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14. ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to show that operational deception, as an operational art, still has a purpose in America's military today. Historical case studies have shown that at a relative inexpensive cost, deception is a force multiplier that can change the outcome of a conflict and can allow a weaker force to defeat a stronger force. Some have argued that recent advances in technology and Information Warfare make deception unnecessary and a waste of resources and time. Conversely, as military leaders become more dependent on information technology, there will be more opportunities to use deception in order to achieve military objectives.

The study and practice of deception must improve if the Joint Force Commander expects to be able to conduct effective deception operations. There should be more emphasis at professional education institutions, joint doctrine should be revised to emphasize the role of deception for the commander, and a new Directorate for Deception Operations on the Joint Staff should be established in order to strengthen America's ability to conduct deception operations.

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Operational Deception
The Lost Art in Today's Operations

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

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Abstract

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The study and practice of deception must improve if the Joint Force Commander expects to be able to conduct effective deception operations. There should be more emphasis at professional education institutions, joint doctrine should be revised to emphasize the role of deception for the commander, and a new Directorate for Deception Operations on the Joint Staff should be established in order to strengthen America's ability to conduct deception operations.

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of the Cold War the United States became recognized as the lone superpower left in the world. Lacking a military peer, America's fighting force is unmatched as evidenced by the recent success of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Success today does not necessarily translate into success tomorrow and the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff do not feel that America has the right force structure to face the challenges of the future.

Joint Vision 2020 calls for a transformation of forces that will make America's military capable of full spectrum dominance through the use of dominant maneuver, precision engagement, focused logistics, and full dimensional protection.[1] Many new weapon systems and more importantly, new concepts, such as Network Centric Warfare and Information Operations Superiority, are being touted as the key to successfully transforming America's military. Joint Vision 2020 identifies that Information Operations are essential for achieving full spectrum dominance[2] and that information superiority provides the joint force a competitive advantage when effectively translated by the Joint Force Commander (JFC) into superior decisions.

Having this information superiority must not cause an operational commander to become overconfident in the decision making process as fog and friction will always be part of war. Information Operations Warfare, a central theme of the commander's war fighting mentioned in Joint Vision 2020, is missing the key component operational deception in its discussions. Deception has been effectively used in war for as long as wars have been fought. Sun Tzu states, "All warfare is based on deception. A skilled general must be master of the complementary arts of simulation and dissimulation; while creating shapes to confuse

and delude the enemy he conceals his true dispositions and ultimate intent. When capable he feigns incapacity; when near he makes it appear that he is far away; when far away, that he is near. His primary target is the mind of the opposing commander; the victorious situation, a product of his creative imagination."[3] Not all military leaders embrace this aspect of operational art and claim that the United States' overwhelming technological advantage causes the fog and friction of war to become transparent. Some commanders may also cite Clausewitz and his discussion on "Cunning." He states "Yet however much one longs to see opposing generals vie with one another in craft, cleverness, and cunning, the fact remains that these qualities do not figure prominently in the history of war."[4]

This paper asserts that operational deception continues to be a valuable tool in today's war planning and should be an integral aspect of war fighting in the 21st century. Historical cases have shown that deception can be a force multiplier, enable surprise attacks, and cause the enemy's commanders to question their decision making abilities. The operational commander must also recognize that despite the technological advancements and overwhelming capability of America's military forces, it is not possible to be superior to the enemy in every aspect of war. Utilizing deception schemes can make up for shortcomings and have an impact on the success of operations. Deception is not easily mastered, however, and the commander must thoroughly integrate deception planning and execution during peacetime operations and exercises in order to be successful against an enemy.

KEY DEFINITIONS

In order to understand how operational deception should be an integral aspect of future war fighting, key definitions and concepts must be understood. Deception, military

deception, and operational deception will all be defined. Additionally, the principles of military deception and how it relates to Command and Control Warfare will be discussed as explained in the Joint Doctrine for Military Deception publication.

Deception is defined as "those measures designed to mislead the enemy by manipulation, distortion, or falsification of evidence to induce the enemy to react in a manner prejudicial to the enemy's interests."[5] *Military deception* is defined as "actions executed to deliberately mislead adversary military decision makers as to friendly military capabilities, intentions, and operations, thereby causing the adversary to take specific actions (or inactions) that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly mission."[6] Deception is aimed at making an adversary react to the information they receive from the deception scheme. Military deception is further broken down into five categories: strategic military deception, operational military deception, tactical military deception, service military deception, and military deception in support of operations security (OPSEC). *Operational military deception* is defined as military deception planned and executed by and in support of operational level commanders to result in adversary actions that are favorable to the originator's objectives and operations. Operational military deception is planned and conducted in a theater to support campaigns and major operations.[7] It is a tool to be used by the JFCs in order to assist them in accomplishing their mission by attaining surprise, security, mass, and economy of force. Military deception supports military operations by causing adversaries to misallocate resources in time, place, quantity, or effectiveness.[8]

Six principles of military deception provide guidance for planning and executing deception operations. These principles include *focus, objective, centralized control, security, timeliness, and integration*.[9] Operational commanders must recognize that the *focus* of

deception is to target the adversary decision maker capable of taking desired actions.[10] Too often there is a misconception that the adversary's intelligence gathering abilities are the target of deception rather than the conduit to the decision maker. The second principle, *objective*, is to cause an adversary to take (or not to take) specific actions, not just to believe certain things.[11] Deception efforts will not succeed if the intended deception scheme never reaches the adversary's decision maker. *Centralized control* requires that the deception operation must be directed and controlled by a single element.[12] The operational commander must approve the deception plan in order to avoid confusion and to determine who has the need to know about the deception operation. Planning for military deception operations is top-down, in the sense that subordinate deception plans support the higher level plan. Commanders at all levels can plan military deception operations.[13] Having this centralized control and vision for the deception plan is vital to prevent wasted and conflicted efforts. Successful deception operations require strict *security*. Along with active operations security effort to deny critical information about both actual and deception activities, knowledge of deception plans must be carefully protected.[14] *Timeliness* is an important principle as a deception operation requires careful timing in not only planning but also in its execution.[15] Timing must also take into account the capability of the adversary to detect the deception and act upon it. Sufficient time must be allocated in the deception plan for the adversary to respond to the deception. Finally, each deception must be fully *integrated* with the basic operation that it is supporting.[16] Deception by itself is not the only means of meeting the objective and should not be solely relied upon for ensuring success. Conversely, if the deception plan is not fully integrated, there is little chance that the commander will elicit the desired action from the enemy's commander.

Deception must also be integrated with Civil Affairs and Public Affairs. Conducting deception operations must not undermine relationships with allied militaries or civilian governments. In addition, deception operations will not intentionally target or mislead the US public, the US Congress, or the US news media. Misinforming the media about military capabilities and intentions in ways that influence US decision makers and public opinion is contrary to Department of Defense policy.[17]

Command and Control Warfare (C2W) includes the use of military deception in order to deny information to, influence, degrade, or destroy adversary command and control capabilities while protecting friendly capabilities against such actions.[18] The goals for an attacking military deception are to cause the adversary commander to employ forces in ways that are advantageous to the joint force, cause the adversary's intelligence and analysis capability to create confusion over friendly intentions to achieve surprise, condition the adversary to particular patterns of friendly behavior that can be exploited at a time chose by the joint force, and cause the adversary to waste combat power with inappropriate or delayed actions.[19] When utilized as a C2W protection effort, military deception can mislead an adversary commander about friendly C2W capabilities which may make the commander more likely to misallocated resources.[20] Whether used as an attack option or for protection, military deception plans must be closely integrated with the other aspects of C2W. Without effective intelligence and counterintelligence the potential for successful deception operations is significantly reduced.

Joint Pub 3-58 is incomplete in its assessment of deception principles. The operational commander must also take into account credibility of the deception scheme and

must have the means to determine the effectiveness of the scheme in order to permit deception flexibility.

A strong intelligence gathering and analysis capability is required for a successful deception operation. Understanding the intelligence capabilities and decision making process of the enemy is necessary to create the deception plan. As noted by Dr. Vego, "Because deception plans use hostile intelligence collection systems, they must identify their modes of collection, timeliness of reporting, their modes of collection, relative weight of data received through each channel, and how that data enters the decision cycle to ensure that proper information is provided by appropriate means at the right time."[21] If one can determine how the adversary's commander responds to the deception efforts, one can modify the plan as desired to capitalize on the enemy's actions. Michael Dewar notes in *The Art of Deception in* Warfare, "…there are countless examples of senior military commanders having quite made up their mind what the enemy is going to do or is not going to do, or what he is capable of or is not capable of."[22]

Once an adversary realizes that he has been a victim of deception he will likely be suspicious of all future intelligence information on his enemy. The operational commander can capitalize on this fear of deception in the future by adapting his deception scheme with partial truths. Deception, like surprise, should thus be considered a vital part of one's intelligence activity.[23]

WHY USE DECEPTION?

Is deception really a useful tool to the JFC? Can deception make a difference in today's battles? The answer to both questions is a resounding yes! Deception operations

provide an opportunity for achieving the element of surprise, have historically had a high probability of success, and are a cost effective means of creating a force multiplier.

Many studies have been conducted on the use of deception operations throughout history and have concluded that these operations are often successful in achieving surprise. For example, in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the Egyptian forces were able to achieve surprise by preconditioning the Israeli forces of their movements. Egyptian forces had staged deception operations by using back-and-forth troop movements and staging material at potential crossing points. Troops were moved to the canal, tank ramps were constructed, and openings were made in the canal ramparts, yet each time there was a flurry of activity there was also a subsequent standing down of Egyptian forces.[24] Eventually, the Israelis became so used to this movement and staging that they were completely caught off guard when the Egyptians actually attacked.

One of the most studied uses of deception is Operation Fortitude in World War II to cover the invasion of Normandy by the Allies. Fortitude was the codename for the operation deception plan to convince Hitler that a massive attack would take place at locations in addition to Normandy. This plan was broken up into two parts, Fortitude North and Fortitude South. The North plan was a fictitious invasion of Norway that would bring Sweden into the war on the side of the Allies and the subsequent invasion of North Germany through Denmark.[25] Careful planning and execution of the deception scheme by mainly British officers resulted in a German force of over two hundred thousand men that remained in Norway awaiting an invasion that never came.[26] The Fortitude South plan was devised to persuade Hitler that the Allies would invade the Pas de Calais. This plan centered on a fictitious First United States Army Group led by General Patton. Hitler believed that Patton

would be the logical choice to lead the attack and thus this operational deception plan played to his preconceived notions. The intent of this deception plan was to persuade Hitler not to order the German 15th Army to become involved in the Normandy battle.[27] Dewar notes that "During the period before Overlord, not one German division moved from the Mediterranean to North Europe and none arrived in time to influence the battle during the critical weeks after D Day."[28] If this deception plan had not succeeded, the outcome of the invasion of Normandy may have been much different. There is little doubt that there would have been considerably higher casualties for the Allies if either German forces from the Norway or the 15th Army been repositioned to repel the invasion.

Desert Storm is a relatively recent example of how Information Warfare can be utilized to target an adversary's commander, in this case Saddam Hussein, into taking action and redistributing forces. Joint Pub 3-13 summarizes the efforts below.

> DESERT STORM demonstrated the effectiveness of the integrated use of OPSEC and deception to shape the beliefs of the adversary commander and achieve surprise. Deception and OPSEC efforts were combined to convince Saddam Hussein of a Coalition intent to conduct the main offensive using ground and amphibious attacks into central Kuwait, and to dismiss real indicators of the true Coalition intent to swing west of the Iraqi defenses in Kuwait and make the main attack into Iraq itself. The OPSEC planning process showed that, prior to initiation of the air offensive, Coalition force and logistic preparations for the ground offensive could not be hidden from Iraqi intelligence collection. The plan then called for conducting the preparations in areas of Saudi Arabia logical for an attack into Kuwait; using the air offensive to blind most of the Iraqi intelligence collectors, and then secretly moving the force to the west where it would be postured for the main ground offensive into Iraq. To support this, deception would create false indicators and OPSEC would alter or hide real indicators, all to help Saddam Hussein conclude the Coalition would attack directly into Kuwait. Deception measures included broadcasting tank noises over loudspeakers and deploying dummy tanks and artillery pieces as well as simulated HQ radio traffic to fake the electronic signatures of old unit locations. OPSEC measures included allowing selected Iraqi intelligence collectors to see aspects of the final Coalition preparations for the real supporting attack into Kuwait and directing aggressive patrolling in this sector. The Marine amphibious force, positioned off the coast,

> conducted both deception and OPSEC. While USCENTCOM hoped to use them only as a demonstration to keep the Iraqi attention fixed on Kuwait, the Marines were nonetheless a real force that could have been employed if the Iraqis had not bought the Coalition deception.[29]

These three historical cases have demonstrated how deception can be employed to create an advantage for friendly forces. Joint Vision 2020 and current joint doctrine state that information warfare and technological advantages will provide American forces with a distinct advantage over their adversaries. In practice, however, operations have shown that the technological advances and information superiority did not directly translate into highly successful deception operations. Operation Allied Force against Serbia received a failing grade from the Journal of Electronic Defense in its deception effort.[30] Other reports also stated that operations in Kosovo lacked perception management expertise and lacked articulated commander's guidance.[31] As stated earlier, two key aspects of deception are centralized command planning and verification of deception operations. Lacking either of these traits makes deception operations much less effective.

The use of highly sophisticated information networks and the newly gained American transparency of the battlefield through the use of advance sensors do not limit the potential use of deception operations by friendly or enemy forces. Undoubtedly, adversaries will adapt and develop capabilities to counter U.S. technological advantages. As Michael Handel has observed, "In terms of its forms and the means employed, deception will, like war itself, change as new weapons and technologies appear.[32] The future network centric warfare and reliance on technology will actually present the JFC a greater opportunity to use deception techniques in computer network systems. Dewar has stated that "Arguably, now that interception and deception capabilities are so much improved, the opportunities for deception are even greater."[33]

Making our networks safe from hostile surveillance and attack is a constant battle that has identified several weaknesses. The Web Risk Assessment Team, established by the Joint Task Force for Computer Network Defense, revealed 1,300 discrepancies at Department of Defense Web sites. Some of these discrepancies included classified information such as communication frequencies and call signs. Other discrepancies identified detailed war plans being published on the websites and policy documents on counterterrorism.[34] These identified network weak areas can be covertly monitored in order to plant false information related to deception schemes. For example, the JFC IW staff can track these sites to determine who is hacking into friendly computer networks and then use these sites to plant inaccurate troop strengths, deployments, and capabilities.

Deception is not limited to full scale war operations either. Deception can also be used by a JFC in operations such as noncombatant evacuation operations (NEO) and United Nations peacekeeping and nation-building operations. The JFC can create a set of misperceptions in the mind of any potential adversary that will serve both defensive and offensive purposes.[35] Deception can create misperceptions about the time, place, units, defensive posture, and other characteristics of potential targets and can support force protection and counterintelligence activities.[36]

Deception has been shown to be a force multiplier that assists the commander in achieving surprise at little cost but comes with associated risk of discovery. Assessing risks and resource requirements are principle elements a JFC must consider when evaluating deception operation options. Forces and resources must be committed to the deception effort to make it believable, possibly to the short-term detriment of some aspects of the campaign or operation.[37] If a JFC utilizes the principles of focus, objective, centralized control,

security, timeliness, and integration and has an effective feedback and monitoring mechanism, the deception operation will most likely be worth the risk and the associated costs.

WHY AMERICANS DO NOT LIKE DECEPTION?

A recent RAND report to the military advised that the military look to nature to learn the art of deception. The report states that military organizations of other nations, especially China, Britain, and Russia, have embraced more formalized training in employing deceptive tactics and countering them, viewing such techniques as critical to success as weaponry and munitions.[38] RAND recommends that the leaders can learn lessons not only military history but also from nature and the way deceptive techniques provide evolutionary advantages. This report does not claim that American forces are not using any deception in Iraq, but rather that "The value of deception in war, while widely appreciated, is understudied."[39]

Why is it that Americans do not like to practice deception as much as other major military powers? It is most likely due to the moral implications and risk associated with deception itself. One of the cultural beliefs of Americans is that truth and honesty are required traits that all professional military members must possess. Civilian and military leaders portray Americans as "honest brokers" and often criticize the use of trickery or deception when used by the adversary. When one looks at the army core values of "Courage, Duty, Honor, Integrity, Loyalty, Respect, and Service" and the Navy core values of "Honor, Courage, and Commitment" it is clearly evident that deception does not relate well to any of those terms. The U.S. Military recently transitioned through a very difficult period with the war in Vietnam. Several members of the government and members of the general public felt

that the military leaders were not trustworthy and were attempting to use deceptive techniques to mislead them on how the war was progressing. It took dedicated effort and time to achieve the current respect and admiration that the military enjoys today. Some leaders may fear that operational deception is not worth the risk of possibly deceiving our own media or public. As stated previously, it is against Department of Defense Policy to mislead the media or attempt to influence civilian leadership decision making through deception.

This fear, while understandable, should not prevent military leaders from embracing the potential benefits that operational deception brings. Contrarily, this fear should cause the military to study and understand deception even more thoroughly in order to apply deception techniques successfully against the enemy while not misleading friendly forces or the general public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Operational commanders must be able to better utilize the art of operational deception in future conflicts, whether they be state vs. state wars or battles against asymmetrical adversaries. There should be more emphasis at professional education institutions, joint doctrine should be revised to emphasize the role of deception for the commander, and a new Directorate for Deception Operations on the Joint Staff should be established in order to strengthen America's ability to conduct deception operations.

One can measure the relative importance of a war fighting skill by how much effort is expended to train future leaders in the corresponding concepts or theories. Civilian and military lecturers at the Naval War College have frequently touted the importance of

professional education as a key aspect to our superior military fighting force. In the case of deception, however, little effort in the nearly year long course at the Naval War College was expended in discussing, studying, and evaluating this component of operational art. This lack of emphasis at one of the leading professional military education schools indicates that, in the mind of current leaders, deception is not a high priority tool for the JFC. In order to educate our future military leaders, more time must be dedicated to teaching the key concepts of deception, reviewing historical case studies for both successes and failures, and discussing the possibilities for deception in the future.

Professional military education institutions must also study how asymmetric opponents in the Global War on Terrorism can be influenced by deception operations. Most past deception efforts have been against symmetrical opponents in classical state vs. state military actions. The military must become more creative and imaginative if it hopes to find ways to deceive an asymmetric adversary. If one expects military officers to have a thorough understanding of operational deception art then the curriculum must advance the academic study associated with deception.

Published joint doctrine does not adequately discuss the advantages offered by deception operations. As I conducted research for this topic, one of the first sources of information I studied was the Joint Doctrine Capstone and Keystone Primer. The section that summarizes Joint Operations does not mention deception at all and is omitted as part of key planning considerations for the joint commander. Yet as discussed previously, and as mentioned in Joint Pub 3-58, the commander is the key to a successful deception operation. The JFC must recognize that a successful deception operation must start at the top and utilize more than one branch of the military in a synchronized effort in order to be effective. An

operational commander cannot leave deception operations to his staff alone. The Joint Doctrine Capstone and Keystone Primer should be updated to include deception as a key planning requirement. Joint Pub 3-58 should also be updated with more discussion on deception operations against asymmetric opponents.

Finally, a new J-9, Directorate for Deception Operations, should be established to support the JFC in planning and implementing deception operations. The JFC cannot be expected to develop a complete deception plan individually, but he must provide centralized direction and conceptual ideas to his staff in order to build a deception package. Currently deception operations are planned and organized by the Directorate for Operations staff. This staff could be relieved of planning the deception operations but would have to work closely with the J-9 staff to ensure the entire operations package is synchronized and integrated with actual operations. Additionally, the J-9 staff should recruit strong military leaders and civilians to form an expert, innovative team. Many creative people currently work in three areas that might prove useful to an operational commander – military fiction authors, movie makers, and computer gamers. Successful and respected writers, such as Tom Clancy, Dale Brown, and Web Griffin to mention a few, often have very creative ideas that could be leveraged into a deception plan. Hollywood screen writers and producers have also shown great talent for coming up with creative military plans and concepts. Hollywood has greatly exaggerated the abilities of American fighting forces and deception planning could use the out-of-the-box thinking of the movie makers. Finally, tapping into the relatively new market of real-time strategy computer gaming writers and designers could also be a source of creative ideas. Coupling a mixture of military expertise with proven creative civilians in a J-9 staff would give the JFC a powerful deception team.

CONCLUSION

America now holds a significant edge in modern technological warfare that often amazes not only our enemies but also our allies and coalition partners. In the immediate future, the enemy commander will not have a choice but to use deception to make up for our superior forces and capabilities. If we are not adept at recognizing and understanding how deception works we could be in danger of losing battles to a weaker force, as has been proven if one studies historical battles in the past.

It would be naïve to think, however, that we will hold this technological advantage indefinitely. It is always easier to play "catch up" than it is to continue to develop new and better weapon systems and platforms. With budget constraints due to Operation Iraqi Freedom and rising life-cycle costs of new weapon system platforms, America is not currently spending the resources needed to modernize our forces. In the relatively near future, some of our potential enemies may militarily become our peers. Furthermore, the internet is leveling the playing field as asymmetrical adversaries do not need to develop their own surveillance systems and advanced information networks independently. A quick search on the World Wide Web shows that any individual can purchase satellite imagery for vast areas of the globe. Communication between cells is easier with the internet and difficult to intercept and interpret. We may not be the dominant information warfare military in the next battle.

Recognizing that the technological advantage we enjoy today may be gone tomorrow requires that we make a better and more concerted effort at studying and implementing deception techniques. Additionally, new technological advances will not cause fog and

friction of war to become obsolete terminology. Complete battlefield transparency will never be a reality as new technologies and platforms will emerge to counter any gains realized today. Stealth platforms are a perfect example of an innovation that has made radar less of a factor in air warfare.

The United States must make a marked improvement in its effort to incorporate deception operations into operational art studies and practices. Improving professional military education, revising current joint doctrine, and establishing a Directorate of Operational Deception on the Joint Staff will allow a JFC to effectively use deception in current and future operations. This application of operational art may not win a campaign, but it has the potential to save lives and shorten a conflict. Operational deception, however, is not the answer to every conflict. As Jon Latimer noted, "… a sense of proportion is needed: deception is probably less important than good intelligence, and no war was ever won by either, but only by hard fighting."[40]

NOTES

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[8] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Military Deception, Joint Pub 3-58 (Washington, DC: 31 May 1996), I-2.

9 Ibid., I-3.

10 Ibid.

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39 Ibid.

[40] Jon Latimer, Deception in War, (Woodstock & New York, NY: The Overlook Press, Peter Mayer Publishers 2001) 311.