to be given higher priority to be satisfied.

Media consumption can span from print, to radio, to the Internet. Determining how a TA engages a medium, either actively or passively, can, in some cases, be determined through technical means. In other cases, some of the data is publically available. Often, however, this information can only be gathered through face-to-face interaction with the TA. A further complication is assessing the faith the TA has in a particular medium. Information regarding literacy rates, the location and propagation of radio stations, access to the internet, and the circulation of newspapers is all valuable to the PsyOp planner. This information might be included in PMESII analysis or on some of the overlays developed as a part of the Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace (IPB).

There are several collection capabilities the MAGTF possesses to identify networks, observe behavior and actions, describe cause and effect relationships,

and understand media consumption. Conceptually, SIGINT may provide valuable information regarding the connectedness of a TA. This data can help analysts discover networks that might otherwise have not been apparent. Additionally, understanding the manner in which individuals engage with various mediums may be discerned through this type of collection.

HUMINT is well suited to identify the motives of some key members of a TA and provide insight into the entirety of the TA. Theoretically, this type of collection is perhaps the best for identifying the motives and values of members of a TA. Unfortunately, utilizing this discipline for this type of data collection is not practical and would be very time consuming.

For the sake of understanding social networks and how to influence them, Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) is an under utilized capability. While PsyOp planners should not fit an objective to a TA but rather a TA to an objective, the value of social media is in the networks there organically develop in line with precisely what PsyOp planners are looking for. They are networks that share interests and motives, they consume the same media, often they provide specific data regarding their other media consumption, they use social media as a forum to discuss their values and beliefs, and their regular access can provides easy monitoring for behavior change.

Reconnaissance is another collection capability organic to the MAGTF. There are certain requirements for PsyOp that would suggest a need for reconnaissance. Specifically, reconnaissance positioned to observe and measure specific behavioral changes. However, the type of anthropological or social-

psychological observation needed to observe and measure behavior change of large social groups is not a capability MAGTF reconnaissance elements are currently suited for. This type of reconnaissance had fallen under the definitions of Special Reconnaissance in the past but the current definition no longer calls for the survey of demographics.³⁴

Recommendations

Technology

As the MOC suggests, there are technologies that help to mitigate the shortcomings of the MAGTF with regard to operating in the IE. Because of the rapidly changing topography of the IE, it is difficult to invest in particular technologies under the current acquisitions process; I will not make recommendations regarding changes to the acquisitions process here. There are plenty of researchers concerned with addressing this issue. However, there are some technologies that, while they themselves may become obsolete in the relative short term, their “effects” may not. For example “Pulse,” a text-message and social media monitoring capability, allows for interactive communication with local populations at the tactical level. “Pulse” may not be the solution the MAGTF needs (or, perhaps, it is), but having the ability for tactical units, with the appropriately trained and authorized personnel, engaging populations in this corner of the IE, is essential.

Creating a PsyOp Force

On 27 October 2017 the Department of the Army reclassified all Military Information Support Operations units as Psychological Operations Forces.³⁵ This was

done after the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 3110.05F *Military Information Support Operations Supplement to the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan* stated MISO was a type of operation executed by PsyOp Force.³⁶ The term Military Information Support Operations (MISO) fails to capture the full ability of a PsyOp Force. Focusing on MISO and not on the broader concept of PsyOp, MISO units have moved away from planning, incorporating, and coordinating Psychological Actions (PSYACTS); there is currently too strong a focus on the dissemination of products to persuade target audiences absent the physical actions required to manipulate physical conditions as the foundation for persuasion.

The 21st century battlefield requires closely coordinated physical action and information dissemination. PsyOp Forces will provide the MAGTF commander the ability to attack psychological vulnerabilities through the integration of PSYACTS and exploitative information products. Further, the focus on military information perpetuates the idea that the distinguishing characteristic between PA and MISO is the target. It is not; the distinguishing characteristic is the target process PsyOp forces use to exploit psychological vulnerabilities.

With these points in mind and to promote inter-service/multi-national interoperability, the Marine Corps should adopt the joint terminology outlined in the most recent CJCSI 3210.05F and designate MOS 0520 as Psychological Operations Officers and MOS 0521 as Psychological Operations Non-Commissioned Officers, while retaining the term MISO to identify their primary activity.

Positioning Marine PsyOp Forces

Marine PsyOp forces currently exist in one location, the Marine Corps Information Operations Center (MCIOC), with the operating forces often receiving a team of PsyOp Marines from MCIOC during their work up before a deployment. As discussed above, this is inadequate.

It is impractical and expensive for MCIOC PsyOp teams to live and work with their assigned units during the entirety of their work up. While it would certainly improve the integration of PsyOp with the operations and intelligence sections of the supported staff, it would (and does) take these Marines away from their primary duty station for months before their deployment separating them from their families and costing the service unnecessary sums of money in travel, meals and incidentals, and housing costs. Each Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) needs an organic capability of their own.

To support the MAGTF, the Marine Corps needs PsyOp representation at various levels within the DoD. Currently MISO plans and programs are written by soldiers for soldiers without considering Marines or maritime-based operations. According to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 3210.05f, all MISO plans are approved by the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) delegated to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)). USD(P) has all plans reviewed by the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (PDAS(SOLIC)). These plans and programs are submitted to the PDAS(SOLIC) by the component commands, typically the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC), via the Combatant Command.

The joint proponent for Psychological Operations is US Special Operations Command (SOCOM). The entirety of PsyOp forces supporting SOCOM, with the recent exception of MCIOC teams intermittently supporting Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC), are all from the 4th Psychological Operations Group (4th POG). All the PsyOp personnel supporting OSD were previously assigned to 4th POG. These soldiers are incredible but ignorant of maritime operations and the target audiences Marines may encounter. Yet, despite their lack of maritime understanding, they are responsible, at this time, for the development and staffing of all military information support plans.

The Marine Corps must invest in officers with the experience and the requisite grade to represent Marine Corps interests at this level. Without a professional full-time force, the Marine Corps and its MAGTFs will never have plans and programs designed from inception to support Marine Corps operations.

Conducting Reconnaissance in the IE

It is recommended that the Marine Corps develop Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures regarding reconnaissance in the IE. Key stakeholders must be consulted and integrated into this process. One primary stakeholder in the development of this capability is the Special Studies Detachment (SSD) of the 4th POG under US Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), at Fort Bragg, NC. Additionally, the MCIOC in Quantico would likely have a special interest in the development of this capability.

Further, many programs in the Marine Corps may be leveraged to conduct this mission. For example, the integrated survey program leverages assets within Force Reconnaissance to reconnoiter necessary but low-risk survey requirements; an IE

reconnaissance mission may look similar to this. In addition to the SSD and MCIOC the Air Force Behavioral Scientists and the personnel from the Joint Information Operations Warfare Center (JIOWC) would certainly have equities regarding research of this kind.

With a capability to understand the IE before the introduction of US forces and an ability to develop running estimates the MAGTF will be prepared to fight and win in the IE. The nature of these requirements suggests the need for a MAGTF “Special Reconnaissance” capability designed to survey social aspects of the IE.

Conclusion

To effectively project into the Information Environment the MAGTF will need a dedicated PsyOp Force, to rethink (and perhaps restructure) intelligence support to understanding the IE, develop a method for reconnoitering this environment, and the appropriately trained personnel in key billets at the Marine Component Commands, potentially the Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC), the Combatant Commands, the Joint Staff J-39, the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD(SOLIC)), and the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy (OSD(P)).

Endnotes

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³ Secretary of Defense, *Memorandum: Information as a Joint Function*. (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 15 September 2017). p. 1.

⁴ United States Code, *United States Marine Corps: Composition; Functions*. Title 10, Subtitle C, Part I, Chapter 507, Section 5063.

⁶ Headquarters, Marine Corps. *The MOC*, p. 6.

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⁸ Brian E. Carlson, “Who Tells America’s Story Abroad?” In *Mission Creep*, ed. Gordon Adams and Shoon Murray (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2014). p. 163.

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- ¹⁷ Headquarters, Marine Corps. *The MOC*, p. 6.
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- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1-29.
- ²² Army Headquarters. *FM 3-05.301 Psychological Operations Process: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*. (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 30 August 2007) p. ix.
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- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2-5.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2-16.
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