

Winter 2015

IOSPHERE

The Professional Journal of Joint Information Operations

Year of the Adversary: Iran



Joint Information Operations Warfare Center





IO SPHERE

FEATURE ITEMS and ARTICLES

View from the Top
 Gregory C. Radabaugh, SES 2

Military Deception: A Core Information Operations Capability
Eric J. Shaw, Ph.D 3

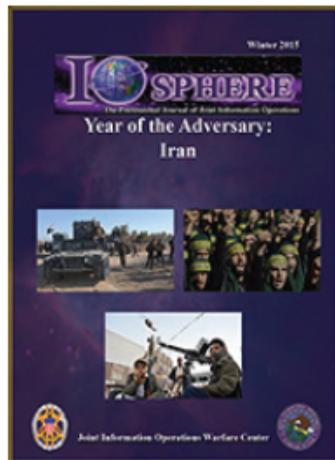
Iran’s Involvement in Bahrain: A Battleground as Part of the Islamic Regime’s Larger Existential Conflict
Jason Rivera 12

Objective Criteria: Applying the Scientific Method to Influence Activities in Practice
Mr. John-Paul Gravelines 20

Information Operations Best Practices Collaboration
Capt Kimberly Bender, USAF 23

Terrorism Gone Viral: The burgeoning media war between ISIS and the U.S.
CPT Kevin C. Sandell, USA 24

Assessing and Evaluating DoD Inform, Influence, and Persuade Efforts: Guidance for Practitioners
Christopher Paul, Jessica Yeats, Colin P. Clarke, Miriam Matthews, and Lauren Skrabala, RAND 27



Credit and thanks to our graphics and layout editors Mr. Myron Hustoft, MeriTec Service Inc. and the JIOWC.

Credit and thanks to the copy editor Capt Kimberly Bender, JIOWC J-51

About the Covers: The front and back cover represent the various aspects of Chinese hegemony.

About our Cover Design: The *IO Sphere* cover is symbolic of the importance of Information Operations in the global projection of national power. The cover colors are a rotation of the U.S. military service colors, as well as, the color purple to symbolize the joint nature of Information Operations.





Shi'ite fighters known as Hashid Shaabi walk as smoke rises from an explosives

Send letters to the editor, articles, press releases and editorials to:

jiowc.iosphere@us.af.mil
or

Joint Information Operations
Warfare Center - IO Sphere
2 Hall Blvd., Suite 217
San Antonio, TX 78243-7074

Phone: (210) 977-5227 DSN: 969 FAX: (210) 977-4654



CALL FOR ARTICLES AND GENERAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

IO Sphere welcomes submissions of articles regarding full-spectrum IO, including all information-related capabilities and activities. *IO Sphere* also welcomes book reviews and editorial commentary on IO and defense-related topics. All submissions will be considered for the next available issue, or issue in which the theme best matches the article. Additional submission information and themes can be found on the *IO Sphere* website. General submission guidelines follow:

TEXT - Microsoft Word.

CHARTS/GRAPHS - TIFF, GIF, JPG format or Microsoft PowerPoint with maximum of one full-size chart or graph on each slide.

PHOTOGRAPHS - TIFF, GIF or JPG in 200 dpi resolution or higher. Please place graphs/photographs/charts on separate pages or as file attachments.

FORMAT/LENGTH - 400 words or more double spaced.

If you're on a .mil network, then IO Sphere is available to you on the Joint Staff's JDEIS electronic publishing site.

Go to <https://jdeis.js.mil/jdeis/index.jsp>, and look at the left-hand listing at the bottom, then click on Additional Resources and JIOWC IO Sphere.

IO Sphere can also be found on SIPRNet at:

<http://intelshare.intelink.sgov.gov/sites/jiowc/publications/default.aspx>

Endnote references for all **academic** articles are published with the article. Contact the Editor for questions about endnotes.

Note: From .mil official domains CAC credentials are required.

Also you can find *IO Sphere* content at www.iosphere.org

Disclaimer Statement

This Department of Defense publication (ISSN 1939-2370) is an authorized publication for the members of the Department of Defense and interested stakeholders. Contents of the *IO Sphere* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the Joint Staff, or the Joint Information Operations Warfare Center. The content is edited, prepared, and provided by the J51 Advocacy Office of the Joint Information Operations Warfare Center under the direction of the U.S. DOD Joint Staff J-39/Deputy Director for Special Actions and Operations. Authors are required to conduct security review of all submissions with their own organization. All photographs are the property of the DOD or JIOWC, unless otherwise indicated. Send articles, Letters to the Editor, or byline editorials to jiowc.iosphere@us.af.mil or Joint Information Operations Warfare Center, Attn: *IO Sphere* Editor, 2 Hall Blvd, Ste 217, San Antonio, Texas 78243-7074. **Articles in this publication may be reproduced without permission. If reproduced, *IO Sphere* and contributing authors request a courtesy line and appropriate source citation.**

China: Adversary or Global Partner

By
Mr. Gregory C. Radabaugh
Director
Joint Information Operations Warfare Center

Welcome to the Winter 2015 issue of the IO Sphere. Continuing with the overarching theme of “The Year of the Adversary,” we will discuss Iran. Like with China, there is some ambiguity with Iran. They are involved in the fight against Da’esh, but this is for their own purposes. Fighting Da’esh is more about increasing their control of Iraq while helping Assad survive.

Iran has had a troubled history. While Iran was never directly “ruled” by outside powers, the oil in the country brought along a lot of influence by western powers, particularly Great Britain. This along with the attempts at modernization and secularization by the Shahs led to two periods of “revolution.” The first, in the early 50’s was more the elected government taking control of the country against the Shah. As the political developments continued, along with the threat to nationalize the oil industry, Britain convinced the US to support the Shah. This led to the coup of 1953 that overthrew the elected government and Prime Minister returning absolute power to the Shah. The second revolution was in 1979 bringing the world’s first Islamist government. This revolution eventually led to the storming of the US embassy and the breaking off of relations with Iran.

With the US out as a protector of Iran, Iraq decided to invade beginning the long Iran/Iraq war. While Iran was primarily focused on this war throughout the 1980’s, they did start spreading their influence throughout the region primarily through Shi’a communities. The civil war in Lebanon provided an opportunity to move beyond their own borders through proxy actors. This involvement led to a partnership with Syria with both countries working together to control Lebanon. It also led to Iran becoming a major sponsor of terrorism.

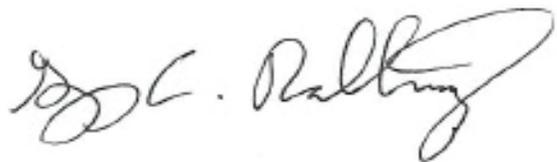
When the war with Iraq ended, Iran was free to expand upon their earlier efforts in terrorism. While their expansion during the 1990’s through the early 20th century was slow, it was fairly steady. With Hezb’allah already part of them, they were able to dominate the landscape of Lebanon following the civil war, influence through the Shia communities in Sunni majority countries provided destabilization. Later, when Palestinians gained greater autonomy, Iran became one of the major supporters of Hamas. Between Hamas and Hezb’allah, Iran was able to attack, through proxies, Israel on a regular basis adding to the prestige in the middle east.



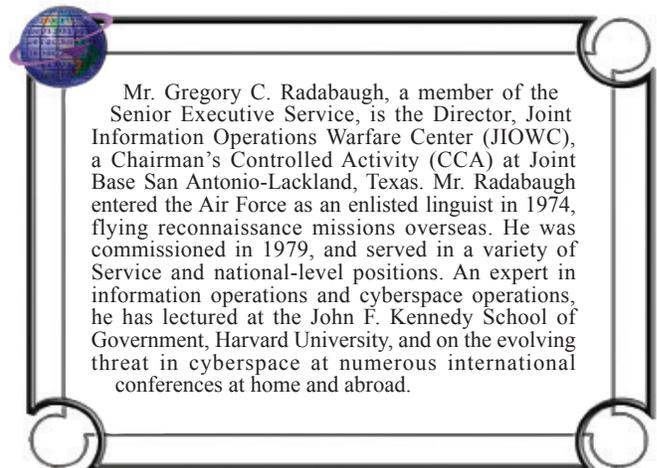
The first event of the 21st century that increased Iranian influence in the region was the US invasion of Iraq. Iraq was already a Shia majority country, but was dominated politically by a secular government that was also led primarily by Sunnis. When Saddam Hussein was ousted, this left an opening for the Shias to finally dominate the government. Under this situation, Iran, using Iraqi Shia proxies, strongly influenced both the makeup of the government and the Shia insurgency. US missteps in the country led to more moderate Shias being thrust from the political picture and strengthened Iran’s influence.

The Arab Spring brought greater influence to Iran as the first, and currently only, Islamist country in the world. Whether they agreed with them or not, Iran was a model for others attempting to create the same model. The civil war in Syria led the Assad government to get help from Iran to hold onto power. Iran also increased their power over the Iraqi government as they were “aiding” Iraq in fighting Da’esh. Finally, there was the coup in Yemen that installed an Iranian supported government, although fighting continues and its long term prospects are in doubt.

Iranian IO primarily consists of influence operations. Iran doesn’t get involved in regional conflicts directly, primarily using proxies. They use the oppression of the Shia minorities, and sometimes majorities, to great effect throughout the region (as can be seen in the article by “Iran’s involvement in Bahrain”). In addition, they use influence operations within the country to convince the people that they are targeted by the rest of the world and against the west to convince these countries their government in moderate and of no threat to anyone else in the world. In addition to their influence operations, Iran has been expanding their offensive cyber capabilities. 🌐



Gregory C. Radabaugh
SES, JIOWC



Mr. Gregory C. Radabaugh, a member of the Senior Executive Service, is the Director, Joint Information Operations Warfare Center (JIOWC), a Chairman’s Controlled Activity (CCA) at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. Mr. Radabaugh entered the Air Force as an enlisted linguist in 1974, flying reconnaissance missions overseas. He was commissioned in 1979, and served in a variety of Service and national-level positions. An expert in information operations and cyberspace operations, he has lectured at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and on the evolving threat in cyberspace at numerous international conferences at home and abroad.

Military Deception: A Core Information Operations Capability

by

Eric J. Shaw, Ph.D

Editor's Note: The following article was submitted to the IO Sphere in 2012 and, unfortunately, was lost in the transition between editors. This article takes a look at military deception and it's uses in shaping the battlefield. This article looks at the historical aspects of deception, provides a solid case study in the use of deception, and describes the future of military deception. The author wasn't able to cover all aspects of military deception, but in the conclusion alerts the reader to the importance of counter-deception.

I did send for thee, To tutor thee in stratagem of war.

— Shakespeare, *Henry VI Part 1, Act IV, Scene 5*

Stratagems, bluffs, ruses de guerre, military deception is as old as warfare itself. In the 4th century B.C., Sun Tzu stated his oft-quoted aphorism, "All warfare is based on deception." By the end of the 18th century the tenets of deception theory and practice were fully accepted as an essential element of warfare. Yet, the practice of deception comes into and falls out of favor frequently throughout military history. Today, many believe that military deception is a modern invention and is most likely thought to be a product of World War II. Others believe that modern surveillance capabilities mean the day of large scale deceptions is over. What is true is that since the successes of the massive deception plans from World War II like BODYGUARD, the deception plan that protected the OVERLORD Allied landings in France, deception practices evolved from what T.E. Lawrence (of Arabia) characterized as "witty hors d'oeuvres before battle" into what should be a fully integrated and essential part of any future military operation.¹

Military deception is an essential core capability within Information Operations (IO). As Joint Publication 3-13 Information Operations attests, military deception operations are designed to "deliberately mislead adversary 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 forces' mission."² The recent revision of the Joint Publication on military deception, JP 3-13.4, emphasizes the importance of coordinating military deception with other IO capabilities as well as stressing the need to integrate them through the planning process in support of an operation or campaign.³ MILDEC and other IO capabilities must be planned and integrated to support the commander's campaign and/or operation. Together, these core capabilities seek to target the adversary decision maker through their information and decision making systems. Information Operations professionals owe it to the commanders for whom they work to be familiar with the theory and tenets of military deception. The purpose of this article is to acquaint the Information Operations practitioner with the basics of military deception. The author hopes to additionally interest the reader in the fascinating history and theory of what is too often thought of as an arcane art.

Case studies are one of the best methods for examining successful — and unsuccessful — deception plans. As an exemplar of the former, this article examines the Third Battle of Gaza in World War I. When British General Sir Edmund Allenby took over command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) in the Middle East in June 1917 it had already been repulsed at Gaza twice before. That Allenby was successful where his predecessor hadn't has been attributed to many factors. One is Allenby's preparation for and brilliant use of cavalry.⁴ Another credits artillery as the unsung hero.⁵ Yet another factor is his novel and effective employment of aviation as part of combined arms.⁶ There is a fourth factor explored here: his use of deception at the operational level.⁷

Before examining Allenby's use of deception this treatment will first explore the theory, principles, and application of deception. The purpose is to serve as an introduction to military deception at the operational level of warfare. The discussion will look at what deception is, why it's used, and how it's done. After providing an introduction to the terms and theory of deception, a discussion of Allenby's use of deception at the operational level will provide the reader an opportunity to consider these ideas through the lens of the Third Battle of Gaza in World War I.

Introduction to Military Deception

"Everything is deception . . . from the insect that mimics a leaf to the popular enticements of procreation."

— Vladimir Nabokov



Leaf Bug, *Phyllium giganteum*

Source: Author

At a fundamental level, deception can be considered the purposeful misrepresentation of reality in order to gain a competitive edge. This is just as true for a military commander as it is for a leaf bug. For the latter, these members of the order of Phasmodotea^{8]} evolved camouflage to protect them from predation. For the former, military commanders

use deception for the purpose of gaining an advantage over the enemy by presenting information (either true or false) that leads the enemy commander to take actions that disadvantage his forces relative to one's own.

Nearly every deception theorist offers a definition of deception. Often confusing, some offer definitions in terms of opposing pairs of concepts. The combination of two opposing concepts together provide the definition. For example, many authors use the terms cover and deception as a pairing for their definition for military deception. Thaddeus Holt in his history of Allies' use of deception in World War II, *The Deceivers*, contrasts cover and deception:

In military usage, cover, as defined officially in 1945 by Joint Security Control, the American central deception

staff in Washington, consists of ‘planned measures for disguising or concealing an operation against an objective, such measures being directed against an enemy,’ Deception, as similarly defined, consists of ‘Planned measures for revealing or conveying to the enemy true information (or false information which could be evaluated as true) regarding our strategic plans, strength, dispositions, operations or tactics, with the purpose of causing him to reach false estimates and to act thereon.’⁹

Simulantur quae non sunt; Quae autem vero dissimulantur.
(*Simulate what is not; dissimulate which is.*)

Barton Whaley and others look at deception as the polarities of *simulation* and *dissimulation*. According to Whaley, “Dissimulation is hiding the real. It is covert, that part of a deception concealed from the target. Its task is to conceal or at least obscure the truth. Operationally, dissimulation is done by hiding one or more of the characteristics that make up the distinct pattern of a real thing.” For him, simulation is “showing the false. It is overt, that part of deception presented to the target. Its task is to pretend, portray, profess an intended lie.”¹⁰

One can discern the close relation between Holt’s cover and deception compared with Whaley’s dissimulation and simulation. For each the first terms are about protecting reality from enemy perception. The second terms are about presenting a false picture to the enemy to cause an action on the enemy’s part that provides an advantage for the friendly side. In a 1969 work, Whaley tightly couples these two pairings, cover and deception, and dissimulation and simulation by noting that all stratagem is the interplay between them. Whaley sees dissimulation as the passive form of deception and simulation as deception in its narrowest sense. Both are present in most if not all of the great deceptions. (Whaley offers Meinertzhagen’s efforts at Third Gaza as one, as discussed below.) The most important result is that “The coordinated use of cover and deception is a much more potent guarantor of surprise than the mere parallel application of both, much less their use singly.”¹¹

Whaley’s categorization of dissimulation as the passive form of deception falls into another pairing in deception’s taxonomy. Many authors offer that deception activities are either “passive” or “active.” Michael Handel offers that “Passive deception is primarily based on secrecy and camouflage, on hiding and concealing one’s intentions and/or capabilities from the adversary.”¹² Passive deception is designed to hide real capabilities or intentions from the adversary. “In contrast to passive deception, active deception normally involves a calculated policy of disclosing half-truths supported by appropriate ‘proof’ signals or other material evidence.”¹³ Active deception attempts to present to the enemy capabilities or intentions the presenter does not possess.

Risking overcomplicating matters, where Handel and most other deception theorists place camouflage in the passive category of deception, one should note that many authors also subdivide camouflage into “active” and “passive” forms. Most forms of camouflage are passive in that they disguise or hide forces and facilities in order to prevent their detection by the enemy. Think of the Trojan Horse: any time a side hides real capabilities it is practicing passive camouflage. Active camouflage, in contrast, creates the illusion that there exist forces or capabilities that aren’t really there. The rubber tanks and wooden airplanes marshaled in

southeast Britain prior to the Normandy invasion in World War II are examples of active camouflage.

Pushing the risk of complication further, while active camouflage should always be used carefully in that the willingness to ensure it is detected may unwittingly alert the enemy to become suspicious about it, the application of passive camouflage to appear to hide the active camouflage may be the most effective combination. In other words, the appearance of trying to “hide” a dummy tank may increase the veracity of the tank in the enemy’s mind. The opposite application can be equally effective: using easily discerned active camouflage over a real capability may upon detection of the camouflage cause the opponent to discount the real force/facility/capability it is “protecting.” As an example, Joseph Caddell relates a story from a World War II U.S. Army Air Force pilot. Photo intelligence uncovered the use of Japanese dummy aircraft on Rabaul. Since they were clearly dummies, they weren’t targeted. After U.S. forces bypassed Rabaul in their island hopping campaign, the island was used as a practice target by newly arriving bomber crews. During one of these practice raids an inexperienced bombardier mistakenly struck the dummy aircraft. They exploded impressively; secondary explosions continued for hours. Beneath the detected and discounted dummy aircraft were the fuel stockpiles critical to Japanese sustainment protected by the “obvious” active camouflage.¹⁴

One more pairing of terms is offered here. First published in 1982 in *The Journal of Strategic Studies* by Donald C. Daniel and Katherine L. Herbig and soon after in *Strategic Military Deception* edited by them, “Propositions on Military Deception” suggested that there are two forms of deception. “The less elegant variety, termed ‘ambiguity-increasing’ or ‘A-type’, confuses the target in order that he be unsure as to what to believe. It seeks to compound the uncertainties confronting any state’s attempt to determine its adversary’s wartime intentions.” For the contrasting form, Daniel and Herbig offer “misleading” or “M-type” deception. These types of deceptions “reduce ambiguity by building up the attractiveness of one wrong alternative. They cause the target to concentrate his operational resources on a single contingency, thereby maximizing the deceiver’s chances for prevailing in all others.”¹⁵ Both of these types are also present in the Third Battle of Gaza, as will be seen.

Deception’s Purpose

B.H. Liddell Hart’s 1967 book, *Strategy*, was based on his 1929 study titled “The Strategy of the Indirect Approach.” The survey presented in the book ranges from the Ancient Greek wars through World War II and provides both a rich history of warfare and a succinct summation of winning principles. One of these is the use of the indirect approach:

During this survey one impression became increasingly strong—that, throughout the ages, effective results in war have rarely been attained unless the approach has had such indirectness as to ensure the opponent’s unreadiness to meet it. The indirectness has usually been physical, and always psychological. In strategy, the longest way round is often the shortest way home [emphasis added].¹⁶

Liddell Hart believes the purpose of a sound strategy is not to overcome resistance but to reduce the possibility of resistance and this is accomplished through the employment of movement and surprise. Where “movement generates surprise, surprise gives impetus to movement.”¹⁷ But for the examination of the utility of deception, he notes that “Surprise lies in the psychological sphere and depends on

a calculation, far more difficult than in the physical sphere, of the manifold conditions, varying in each case, which are likely to affect the will of the opponent.”¹⁸

The calculation Liddell Hart calls for comes down to this: one must consider the resources required for the large scale deceptions that generate the surprise he finds elemental at the operational level of warfare in terms of opportunity costs for deception’s conduct. Weighing the possible gains versus the costs and risks requires a thorough understanding of the purposes deception activities serve.

How Deception is Done

At the heart of every effective deception is a good story. Successful deception planners have vivid yet disciplined imaginations. Creating a deception story requires not only the ability to produce a robust and nuanced narrative. It also requires a deep knowledge of the enemy decision maker and his or her beliefs, preconceptions, and biases. A foundational principle in deception known as “Magruder’s Principle” is that it is easier to support a deception target’s pre-existing belief than it is to change it. As an example, the German Army in World War II named their winter offensive in the Ardennes to appeal to the belief of the Allies that the Germans were in a defensive posture. “WACHT AM RHEIN” translates to “Watch on the Rhine,” implying the Germans were watching for the Allies’ offensive action in a defensive position.¹⁹

Deception activities that deliver this story must fit within the broad pattern of events that the enemy might expect. They must appear to be logical and cannot be perceived as incongruous. To be a deception operation the presentation must be intentional and it must be designed to gain an advantage for the presenter.

Deception Techniques

Distilled to their basic categories, there are only four techniques employed in deception. These are feints, demonstrations, ruses, and displays.

The first two techniques, feints and demonstrations, fall under the more general category of diversions. A diversion is the intentional distraction of an enemy’s attention away from an area of interest or attack. Feints differ from demonstrations in that the former involves contact with the opponent while demonstrations do not intend to make contact. A feint is an offensive action whose objective is to deceive the adversary as to where and/or when the main offensive action will occur. Demonstrations are a show of force usually seeking to cause the enemy to select a disadvantageous course of action.

Ruses are the deliberate presentation of false or confusing information designed to deceive the enemy into decisions or actions that put that side at a disadvantage.

Displays serve to support a deception story by simulating, disguising, and/or portraying friendly force compositions or capabilities. These forces or capabilities may not really exist but are made to look as if they do, usually through simulation.

Cover is also the use of an apparently nonthreatening activity to disguise preparation for or initiation of a hostile act. An example would be announcing a large training exercise near the border or shore of a hostile state. Again, following deception principles, this would best work if it were conducted at a time of year and location that coincided with regular and observed training cycles in the past. A related term is conditioning, where repetition of what

might be preparations for a hostile act are made but not acted upon. The objective is to cause the enemy to become complacent in the face of these actions.

To Whom Deception is Done

At the heart of any deception operation is the need to convey through known channels a plausible deception story that will be believed and acted upon by the enemy decision maker or makers. The deception target is invariably the enemy decision maker.

To deceive the enemy commander one must deceive the conduit through which he or she receives information to base decisions upon. That requires a knowledge of the enemy intelligence apparatus. More than this, the deception planner must also understand the methods and modes of message delivery. What are the opponent’s trusted communications channels? How much, when, and what order should components of the story be presented to receptors within the adversary’s intelligence and Command and Control (C2) networks? What kind of noise or inefficiencies in those communications paths need to be overcome? How many of these channels should be exploited? Another deception maxim, “Jones’ Dilemma,” notes that as the number of channels available and used by the opponent to perceive reality increases, the more difficult it is to deliver a plausible deception story. On the other hand, as the number of those channels that are available for exploitation and used for deceptive manipulation increase, so do the chances the deception will be accepted.

Another question deception planners have to weigh is how much or how complete a picture should they present to the adversary? Spoon-feeding a complete deception story or overselling important components of it through one or few delivery channels raises the risk that the story will be rejected wholesale. It is better to present information — especially false information — in a way that provides the enemy the opportunity to congratulate themselves on deducing the (false) picture on their own. Conversely, delivering incomplete snippets of the story through multiple channels may increase the enemy decision maker’s credulity but risks the possibility that important elements aren’t delivered, or are delivered in a garbled state, or are assembled by the enemy in a way that confuses the intended picture.

While deep knowledge and effective exploitation of opponents’ sensors, communications channels, and decision processes aid success in deception, a cardinal principle in deception is the need to maintain centralized control and coordination of one’s own deception operations. Operational security is of paramount concern. This yields a dilemma: While deception planning is closely held, it must be fully coordinated with “real” operations occurring at the same level of warfare. At the same time it must be fully nested with other deception activities occurring at that level and with those being planned for and executed at higher and lower levels of activities. Failure to do so may result in confusion in the battlespace, or an incoherent projection of real or false intentions, or in worse cases lead to fratricide.

A Case Study: The Third Battle of Gaza

A brilliant example of the use of deception at the operational level was General Allenby’s victory in the 3rd Battle of Gaza, part of the British Campaign in Palestine in World War I.

Before March, 1917, the British Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) had been in a static defense posture protecting



the Suez Canal in what was a minor and peripheral theater. In command was General Archibald Murray. With the collapse of Russia in early 1917, Turkish forces looked to attack British forces in Baghdad. To relieve the pressure on British forces in Mesopotamia and to cement a position protecting the land bridge between Egypt and India, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George looked to make Palestine the most important theater of war outside of Europe. Given the devastating losses on the Western Front, Lloyd George believed the British people needed a victory and that it could come in Palestine. By ‘knocking away the props,’ striking at the Central Powers where they were weakest, Lloyd George hoped to eliminate Germany’s principal supporters and eventually gain the upper hand in Western Europe.²⁰

While the prime minister’s intent was clear, his communications to and support of his military commander were not. Political compromises in London meant Murray’s instructions were to fight local battles in order to tie down Turkish troops and strengthen his defensive position along the Palestinian border. Yet, when Murray requested two additional infantry divisions to do so, he instead received orders to relinquish one of the four he had for transfer to France, leaving him with only three infantry Divisions.²¹

The First and Second Battles of Gaza

By March 1917, both armies were arrayed in a line along the Egyptian-Palestinian border. Facing Murray were Turkish forces under the command of German General Kress von Kressenstein deployed along a line from Gaza on the west coast of Palestine to the oasis town of Beersheba with Tel El Sharia in between (see figure 1).

Before the First Battle of Gaza the primary concern of the British was not that the Turks would make a formidable foe, but that they wouldn’t stay for a fight. The plan then was for a coup de main, a lightning strike, against Gaza. In March, 1917, Gaza was not heavily fortified and this plan had a good chance of being successful. British forces moved swiftly and quickly encircled Turkish forces in Gaza. When the time came to assault the initial objective, a 300 foot knoll called Ali Muntar that dominated the city, Murray’s subordinate commanders dithered. It wasn’t until an hour-and-a-half after enveloping the city that the assault began. By evening the EEF had taken Ali Muntar despite fierce resistance from the Turks. But just as the German commander was about to accept defeat, through a series of command and communications errors, British forces were ordered to withdraw. Realizing their error, the British commanders ordered their forces back to Ali Muntar. A brigade succeeded in retaking the hill only to be ordered off of it again. Finally, all British forces fell back to their original starting points.

During the next three weeks both armies prepared feverishly. The Turks dug in deeper and wider (further impressing the British with their defensive earthworks). The EEF extended their rail bridge another five miles closer to the fighting and sent in additional reinforcements.

While 1st Gaza had been planned as a lightning attack first enveloping, and then cutting through the Turkish troops there, plans for 2nd Gaza took on the familiar guise of the Western front. Instead of a single division and cavalry, this time two divisions with a third in reserve were to conduct a direct assault against Gaza. Deficient in both artillery (Murray had 170 guns, with only 16 of these being medium or better)

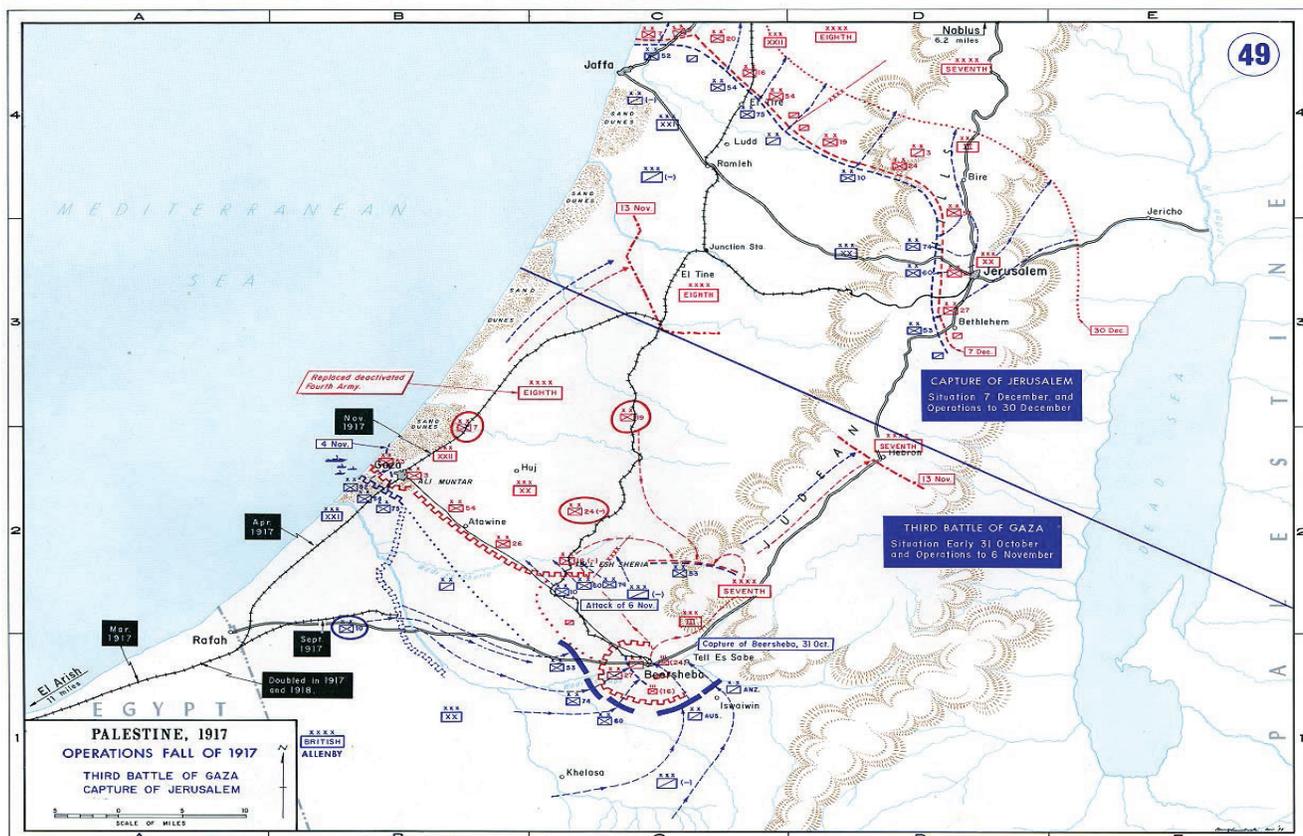


Figure 1. Thomas E. Greiss, ed. Third Battle of Gaza.

Source: Atlas for the Great War (1986), plate 49

and air support, tanks were thought to be able to make up the difference.²² Murray had received eight older types of tanks in January for instructional purposes. These were the ones he employed.

On 19 April the British attacked along a 15,000 yard front. Despite the impotent artillery fire supported by naval gunfire from the west, the overall effect was only to warn the enemy of the commencement of the assault. The results were as expected. The tanks bogged down in the sand and their crews suffered as temperatures inside climbed to above 200 degrees due to red hot engines and an unrelenting sun. Poison gas, another hopeful game changer, evaporated in the heat and dispersed in the winds. The Turkish guns had not been silenced and their machine gunners were ready. Advancing British forces were crushed by Turkish fire. Without any progress that day, Murray called for a renewed assault using his reserves on the morning of the 20th. Fortunately, Murray's subordinates were unanimously and adamantly opposed and convinced Murray to abandon the effort.

On 23 April the British War Cabinet voted unanimously to recall Murray.

The Third Battle of Gaza

General Sir Edmund Allenby, later Field Marshal Viscount Allenby of Meggido and Felixstowe, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., wasn't the first choice for Murray's replacement. That was Jan Christian Smuts, who had previously fought against the British in the Boer War and had recently returned from leading British efforts against German forces under Lettow Vorbeck in East Africa. When Smuts declined the opportunity, Lloyd George convinced Allenby, who thought the Palestinian assignment a step down from his previous position as an Army commander in France, to take the job.

As Allenby's biographer states it, since the second battle of Gaza, "when the disastrous action at Gaza had taken place, a disaster which either by incredible folly or incredible vanity had been blatantly advertised as a victory, the troops had been resting, and it was freely stated that their morale was none too good."²³ Allenby was the man to turn things around. One of his first acts was to move his headquarters from distant Cairo to Khan Yunis, only 30 kilometers of the front. Known as "The Bull," he quickly made his presence known in the field. His visits were invariably preceded by a two letter message, "B.L.": "Bull Loose."

In many ways it made sense that the third attempt to take Gaza should follow the precedent of the first two. A third direct assault was logical; it was the location of the enemy's strongest concentration of forces. A direct attack gave the shortest line of operations. It allowed for support from the Royal Navy on the coast. On the other side of the ledger was the fact that the Turks had become even more strongly entrenched using an elaborate and effective system of interconnecting trenches supported by multiple layers of perimeter barbed wire. The situation had all the hallmarks of becoming another Western Front stalemate or precipitating the slow and enervating withdrawal of Turkish forces to the north, increasing the British lines of communication while shortening those of the Turks.

Conversely, the enemy's vulnerable left flank at Beersheba was in an arid, waterless region through which it would be difficult for the British to attack. The British had no logistics network in the area and any supplies they needed would have to be brought with them. Any attack in this direction would require huge levels of preparation, would be difficult

to conceal, and success would hinge on surprise in order to be able to take Beersheba with its water wells intact. Any further push towards the Turks without this water supply would be impossible.

This laid the groundwork for an operational level deception that in large measure led to Allenby's success at Gaza and his fulfillment of a promise extracted by Lloyd George, to be in "Jerusalem by Christmas."²⁴ Allenby's operational scheme was to surprise the enemy by shifting his main effort to Beersheba, rolling up the Turks' left flank and then pushing towards the main Turkish disposition and bend it back towards Gaza. The frontal attack on Gaza itself was to be the secondary effort. Allenby's operational design was therefore opposite the schemes of maneuver conducted in the 1st and 2nd battles for Gaza, shifting the main effort from Gaza to the enemy's left flank.

Where Murray had been unsuccessful in gaining larger forces (instead, losing one of his four divisions) Allenby successfully negotiated reinforcements, eventually attaining eight divisions assigned to three corps. Allenby's plan was to transfer six divisions to the sector of main effort, but to retain the element of surprise this needed to be done using concealment so as not to divert the enemy's attention away from Gaza, which Allenby wanted the enemy to believe would be the main effort. While this large-scale deception operation was conducted, Allenby still allocated large levels of forces to the secondary effort at Gaza. The originator of this plan, Lieutenant General Philip Chetwode, wrote in the first draft to Allenby that, "We must give the enemy every reason to believe until the last moment that we will contemplate renewing our efforts against his right. Subsidiary operations against portions of his Gaza front will, I think, be unnecessary."²⁵

The objective of the deception plan at the operational level was to hold in place enemy forces and reserves at Gaza, thereby preventing the reinforcement of Beersheba, the weight of main British effort. The deception story supporting this objective was that the British main effort would be a frontal ground attack against Gaza reminiscent of the 1st and 2nd Battles of Gaza with an accompanying flanking attack from the sea. The attack at Beersheba was designed to be perceived by the Turks as a feint to pull enemy reserves away from Gaza.

Overall, the British aimed to conduct an M-Type (misleading) deception to convince the enemy to draw the wrong conclusion regarding the sector of main effort. At the same time, by attempting to cover preparations for Beersheba while overtly preparing for Gaza, the British also conducted A-Type (ambiguity increasing) deception operations which would at least cause him to doubt which was real and which was the feint should the preparations against Beersheba be discovered.

To recap, the deception story was that for a host of real reasons supporting the idea and already accepted as true in the minds of the German leaders of Turkish forces, the British were to directly assault Gaza for the third time. According to the story, this time, as a feint, a subsidiary force would first attack Beersheba hoping to draw off forces from Gaza. With the story in place, the next job was to create or exploit communications channels to sell it to both the German and the Turkish commanders.



Delivering the Deception Story

Two channels were identified to deliver the deception story. These were radio and the use of a ruse.

Communications Channels as a Delivery Method

Radio transmission of military orders was cutting-edge technology in 1917. False transmissions were sent as unofficial chatter between officers and radio operators as well as official traffic and coded messages. Conveniently, the British had “lost” the cryptographic key to the Turks previously so they were able to read these coded messages in the clear. This radio traffic painted a picture of precautionary reconnaissance patrols towards Beersheba while indicating it wasn’t the primary objective. Reports coming back from reconnaissance patrols indicated routes to Beersheba were impassable. Other messages said that Allenby would be out of the area between 29 October and 04 November.

The Haversack Ruse

The second channel was one created by a single remarkable officer, Major Richard Meinertzhagen. Many readers of World War II history are familiar with Operation MINCEMEAT and its “Man Who Never Was.” This was the operation in which a corpse dressed in a military uniform with a briefcase handcuffed to the wrist was delivered by submarine off the coast of Spain. Inside the briefcase was material designed to lead the Germans to believe Operation HUSKY, the Allied invasion of Sicily, was instead directed towards the invasion of Greece by troops from Egypt and Libya. The Spanish authorities discovered the beached corpse, copied the material found on “Major Martin” and forwarded it to the Germans, who acted upon it as the Allies had hoped.²⁶

While the idea for MINCEMEAT is attributed to the author of the James Bond thrillers, then Lieutenant Commander Ian Fleming, and his inspiration is reported to have come from a lesser known author, Basil Thompson, there is a less well known example of the Haversack Ruse, as this form of ruse came to be known. It pre-dates MINCEMEAT and may also have been a source of not only the name for this type of ruse, but also may have inspired that operation.²⁷

Meinertzhagen writes in his Army Diaries:

Spent today in deceiving the enemy. I have been busy lately compiling a dummy Staff Officer’s notebook containing all sorts of nonsense about our plans and difficulties. Today I took it out to the country north-west of Beersheba with a view to passing it on to the enemy without exciting suspicion. After crossing the Wadi Ghuzzee I went in a north-westerly direction towards Sheria. I was well mounted and near Girheir I found a Turkish patrol who at once gave chase. I galloped away for a mile or so and then they pulled up, so I stopped dismounted and had a shot at them at about 600 yards. That was too much for them and they resumed the chase, blazing away harmlessly all the time. Now was my chance, and in my effort to mount I loosened my haversack, field glasses, water-bottle, dropped my rifle, previously stained with some fresh blood from my horse, and in fact did everything to make them believe I was hit and that my flight was disorderly. They had approached close enough and I made off, dropping the haversack which contained the notebook, various maps, my lunch, etc. I saw one of them stop and pick up the haversack and rifle, so I now went like the wind for home and soon gave them the slip, well satisfied with what I had done and that

my deception had been successful. If only they act on the contents of the notebook, we shall do great things.²⁸

In the haversack were carefully crafted false documents that presented a coherent picture of the British plans to attack Gaza. These included a mock agenda for a commanders’ conference and instructions from headquarters regarding the attack on Gaza. An intelligence estimate confirmed the impracticability of an attack on Bersheba. A letter from an imaginary staff officer criticized the attack on Gaza and instead championed an attack on Beersheba. Another letter from his equally notional wife heralded the arrival of his new son. The bag also contained £20 to increase its credibility.

The ruse was accepted on both sides. Only three in Meinertzhagen’s chain of command knew of the ruse, including Allenby. Upon his return Meinertzhagen dutifully reporting losing the haversack. When he reported back to Headquarters, Allenby told him he had received “a violent message from Desert Mounted Corps begging him not to employ such an inexperienced young officers on reconnaissance and that Meinertzhagen had done untold harm through his negligence and stupidity.²⁹ On the other side, it was clear from the behavior in the battle that the German and Turkish commanders had fully assimilated the deception story as delivered. To further cement the idea in the minds of the adversaries that the information Meinertzhagen “lost” was real, Allenby issued an order against any future carelessness like this. A copy was used to wrap some sandwiches which were again conveniently left for the Turks to recover.

During the preparatory phase for the operation, British forces arrayed in front of Gaza were left in place. A naval force assembled with the appearance of being about to launch a landing and auxiliaries sailed along the coast taking soundings.

To condition the enemy against alerting to any movements near Beersheba mounted patrols were sent in regularly. Besides this conditioning, one can ask a question regarding the larger effect of the previous two battles. Could the first two unsuccessful attempts to take Gaza serve, albeit unintentionally, as something like conditioning? That is, while the hostile actions were intended and carried out, did their impotence and repetition lead the Turks into believing a lack of imagination among the British operational commanders would lead them to a Third Battle of Gaza that again mirrored the Western Front with another full direct offensive against Gaza? Evidence suggests that it may have contributed to the Turks’ acceptance of the deception story.

During the deployment phase, over six divisions were shifted to an area south of Beersheba, mainly over one night, 28-29 October, after which the deployment was complete. It was done in a series of hops where departing troops positions were filled by arriving troops. Camps abandoned in trail were maintained by small contingents of soldiers who kept them lit at night and apparently occupied in the day. All rail and water pipe construction was done at night, as were the troop movements. Rail and water routes were camouflaged before daybreak. Soldiers stayed hidden during daylight hours using concealment and camouflage. Overall this constituted the covered movement of 45,000 infantry, 11,000 cavalry, and 200 artillery pieces, an astounding feat. Adding to the success of this effort was the air superiority enjoyed by the British over the battlefield. Most Turkish aircraft were forced to fly too high to be effective at gathering intelligence. Only one succeeded in photographing troops on the move and it was shot down before returning, its crew captured.³⁰

Prior to the attack on Beersheba forces in Gaza were pressed forward in a feint solidifying the Turkish impression that this would be the site of the main engagement. Artillery bombardment began six days prior and continued for two days after these troops moved. Naval bombardment commenced two days prior. This was at the time of the major troop shift towards Beersheba and was designed to emphasize the impression that Gaza was the main effort. Finally, an amphibious demonstration was conducted simulating an immediate sea landing. The main attack commenced on 31 October. Allenby emphatically ordered that the wells at Beersheba had to be taken before nightfall. In one of the most successful cavalry charges ever executed, the Desert Mounted Corps was able to sweep through two lines of trenches, taking 1,400 prisoners and 14 guns.³¹ The attack was so swift the Turks were unable to demolish the wells using the explosive charges they had in place. With the wells in hand, Allenby turned to his left flank. On 01 November the attack began on Gaza and was successful enough to draw one of the Turkish reserve divisions into the fray. By 07 November the British had succeeded in securing Tel El Sheria. A week's fighting forced the Turks into abandoning their positions and retreating, something the British had been incapable of achieving over the previous nine months.

It's difficult to gauge exactly how the Germans and Turks received the deception, as little archival evidence is available, but there are telltale signs that it was believed and acted upon. After Meinertzhagen dropped his packet, work on the Turkish left flank (Beersheba) decreased and efforts to reinforce defenses on the right flank (Gaza) increased. Documents captured during the operation show that Kressenstein received the documents, and while he did not rule out the possibility that they were faked, he apparently eventually accepted their authenticity. Evidence supporting this was his refusal to reinforce Beersheba after the attack began.

Overall, the deception was almost entirely successful. While the preponderance of Turkish forces remained in Gaza and Beersheba remained relatively lightly defended, the British were not able to convince the Turks to deploy both of their reserve divisions to reinforce Gaza.

After Gaza, Allenby drove north and entered the Jaffa Gate of Jerusalem on 11 December. He ultimately pressed deeply into Syria, achieving the final defeat of the Ottoman Empire in Palestine and Syria. Once the Ottoman Empire surrendered, Allenby served as the commander of the occupying army in the Levant, and then served as the high commissioner for Egypt from 1919 to 1925.³²

Deception's Future

Two questions continue to be debated in the literature regarding the future of operational deception. They are, should deception be conducted, and could it be conducted in the present and future environments?

There are moral and ethical questions regarding the use of deception. Deception is a form of lying but with a more restrictive requirement in order to be successful. Where a liar can tell a lie and be a liar whether or not the lie is believed, a deception requires the receiver to believe the lie in order to be deceived.³³ The Kantian prohibition on lying is absolute. According to Immanuel Kant, any lie violates a universal principle: "To be truthful in all declarations is a sacred and unconditionally commanding law of reason that admits of no expediency whatsoever."³⁴ By this strong criterion, deception would not be allowed.

There are internationally recognized limits to what can and cannot be done in military deception. Illegal ruses, known as acts of perfidy, are forbidden. Acts of perfidy are deceptions designed to gain the confidence of the enemy leading to a belief of entitlement to protected status under the law of armed conflict with the intent to betray that confidence. A surprise attack by someone feigning shipwreck or wounds would be a perfidious act and punishable as a war crime.

Beyond what is legal is a grayer area of what is moral. Most authors on the subject recognize that military deception is not only a common practice in war but, within the strictures of the law of armed conflict, a legal one. Just as killing another human being, destruction of others' property, and other acts of violence are illegal outside the confines of warfare but can be legal in warfare if conducted lawfully, so too is deception.³⁵

The second question is of greater practical concern. In this age of pervasive and nearly omniscient surveillance, can one successfully conduct large scale deceptions at the operational level? A hasty conclusion might be that more pervasive surveillance means the end of large scale deception operations. One author identifies three readily available sources for an adversary to detect deception: commercially available satellite imagery, open source information, and the 24 hour news media.³⁶

Paradoxically, at least one thinker, Milan Vego, finds this as an advantage: "Yet new information technologies offer both sides more, not fewer opportunities for deception." [37] For example, the ability to inject deceptive information into a computer network was not available to Allenby.

Despite these contemporary avenues for monitoring an opponent, it is still possible to temporarily employ real forces where they can and are desired to be detected, establish simulated headquarters and units that through signals and other deceptive channels appear to be real and are difficult to discount, and employ other methods for leveraging the power of deception in today's battle space.

Conclusion

There are several topics this short treatise was not able to address but are important enough to alert the reader. For example, there has been no mention of counter-deception efforts. The ability to detect the deception activities and practices of the enemy is a crucial capability and one that heavily leverages the intelligence community. A healthy relationship between its members and deception planners can aid in detecting and even exploiting adversary deceptive practices. Nor have the cultural aspects of deception been discussed. This is an area that is often highlighted in the literature as an area needing further research. Some societies show more affinity for deception than others. Many authors contrast authoritarian and democratic regimes' approaches to deception, for example. Knowing the enemy is an old saw that applies here.

Knowledge and practice of deception are like many of the more esoteric arts in warfare. Emphasis waxes and wanes through history. Yet, a study of military history quickly makes it clear that knowledgeable practitioners of the art of military deception nearly invariably achieve an advantage over the side that does not engage in it. Understanding the theory and execution of successful military deception is an essential part of every military officer's education. 🌐



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bok, Sissela. *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.
- _____. *Secrets: On the ethics of Concealment and Revelation*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1982.
- Brown, Anthony Cave. *Bodyguard of Lies*. New York: Harper Collins, 1975.
- Caddell, Joseph W. *Deception 101-Primer on Deception*. Monograph Series, Washington, D.C.: Strategic Studies Institute, December 2004.
- Cocker, Mark. Richard Meinertzhagen: *Soldier, Scientist & Spy*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1989.
- Critz, Commander M.R., U.S. Navy. "Operational Deception," Newport, RI: Naval War College, September 1996.
- Cruickshank, Charles. *Deception in World War II*. Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Daddis, Gregory A., Major, U.S. Army. "Armageddon's Lost Lessons: Combined Arms Operations in Allenby's Palestine Campaign." Air University Press: Maxwell Air Force Base, AL, 2005.
- Daniel, Donald C. and Katherine L. Herbig, eds. *Strategic Military Deception*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1982.
- _____. "Propositions in Military Deception." In *Strategic Military Deception*, edited by Donald C. Daniel and Katherine L. Herbig. New York: Pergamon Press, 1982.
- Dewer, Colonel Michael. *The Art of Deception in Warfare*. N.P.: David and Charles, 1989.
- Falls, Cyril. *Armageddon, 1918: The Final Palestinian Campaign of World War I*. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.
- Godson, Roy and James J. Wirtz. *Strategic Denial and Deception: The Twenty-First Challenge*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002.
- Greiss, Thomas E., ed. *Atlas for the Great War*. Wayne, NJ: Avery Publishing Group, 1986.
- Gilbert, Major Vivian. *The Romance of the Last Crusade: With Allenby to Jerusalem*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1923.
- Glanz, David M. *Soviet Military Deception in the Second World War*. London: Frank Cass, 1989.
- Grohe, LCDR Edwin, J. *Military Deception: Transparency in the Information Age*. Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2007.
- Immanuel Kant. *On a Supposed right to Lie from Philanthropy*, in Mary J. Gregored, ed. Immanuel Kant" Practical Philosophy, 1996.
- Handel, Michael I., ed. *Intelligence and Military Operations*. London: Frank Cass, 1990.
- _____. "Intelligence and Military Deception." *Journal of Strategic Studies*. 5:1, 1982, 122-154.
- _____. "Military Deception in War and Peace" in *Jerusalem Papers on Peace Problems*, Number 38. The Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations, 1985.
- _____. *Strategic and Operational Deception in the Second World War* London: Frank Cass, 1989.
- _____. *War, Strategy and Intelligence*. London: Frank Cass, 1989.
- Holt, Thaddeus. *The Deceivers: Allied Military Deception in the Second World War*. New York, Scribner, 2004.
- Howard, Michael. *Strategic Deception in the Second World War*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Practical Philosophy*. Translated and edited by Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Hughes, Matthew. *Allenby and British Strategy in the Middle East, 1917-1919*. London: Frank Caass, 1999.
- Kiss, Elizabeth. "Strategic deception in Modern Democracies: The Ethical Dimension." *Proceedings of the Conference on Strategic Deception in Modern Democracies: Ethical, Legal, and Policy Challenges*, Chapel Hill, NC, 2003. <http://sanford.duke.edu/centers/tiss/pubs/documents/Kiss.pdf> . (Accessed 13 December 2011).
- Latimer, Jon. *Deception in War*. New York: The Overlook Press, 2001.
- Lawrence, T[homas]. E[dward]. *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1935.
- Liddell Hart, B.H. *Strategy*. 2d rev. ed. London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1967.
- Lloyd, Mark. *The Art of Military Deception*. London: Leo Cooper, 1997.
- Lord, John. *Duty, Honor, Empire: The Life and Times of Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen*. New York: Random House, 1970.
- MacIntyre, Ben. *Operational Mincement: How a Dead Man and a Bizarre Plan Fooled the Nazis and Assured an allied Victory*. New York: Harmony Books, 2010.
- Mastermann, J.C. *The Double Cross System in the War of 1939 to 1945*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972.
- Mattox, John Mark. "Ethics and Military Deception." Thesis, Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1998.
- _____. "The Moral Limits of Military Deception." *Journal of Military Ethics*, 1:1, 2002, 4-15.
- McKale, Donald M. *War by Revolution: Germany and Great Britain in the Middle East in the Era of World War I*. Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1998.
- Meinhertzhagen, R[ichard]. *Army Diary: 1899-1926*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960.
- Montegu, Ewen. *The Man Who Never Was*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott Company, 1954.
- Savage, Raymond. *Allenby of Armageddon: A Record of the Career and Campaigns of Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1926.
- Sheffy, Yigal. "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement: Allenby's Campaigns in Palestine," in *Intelligence and Military Operations*, edited by Michael I. Handel, 173-236. London: Frank Cass, 1990.
- U.S. Office of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Information Operations*, Joint Publication 3-13. Washington,

D.C.: CJCS, 13 February 2006.

_____. *Military Deception* Joint Publication 3-13.4. Washington, D.C.: CJCS, 26 January 2012.

Vego, Milan. "Operational Deception in the Information Age." *Joint Force Quarterly* Spring, 2002, 60-66.

Wavell, Colonel A. P., C.M.G., M.C. *The Palestine Campaigns*, 3rd ed. London: Constable and Co. Limited, 1931.

Woodward, David R. *Hell in the Holy Land: World War I in the Middle East*. Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2006.

Wavell, Colonel A.P. *The Palestinian Campaigns*. London: Constable and Co. Limited, 1931.

Whaley, Barton. *Strategem: Deception and Surprise in War*. Boston: Artech House, 2007.

_____. "Toward a General Theory of Deception," in *Intelligence and Military Operations*, edited by Michael I. Handel, 173-236. London: Frank Cass, 1990.

Young, Peter. "The Third Battle of Gaza." *History of the First World War, Vol. 6*. London: BPC Publishing, n.d. Editor's Note: This article was originally a JIOWC/J2 IOII S

Endnotes:

1. T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1935), 337.

2. Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Staff, 2012), II-2.

3. Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-13.4, *Military Deception* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Staff, 2006), II-2.

4. Cyril Falls, *Armageddon, 1918: The Final Palestinian Campaign of World War I* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), ix.

5. Matthew Hughes, *Allenby and British Strategy in the Middle East* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 59.

6. Gregory A. Daddis, "Armageddon's Lost Lessons: Combined Arms Operations in Allenby's Palestine Campaign." (Air University Press: Maxwell Air Force Base, AL, 2005), 22.

7. Much of the discussion regarding Allenby's use of deception is informed by Yigal Sheffy's "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement: Allenby's Campaigns in Palestine, 1917-18" published in *Intelligence and Military Operations*, Michael I. Handel, ed.

8. From the Greek, "phasm," translated as "phantom." This refers to their stealthy appearance.

9. Thadeus Holt, *The Deceivers: Allied Military Deception in the Second World War* (New York: Scribner, 2004), 53.

10. Barton Whaley, "Toward a General Theory of Deception," in *Intelligence and Military Operations*, ed. Michael I. Handel (London: Frank Cass, 1990), 183.

11. Whaley, *Strategem: Deception and Surprise in War* (Boston: Artech House, 2007), 126.

12. Michael Handel, "Intelligence and Deception," in *Intelligence and Military Operations*, ed. Michael I. Handel (London: Frank Cass, 1990), 133.

13. Ibid., 134.

14. Joseph W. Caddell, Deception 101 — Primer on Deception. Monograph Series, (Washington, D.C.: Strategic Studies Institute, December 2004), 8.

15. Donald C. Daniel and Katherine L. Herbig, "Propositions on Military Deception," in *Strategic Military Deception*, ed. Donald C. Daniel and Katherine L. Herbig (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982), 5-7.

16. B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* 2d rev. ed. (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1967), 5.

17. Ibid., 323.

18. Ibid.

19. For more on German deception in the 1944 Ardennes offensive, see Lloyd, *The Art of Military Deception*, 67-69.

20. Mark Cocker, Richard Meinertzhagen., *Soldier, Scientist & Spy* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989), 102.

21. David R. Woodward, *Hell in the Holy Land: World War I in the Middle East* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2006), 58-59.

22. Ibid., 73.

23. Raymond Savage. *Allenby of Armageddon: A Record of the Career and Campaigns of Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1926), 192-3.

24. Matthew Hughes. *Allenby and the British Strategy in the Middle East, 1917-1919*, 23.

25. Quoted in Yigal Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement," 181.

26. See Ewen Montagu, *The Man Who Never Was* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1954).

27. Ben MacIntyre, *Operation Mincemeat: How a Dead Man and a Bizarre Plan Fooled the Nazis and Assured an allied Victory*. (New York: Harmony Books, 2010), 11-14.

28. Richard Meinertzhagen, *Army Diaries: 1899-1926*. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960), 222.

29. Ibid., 223.

30. Sheffy, "Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement: Allenby's Campaigns in Palestine," 192.

31. Peter Young, *The Third Battle of Gaza, History of the First World War, Vol. 6*. (London: BPC Publishing, n.d.), 2390.

32. Hughes. *Allenby and the British Strategy in the Middle East, 1917-1919*, 21.

33. Daniel and Herbig, "Propositions in Military Deception," 5.

34. Immanuel Kant. "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy," in *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy* trans. Mary J. Gregor, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 613.

35. See Sissla Bok. *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, 1978, Elizabeth Kiss. "Strategic Deception in Modern Democracies: The Ethical Dimension," 2003, and John Mark Mattox, "The Moral Limits of Military Deception, 2010.

36. LCDR Edwin Grohe. "Military Deception: Transparency in the Information Age" (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2007), 1.

37. Milan Vego. "Operational Deception in the Information Age," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Spring, 2002, 60-66.

38. See Roy Godson and James J. Wirtz, *Strategic Denial and Deception: The Twenty-First Challenge* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002).



Iran's Involvement in Bahrain: A Battleground as Part of the Islamic Regime's Larger Existential Conflict

by

Jason Rivera

Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in Small WarsJournal (SMJ). Only minor formatting changes were made to this article from the original. Per SMJ's free share licensing, this article may be freely shared for non-commercial purposes. For full details of the SMJ licensing, see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>.

An Introduction to the Iranian Security Calculus

The Iranian state is engaged in an existential conflict for the future of the ruling government, Shia Islam, and its status as a regional hegemonic power. Strategically postured against three powerful adversaries to include the United States, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, Iran perceives itself as the underdog in a protracted conflict where it is outmanned, outgunned, militarily surrounded, and diplomatically isolated. To Iran's further detriment, the Islamic Regime is accused, rightly or wrongly, by the United Nations (UN) Security Council of seeking the means to develop a nuclear weapon, which has resulted in devastating sanctions against the Iranian economy and has placed Iran on the precipice of war with a superior United States military force stationed throughout the Persian Gulf and an aggressive, war-hardened, and technologically superior Israeli military force to the West. Given these disadvantages, Iran's security posture is, if nothing else, precarious and seemingly uncertain.

The above pessimistic characterization of the Iranian security posture is a rudimentary introduction to the Iranian problem set, yet serves to demonstrate how the regime may perceive their future survival objectives and accordingly construct their strategic calculus. In response to these perceived threats, Iran has historically relied on asymmetric strategies to include less costly (yet threatening) military deterrents such as their theater ballistic missile (TBM) program, a robust information operations campaign directed at both internal and external audiences, and support to key non-state actors in order to extend the regime's capacity to influence politics and population centers throughout the Southwest Asia region. The latter of these asymmetric strategies is potentially the most critical to Iran's future security posture as it provides the regime the necessary strategic depth to achieve its prime objectives – maintaining the continuity of its government, promoting Shia Islam, and becoming a regional hegemon.

In the process of supporting regional non-state actors, Iran finds itself decisively engaged via its proxies throughout the Southwest Asia region. The most well-known Iranian proxy is Hezbollah, a political group with a militant wing operating primarily in Lebanon, but also suspected to have operations throughout Southwest Asia and as far away as South America.¹ In the southern portions of the Saudi Peninsula, Iran is suspected of providing moral and material support to the Houthi rebels, a minority Shi'ite rebel group that is staging a resistance movement and holding territory

in Northwest Yemen.² While Yemen in of itself is of little strategic importance to the Iranian government, a destabilized Yemen serves to further destabilize Saudi Arabia, which is integral to Iran's long-term strategy. Within Iraq, Iran was and still is known to use its Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Quds Force to provide arms and training to Jaysh al-Maidi and the Sadr Militia, two pro-Shi'ite insurgent groups that were heavily involved in combat operations throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and continue to maintain a low level presence to this day.³ Most recently, Iran has deployed members of its IRGC to Iraq in order to combat the Sunni led Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)⁴ and preserve gains made over the last decade. These three examples are amongst the most well-known and regularly studied Iranian efforts to support non-state actors and foreign insurgencies, however, they are not Iran's only efforts to support and/or inspire foreign insurgencies nor are they necessarily the most important to Iran's strategic objectives. This paper contends that Iran has a substantial strategic objective in fomenting the conditions for a Shi'ite insurgency in the nation of Bahrain and is actively seeking to do so through indirect support operations to the nation's Shi'ite majority population.

Bahrain's Strategic Importance

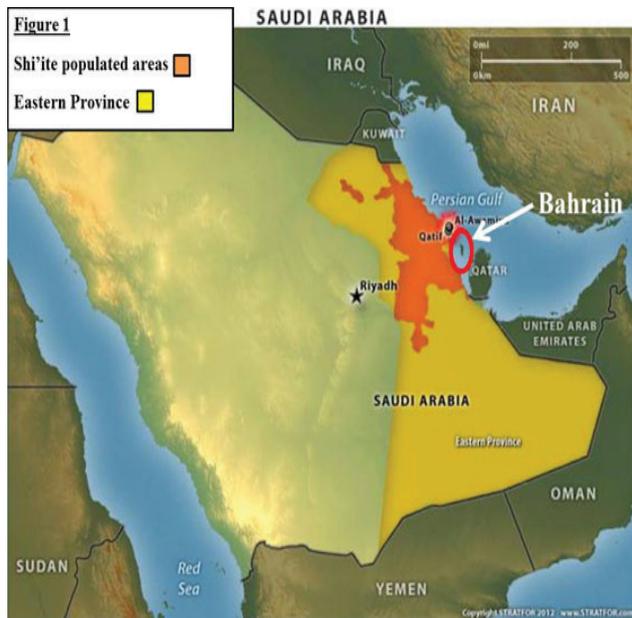
Bahrain, a small island nation located in the Persian Gulf, is a Sunni-led monarchy and member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) whose government is widely considered to be a puppet state of Saudi Arabia.⁵ Unlike the rest of the GCC⁶, which is overwhelmingly comprised of Sunni Muslims, Bahrain's Shi'ite sect of Islam comprises approximately 70% of the nation's Muslim population.⁷ Like the other GCC states, Shi'ite Muslims in Bahrain are notoriously under-represented in politics, are unable to serve in key government positions of power, are generally barred from serving on the police force, and are generally not allowed to serve as officers in Bahrain's armed forces. The al-Khalifa family, a Sunni family that first established control in Bahrain in the 1700s, has managed to retain control with the support of the Saudis and, to this day, continues to rule over the Shi'ite majority.⁸

Bahrain's predicament is similar to many historical and current situations where a majority population serves under and experiences suppression from a ruling minority population. Such a model bares its roots in the world's colonial era, where European nations regularly empowered a ruling local minority in order to maintain strict and scalable control over a larger body of people. Bahrain's importance, however, is not derived from the tragedy of its politics, but rather the strategic importance the island nation has to regional stakeholders to include the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Iran.

The United States, a nation that has become heavily vested in Southwest Asia over the last decade, relies on Bahrain's

strategic position in the Persian Gulf in order to conduct command and control of the region's naval capabilities. Specifically, Bahrain is the headquarters for the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, otherwise known as Navy Central Command (NAVCENT).⁹ This military entity is capable of projecting command and control over two Carrier Battle Groups, nuclear submarines, a fleet hospital, an expeditionary Marine Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team (FAST),¹⁰ and a host of air powered intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets.¹¹ In terms of the United States Central Command's (CENTCOM) air defense posture, Bahrain is currently manned by two Patriot missile batteries scattered throughout the island¹² and is critical to CENTCOM's integrated air defense strategy. Lastly, the United States possesses a limited military presence at Sheikh Isa Air Base located at the southern tip of Bahrain and is the headquarters to a naval Patrol Squadron responsible for flying the P-3 aircraft, an ISR asset responsible for conducting anti-submarine missions and strategic reconnaissance missions.¹³

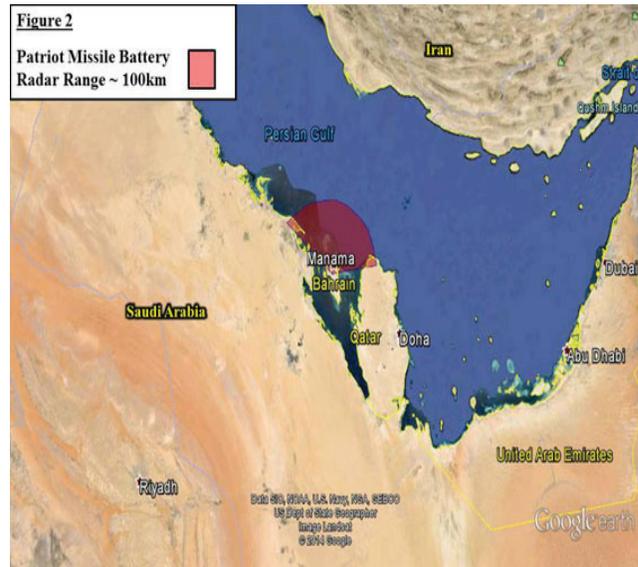
Saudi Arabia, one of Iran's strategic adversaries, has a critical



Source: Author

stake in Bahrain for both political and strategic reasons. Politically, King Abdullah and the other members of the ruling Saudi family rely on the al-Khalifa family in Bahrain to maintain a peaceful relationship with its Shia population. Note figure 1's¹⁴ illustration of Bahrain's proximity to Saudi Arabia's highest density area for members of its Shi'ite population; the relationship and proximity of the Shi'ite populations in both nations creates a situation where political rupture in Bahrain could very easily spillover to Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, Bahrain's location within the Persian Gulf provides a strategic buffer against the Iranian TBM threat. The radar system contained within U.S. Patriot missile batteries is capable of detecting incoming air threats up to 100km out¹⁵; when leveraged as part of a larger integrated air defense systems (IADS) apparatus, the specific location of these missile batteries has the effect of providing a strategic obstacle between Iran's ballistic missile operating areas and the Saudi capital of Riyadh (note figure 2¹⁶).

Similarly to Saudi Arabia, Iran's interests in Bahrain are cultural, strategic, and also economic in nature. Iran's



Source: Author

cultural interests in Bahrain are primarily derived from the island nation's Shi'ite majority and a perceived opportunity to expand Iranian influence throughout the Gulf. In terms of influence, Iran has managed to exploit the cultural Sunni-Shia divide in Bahrain over the last three years by taking advantage of the al-Khalifa family's paranoia. The family insists that Shia's political sentiments have been "hijacked by extremist elements with ties to foreign governments in the region" as opposed to being derived from legitimate grievances.¹⁷ The ruling family's paranoia has resulted in an ongoing crackdown against Shia dissidents, which has given Iran the opportunity to express itself in a positive light to Bahrain's population by attempting to provide humanitarian aid and making political statements calling for peace and calm. Strategically, a Shia led government under Iranian influence in Bahrain may imply opportunities for Iran to rid the island nation of U.S. military presence in favor of Iranian military presence, which not only would remove a strategic U.S. foothold in the region but would also allow for the placement of Iranian military assets in the immediate proximity of Saudi Arabia. Lastly, increased Iranian influence in Bahrain would potentially yield economic benefits such as increased participation in oil projects in southern areas throughout the Persian Gulf, participation in projects with other GCC countries, and increased regional investment in Iranian energy development.¹⁸

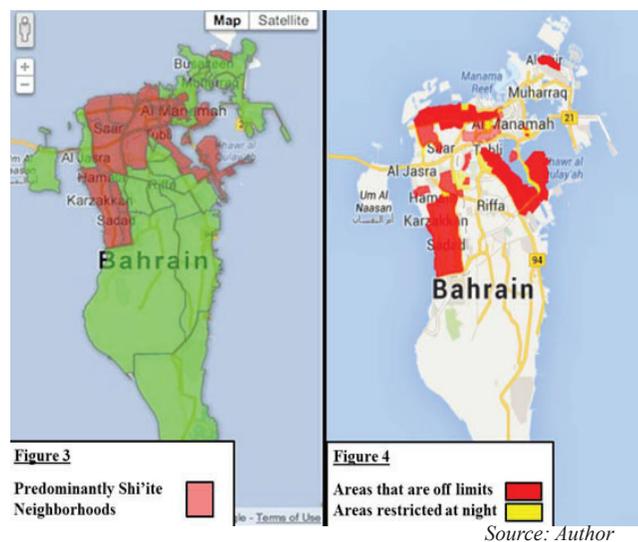
The United States, Saudi Arabia, and Iran's conflicting interests in Bahrain facilitate conditions that have morphed the island nation into a proxy battleground as part of the greater protracted conflict between Sunni and Shia Islam as well as the ever-brewing tensions between the U.S. and Iran. Further accelerated from early 2011 onward by the events of the Arab Spring, the Kingdom of Bahrain has found itself mired down in a war of ideas, culture, political interests, and strategic military competition. As stated earlier in this paper, Iran finds itself at a disadvantage in terms of its conventional military force posture in addition to the Islamic Regime's inability to galvanize the international community unto its cause. Consequently, Iran has turned to and continues to pursue a strategy of direct and indirect insurgency support operations within Bahrain in order to achieve its security objectives. The remainder of this paper shall further profile Iran's insurgency support operations within Bahrain by

conducting a historical overview of Iran's operations within the island nation, reviewing Iran's role in Bahrain throughout the events of the Arab Spring, and providing insights via supplementing testimony, observed host-nation military and police sentiments, and in-person experiences from the author's on-ground presence in Bahrain during the late 2010 and early 2011 timeframe.

Iran's Involvement in Bahrain: Pre-2011

Iran's interest in Bahrain's Shia heritage began in 1602 during the Iranian Safavid dynasty,¹⁹ which is considered the beginning of modern Persian history and is known for the establishment of the Twelver school of Shia Islam.²⁰ The Islamic Regime's de-facto rule over Bahrain lasted until the conquest of the al-Khalifa tribe in 1782, which came as an invasion on the eastern shores of Bahrain from the nation of Qatar to the east. This invasion subsequently forced many Shia to flee to the northern and western portions of Bahrain,²¹ which in turn caused the demographic division of Bahrain's Shi'ite population and is a critical factor in the fomenting of conditions ripe for insurgency at the current time. Figure 3 portrays those districts where Shi'ite opposition party, al-Wefaq, holds seats in the Bahraini parliament,²² which is indicative of where the majority of Bahrain's Shi'ite population currently resides. Figure 4 is an interactive Google Map maintained by the U.S. Embassy in Bahrain that portrays areas which are off limits to Embassy personnel, military service members, and their families due to civil unrest and violent activity.²³ Note the correlation between the two maps in terms of Shi'ite population centers and areas where unrest and violence tend to be higher.

With the rising prominence of the Ottoman Empire and



the subsequent dominance of Sunni Islam, the Shi'ite sect became increasingly isolated which drastically affected the sentiments of the Shi'ite population in Bahrain. The 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran played a critical role in giving hope to Bahraini Shia oppositionists and gave rise to the creation of Shia resistance groups throughout the nation. Bahraini Shi'ites became encouraged by the success of the Islamic revolution in Iran, and the relationship between Bahrain's Shia population and the Islamic Regime was further cemented when Iranian clerics came to preach in Bahrain. The clerics' visits "coincidentally" occurred around the same time that

a radical Shi'ite group known as the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain (IFLB) came into prominence.²⁴ In 1980, IFLB's leadership held a conference in Tehran, at the conclusion of which they issued a statement that "Imam Khomeini is the leader and axis around which our oppressed peoples should rally if they truly seek freedom, since Imam Khomeini is the summit of jihad and faith and the symbol of challenge and endurance. He is the hope of all the oppressed in the world."²⁵

The IFLB's most overt action against the Bahraini government took place in 1981, when the insurgent group executed a failed coup attempt that was largely backed by Iran.²⁶ Iranian support to the IFLB's coup attempt took several forms, the most notable of which included Tehran's provision of fake Bahraini police uniforms, training, funding, extensive media and propaganda assistance, and the provision of weapons.²⁷ The coup attempt's failure was followed by the trial of 73 IFLB members; however, the Bahraini government was careful in its judicial rulings to not be overly harsh as to mitigate further unrest amongst the nation's Shi'ite majority.²⁸ Instead, the more radical members of the IFLB were slowly and systematically deported from Iran,²⁹ resulting in the gradual dissipation of the group throughout the 1990s and its complete dissolution in 2002. King Hamad al-Khalifa managed to mitigate the IFLB supporter's primary grievances by facilitating reforms that increased integration of Shia leaders into the Bahraini political process via the formation of the Council of Representatives, a 40-member parliament with limited constitutional powers.³⁰

Starting in the 1980s through the 1990s, Iran sought (in a more direct manner than through the IFLB) to replicate the success of Hezbollah's operations in Lebanon via the implementation of split-off branch known as Hezbollah al-Hejaz. This group was initially based in Qom, Iran and was trained alongside Lebanese Hezbollah with the intent of conducting insurgency support operations in Shia populated areas of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain.³¹ Hezbollah al-Hejaz is best known for the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, an attack that killed 19 U.S. service members and injured hundreds of others.³² Though they have not since executed an attack of the same magnitude, Hezbollah has maintained a fairly robust presence throughout the GCC has been an integral part of Iran's operations in the region.

Specifically in Bahrain, Hezbollah played an active role throughout the 1990s both in terms of combat logistics operations and insurgency support efforts. In 1994, after having received training from the IRGC, Hezbollah al-Hejaz attempted to smuggle improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and weapons into Bahrain at the direction of Iranian intelligence services.³³ In 1996, Hezbollah agents in Bahrain joined an ongoing wave of civil disobedience and disturbances directed against the ruling regime to include participation in arson and the facilitation of pro-Iranian radio communications from Iranian radio stations.³⁴ Bahraini security forces soon after arrested 44 Hezbollah operatives, after which a subsequent investigation revealed that Bahraini Hezbollah had been trained by IRGC and that Iran's intent was to inspire events in Bahrain similar to that of Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution.³⁵

Outside of the IFLB and Hezbollah al-Hejaz, Iran's support to dissident groups within Bahrain prior to late 2010 was primarily geared towards Shia-based political parties. The three most important of these political parties are al-Wefaq, the Haq Movement, and the Bahrain Freedom Movement. As of Bahrain's most recent elections in 2010m

Al-Wefaq, the largest of the three important Shia political parties, currently holds 18 out of 40 seats on the Council of Representatives.³⁶ Al-Wefaq is the only licensed Shia political party in Bahrain and is leveraged by the Bahraini Sunni leadership as a controlled outlet for Bahrain's Shi'ite population to marginally participate in the political process. Of note, al-Wefaq has always held less than 50% of seats in the Council of Representatives, despite Bahrain's majority Shi'ite population, due to district gerrymandering and a host of fraudulent leadership sponsored activities. In addition to questionable election practices, the Bahraini constitution mandates that the Chairman of the Board of Deputies³⁷ is appointed by King. Khalifa bin Ahmed al-Zahrani, a member of King Hamad's extended family, has served in this position since the formation of the Council of Representatives in 2002.³⁸ Moreover, any legislation passed by the Council of Representatives is subject to the review and approval of the Majlis al-Shura, an advisory council whose members are also appointed by the king.³⁹ Thus despite the reforms promised by King Hamad in 2002, the governmental changes were merely cosmetic in nature and were intentionally designed to marginalize al-Wefaq's already limited role in Bahraini politics.

Unlike al-Wefaq which is considered to be fairly moderate, the Haq Movement and Bahrain Freedom Movement are fringe Shi'ite political groups within Bahrain that are unlicensed and therefore do not have the ability to legally participate in Bahraini elections. The Bahrain Freedom Movement is comprised primarily of former IFLB members; their leader, Saeed al-Shehabi, is currently exiled in London and conducts public outreach activities from abroad.⁴⁰ Al-Haq's original leadership, to include Abd al-Wahhab Hussein and Hasan Musheima, were originally members of al-Wefaq and left to form al-Haq due to frustrations with al-Wefaq's moderate stance.⁴¹ Members of both groups are often accused of being direct proxies of the Iranian government or current Hezbollah al-Hejaz sympathizers; this has culminated in accusations that these groups have received training abroad in places like Iran or Syria and has resulted in the subsequent arrest of several key members.⁴² Iran's support to these groups prior to 2011 can best be described as passive, psychological, and financial in nature. Though the Islamic Regime was and still remains intent on promoting an Islamic revolution in Bahrain, they tend to limit their support and are somewhat discriminate in their choice to provide material support to militant operations, thus alluding to the possible reason as to why Iran has chosen to not militarize the Haq or Bahrain Freedom Movements.

From late 2010 onwards, several events have come to pass that have drastically changed the Iranian approach of inspiring an Islamic revolution inside Bahrain. The most significant of these events was the Arab Spring, a revolutionary wave of civil wars, protests, demonstrations, and riots that began to erupt across the Arab on 18 December 2010 and still continues through the present day. Other smaller, more isolated, yet highly significant events include the withdrawal of the United States from Iraq in December 2011, the demolition of Bahrain's Pearl Roundabout⁴³ on 18 March 2011, and both the initial and ongoing deployments of Saudi, Emirati, Jordanian, and Pakistani troops into Bahrain.

Early 2011 Observations of Iranian Involvement in Bahrain

The following is based largely on the author's on ground experience in Bahrain during the late 2010 – early 2011 timeframe.

***Disclaimer:** All subsequent thoughts, experiences, citations, or opinions are comprised entirely from unclassified sources, are derived solely from the author, and do not represent the official positions or opinions of the U.S. Army, the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Government, or the Kingdom of Bahrain.*

On 17 December 2010, an unremarkable fruit and vegetable vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi attempted suicide through self-immolation⁴⁴ in response to the perceived system of oppression set forth by the Tunisian government. Within hours of this event, protests had begun in Tunisia and steadily gained traction over the following week. Former Tunisian President, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, began to realize that the unrest was spiraling out of control and attempted a series of remediations to include visiting Bouazizi in the hospital⁴⁵ and having the officer that accosted Bouazizi on the day he attempted suicide arrested.⁴⁶ These measures, of course, failed to quell Tunisia's popular unrest; Bouazizi died of his injuries on 4 January 2011 and, a mere ten days later, President Ben Ali fled the country with his family.⁴⁷

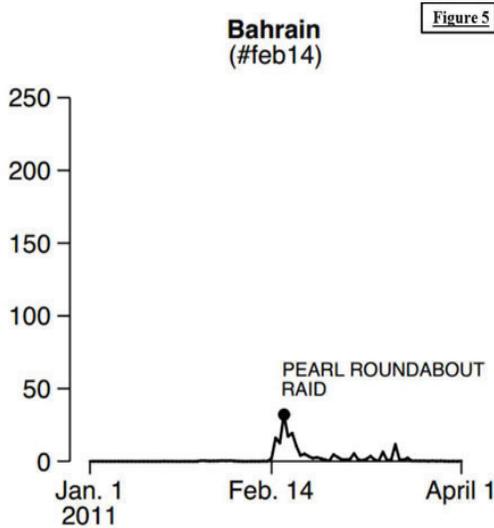
The Tunisian revolution quickly spread throughout North Africa and eastward towards Southwest Asia, resulting in the overthrow of governments, civil war, major protests, and sustained civil disorder in several other countries, some of the more notable of which include Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Bahrain.⁴⁸ Whereas the 14 February 2011 "Day of Rage" in Bahrain is often referenced as the first day of Bahrain's uprising, there was a substantial period of preparation and key events that occurred in the January timeframe that would ultimately enable the necessary conditions for the nation's Shia uprising.

Beginning in mid-January, the Bahraini Ministry of Interior (MOI)⁴⁹ reported an unusual uptick in social disorder, vandalism, and inflammatory rhetoric originating from Shi'ite mosques throughout the nation. The MOI was quick to assign blame to Iranian agents and Hezbollah operatives; of note, it is typical of military and police forces both in Bahrain and the GCC at large to attribute any sort of societal unrest within their borders to Iranian instigators. Such attribution is often a result of overt discrimination against the Shia people, a preference towards maintaining the status quo in favor of the Sunni minority, and a resounding paranoia (and perhaps fear) of the nation of Iran and the capability of Iran's intelligence community, IRGC Qods Forces, and sub-state proxies. This particular accusation at this period in time, however, was supported factually by noticeable instances of anti-regime radio messaging, talks of protest and change via social media forums, and a Shi'ite population that appeared to be slowly arming itself and engaging in policing functions within heavily populated Shia neighborhoods.

Advisor to the Bahraini King for Diplomatic Affairs, Dr. Muhammad Abdul Ghaffar, cited before the United Nations on 25 September 2013 that "The kingdom of Bahrain has been suffering for a long time from the Iranian interference in its internal affairs. There are multiple TV channels that are under Iranian influence, along with a number of radio stations, newspapers and media institutions that are affiliated with Iran."⁵⁰ Dr. Ghaffar's accusation against Iran was particularly applicable in Bahrain during the January – early February 2011 timeframe. Native Arabic and Farsi speakers reported hearing both on the radio and amongst Shi'ite mosques calls from Iran encouraging Bahrain's disparaged Shia population to conduct demonstrations in the streets and to begin policing their own neighborhoods in preparation for an inevitable conflict with the ruling Sunni majority. This public

messaging campaign within Bahrain coincided with public support for continued unrest from Iranian political circles. Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei was cited as saying, “the uprising of the people of Bahrain is essentially the same as the uprising of the people of Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen... the people of Bahrain only want free elections. Is this too much to expect?”⁵¹

In addition to public messaging via radio and political statements, there is evidence to suggest that Iran exacerbated anti-regime sentiments within Bahrain using social media platforms. Post-analysis of the Internet’s role throughout the duration of the Arab Spring has exemplified the importance of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and weblogs for popular mobilization.⁵² Like other populations in countries affected by the Arab Spring, Bahraini Shi’ites heavily relied on social media to organize protests, share news about security force movements, and bring their message to wider audiences throughout the world. Realizing the role that social media was playing in terms of popular mobilization, Bahraini security forces were quick to shut down access to popular social media forums by filtering key websites and, in many cases, shutting down Internet access in Shia concentrated regions. Figure 5⁵³ demonstrates number of clicks on popular social media URLs by the thousands during the January – April 2011 timeframe.

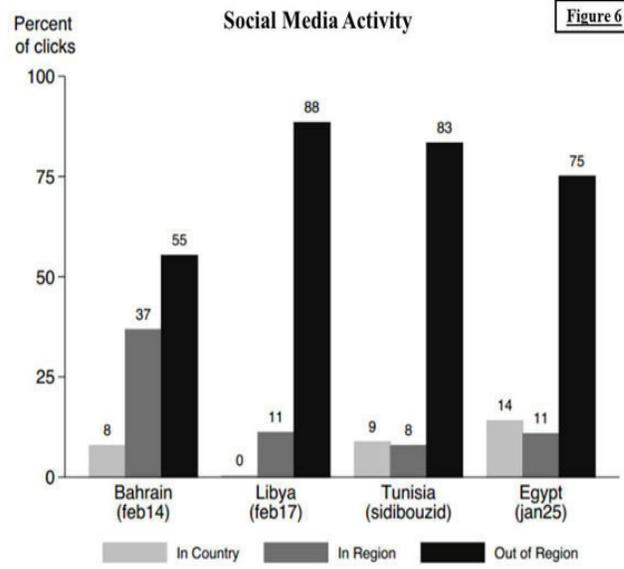


Source: Author

Note how activity skyrocketed after the 14 February 2011 Day of Rage and then quickly plummeted after security forces raided the Pearl Roundabout. Bahraini government officials, through working with popular state-owned telecommunications company, Batelco, managed to effectively blackout both Internet and cell phone communications throughout key portions of the island.

Despite the communications blackouts, social media support and coordination continued to be prevalent. Even more oddly, social media postings to include activity reports and photos of alleged government atrocities continued to be posted despite the communications blackout. Bahraini security forces were quick to analyze the source of these postings and concluded, per their usual modus operandi, that the Iranians were the source of the ongoing “false allegations” and activity reports. At the time, U.S. forces on ground had no way to verify these claims. Analysis conducted throughout the following year, however, suggests that these allegations may have been true.

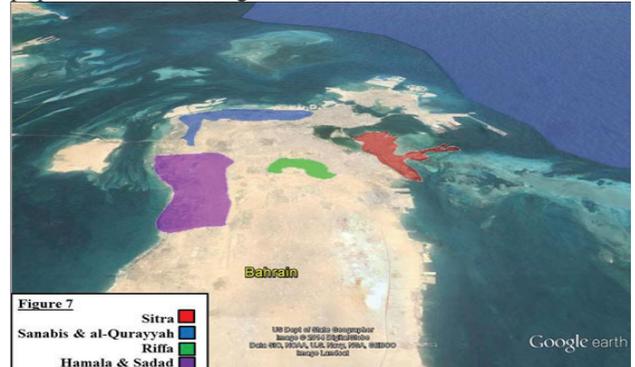
Note figure 6’s⁵⁴ illustration of social media activity in terms of percentage of clicks originating from within the country of unrest, within the region, and outside of the region.



Source: Author

Note Bahrain’s regional social media activity compared to other countries that experienced significant civil disorder during the Arab Spring; Bahrain’s regional click activity is over three times that of any other country. In regards to origin of regional activity, it is unlikely that these “regional clicks” were occurring in nearby GCC countries such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, or Kuwait, as these nations were simultaneously exercising Internet filtering in preemption of possible civil disorder within their own borders. Therefore, there is a strong possibility that the most logical explanation is that regional activity was coming from Iran or Iranian regional Internet Protocol (IP) proxies, which in turn gives credence to Bahrain’s security forces regarding their claims of Iranian sourced social media postings claiming to document nefarious activities.

The February 14th Day of Rage and the subsequent governmental response spurred the more radical sects of Bahrain’s Shi’ite population to take up arms. In particular, Bahraini military forces had begun to report armed patrols, check points, and periodic attacks against perceived outsider threats, i.e., those who were not from that specific neighborhood. These reports tended to originate from highly populated Shi’ite neighborhoods to include Sitra, Sanabis,



Source: Author

al-Qurayyah, Hamala, and Sadad (note figure 7⁵⁵ for specific locations).

A notable exception was the neighborhood of Riffa, which is actually a Sunni majority neighborhood that had developed a widely spread perception that they were under siege by Iranian inspired Shia agitators and Hezbollah agents. Spot reports suggested that armed individuals possessed small arms to include pistols, rifles, shotguns, and, in many cases, melee weapons such as machetes, baseball bats, wooden planks, and swords.

The timeframe following the Day of Rage was characterized by increasing escalation of tensions at the Pearl Roundabout and massive marches and demonstrations throughout the streets. While these demonstrations were well-documented by regional and international media sources on ground, these same media sources failed to document the series of paramilitary activities and weapons smuggling operations being undertaken by Shi'ite militants. Increasingly complex improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were being employed by Bahraini resistance movements as Bahrain's military and LEF forces has begun to employ violent measures against protestors. The first attacks appeared to be vehicle born IEDs that were directed against Bahraini government buildings, checkpoints, and other property. These occurred during the February timeframe as protests within the island nation had become increasingly prevalent. These sorts of attacks were then escalated following the military intervention of the GCC led by Saudi Arabia and the demolishing of the Pearl Roundabout.

On March 14th, 2011, Saudi Arabia and other GCC partners announced that they would be sending a "peacekeeping" force to Bahrain in order to counter Iranian proxies and help restore calm within the island nation.⁵⁶ The Peninsula Shield Force, a GCC collaborative military force made up GCC nations to include Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Bahrain, and Oman,⁵⁷ conducted a sweeping intervention and quickly quelled the majority of violent protests within Bahrain. Most press reporting indicated that the troops were comprised solely of GCC forces to include 1,200 personnel from Saudi Arabia and another 800 from UAE.⁵⁸ This, however, was not the full extent of foreign military intervention into Bahrain's internal security dynamic. Pakistani troops, who have a long history of supporting GCC military forces in the realms of military training and tactics, were brought into Bahrain in order to bolster the nation's internal security capacity. Open source indicates that approximately 2,500 Pakistani service members contributed to Bahrain's national guard capacity.⁵⁹ In addition, Bahraini military sources indicated that Pakistani commandos were often used in situations where the government of Bahrain needed to maintain plausible deniability of involvement in certain actions. This information was never reported on in mainstream media, however, is corroborated by on-ground reports via social media and blog forums. One blog states that "some of the suppressing seems to have been done by Pakistani mercenaries (there is an elite battalion of ex-Pakistani commandos who constitute a special security force in Bahrain). There are also rumors that regular Pakistani troops were used..."⁶⁰

At the behest of the Peninsula Shield Force, the government of Bahrain implemented a decision to forcibly remove protestors as the Pearl Roundabout on March 16th, 2011, which was followed two days later by the dismantling and literal obliteration from Bahraini history of the Pearl Roundabout as a symbol of Shia resistance.⁶¹ While this

event is widely considered to mark the end of Bahraini protest activity, in reality it inspired insurgent-like behavior from militant Shias who were committed to changing Bahrain's system of governance.

After the Pearl Roundabout Destruction and an Assessment of the Future

The occupation of the Peninsula Shield Force and destruction of the Pearl Roundabout managed to drastically discourage and reduce large-scale protest activity, however, militant Shi'ite groups continued to carry on their efforts in a more clandestine manner. The decision to destroy the Roundabout forced Shia agitators to reassemble in a more decentralized manner, primarily relying on impromptu mosques⁶² as centers for assembly, planning, and dispersal of arms. Incidents of violence in the form of small arms fire and explosions had become more common. Mid-2011 on-ground reports from MOI forces suggested that militant Shia factions had begun to assemble IED making materials within various properties throughout densely populated Shia neighborhoods. One particular raid of an impromptu mosque in the densely Shia populated neighborhood of Sitra revealed complex IED making materials that, according to Bahraini LEF forensics teams, resembled the materials used during the height of anti-coalition violence in Iraq during OIF. Bahraini LEF were quick to attribute the technical similarities to Iranian IRGC Qods Forces, though there was never any hard evidence to prove that this was the case.

It is relevant to note, however, that Bahrain has since experienced several attacks, training efforts, financing schemes, and smuggling attempts of relatively high complexity, many of which are suspected to have Iranian origins. In the early December 2011 timeframe, a bomb was placed underneath a vehicle 50 meters away from the British Embassy in Manama, which is assessed by many to be a response to the expulsion of Iranian diplomatic staff members from Britain the week prior.⁶³ In early 2013, a joint Bahrain-Oman intelligence operation claimed to have uncovered evidence of an eight-man cell operating in Bahrain that was responsible for engaging in financing efforts, recruiting, information gathering, and finding places to store weapons in Bahrain.⁶⁴ Evidence suggests that smuggling operations via Bahrain's shipping channels have also steadily been on the rise. In December 2013, Bahraini authorities claimed to have seized a boat of Iranian origins off its shores containing hand grenades, fuses, C4, and TNT.⁶⁵

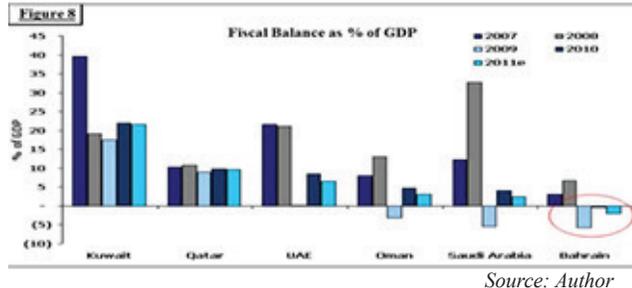
In an effort to disguise the above activities, Shia militants in Bahrain often used impromptu mosques in order to escape detection and assemble in secret. Bahraini intelligence services quickly discovered that the impromptu mosques were being used as logistical nodes for militant Shia efforts and have since that time engaged in a campaign of systematically targeting these pseudo religious sites. Despite the tactical advantages this yields to Bahraini LEF, the media has been quick to condemn the destruction of these sites,⁶⁶ which has caused subsequent condemnation within diplomatic channels. To this day, Bahraini LEF continue to carry out aggressive operations against Shia militants with suspected Iranian ties; alternatively, Iran continues to wage its efforts through diplomatic, political, and possible clandestine military means.

Events over the last three years and the current instability throughout Southwest Asia imply an uncertain future for the Kingdom of Bahrain. Iran will likely continue its efforts of promoting internal subterfuge in an attempt to gain a



strategic foothold in the Gulf while simultaneously denying the same to the United States and Saudi Arabia. However, current events in Iraq to include the apparent shortcomings of the Shi'ite dominated Maliki government and the aggressive push by ISIL are likely to dominate the Iranian leadership's attention in terms of their primary external proxy efforts, leaving Bahrain on the backburner for now.

Even without a focused effort from Iran, Bahrain's problematic political situation, inefficient policies, and demographic divide will likely result in an unsustainable situation for its Sunni-led government. Bahrain's oil reserves are lacking compared to its GCC counterparts, which has caused the island nation to seek other mechanisms to grow and sustain national wealth. Despite these efforts, inefficient policies have caused Bahrain to experience exacerbated fiscal drain relative to the rest of the GCC (note figure 8⁶⁷), which in turn contributes to the nation's instability. Furthermore, Bahrain's Shi'ite population is projected to grow at a rate that outpaces many of the fastest growing majority-Muslim nations, implying the possibility that Bahrain's Sunni-led government will experience increased sectarian pressures in the future (note figure 9⁶⁸).



Shia Muslim Population Growth in the Four Largest Shia-Majority Countries			
Country	ESTIMATED SHIA POPULATION 2010	PROJECTED SHIA POPULATION 2030	ANNUAL GROWTH RATE
Iraq	20,998,000	32,636,000	2.2%
Bahrain	459,000	617,000	1.5
Iran	69,208,000	82,904,330	0.9
Azerbaijan	6,156,000	7,113,000	0.7

Sunni Muslim Population Growth in the Four Largest Sunni-Majority Countries			
Country	ESTIMATED SUNNI POPULATION 2010	PROJECTED SUNNI POPULATION 2030	ANNUAL GROWTH RATE
Pakistan	155,834,000	224,103,000	1.8%
Egypt	79,624,000	104,539,000	1.4
Bangladesh	147,864,000	186,568,000	1.2
Indonesia	203,823,000	237,639,000	0.8

Source: Author

These problems, by their very nature, are systemic and over the long-run have the effect of eroding even the most experienced and well-supported autocracies. Bahrain is no exception – making it likely that the nation's current policies will prove unsustainable for a minority Sunni ruling party who, despite their best efforts, is on the precipice of being overrun by a frustrated, increasingly violent, and Iranian-supported Shia majority.

Jason Rivera is a Captain in the U.S. Army National Guard, a Senior Consultant with Deloitte Consulting LLP, and possesses a M.A. from Georgetown University in Security Studies, a M.A. from the University of Oklahoma in Economics, and two B.A. degrees in Political Science and Economics from the University of Nevada – Las Vegas.

Endnotes:

[1] Matthew Levitt, (2011) "Hezbollah: Party of Fraud – How Hezbollah Uses Crime to Finance its Operations," *Foreign Affairs*, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67997/matthew-levitt/hezbollah-party-of-fraud?page=show#> (accessed 2 Jul. 2014).

[2] Anthony Cordesman, et al., (2013) "The Gulf Military Balance Volume III: The Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula," Center for Strategic & International Studies, v.

[3] Anthony Cordesman & Jose Ramos, (2008) "Sadr and the Mahdi Army: Evolution, Capabilities, and a New Direction," Center for Strategic & International Studies, (Washington, DC: CSIS), 3.

[4] Amir Abdallah, "Iran deploys military to fight Sunni ISIL insurgents in Iraq," [www.iraqnews.com](http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/iran-deploys-military-to-fight-sunni-isil-insurgents-iraq/), <http://www.iraqnews.com/iraq-war/iran-deploys-military-to-fight-sunni-isil-insurgents-iraq/> (accessed 2 Jul. 2014).

[5] Kevin Downs, (2012) "A Theoretical Analysis of the Saudi-Iranian Rivalry in Bahrain," *Journal of Politics & International Studies*, Vol. 8, 227.

[6] Members include Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, and Oman.

[7] Geneive Abdo, (2013) "The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi'a-Sunni Divide," The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, (Washington, DC: Brookings), 5.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[9] U.S. Navy, (2014) "U.S. 5th Fleet – U.S. Naval Forces Central Command," United States Navy, <http://www.cusnc.navy.mil/> (accessed 3 Jul. 2014).

[10] An elite security force designed to rapidly respond to threats to US government interests in the region.

[11] Sami G. Hajjar, (2002) *U.S. Military Presence in the Gulf: Challenges and Prospects*, (Virginia: Army War College), 27.

[12] Gulf Daily News, (2010) "US missiles for Bahrain?" *Gulf Daily News*, <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/NewsDetails.aspx?storyid=269639> (accessed 3 Jul. 2014).

[13] AIR-1.0 Public Affairs, (2012) "Aviation Week honors P-3 simulation team for IT/Electronics achievement," Naval Air systems Command, <http://www.navair.navy.mil/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.NAVAIRNewsStory&id=4955> (accessed 3 Jul. 2014).

[14] STRATFOR, (2012) "Map of Shi'ite Islam Concentration in Saudi Arabia," *STRATFOR Global Intelligence*, <http://libertarian-neocon.blogspot.com/2012/02/it-might-not-be-hormuz-but-saudi-oil.html> (accessed 3 Jul. 2014).

[15] Strategic Defence Intelligence, (2014) "Patriot Missile Long-Range Air-Defence System, United States of America," *Army-technology*, <http://www.army-technology.com/projects/patriot/> (accessed 4 Jul. 2014).

[16] "Map showing the maximum range of the U.S. Patriot Missile Battery Radar," 26o11'33" and 50o31'29", Google Earth.

[17] Justin Gengler, (2011) "How Radical are Bahrain's Shia? The Real Source of Unrest in the Kingdom," *Foreign Affairs*, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67855/justin-gengler/how-radical-are-bahrain-shia> (accessed 7 Jul. 2014).

[18] George Friedman, (2011) "Bahrain and the Battle Between Iran and Saudi Arabia," *Geopolitical Weekly*, <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20110307-bahrain-and-battle-between-iran-and-saudi-arabia#axzz36m175Z15> (accessed 7 Jul. 2014).

[19] Graham Fuller & Rend Francke, (1999) *The Arab Shi'a: The Forgotten Muslims*, (New York: St. Martin's Press), 121.

[20] Amiz Nanji & Farhad Daftary, (2007) "What is Shi'a Islam?" The Institute of Ismaili Studies, (London, UK: Institute of Ismaili Studies), 8.102.

[21] Geneive Abdo, (2013) "The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi'a-Sunni Divide," The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, (Washington, DC: Brookings), 9.

[22] Jadaliyya Reports, (2013) "Gerrymandering in Bahrain: Twenty-One Persons, One Vote," *Jadaliyya* جَدَالِيَّيَا, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/10275/gerrymandering-in-bahrain_twenty-one-persons-one-v (accessed 7 Jul. 2014).

- [23] U.S. Embassy, (2014) "Bahrain Off Limits Areas," *Google Maps*, <https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=216471892140116171495.0004cae74799a7c9b9fb6&msa=0&ll=26.23769,50.578995&spn=0.220492,0.307274&dg=feature> (accessed 7 Jul. 2014).
- [24] Geneive Abdo, (2013) "The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi'a-Sunni Divide," *The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings*, (Washington, DC: Brookings), 10.
- [25] Hasan Tariq Alhasan, (2011) "The Role of Iran in the Failed Coup of 1981: The IFLB in Bahrain," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 65, No. 3, 603-17.
- [26] Kevin Downs, (2012) "A Theoretical Analysis of the Saudi-Iranian Rivalry in Bahrain," *Journal of Politics & International Studies*, Vol. 8, 214.
- [27] Ibid.
- [28] Ibid.
- [29] Claire Beaugrand, (2010) "The Return of the Bahraini Exiles (2001-2006): The Impact of the Ostracization Experience on the Opposition's Restructuring, Mapping Middle Eastern and North African Diasporas, BRISMES Annual Conference, (London, UK: University of Leeds), 5.
- [30] Kenneth Katzman, (2011) "Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service, (Washington, DC: GPO), 2.
- [31] Scott Modell & David Asher, (2013) "Pushback: Counter the Iran Action Network," Center for a New American Security, (Washington, DC: CNAS), 17.
- [32] Toby Matthiesen, (2011) "The History of Hizbullah Al-hijaz," *Arabia Today*, <http://arabia2day.com/featured/the-history-of-hizbullah-al-hijaz/> (accessed 8 Jul. 2014).
- [33] The Israeli Intelligence & Heritage Commemoration Center, (2013) "Bahrain as a Target Preferred by Iran for Terrorism and Subversion," *The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center*, (Israel: IDF), 14.
- [34] Ibid.
- [35] The Israeli Intelligence & Heritage Commemoration Center, (2013) "Bahrain as a Target Preferred by Iran for Terrorism and Subversion," *The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center*, (Israel: IDF), 15.
- [36] Sarah Beckerman, (2014) "Bahrain," *The National Democratic Institute*, <https://www.ndi.org/bahrain> (accessed 8 Jul. 2014).
- [37] The equivalent to the U.S. Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- [38] Official Nuwab Web Page of Bahrain, (2014) "House of Representatives >> members of the Board," <http://www.nuwab.gov.bh/CouncilMembers/Pages/default.aspx> (accessed 8 Jul. 2014).
- [39] Geneive Abdo, (2013) "The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi'a-Sunni Divide," *The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings*, (Washington, DC: Brookings), 12.
- [40] Claire Beaugrand, (2010) "The Return of the Bahraini Exiles (2001-2006): The Impact of the Ostracization Experience on the Opposition's Restructuring, Mapping Middle Eastern and North African Diasporas, BRISMES Annual Conference, (London, UK: University of Leeds), 6.
- [41] Ali Alfoneh, (2012) "Between Reform and Revolution: Sheikh Qassim, the Bahraini Shi'a, and Iran," *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*, No.4, (Washington, DC: AEI), 7.
- [42] Kenneth Katzman, (2011) "Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service, (Washington, DC: GPO), 3.
- [43] The central hub and organization center for Bahraini civil unrest in the early 2011 timeframe.
- [44] Yasmine Ryan, (2011) "The tragic life of a street vendor," *Al Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/01/201111684242518839.html> (accessed 10 Jul. 2014).
- [45] Ibid.
- [46] Yasmine Ryan, (2011) "The tragic life of a street vendor," *Al Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/01/201111684242518839.html> (accessed 10 Jul. 2014).
- [47] Ibid.
- [48] Seth Jones, (2013) "The Mirage of the Arab Spring: Deal With the Region You Have, Not the Region You Want," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 92, No. 1, 55-64.
- [49] The name for Bahrain's public security forces and special security forces.
- [50] Yasser al-Chazli, (2013) "Adviser to Bahrain king: GCC basis of balance in region," *Al-Monitor*, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/security/2013/11/bahrain-gcc-balance-unrest-iran.html#> (accessed 12 Jul. 2014).
- [51] Hanif Zarrabi-Kashani, (2014) "Iran and the Arab Spring: Then and Now," *Muftah.org*, http://muftah.org/iran-arab-spring-now/#.U8H_uvIdVyI (accessed 12 Jul. 2014).
- [52] Maha Taki & Lorenzo Coretti (2013) "The role of social media in the Arab uprisings – past and present," *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, Vol. 9, Issue 2, 1.
- [53] Sean Aday, et al., (2012) "New Media and Conflict After the Arab Spring," *United States Institute of Peace*, (Washington, DC: USIP), 12.
- [54] Sean Aday, et al., (2012) "New Media and Conflict After the Arab Spring," *United States Institute of Peace*, (Washington, DC: USIP), 13.
- [55] "Map showing Bahraini neighborhoods where citizens conducted armed patrols," 26o03'23" and 50o32'51", *Google Earth*.
- [56] Ethan Bronner & Michael Slackman, (2011) "Saudi Troops Enter Bahrain to Help Put Down Unrest," *The New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/15/world/middleeast/15bahrain.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 (accessed 1 Aug 2014).
- [57] Karen Young, (2013) "The Emerging Interventionists of the GCC," *LSE Middle East Centre*, (London, UK: Long School of Economics), 13.
- [58] Ibid.
- [59] Mujib Mashal, (2011) "Pakistani troops aid Bahrain's crackdown," *Al-Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/07/2011725145048574888.html> (accessed 1 Aug 2014).
- [60] Omar Khattab, (2011) "The Shia genocide in Bahrain shows Islam's replacement by Wahhabism," *Let Us Build Pakistan*, <http://lubpak.com/archives/40692> (accessed 1 Aug 2014).
- [61] Martin Chulov, (2011) "Bahrain destroys Pearl roundabout," *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/18/bahrain-destroys-pearl-roundabout> (accessed 1 Aug 2014).
- [62] Shia agitators in Bahrain during the 2011 uprising often designated people's homes and/or social structures as "mosques" in order to avoid detection and military assault against their planning efforts.
- [63] Loveday Morris, (2011) "Bomb blast outside UK embassy in Bahrain," *The Independent*, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/bomb-blast-outside-uk-embassy-in-bahrain-6272354.html> (accessed 1 Aug 2014).
- [64] Frank Gardner, (2013) "Iran 'set up Bahrain militant cell,'" *BBC News Middle East*, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-21522074> (accessed 3 Aug 2014).
- [65] Agence France Presse, (2013) "Bahrain says it seized Iranian, Syrian explosives," *The Daily Star*, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Dec-30/242667-bahrain-says-it-seized-iranian-syrian-explosives.ashx#axzz39KxT1OfZ> (accessed 3 Aug 2014).
- [66] Al-Wefaq Source, (2011) "Bahrain targets Shia religious sites," *Al-Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/video/middleeast/2011/05/2011513112016389348.html> (accessed 1 Aug 2014).
- [67] M.R. Raghu & Mai Sartawi, (2012) "GCC Demographic Shift: Intergenerational risk-transfer at play," *Kuwait Financial Centre*, (Safat, Kuwait: Markaz), 12.
- [68] Luis Lugo, et al., (2011) "The Future of the Global Muslim Population: Projections from 2010-2030," *Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project*, (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center), 154.

Objective Criteria: Applying the Scientific Method to Influence Activities in Practice

by

Mr. John-Paul Gravelines

Editor's Note: This article looks at using scientific method for creating an influence campaign. What the author means by this is using a theory to make observable predictions. From here, you set an experiment to test the theory in order to validate, at least for the time being, the theory itself. The author calls upon his experience from deployments to Afghanistan and set forth an experiment based upon a theory that influence operations can aide in building the legitimacy of a nascent indigenous police force.

Determining the utility of influence campaigns is an on-going challenge for those plying the strategic communications trade. Despite noble efforts, the communications assessor is unlikely to be in a position to conduct randomised control trials to determine program efficacy. A determined sceptic is likely to find departures from laboratory-style rigour when observing the assessment of influence activities in the context of violent political conflict. However, that is not to suggest such rigour should not be a goal, particularly during the initial trials of an influence campaign. Innovative quasi-scientific methods can be employed to both improve influence activities and for the sake of due diligence. The cycle of using theory to make a prediction which can be observed in an experimental setting to reach conclusions can be approximated in order to maximise value of influence efforts. Those tasked with safeguarding the legitimacy of taxpayer expenditures will also likely approve of increased innovation in the area of influence assessment. The process supports an "evidence based decision making" model of public management. While causality is essentially impossible to demonstrate in field conditions, the scientific method should serve as a foundation for influence activities such that practitioners can refine techniques as necessary.

This paper will outline the initial testing of a program through which a nascent indigenous police force can be supported by coalition influence activities, in turn building the legitimacy of the police force's central government. More specifically, this paper will describe a stylized example based on the author's experience in Kandahar province of Afghanistan during 2010 as a member of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) where a scientific process was applied to the basic doctrinal approach in effect at that time. This is not in any way intended to be a factual recitation of historical events, but a heuristic for ways a similar project might be conducted in the future. The prevailing theme is a commitment to scientific principles in the determination of program efficacy, while acknowledging the limitations of field conditions.

The Afghan National Police (ANP) had a poor reputation across the country due to among other things, high levels of perceived corruption (Bombs and baksheesh, 2010). Local citizens distrusted the ANP. This manifested itself through behaviours such as the avoidance of reporting enemy activity, undermining coalition intelligence efforts. Citizens needed to be persuaded to report enemy activity to the

authorities. Attitude and sentiments of those citizens are not to be discounted, as they form layers of the Hierarchy of Psychological Effects Model offering critical insight into the effectiveness of any influence campaign (McKinney, 2015). However, the ultimate dependent variable should be behavioural-centric (MacKay & Tatham, 2011). This approach is also consistent with recent research in the related field of consumer behaviour which suggests that past behaviour is a more useful predictor of future behaviour than attitudinal or psychographic based segmentation (Yankelovich & Meer, 2006). In this case, it was viewed as both tactically advantageous and strategically significant if local nationals "tipped off" Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's (GIRoA) security forces (the ANP) of enemy activity.

Rather than immediately launch a costly large-scale influence campaign, a pilot project was conducted in a specific location. This process was a natural experiment. Although persuasion principles guide influence practitioners to perform certain activities, each situation is distinct. A long term "drum beat" influence campaign would benefit from a proof-of-concept exercise. ANP police units were divided into Police Sub Stations (PSS). Each PSS was responsible for a geographic area and would serve as the basis for this pilot program. Influence theories inspired activities that could ideally bring about behavioural change. Influence activities were restricted to this location as much as pragmatism allowed. This allowed comparison of a targeted population against a non-targeted group, resembling treatment and control groups. Choosing a treatment group was determined by a range of factors. Logistical considerations such as freedom of movement and existing infrastructure will inevitably play an important role in pilot location determination. For example, a coalition radio station may be transmitting over a footprint that loosely corresponds to the geographic boundaries of a PSS. Beyond practical determinants, however, it is critical to "move the moveable," (Helmus, Paul, & Glenn, 2007) that is, persuading those most likely to be receptive to the message.

A more formal experimental procedure would have selected a treatment group at random from the total set. However, disregarding pragmatic considerations, a best-case treatment PSS in terms of receptiveness to influence was chosen. The belief was that if results were not realised under favourable conditions, other courses of actions should be sought. Properties of the population were considered prior to treatment PSS selection in an effort to ensure a positive response from the stimulus. The control group, as discussed below, was determined at random. Non-randomised treatment group selection limited generalizability, but the results nonetheless offer useful insight on how similar stimuli might affect similar subject groups.

When choosing where to conduct the pilot program, the malleability of the population's behaviour was considered. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) suggests that behaviour is determined by a combination of attitude

toward the behaviour, subjective norms and perceived control (Ajzen, 1991). Subjective norms were approximated by the existing rate of tipping off of authorities in the PSS. The higher the rate of tipping, the more normalised is the behaviour. Perceived control will be determined by the existing tipping telecommunications infrastructure. A PSS was chosen that allowed residents to easily contact the ANP, versus a PSS that lacked call centre support and/or a dedicated mechanism to reach GIRoA authorities. Local nationals should also be confident in the effectiveness and professionalism of the ANP response. Finally, the TPB suggests that attitude helps predict behaviour. Therefore, a region for the pilot program should be selected that contains residents who hold a relatively positive opinion toward GIRoA a priori. The ideal PSS for this pilot program was therefore one which has (1) a relatively high acceptance of GIRoA's legitimacy and the ANP's effectiveness, (2) a reasonably advanced communications systems enabling contact between residents and the ANP and (3) many residents already engaging with the ANP. While this approach appeared to limit potential growth, the data suggested there was significant room for improvement in all parts of the region.

Defining objectives as simply an improvement in these factors is inadequate if assessment is to be conducted. Goals should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (Paul, Yeats, Clarke, & Matthews, 2015). Measurability goes beyond quantification. Variables must be related to relevant factors to ensure the validity of the metric is consistent with the intended observation. In short, variables must be "good" and ensure they are observing the right factor (Connable, 2012). The supposed dependent variable, in this case tip line calls, should be weighed against the related behaviour of actual enemy initiated attacks (EIAs). This results in a proposed dependent variable consisting of the ratio tips / EIAs. A rise would indicate there are more tips being received per EIA, suggesting a greater willingness of the population to report enemy activity. Additionally, the ratio in the targeted PSS would be compared over time to the ratio of a separate randomly selected PSS. The resulting goal was phrased as, "The ratio of tips per EIAs in PSS-Treatment (PSS-T) will increase over the same ratio observed in PSS-Control (PSS-C) at rate of x% per month." Determining the value of "x%" was consistent with the above stated principle of achievability, and refrained from overly optimistic expectations. This result was the foundation for a basic experimental design: a treatment group, a control group, a stimulus (the influence efforts communicated to the treatment group), a time interval and an observable dependent variable. It must be noted that randomness cannot be achieved due to the aforementioned practical considerations, but this procedure was likely as close as one could get under field conditions.

The stimulus, being the persuasion efforts directed at the treatment group, naturally targeted different stages of the Hierarchy of Psychological Effects Model, from the cognitive stage, to the affective stage and finally to the behavioural stage. The local populace, being the primary audience, must be made more aware of the ANP, develop a preference for the ANP and finally seek out the ANP when needed. One novel method used to both build awareness and create a brand preference involved employing the coalition sponsored radio station (whose footprint loosely aligned with the boundaries of PSS-T). Listeners were encouraged to call the station and suggest nicknames for the PSS-T ANP unit. Entrants would receive a low-denomination pre-paid phone card if deemed competitive by the locally-

sourced on-air personalities. Offering a nominal reward to encourage a desired behaviour creates cognitive dissonance in the caller fostering an attitudinal change in favour of the ANP (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). Broadcasting ostensibly positive local support for the ANP leverages the "social proof" principle of influence which can build broader support for the ANP among the population (Cialdini, 2007).

Directly engaging the public was one avenue toward reaching the overall goal of increased tipping / EIA. It was also believed that persuading PSS-T police members to behave more professionally would contribute to positive developments in the affective stage of the PSS-T population. The goal of improving ANP behaviour would contribute to the ultimate goal of an improvement in PSS-T tips / EIA. This was required to have a SMART goal and assessment scheme. A police behavioural aggregate metric was developed with components related to corruption, professional bearing, safety and other elements associated with professional policing. Directly observing police behaviour would result in an observer effect, where police members would likely behave differently than if they did not believe they were being observed. To combat this issue, local nationals were contracted to drive through both PSS-T and PSS-C ANP vehicle checkpoints with clandestine cameras mounted in the vehicle to document the behaviour of the ANP members. The resulting video was analysed and coded to quantify the components of the overall police behavioural aggregate metric. This procedure was conducted at regular time intervals. Changes in the behavioural metric could be compared over time between the treatment group and the control group, elucidating the effect ISAF actions had on police behaviour in PSS-T. Several specific influence activities were developed to realise a positive result in PSS-T.

For ISAF mentors to guide ANP members toward more professional behaviour, rapport between parties had to be nurtured. It was observed that the relationship between police and ISAF mentors was strained over a variety of issues. Mentors and ANP quartered in opposite corners of the PSS. Cultural misunderstandings and friction retarded professional development activities. In response, actions dubbed "Rapport Building Activities" (RBAs) were outlined to bridge the cultural differences and create an environment in which mentees "liked" mentors, consistent with the "liking" principle of influence (Cialdini, 2007). RBAs involved ensuring more culturally sensitive soldiers spent more personal time in direct contact with ANP members, cultivating relationships while associating the ISAF brand with mutual respect. The goal was to create an environment in which ANP members would be more willing to consider the input from their coalition advisors. Specific RBAs typically consisted of informal mutual language training, musical performances, meal sharing and other activities that permitted the ANP members to showcase their culture to their NATO mentors. Both entertaining and enlightening for all involved, RBAs appeared to be a useful and interesting method of creating a receptive audience. Given the context, it must be noted that such activities may increase insider attack risk.

Photographs of PSS-T ANP members were taken and incorporated into visual products used for billboards and posters. Target audience analysis revealed images associated with confidence and effectiveness would resonate with the audiences and as a result images highlighted the stoicism and tactical acumen of the ANP members. This tactic was two-fold: (1) to communicate ANP effectiveness to the civil population of PSS-T, and (2) to illustrate to PSS-T ANP members that the subjective norm for all ANP members is



to behave in a fashion consistent with the professionalism depicted on these visual products. These visuals were prominently displayed throughout PSS-T in locations obvious to both ANP members and the general public. This display contributed directly to the subjective norm input for The Theory of Planned Behaviour with the goal of improving the behaviour of the PSS-T ANP.

Experimental results began to flow to analysts. Video footage of ANP members at checkpoints were coded and input while tip line data and EIA metrics were gathered and compiled. The results, which themselves were immaterial to the experimental process, suggested that PSS-T ANP members were behaving more professionally versus those in PSS-C. Likewise, tip / EIA data showed an increase in PSS-T relative to PSS-C. The pilot study suggested the theories and tools leveraged would be effective if deployed on a broader scale. While there will inevitably be idiosyncratic issues with which to contend as a project is scaled, a strong argument may be made to support similar techniques supported by an appropriate level of resourcing. Officers tasked with assigning resources should recognise the value of such a scientifically-derived pilot study in determining how to deploy funds. Reasoned evidence suggested this combination of influence techniques produced desirable results.

The application of the scientific method to the execution of influence activities has the potential to hone the effect of those activities, while demonstrating strong due diligence to auditors and sceptics. The preceding method is not intended to be a pro forma method, but one vignette to serve as inspiration for further development. Multiple treatment groups can be used with different stimuli to determine which is most effective. Very specific stimuli can be tested rather than an entire persuasion program. There are ample possibilities to leverage the scientific process in practice to determine optimal practices in a particular setting. Capitalising on relevant literature in fields such as behavioural economics and social psychology, influence practitioners can devise theoretically-sound persuasion programs while subjecting them to the criteria of an approximated experiment. This proposal is far from the rigour of laboratory conditions. Members of the treatment

and control groups cannot be randomly assigned. Other stimuli may interfere with one group or another. The acumen and experience of the influence professionals must still account for these inevitable departures from strict scientific analysis. However, this framework is a step to ensure the effect of influence activities on target audiences can be evaluated in a structured fashion at an early stage. 🌐

John-Paul Gravelines is a veteran of the Canadian Army's Psychological Operations community. His civilian career has focused on the assessment of strategic communication activities. He holds a Bachelor's degree in mathematics, a Master's degree in political science and an M.B.A. He resides in Virginia.

Works Cited:

- Bombs and baksheesh. (2010, January 21). Retrieved August 2, 2015, from The Economist: <http://www.economist.com/node/15331099>
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 179-211.
- Cialdini, R. B. (2007). *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. New York: Collins.
- Connable, B. (2012). *Embracing the Fog of War: Assessment and Metrics in Counterinsurgency*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.
- Festinger, L., & Carlsmith, J. M. (1959). Cognitive consequences of forced compliance. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 203-210.
- Helmus, T. C., Paul, C., & Glenn, R. W. (2007). *Enlisting Madison Avenue: The Marketing Approach to Earning Popular Support in Theaters of Operation*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.
- MacKay, A., & Tatham, S. (2011). *Behavioural Conflict*. Essex: Military Studies Press.
- McKinney, P. C. (2015). *Hierarchy of Psychological Effects Model and the Military Information Support Operations Assessment Framework*. Ft. Bragg: United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School Psychological Operations Commandant Psychological Operations Doctrine Division.
- Paul, C., Yeats, J., Clarke, C. P., & Matthews, M. (2015). *Assessing and Evaluating Department of Defense Efforts to Inform, Influence, and Persuade*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.
- Yankelovich, D., & Meer, D. (2006, February). *Rediscovering Market Segmentation*. Harvard Business Review



Subscribe to the *IO Sphere*



Subscription comes with several benefits:

- **Earlier delivery:** Each issue is released to subscribers the day before public release
- **Delivered directly to the e-mail address of your choice - No looking through the site to find the latest issue**
- **May be delivered directly to your e-reader device* if you prefer: No need to manually load to your preferred device**

Subscribe at the *IO Sphere* website. Link to subscription form is found on the right side of the home page.

- **Works for Kindle, iPad, iPhone, and many Android tablets. Currently not available for Nook or Sony e-readers.**

Information Operations Best Practices Collaboration

by
Capt Kimberly Bender, USAF

Editor's Note: This is the continuation of a series of updates on activities involving the Information Operations Best Practices Community of Practice (IO BP CoP). The IO BP CoP comprises a mailing list of over 100 individuals from 20 organizations across the joint IO community, interagency, and services. The CoP meets quarterly via SIPRNet Defense Connect Online (DCO) to share information on potential joint IO BPs.

Since its inception in September 2012, the IO Best Practices Community of Practice (IO BP CoP) has conducted 14 virtual collaboration sessions via VTC SIPRNet Defense Connect Online (DCO), and Defense Collaboration Service (DCS). Eleven of those sessions were regularly scheduled (quarterly) sessions, and two were out-of-cycle sessions on special-interest topics. Topics have included such subject areas as force development, IO planning tools/processes, assessment, and effects-based targeting, subject-matter expert exchanges, and the DOD Rewards Program.

LTC Blas and Mr Diaz, USSOUTHCOM J39, briefed their Subject Matter Expert Exchanges initiative during the 6 October IO Best Practices DCS session. The purpose of this initiative is for USSOUTHCOM J39 to conduct SMEEs across the USSOUTHCOM AOR in order to increase Partner Nation IO and information related capabilities as critical elements of Operation SOUTHERN VOICE. This increase acts as a force multiplier for USSOUTHCOM and helps them to conduct IO in the theater despite ever decreasing resources.

The end state for the USSOUTHCOM Subject Matter Expert Exchange (SMEE) program is to increase partner nation IRC capacity so they can conduct information related activities while key foreign audiences support security and stability in the region consistent with USSOUTHCOM objectives resulting in adversarial influence being degraded. Due to the shrinking budgets, USSOUTHCOM has had to prioritize the countries they work closest with. The priority countries are (in order of IO capability development):

- Columbia – Promote IRC collaboration
- Peru – Enhance existing capability
- Honduras – Enhance existing capability
- Guatemala – Enhance existing capability
- El Salvador – Enhance existing capability

Columbia has also advanced to the point where they are aiding in the training of other countries IO capabilities.

While the priority countries receive the most help from USSOUTHCOM, they also have other initiatives that include other partner nations from the region. The primary means of meeting the other countries in the annual Western Hemisphere IO SMEE. The conference in 2014 included 11 countries plus the US and several other US organizations.

This program's begins with an initial high level engagement at the MOD level. From there, they will hold workshops to

identify the desired program elements and develop a plan to meet the needs of the country's IO needs. USSOUTHCOM will then work with the country to institutionalize the program and work through the implementation.

The next IOBP DCS session is scheduled for 6 Jan and will look at USPACOM's SENTRY SHEILD. 

Capt. Kim Bender is an U.S. Air Force public affairs officer who has held positions at the wing, numbered air force, major command, and sub-unified command levels. Capt. Bender is currently a J5 Strategic Engagement and Information Operations planner, Joint Information Operations Warfare Center.



IO Best Practices Community of Practice



Improving Joint Information Operations One Step at a Time

Join us on SIPRNet at

<https://intelshare.intelink.sgov.gov/sites/jiowc/Products/Advocacy/BP/>

– Or –

Contact the facilitator, Capt Kimberly Bender, at
kimberly.t.bender.mil@mail.smil.mil



Terrorism Gone Viral: The burgeoning media war between ISIS and the U.S.

by
CPT Kevin C. Sandell, USA

Editor's Note: In this article the author examines the new recruiting tool of terrorism: social media. Da'esh specifically uses social media as an influence tool to shape the battlefield, or at least the perception of the battlefield as part of their recruiting. As the author points out from a quote by an ISIS mujahedeen, "... media is 'half of the battle, if not its majority.'" This article then goes on to describe what the US government and the US military need to accomplish in order to counter the Da'esh message.

Moments before opening fire on an unsuspecting throng of attendees at a Prophet Muhammad caricature contest, the Islamic State sympathizer examined his guise, cocked his weapon and prepared his last living act. Logging onto Twitter, the terrorist typed 126 characters, pledging his allegiance to the Islamic radicalist group, and signing off with the hashtag, "TexasAttack." While no bystanders were killed in the evening assault, the attack prodded the U.S. government to deeply analyze the future of war – how terrorist groups modified their center of gravity to actively recruit and engage global audiences through the use of social media.

To combat this emergent trend, the U.S. military must take a concerted, comprehensive and aggressive posture to degrade terrorist propaganda, deny enemy recruitment efforts and ultimately defeat the Islamic State.

Terror Groups' Changing Recruitment Tactics

Gone are the days when radical extremists signed up under the inspiration of Osama Bin Laden's terrorist camp video footage or listening to copies of his scratchy audio tapes. Today, potential terrorist recruits are heavily influenced by ISIS' grisly footage of beheadings, car bombings and kidnappings posted through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

In a statement to the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Homeland Security, U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul said, "Social media networks have become an extension of the Islamist terror battlefields overseas, turning homegrown extremists into sleeper operatives and attackers. ... We are no longer hunting terrorists living in caves who only communicate through couriers. We are facing an enemy whose messages and calls to violence are posted and promoted in real-time."¹ Islamic radicalists now propagate their battlefield successes instantly on location, customized to specific audiences, and often with the professional appearance of cutting-edge imagery, graphics and editing.

Mirroring news packages seen on international newscasts, the Islamic State has created an expanding portfolio of instantaneous video and radio news programs touting triumphs of seized territory across Iraq and Syria. Within the group, those operating cameras and editing equipment are esteemed as highly as those wielding swords, explosives and guns.

In a recent video released by the Islamic State mujahedeen, a fighter states that media is "half of the battle, if not its majority."² Reaching potential recruits, who like Americans, are glued to their smartphones and the apps that allow rapid transmission of images, means the group must bombard social

media channels with its messaging. A study conducted by the Brookings Institute and quoted by Associated Press reporter, Lori Hinnant, found more than 46,000 active Twitter accounts associated with the Islamic State over a two-month period.³ Even if an account is deactivated, there's one right behind it waiting to surface.

The commander of U.S. European Command, Air Force Gen. Philip Breedlove, said the group can find underlying motivations and market those to recruit fighters. "[ISIS is] able to reach and find out what is important to these people, what motivates these people, and then they create an ability to fill that need, initially through the social media, internet," Gen. Breedlove said.

The assistant director of the FBI, Michael B. Steinbach, testified to Congress that ISIS establishes a narrative and connects with its target audiences, especially those on-the-fence. The group emphasizes a complete lifestyle change, and being an element of a larger unit:

Unlike other groups, ISIL has constructed a narrative that touches on all facets of life – from career opportunities, to family life, to a sense of community. The message isn't tailored solely to those who are overtly expressing symptoms of radicalization. It is seen by many who click through the internet every day, receive social media push notifications, and participate in social networks. Ultimately, many of these individuals are seeking a sense of belonging.⁴

Steinbach continues by saying that ISIS' "widespread reach" through social media channels is "most concerning as ISIL has aggressively employed this technology for its nefarious strategy."⁵

Federal law enforcement agencies and Cabinet-level departments remain in "hot pursuit" of ISIS' social media administrators, but say the fight is an uphill climb. The FBI has said all 50 states have open investigations into suspected ISIS supporters. ISIS also has more than 25,000 English language followers on Twitter.⁶ According to Congressional testimony on June 3, 2015, the U.S. government believes nearly 200 U.S. citizens, and nearly 4,000 Westerners, have traveled to Syria to fight. Chief among the government's concerns are Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs) who learn tactics abroad and use them against U.S. interests, persons or facilities.

Efforts by the U.S. government and U.S. military have not been fruitless, however, as techniques by the U.S. State Department and Defense Department pioneer ways to impact social media becoming the future of war.

Confronting Challenges

When U.S.-led aerial bombings of ISIS targets began in 2014, United States Central Command released daily rollups of destroyed targets, along with video footage of bombs impacting their mark. The bombings were creating substantial leeway for Iraqi forces to regain territory and degrade ISIS fighters. By using outdated "b-roll" or stock video footage, however, of Islamic State convoys careening down Iraqi streets with their

characteristic black ISIS flags, TV networks became a pivotal player in the accuracy battle between the U.S. government and ISIS. To counter claims the government was propagating its own successes, the international coalition battling ISIS argues the government's main objective is accuracy.

"We're here to help you get it right," Emily Horne, a spokesperson for the State Department's special envoy against ISIS said. "What we're pointing out is something that we think is inaccurate."⁷

Horne also said alternate imagery (usually provided by military public affairs teams), such as footage of U.S. troops training Iraqi security forces, would be more appropriate. In some cases, it appears that networks were using ISIS footage provided directly through propaganda videos.

Seeking to align the counter-terror communication strategies of the U.S. executive branch, President Barack Obama signed Executive Order 13584 two days before the 10th anniversary of 9/11. The order, originally intended to discredit the actions and ideologies of al-Qa'ida, brought together "expertise, capabilities, and resources to realize efficiencies and better coordination of U.S. Government communications investments to combat terrorism and extremism."⁸ Under this order, the U.S. State Department's Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications was established to coordinate government-wide communications targeted against violent extremists and terrorist organizations. The center was mandated to monitor and evaluate narratives and international events, identify emerging trends in extremist communications, and facilitate a wider range of communications technologies.

Facilitating counter-terrorism communications would prove problematic and muddled by differences in strategic communication strategy three years later with the release of the center's "Welcome to ISIS Land" video. The video, which showed graphic depictions of ISIS-led executions and attempted to subvert the organization's online propaganda efforts, garnered nearly 850,000 views on YouTube, but failed to show a measure of effectiveness. According to a Washington Post article, "critics at the State Department and White House saw the use of graphic images as a disturbing embrace of the adversary's playbook. And for all the viral success of 'ISIS Land,' even the center's defenders could never determine whether it had accomplished its main objective: discouraging would-be militants from traveling to Syria."⁹

While the center has downsized and the U.S. State Department now heads an Information Coordination Cell, the department plans to assemble U.S. embassies, senior military leaders and regional allies to create a worldwide messaging campaign to discredit and refute ISIS claims. A White House advisor, Rashad Hussain, said the plan is to be more "factual and testimonial," and will emphasize ISIS hypocrisy and accounts of its defectors, while also showcasing the group's battlefield losses. Absent from the latest trend of State Department messaging: regeneration of graphic imagery.¹⁰

Although the State Department's Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications did not demonstrate a clear measure of performance or effectiveness, its efforts did not go unnoticed by Islamic State militants. ISIS followers created their own version of the "Welcome to ISIS Land" video, instead mockingly naming their video, "Run Do Not Walk to U.S. Terrorist State." Many ISIS fighters even tweeted death threats on the center's Twitter page, and in one case, an ISIS sympathizer identified one of the center's contractors by name and singled him out for death.¹¹ Not so widely promoted through media or diplomatic channels, the State Department

also developed tactics to counter Islamic States claims about America's allure.

The department enlisted The Walt Disney Company to create a multimedia project entitled, "Welcome: Portraits of America," to officially welcome international visitors to U.S. airports and embassies. A press release on the project said the department's aims were to "create standards that ensure passengers entering the United States experience a process that is welcoming, understandable, respectful, time-efficient and less stressful. ... And will resonate deeply with citizens returning to their nation."¹²

While centralized efforts exist to discredit Islamic State media attention, there is more to be done. To ultimately defeat ISIS and future extremist organizations who threaten the United States, the Pentagon must embrace innovative, consistent and compelling resources.

Crafting Solutions

Inform and influence activities (IIA) are shaping operations that can motivate a global audience, and can be used offensively against enemy command nodes as a way to impact enemy morale. Impacting how our enemies recruit and retain fighters will impact how future wars are conceived. While the branches of the U.S. government have mastered the diplomatic, military and economic instruments of power, the information instrument still needs to be sharpened. Today's information environment is too powerful and world-changing to disregard, or mistreat.

Among other aspects, the U.S. Department of Defense should consider implementing the following recommendations to better target the expanding role of social media and misinformation:

- Create a strategic counterterrorism communication cell in U.S. Cyber Command or the Defense Intelligence Agency.
- Educate Public Affairs Officers and G7/S7s on properly countering enemy claims.
- Reduce the approval timeline to release factual information through Public Affairs channels.
- Train service members on the importance of Words-Deeds-Images principles.
- Bolster Information-Related Capabilities throughout the military branches of service.

First and foremost, the Pentagon should imitate State Department efforts to counter terrorist communication themes and messaging. The U.S. Cyber Command should foster cyber warriors dedicated to rooting out online terrorist propaganda and countering their claims. Military Public Affairs Officers and IIA officers could be used also to counter terrorist propaganda and let the facts speak for themselves.

The next solution would be increasing instruction to military communicators on properly countering terrorist/extremist communications. The State Department currently implements daily talking points from the Information Coordination Cell distributed to U.S. embassies worldwide, urging them to accentuate a combined, joint set of themes and facts on ISIS.¹³ The military could utilize these talking points and modify them based on current operations on the ground. Public Affairs Officers and IIA officers must be better prepared to offer talking points to local national media and even stakeholders in the American military. These communicators must constantly

have factual and ever-changing talking points to use in press releases and social media posts.

As in any bureaucratic organization, the approval authority to release a product often lags, effectively rendering the product useless. A Washington Times editorial said that military and diplomatic officials often want to prevent a blatant disclosure of American involvement in inform and influence activities: “U.S. information operations have been weakened and limited in conducting counter-information attacks because of concerns the American hand will be exposed. Another problem has been fear among U.S. higher-ups that IS will step up both information and kinetic attacks in response.”¹⁴ Combatant commanders must issue a top-down directive clarifying and expediting approval authority processes to subordinate commanders at the O-5 level. Operating at the tactical level, battalion commanders are often at the forefront of information operations. By reaching our external audiences as lightning-fast as the Islamic State, will we be successful in countering messages and propaganda.

Service members must be cognizant of the “Strategic Corporal” effect, and how strategic implications are rank immaterial. Junior-ranking Soldiers have as much, if not more, impact on consequential actions than the U.S. State Department or Defense Department. “Modern military experience, particularly in combat, is often characterized by rapid decision making in autonomous environments,”¹⁵ writes Rye Barcott in a Harvard Business Review editorial. The author continues by saying, “As young lieutenants, we learned that we needed to set the example, communicate the commander’s intent, and then empower our corporals and sergeants to operate in places where they may not be able to ask, “What do I do next?”¹⁶

Aligning the government and military’s Words-Deeds-Images under a top-down synchronization ensures the Soldiers with boots on the ground act professionally, competently, and situationally aware. Soldiers from private to general must train more in media interviews, facilitating media embeds, and understanding the Army is a profession. Additionally, Soldiers must be more culturally-aware and continually learning basic phrases in the host nation language.

Finally, Information-Related Capabilities (IRCs) must be bolstered across the U.S. military because these independent capabilities and techniques support lines of effort and can make significant strides against extremists. Whether it is public affairs, military information support operations, combat camera, or Soldier-Leader Engagements, IRCs should be emphasized, planned and coordinated before, during and after an operation. These critical mission enablers and force multipliers serve as another source of non-lethal capabilities to meet a commander’s objectives, while countering extremists’ dishonest and deceitful releases.

Today’s information environment has changed the course of modern warfare, and will transform future wars for generations. Only by working together can we defeat our modern-day adversaries. 🇺🇸

CPT Kevin Sandell is the public affairs officer for the 504th Military Intelligence Brigade at Fort Hood, Texas. He has served in public affairs for nearly five years, and has deployed twice to Afghanistan and once to Kosovo. He can be reached at kevin.c.sandell.mil@mail.mil.

Endnotes:

1. Terrorism Gone Viral: The Attack in Garland, Texas and Beyond, 114th Cong. (2015) (testimony of U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX)). Print.
2. Hinnant, Lori. “ISIS Revamps Recruitment, with Savvy, Professional Broadcasts.” Military Times. Associated Press, 1 June 2015. Web. 4 June 2015.
3. Hinnant 2
4. Statement of Michael B. Steinbach, Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 114th Cong. (2015) (testimony of Michael B. Steinbach). Print.
5. Foux, Kara. “FBI Head warns of ‘crowdsourced terrorism’ and Online Predators.” Fox19 Now. N.p., 14 Oct. 2015. Web. 16 Oct. 2015.
6. Statement for the Record, 114th Cong. (2015) (testimony of Francis X. Taylor, DHS Undersecretary, Office of Intelligence and Analysis). Print.
7. Crowley, Michael, and Hadas Gold. “Stop Using ISIL Footage, Obama Administration Asks Networks.” Politico.com, 13 May 2015. Web. 18 May 2015.
8. Exec. Order No. 13584, 3 C.F.R. 3 (2011). Print.
9. Miller, Greg, and Scott Higham. “In a Propaganda War against ISIS, the U.S. Tried to Play by the Enemy’s Rules.” The Washington Post. N.p., 8 May 2015. Web. 4 June 2015.
10. Miller 4
11. Miller 9
12. “Disney Donates ‘Welcome: Portraits of America’ Video to CBP Model Airport Project.” U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Department of Homeland Security, n.d. Web. 9 June 2015.
13. Miller 14
14. Gertz, Bill. “Pentagon Struggles to Counter Success of Islamic State Social Media, Info War.” Editorial. The Washington Times, 13 May 2015. Web. 9 June 2015.
15. Barcott, Rye. “The Strategic Corporal.” HBR Spotlight. Harvard Business Review, 21 Oct. 2010. Web. 9 June 2015.
16. Barcott 1



Assessing and Evaluating DoD Inform, Influence, and Persuade Efforts: Guidance for Practitioners, Part 3 – Developing Measures and Designing Assessments

by

Christopher Paul, Jessica Yeats, Colin P. Clarke, Miriam Matthews, and Lauren Skrabala (RAND Corporation)

Editor’s Note: This article is the third in a series for IO Sphere and excerpted from *Assessing and Evaluating Department of Defense Efforts to Inform, Influence, and Persuade: Handbook for Practitioners*, by Christopher Paul, Jessica Yeats, Colin P. Clarke, Miriam Matthews, and Lauren Skrabala, RAND Corporation, RR-809/2-OSD, 2015. The research was jointly sponsored by the Rapid Reaction Technology Office in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics and the Information Operations Directorate in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. The full text of the handbook is available online at www.rand.org/t/RR809z2.

This excerpt is copyrighted by the RAND Corporation and reproduced with permission. RAND publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) spends more than \$250 million per year on information operations (IO) and information-related capabilities for influence efforts at the strategic and operational levels. How effective are those efforts? Are they well executed? How well do they support military objectives? Are they efficient (cost-effective)? Are some efforts better than others in terms of execution, effectiveness, or efficiency? Could some of them be improved? How? Unfortunately, generating assessments of efforts to inform, influence, and persuade (IIP) has proven to be challenging across the government and DoD. Challenges include difficulties associated with changes in behavior and attitudes, lengthy timelines to achieve impact, causal ambiguity, and struggles to present results in ways that are useful to stakeholders and decisionmakers.

RAND’s sponsors in the Office of the Secretary of Defense asked us to identify effective principles and best practices for the assessment of IIP efforts from across sectors and distill them for future application in DoD. As part of this effort, we reviewed existing DoD IIP assessment practices (and broader DoD assessment practices), sought to identify IIP assessment practices in industry (commercial marketing, public relations, and public communication), and reviewed guidance and practices from the academic evaluation research community.

We compiled the practices, principles, advice, guidance, and recommendations, distilling and synthesizing them for application to DoD in the form of a general reference, *Assessing and Evaluating Department of Defense Efforts to Inform, Influence, and Persuade: Desk Reference*.¹ A handbook version further distills and synthesizes that content, presenting it in a quick-reference format intended specifically for personnel charged with planning and assessing DoD IIP efforts. This article is the third in a series for IO Sphere extracting some of the most pertinent guidance from the handbook. The first installment, published in the Summer 2015 issue of IO Sphere, looked at best practices for assessment from across sectors and

how they can be applied to DoD IIP efforts. The second article, published in the Fall 2015 issue, shared lessons for identifying objectives and measuring progress toward DoD IIP campaign goals. The remaining installments in the series are as follows:

- “Research Methods and Measurement for DoD Inform, Influence, and Persuade Assessment” (Spring 2016)
- “Presenting Findings with the User in Mind and Other Recommendations for Successful Assessment” (Summer 2016).

Here, we address the processes and principles that govern the development of valid, reliable, feasible, and useful measures that can be used to assess the effectiveness of IIP activities and campaigns. The development of measures is decomposed into two broad processes:

1. deciding what constructs are essential to measure
2. operationally defining the measures.

A Word on Measures of Performance and Measures Effectiveness

As discussed in the second installment in this series, ideally, an assessment should include a measure to gauge every cause-and-effect relationship specified in the program logic model. DoD assessment doctrine emphasizes the distinction between measures of performance (MOPs) and measures of effectiveness (MOEs). In IIP evaluation, MOEs are typically associated with attitudinal and behavioral changes at the individual and group levels. Whether attitudinal change constitutes an effect is controversial, which demonstrates a limitation to the MOP-versus-MOE construct.

While appreciating the conceptual differences between measure types can be valuable, assessment reports should avoid being overly concerned with the difference between MOPs and MOEs, because this focus is overly narrow and potentially distracting. In reality, there is a spectrum of measure types, and the MOE-MOP dichotomy can mislead evaluators into thinking that there are only two relevant measures. At worst, premature conclusions made on the basis of a single MOE can lead to the termination of an otherwise promising effort.

Attributes of Good Measures

The quality of a measure is typically evaluated on the basis of its validity, reliability, feasibility, and utility:

- Validity is the correspondence between the measure and the construct—or freedom from systemic error (bias).
- Reliability is the degree of consistency in measurement — or freedom from random error (e.g., signal to noise).

- Feasibility is the extent to which data can actually be generated to populate the measure with a reasonable level of effort.
- Utility is the usefulness of the measure to assessment end users and stakeholders.²

Validity and reliability represent the two types of measurement error. There is tension between the feasibility of a measure and its utility. Often, what is important or useful to measure cannot be easily observed. It is important to first identify the measures with the highest information value and subsequently determine what is feasible among those worth measuring.

Identifying the Constructs Worth Measuring: The Relationship Between the Logic Model and Measure Selection

Separating what is important to measure from what is less important is what measure development is all about.³ The program logic model provides the framework for selecting the constructs that are worth measuring, but evaluators should not assume that all important measures will simply “fall into their laps” in the course of planning. Goals and objectives can be unclear or unmeasurable, and program managers often disagree on the ultimate goal of a program.⁴ Moreover, it is too costly to measure every cause-and-effect relationship and mediating variable.

The importance of measuring something, or the information value of a measure, is a function of uncertainty about its value and the costs of being wrong. When identifying constructs worth measuring, assessors should therefore give priority to “load-bearing” and vulnerable cause-and-effect relationships in the logic model. These can be identified by drawing on IIP theories, empirical research, expert elicitation, and rigorous evaluations of similar programs implemented in the past.⁵ Moreover, the information value of a measure takes precedence over its validity and reliability. Even the most valid and reliable measurement instruments cannot improve the value of a measure for a construct that is irrelevant to assessment stakeholders and the decision they need to make. Assessors should therefore try to measure every truly important variable even if the measurement instrument has weak validity. Douglas Hubbard emphasizes this point in *How to Measure Anything*: “If you are betting a lot of money on the outcome of a variable that has a lot of uncertainty, then even a marginal reduction in your uncertainty has a computable monetary value.”⁶

Developing Measures: Advice for Practitioners

Keep a record of validated and potential IIP measures and indicators.

Although a centralized repository of some kind would be ideal, a more practical solution for practitioners could be to keep records on where measures have been used before, how well

they worked, and the evidence that supports them. It might be useful to also keep records of invalid measures and indicators to avoid using them again.

Tie each influence objective to several specific measures.

Some measures will have insufficient or unreliable data and need as much support as possible. Suppose your goal is to reduce the influence of a particular mullah. Your measures could assess (1) the population’s self-reported impressions of him; (2) attendance at his mosque; and (3) how often he is mentioned in communications from various organizations or the press.⁷

Avoid “metric bloat” or “promiscuous” measure collection.

Having too many measures per objective can complicate analysis and the interpretation of results.⁸ If the number of measures is becoming unmanageable, discard the lower-performing ones. It is also worth noting that measuring the same outcome twice does not satisfy two layers of the assessment scheme. For example, “Reductions in the number of attacks and incidents will lead to increased security” almost sounds sensible, but this is what it really says: “Increases in security will lead to increased security.”

Express numeric measures in the form of a ratio so that progress from the baseline to future states can be easily determined.

In this formulation, the baseline value is the denominator and changes due to the IIP activity are reflected in the numerator.⁹ Otherwise, change may be in units that lack clear meaning to stakeholders and decisionmakers.

Avoid the temptation to collect data only on indicators of success.

Measures or indicators should be defined or scaled so that they capture failure or regression as well as success.¹⁰ The measurement system should also be flexible enough to capture unintended consequences.¹¹ When things are going well, it may be tempting to only measure outcomes, but assessment is at its best when things are not going well. Measuring intermediate nodes in a theory of change can help determine why. As we stated in the second article in this series, this is when a logic model (or other articulation of a theory of change) really shines.

Avoid perverse incentives.

A perverse incentive is an incentive (usually an unintended one) that rewards an undesirable result. Measures of exposure are particularly susceptible to perverse incentives.¹² A recent State Department Inspector General’s report accused the Bureau of International Information Programs of “buying likes” on Facebook as a way to improve the perceived reach of a program.¹³ Such a strategy may increase awareness, but it will not tell you anything about a program’s impact.

Where to Begin? Measuring Baselines and Variables

Before any IIP intervention, there exists a prior state that characterizes the people, their attitudes, their community, the security environment, the economy, and so on. This serves as the baseline with which evaluation measurements are compared. This prior state will also include constraints that need to be considered and could affect the success of an assessment if they’re not. These constraints are not limited to characteristics of the local environment (such as security concerns). They could also include the need to work around another operation, such as a counterinsurgency operation or a kinetic operation in the same area.

How often do prior states and system variables need to be measured? The answer depends on the rate at which the variables are expected to change over time. Some things are very slow to change and therefore typically only need to be measured once (e.g., the presence of a health care clinic). But variables that change frequently—such as kinetic operations or economic conditions—should be measured often, at intervals sufficient to capture relevant change.

Avoid measures that are easily manipulated.

Past examples of manipulated or “captured” metrics in counterinsurgency environments have included exaggerated reports of the operational readiness of host-nation forces or of enemy casualties and reduced reporting of civilian casualties.¹⁴ Careful data collection, in addition to careful measure selection, can help mitigate this risk.

Designing and Implementing Assessments

The design of an assessment or evaluation is the plan that describes the research activities that will answer the questions motivating the evaluation. The design determines the way in which the evaluation can (or cannot) make causal inferences regarding the outputs, outcomes, or impacts of the intervention. Design-related decisions govern the structure of data collection (i.e., the number, timing, and type of data measurements), rather than the methods by which data are collected. There are three broad types of evaluation design:

- experimental (control with random selection)
- quasi-experimental (control without random selection)
- nonexperimental or observational studies (no control).

Practitioners should already be familiar with a range of potential evaluation designs and their strengths and weaknesses so that they can design the best and most appropriate evaluation given stakeholders’ needs, populations affected, and available resources, so we do not cover that here.¹⁵

Criteria for High-Quality Evaluation Design: Feasibility, Validity, and Utility

How should evaluators choose among possible evaluation designs? We propose that the best designs are feasible, valid, and useful. However, there are tensions and trade-offs inherent in pursuing each of those objectives. It is important to select the strongest evaluation design, in terms of internal and external validity, among those designs that are useful and feasible with available resources.¹⁶ However, the most rigorous design varies with the importance and intended use of the results. Resources should therefore be allocated according to the importance of potential outcomes. In a budget-constrained environment, evaluations are simultaneously more important and less affordable. To allow room for more assessments within budget constraints, there needs to be a mechanism for quick, cheap, and “good enough” assessments.

Designing Feasible Assessments

Acknowledging the importance of constructing the best and most valid evaluation possible given the available resources, Thomas Valente states that the first requirement of evaluation design “is that it be practical, which often prevents the use of the best design that might be theoretically possible.”¹⁷ Time, resources, and ethical or practical concerns with carrying out randomized experiments all constrain feasibility.

To gauge the feasibility of a new, resource-intensive evaluation design, IIP evaluators should consider using pilot evaluations. Pilot evaluations test the evaluation design on a much smaller scale than ultimately envisioned by either studying the effectiveness of a small effort or focusing on a subset of the target audience. Time permitting, DoD IIP efforts should include both pilot tests of the effort’s activities and pilot tests

of the evaluation design. Such limited-scope formative efforts can ensure that money for the full-scale efforts is well spent.

Designing Valid Assessments

Designing feasible evaluations is in tension with designing valid ones. Validity represents the extent to which a design or a measure is accurate or free from systemic bias. Internal validity is the extent to which the design supports the kinds of causal inferences or causal conclusions that need to be made within the evaluation. External validity (also known as generalizability or ecological validity) is the extent to which design is able to support inference (e.g., generalize) about the larger population of interest.

In the DoD context, the contribution of the IIP effort often cannot be separated from “background noise” and operational, tactical, and strategic factors.¹⁸ Adding to the complexity is the challenge associated with isolating the contribution of influence tactics within the broader context of a military campaign. The most-valid evaluations are those that include the most-effective controls against those factors. However, such designs will be more complex and therefore (typically) more resource intensive.

There is often a trade-off between external and internal validity. Designs with the highest internal validity often have weak ecological validity, because the “laboratory-like” conditions required to control for the threats to internal validity do not appropriately reflect conditions in which the focal audience would interact with the program “in the wild” or under generalizable circumstances.¹⁹ Likewise, field experiments taking place “in the wild” have the highest ecological validity but are the hardest to control for threats to internal validity.

Designing Useful Assessments

As we’ve emphasized before, assessment is a decision-support tool. How it will be used has significant implications for an assessment’s design. Assessment design, processes, and degree of academic rigor and formality should be tailored to the assessment end users and stakeholders. Field commanders and congressional leaders will have different sets of questions.²⁰ Part of successful assessment design is balancing stakeholder needs with feasibility and rigor.

To design a useful evaluation, evaluators must first understand the assessment audience (users and stakeholders) and the decisions it will inform (assessment uses). End users are those with formal or institutional responsibility and authority over the program and have an active interest in the evaluation. In the IO context, program managers, military leadership, and Congress represent potential end users, depending on the level of evaluation. Stakeholders include a broader set of “right-to-know” audiences that have a more passive interest in the evaluation. Stakeholders could include the target audience, media, and internal program management and staff.²¹

Recall that there are three primary uses for assessment: planning, improvement, and accountability. These categories roughly correspond to the three types, or stages, of evaluation: formative, process, and summative. Accountability-oriented evaluations will tend to target end users outside DoD. Improvement-oriented evaluations have end users who are internal to the program.

Formative Evaluation Design

Formative evaluation is the preintervention research that helps to shape the campaign logic model and execution. Formative evaluation can define the scope of the problem,



The Challenge of Determining Causality

There are many daunting challenges to establishing causality in IIP evaluations. But it is not impossible to obtain reasonable estimates of causal effects. We interviewed a DoD MISO practitioner who believed that much of the concern over causality is driven by a lack of awareness of alternatives to true experimental design. In *Data-Driven Marketing: The 15 Metrics Everyone in Marketing Should Know*, Mark Jeffrey responds to the objection that there are too many factors to isolate cause and effect: “The idea is conceptually simple: conduct a small experiment, isolating as many variables as possible, to see what works and what does not.”²²

Ultimately, a number of designs can lead to assessments with high internal validity and allow strong causal claims. These designs tend to be more resource-intensive and require an unambiguous commitment to some kind of experimental or quasi-experimental structure in program delivery and assessment. This returns us to the matter of feasibility. If you want to be able to make causal claims, are you willing to put forward the time and effort necessary to make that possible?

Many quasi-experimental designs are more feasible in the defense context than many planners might think, though a functional quasi-experimental design may entail slight delays in delivering findings. Quasi-experiments are not as rigorous as randomized controlled experiments, but they still provide strong grounds from which to assert causation—sufficient for many assessment processes. See the section on summative evaluation for more on experimental designs.

identify possible campaign strategies, provide information about the target audience, determine what messages work best and how they should be framed, determine the most credible messengers, and identify the factors that can help or hinder the campaigns.²³

Formative evaluation design can range from observational studies using focus groups, interviews, atmospherics, or baseline surveys to laboratory experiments for testing the efficacy of messages and media. To inform decisionmaking, formative research must be turned around quickly. It should also feed back into the logic model development and refinement process.

Process Evaluation Design

Process evaluation serves several purposes and is underutilized. Process research can document implementation, guide program adjustments mid-implementation, identify whether the necessary conditions for impact took place, identify the causes of failure (see the discussion of program failure versus theory failure in the second installment in this series),

identify threats to internal validity (such as contamination or interference from other campaigns), and generate information necessary for replicating and improving the program or campaign.

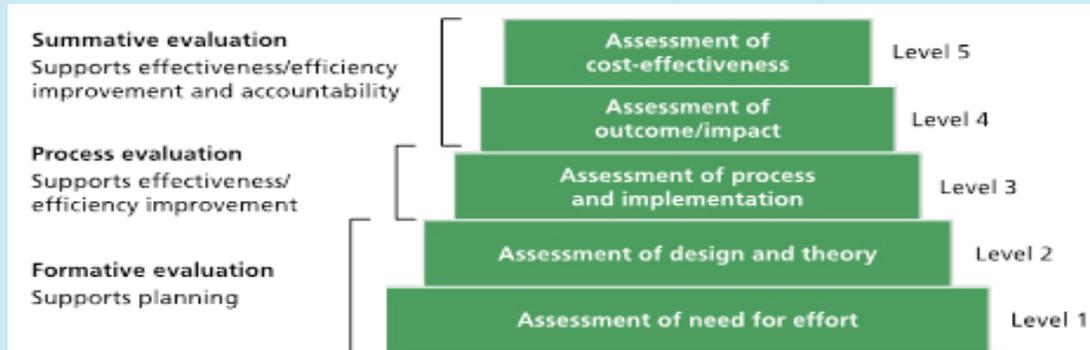
Summative Evaluation Design

Summative evaluations consist of postintervention research designed to determine the outcomes that can be attributed or tied to the IIP intervention or campaign. Determining causality — or the extent to which one or more influence activities contributed to or was responsible for a change in knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors — is a chief goal of summative IIP evaluation.²⁴ Summative evaluation designs can be classified as experimental, quasi-experimental, or nonexperimental.

In experimental designs, subjects are randomly assigned to treatment and control conditions and are observed, at minimum, after treatment. Experimental designs have the highest internal validity and therefore the strongest basis for causal inference. Quasi-experimental designs or natural experiments, such as longitudinal or cross-sectional exposed

Nesting: The Hierarchy of Evaluation

The hierarchy divides potential evaluations and assessments into five nested levels. They are nested in that each higher level is predicated on success at a lower level. For example, positive results for cost-effectiveness (the highest level) are possible only if supported by positive results at all lower levels. The figure below shows the nested relationship of formative, process, and summative evaluation.



SOURCE: Adapted from Christopher Paul,

Harry J. Thie, Elaine Reardon, Deanna Weber Prine, and Laurence Smallman, *Implementing and Evaluating an Innovative Approach to Simulation Training Acquisitions*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-442-OSD, 2006, Figure 7.1.

These five levels roughly correspond to the three motives and three stages of evaluation described in the first installment in this series. This framework is described as a hierarchy because the levels nest with each other; solutions to problems observed at higher levels of assessment often lie at levels below. If the desired outcomes (level 4) are achieved at the desired levels of cost-effectiveness (level 5), then lower levels of evaluation are irrelevant. But what about when they are not? When desired high-level outcomes are not achieved, information from the lower levels of assessment needs to be available and examined. For example, if an effort is not realizing its target outcomes, is that because the process is not being executed as designed (level 3) or because the theory of change is incorrect (level 2)? Evaluators encounter problems when an assessment scheme does not include evaluations at a sufficiently low level to inform effective policy decisions and diagnose problems. When the lowest levels of evaluation have been “assumed away,” skipping lower-level evaluation steps is acceptable only if those assumptions prove correct. By then, it could prove exceptionally difficult and costly to revisit those levels.

versus unexposed studies, are similar to experimental designs except that the researchers cannot randomly assign subjects to treatment or control groups. Quasi-experimental evaluation designs can be mixed method, incorporating qualitative components. Quasi-experimental designs have lower internal validity than experimental designs but are often much more practical and cost-effective. Nonexperimental studies do not have a control and therefore have limited to no ability to make causal claims regarding the contribution of the program to outcomes, but they can nonetheless be useful to gather information on perceptions of the campaign.

Within these broad categories there are many design variations. Organizations with effective research cultures often use several designs.

The Best Evaluations Draw from a Compendium of Studies with Multiple Designs and Approaches

Each design has strengths and weaknesses that vary by environment and circumstance. No single design will be appropriate for all campaigns. And, independent of feasibility, no single design will present a full picture of effectiveness. Thus, the most valid conclusions about program effects are those that are based on results from multiple studies using different designs. Even if they are feasible, using the same approaches over and over leads only to a partial answer, which can be a mistaken answer, “so the best way to do research is to approach it from multiple angles-surveys, some experimental work, in-depth interviews, and observational work.”²⁵

Because there are limitations to each approach, IIP evaluators should look at all evidence from as many different angles that are reasonable, rational, empirical, and feasible and see whether the evidence is trending in the same direction. While it is relatively easy to identify weaknesses with any single measure, when a collection of measures across different methods is suggesting the same general trend, you can have much more confidence in your conclusions.

In the Next Installment

This series of articles will continue in the Spring 2016 issue of IO Sphere, with the next topic being research methods and measurement for IIP assessment. We will examine approaches to developing and testing messages, review examples of research methods, and look at some best practices and challenges in surveys and sampling. 

Christopher Paul is a senior social scientist at the RAND Corporation and professor at the Pardee RAND Graduate School. He is also a member of the adjunct faculty in the Center for Economic Development in the Heinz College at Carnegie Mellon University. Prior to joining RAND full-time in July 2002, Paul worked as an adjunct at RAND for six years and on the statistics faculty at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 2001–02. Paul received his Ph.D. in sociology from UCLA.

Dr. Jessica Yeats is a graduate of the Pardee RAND graduate school.

Colin P. Clarke is an associate political scientist at the RAND Corporation, where his research focuses on insurgency/counterinsurgency, unconventional/irregular/asymmetric warfare (including cyber) and a range of other national & international security issues and challenges. From a

methodological standpoint, he is interested in measurement, assessment and evaluation, from tactical to strategic.

Miriam Matthews is a behavioral/social scientist at the RAND Corporation. She conducts research in the areas of political psychology, international conflict, and diversity and multiculturalism. She earned her Ph.D. in social psychology from Claremont Graduate University, and she was a postdoctoral research fellow with the University of Oxford.

Lauren Skrabala is a communication analyst at the RAND Corporation.

Endnotes:

1. Christopher Paul, Jessica Yeats, Colin P. Clarke, and Miriam Matthews, *Assessing and Evaluating Department of Defense Efforts to Inform, Influence, and Persuade: Desk Reference*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-809/1-OSD, 2015, www.rand.org/t/RR809z2.
2. Author interview with Christopher Nelson, February 18, 2013.
3. Author interview with Christopher Nelson, February 18, 2013.
4. Author interview with Christopher Nelson, February 18, 2013.
5. Author interview with Christopher Nelson, February 18, 2013.
6. Douglas W. Hubbard, *How to Measure Anything: Finding the Value of "Intangibles"* in Business, Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons, 2010, p. 36.
7. Author interview with Anthony Pratkanis, March 26, 2013.
8. William P. Upshur, Jonathan W. Roginski, and David J. Kilcullen, “Recognizing Systems in Afghanistan: Lessons Learned and New Approaches to Operational Assessments,” *Prism*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2012, p. 91; Stephen Downes-Martin, “Operations Assessment in Afghanistan Is Broken: What Is to Be Done?” *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4, Fall 2011, p. 108.
9. The Initiatives Group, *Information Environment Assessment Handbook*, version 2.0, Washington, D.C.: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, 2013.
10. Author interview with Steve Booth-Butterfield, January 7, 2013.
11. Author interview with James Pamment, May 24, 2013.
12. Author interview with Craig Hayden, June 21, 2013.
13. Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of State, *Inspection of the Bureau of International Information Programs*, May 2013; Craig Hayden, “Another Perspective on IIP Social Media Strategy,” *Intermap*, July 23, 2013.
14. Dave LaRivee, *Best Practices Guide for Conducting Assessments in Counterinsurgencies*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Air Force Academy, December 2011, p. 18.
15. For more on these topics, see Paul, Yeats, Clarke, and Matthews, 2015.
16. Valente, 2002, pp. 89–90.
17. Valente, 2002, p. 88.
18. David C. Becker and Robert Grossman-Vermaas, “Metrics for the Haiti Stabilization Initiative,” *Prism*, Vol. 2, No. 2, March 2011.
19. Author interview with Marie-Louise Mares, May 17, 2013.
20. Author interview with Monroe Price, July 19, 2013.
21. Author interview with Christopher Nelson, February 18, 2013.
22. Mark Jeffery, *Data-Driven Marketing: The 15 Metrics Everyone in Marketing Should Know*, Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons, 2010.
23. Julia Coffman, *Public Communication Campaign Evaluation*, Washington, D.C.: Communications Consortium Media Center, May 2002.
24. Valente, 2002, p. 89; author interview with Kavita Abraham Dowsing, May 23, 2013.
25. Author interview with Devra Moehler, May 31, 2013.

IO SPHERE: INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

Command/Organization: _____
Group/Dept./Division Name: _____
Attention Line: _____
Number & Street Address or Box: _____
City, State/Province: _____
ZIP +4 or Postal Code _____
POC: _____ Phone #: _____
E-mail: _____

FOLD UP HERE

How many people there involved in IO? _____
How did you learn about *IO Sphere*? _____
Which article(s) did you find most useful? _____
Which article(s) did you find least useful? _____
What would you like to see in future e-pub editions or our website? _____
Other comments: _____

Information on SIPRNet at: <http://intelshare.intelink.sgo.gov/sites/jiowc/products/advocacy>
Under "lists" click "IO Sphere Subscription"
On Internet Via APAN at: <https://community.apan.org/ioc/p/customlists.aspx>; and
<http://home.iosphere.org/>
FAX TO: (210) 977-4654 (DSN 969) Email: jiowc.iosphere@us.af.mil

FOLD BACK HERE

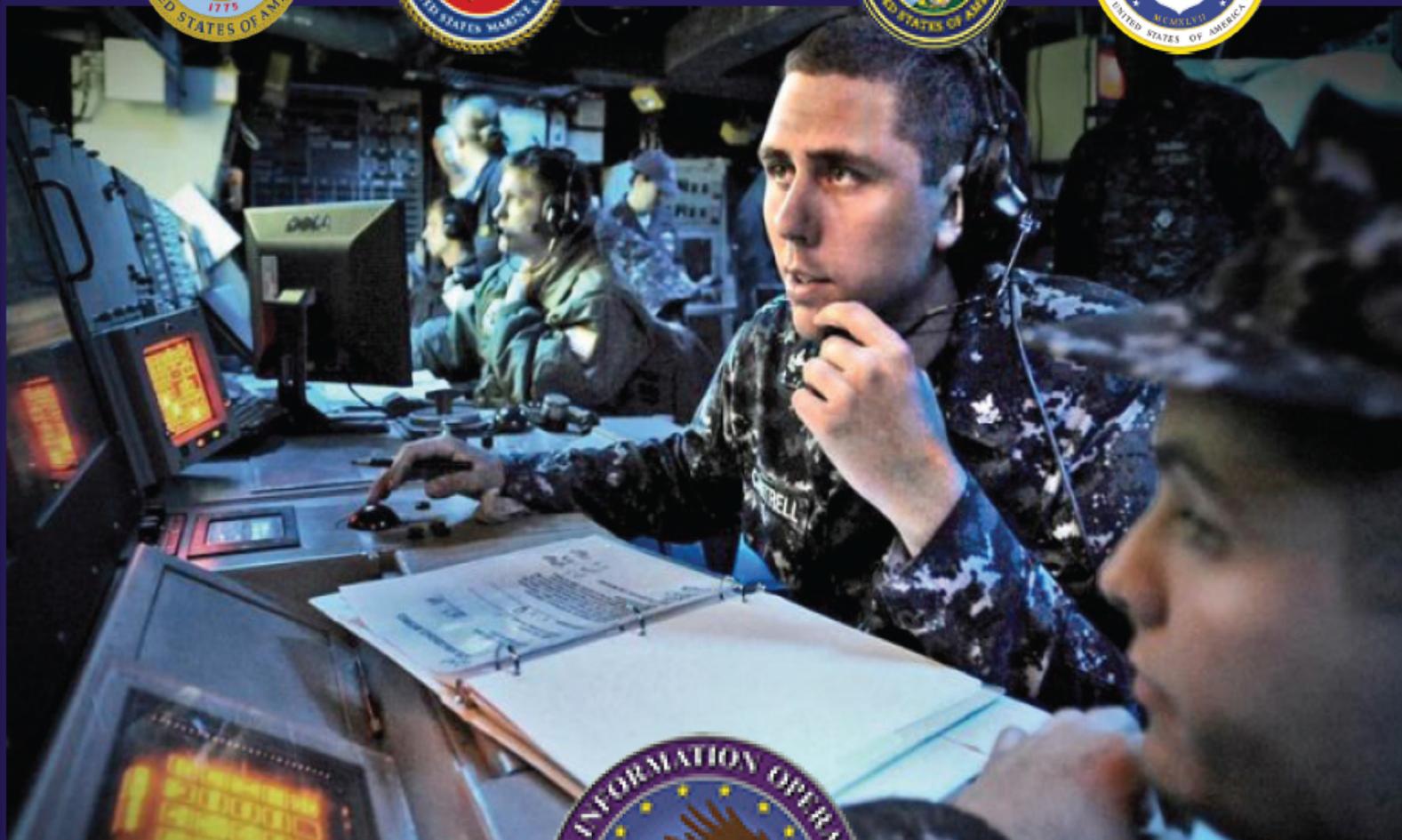
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PLACE
POSTAGE
HERE

**JOINT INFORMATION OPERATIONS WARFARE CENTER
ATTN: IO SPHERE EDITOR / J51
2 HALL BLVD STE 217
SAN ANTONIO TX 78243-7074**

“Support the Joint Staff in improving DoD ability to meet combatant command information-related requirements, improve development of information-related capabilities, and ensure operational integration and coherence across combatant commands and other DoD activities”

Mission of the Joint Information Operations Warfare Center (JIOWC)
CJCSI 5125.01, 1 September 2011



JOINT INFORMATION OPERATIONS WARFARE CENTER
2 HALL BLVD STE 217
SAN ANTONIO TX 78243-7074