

Fourth Generation Warfare and the Information Arrow

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Most of us now accept that we are fighting a different kind of war in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the forgotten Philippines than the one we prepared and trained for: the conventional maneuver war. While our maneuver forces were successful in the taking of Baghdad and in the unhinging of the Taliban, we are now bogged down in very uncomfortable unconventional wars in all three countries that hold little promise of early success. Moreover, all three are very different in nature. The focus of this paper is on the war in Iraq, but the conclusions and recommendations apply to Operations Other Than War (or the name de jour) beyond the three we are currently engaged.

And so what is new about this conflict that we might recognize it as Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW)?¹ One of the most important factors to recognize is that our enemies place more value on the message than on destruction. They would not hesitate to resort to dirty nuclear weapons if they could, but at present, they cannot; so they fight more with words than with bullets, and we fight more with bullets than words because we have more of the former and don't respect enough of the latter as a potent weapon of warfare. We need to recognize the synergistic effects of bullets and words combined. The extremists are fighting a different war than we are. This war, The Global War on Terrorism, is a struggle of ideas. The arrival of the information age has enabled small elements to effect large segments of the world's population, established political structures, and entire economies. If we continue to treat this contest of ideas as a toe-to-toe slugfest we will surely contribute to a REAL global war in the out-years.

¹ To learn more about 4GW, visit <http://www.d-n-i.net>

In Iraq, the United States can claim clear title to the physical war, but the information war (the mental war) is being won by our adversaries. Every time they kill another Iraqi policeman, the killing is accompanied with some kind of press release, and the message is getting out.

By far, the most effective weapon in the arsenal of 4GW is information. I choose to call this barbed weapon the “Information Arrow”. The old saw: “The pen is mightier than the sword.” implies that the pen is a weapon itself, and indeed it is, notwithstanding MacArthur’s quip: “Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword obviously never encountered automatic weapons”.

If one accepts that the pen is mightier than the sword, then the picture is worth 1,000 words. It follows that the video tape must surely be worth 10,000 words, and interactive multi-media could be considered priceless. The shock of seeing a HMMWV filled with American soldiers being blown up by a command detonated explosive before our eyes is psychologically and sociologically traumatic. In addition to such images being used as recruiting venues for the Muslim extremists, these images serve as information arrows directed at the hearts of the American public. Nightly viewing of the carnage of blown up HMMWVs and wounded and killed American soldiers will eventually affect the collective psyche of the American public in this war, just as it did in Vietnam. Moreover, this is exactly the enemy’s strategy. They intend to defeat us not with bullets but with images until we get tired of the war and withdraw – leaving them the victors. While we Americans dominate the physical war, our own practice of information warfare against these enemies is sadly lacking.

Broken Arrow: U.S. Information Warfare.

A 1994 Defense Science Board Study, *Strategic Communications*, went far beyond its charter in describing just how broken our ability to conduct information warfare really

is.² That study examined the failure of our information policy from the very top of the Administration through the National Security Council, and both Departments of State and Defense. The damning recommendations make clear that until the leadership at the top gets fixed, there is little chance that the emphasis required to conduct such an information campaign will ever get started.

We fail to integrate all the various informational components into a strategic whole. We treat each bit as a separate entity and hope that they somehow come together at the right place and the right time. Consider that the ability for Americans to speak the languages of the country or region of interest is part of the information equation. It is just one of the information arrows in our quiver, but we Americans are particularly short of language skills. We tend to rely on multi-lingual natives to translate for us. That sometimes gets us into more problems than it solves. We need to rededicate ourselves to becoming more multilingual so that we can not only communicate but also we can understand the culture of the country better. The typical response of our acquisition-oriented mentality is, however, “Let us build computer-based hand-held translators”. We should be schooling soldiers. More important, we should be schooling third graders in a variety of languages.

Ideally armed with policy guidance and direction from the top, we need to put together our public affairs representatives with our psychological warriors and our intelligence specialists to present a consistent and comprehensive information program that will address all of the audiences either separately or together. We have to “operationalize” all of their efforts into a synergistic output. We need to provide a coherent information arrow for the commander to use along with his other weapons – or in some cases in lieu of his other weapons.

The military recognizes the critical importance of the information war and knows that this is the key to winning such conflicts. Yet, there is little done about it. An appropriate

² U.S. Government, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, “Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication”, Washington, D.C. September 2004.

question is why has there been so little done to rectify this extraordinary deficiency? The answer eludes this author.

We have yet to change the main attack from the physical aspects of this war in Iraq to the information (mental) aspects. We continue to fight attrition warfare in cities like Fallujah and fail to recognize that the real war is being won in the media. The key is to integrate all three aspects of Colonel John Boyd's trinity (the physical, mental, and moral aspects of war) to isolate the extremists from their base.³ And it is the population base that is insurgency's **center of gravity**.

What's Wrong with Our Approach?

It's the content, my friend! In this war of ideas, we have to have a coherent message to the people. This message has to be massaged to each specific cultural audience as best we can. It requires careful understanding of the mass audience.

We have successfully alienated Iraqis, in particular, by our heavy-handed approach. Our message is not getting through. Our actions speak louder than words. We fail to train our soldiers to treat the Iraqi people with the respect that we would our own citizens. That creates multiple problems. We appear arrogant and very oppressive. The communists solved this problem by placing a "political officer" with every company. The status of this political officer was equal to that of the company commander if not higher. There were daily confessionals and party-line briefings. We Americans fail in the most rudimentary way of educating our children in common shared universal values which leads to a crude form of arrogance with respect to the American way of life. We expect the entire world to want to emulate our way of life which leads to a secular form of hubris. We also fail to educate our conventional forces before sending them to areas where the culture, the beliefs, and the conflict itself are totally different than those we have grown to expect. We are getting better at recognizing the need for cultural

³ Colonel John Boyd, USAF, "The Strategic Game", briefing presentation on the Theory of War, June 1987, pp 34-59, can be found on <http://www.d-n-i.net>.

awareness and cultural knowledge, but this is the basic starting point that we should have gone in with. We are light years behind the power curve.

The same problem existed in Vietnam where we threw our conventionally trained armed forces into an Asian culture we didn't fully understand. Once the troops were on the ground, they "dissed" friends and enemies alike. What message did we send to our friends by calling every Vietnamese a "Gook"? What message do we send by calling our hosts "Ragheads"? On a Public Broadcasting Station documentary about the 1-8 Cavalry in Iraq, 22 February 2004, "A Company of Soldiers", a full colonel was seen berating a sheik (in English) similar to the reported dressing down of the Vietnamese President by Ambassador Maxwell Taylor in Vietnam in 1964. This is basic information failure of the most drastic kind: a first order error.⁴ We are culturally inept.

Our primary efforts to execute information warfare at the higher levels are poorly conceived and coordinated. American financed Iraqi TV network, Alhurra TV, hardly registers on the scale of watched TV programs in the Middle East.⁵ The format is American, not Arabic. Al Jaazera is the most watched Middle East TV network with 51.7 percent of the viewers polled by Zogby.⁶ Even CNN gets 6.4 % of the viewers in the Middle East according to the same poll. On the other hand, there is criticism of Radio Sawa, a State Department broadcasting station, for failing to promote pro-American attitudes because of its concentration on popular music.⁷ Staffers have quit the American sponsored newspaper, al-Sabah, because they have been over-supervised, as opposed to becoming a free press.⁸ The basic premise that there is such a thing as a "free press" is beyond the scope of this paper, but clearly, some are more free than others, and democracies seem to get it better than tyrannies. The real point, however, is the inconsistency of approach. The message is garbled.

⁴ Cf., Deborah Horan, "Army's Propaganda War Collides with Reality", *Chicago Tribune*, July 9, 2004.

⁵ Ellen McCarthy, "U.S.-Financed News Channel Asserts Independence", *Washington Post*, October 15, 2004, p.1.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Daniel Williams, "Staffers Quit at U.S.-Backed Paper", *Washington Post*, May 5, 2004.

There have been breakthroughs in reaching the Arab public recently that have been sponsored by the interim Iraqi Government. The interim government, using their own knowledge of the culture, has put captured insurgents in front of the TV cameras to confess their sins. Reportedly, this has been drawing viewers in Iraq like no other programming – especially in the post-election period.⁹ And we have a right to be buoyed by the elections in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Even Al Jazeera carried excitement of the purple fingers without an extremist spin.

If anything, we need to broadcast and repeatedly air graphically the insurgent mistakes in a manner that is culturally acceptable in the Middle East and Southeast Asia where it might not be so in the United States. We need the Iraqis and others to continue to wage this side of the war as champions of their own destiny.

James Lacey wrote an article in *Proceedings* which asked: “Who’s Responsible for Losing the Media War in Iraq?”.¹⁰ He places the blame squarely on the military public affairs officers for failing to meet their responsibilities in keeping the American media informed of the good news as well as the bad. He suggests a complete revamping of the PAO (Public Affairs Office) is in order.¹¹ Most observers would tend to agree. The objectors are principally drawn from the ranks of the public affairs offices.

Our PSYOP attacks seem to be limited to pamphlets and broadcasts from loudspeakers. While the efforts are hard to measure, they seem to offer very little above the tactical level for the Iraqi people even though Madison Avenue techniques are used (including focus groups) to help shape the messages.¹² The PSYOPS efforts appear to be “stand-alone” rather than the comprehensive integrated effort as a result of considered intelligence and civil affairs inputs. This is not always the case, but given the track record of PSYOP in this war, we need to bring this special operation into the fold with a

⁹ This information comes from inside sources in Iraq. The author has possession of e-mail documentation which is not releasable to the general public out of concern for the safety of the reporters.

¹⁰ James Lacey, “Who’s Responsible for Losing the Media War in Iraq?”, *Proceedings*, October 2004.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

much more robust capability for influencing humans, and this does not mean more equipment.

There are other media besides the obvious ones available. Web sites on the internet are perennially used by the extremists to spread their hate. The sermons in the Mosques are vitally important as well. Has anyone taken the effort to determine what is being said by the majority of Imams over time? What is the mass message? Is it changing over time?

Probably the most prevalent form of media in Iraq is rumor. There is a climate of receptiveness to rumor in the Middle East and other regions of the world. Where most Americans might be skeptical of a story or laugh at such charades, Iraqis, Afghans, and Filipinos are more likely to accept rumor as truth, and the extremists are more than willing to feed grist to the mill. In 2003, many Iraqi patients told doctors that the virus they had contracted was spread by Americans so the people would be grateful to the U.S. when they were healed.¹³

A group of U.S. soldiers in Baghdad were looking at a group of young Iraqi teen-age girls who were clearly checking out these young GIs. The minute one of the soldiers put on his sunglasses, the girls immediately crossed their chests and sank into a crouch.¹⁴ The rumor was that the GIs' sun glasses gave them x-ray vision and they could see through clothes. There is nothing more important to an Iraqi male than protecting his family, and the thought that GI sunglasses had x-ray capabilities clearly attacked the honor of Iraqi men. The rumor was designed to make Iraqis hate Americans. It worked.

Rumor is a very important medium which we little understand. Like charades, rumors transform over time, and like internet urban legends, they are almost impossible to stop.¹⁵

¹² Deborah Horan, "Army's Propaganda War Collides with Reality", *Chicago Tribune*, July 9, 2004.

¹³ Betsy Pisik, "Rumors Become Insidious in Iraq", *The Washington Times*, 10 June 2003, received via www.washingtontimes.com.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Recall from the history of the Sepoy Rebellion in India in 1807 that it was the rumor among Muslim and Hindu soldiers that Enfield cartridges were lubed with been and pork that started the rebellion that ended in a massacre. The Bin Laden assertion that the Americans are in Iraq to exploit their oil is widely believed and oft repeated as a reason for fighting the "occupiers".

For Americans to successfully use the rumor mill as another arrow in the information quiver we will have to gain a very intimate understanding of the specific culture(s) which Americans, in particular, do not now possess.

And then there is the unspoken, unwritten, unaided communications. No one has to tell the Iraqis of Baghdad that they do not have electricity any more than they did under Saddam. No one needs to tell the Iraqis that there is little basic security anywhere – even around the Green Zone. Perhaps it is this absence of basic services and security that is the most revealing message of all. John Poole cites the tactics of the rebels as designed to do just that, prove to the Iraqi people that the Americans cannot provide them anything but more misery.¹⁶ There are the inklings of some good news stories about reconstruction in Iraq and elsewhere, albeit nascent. It is clear that the extremists fear these efforts as evidenced by their continued attacks on the infrastructure. We should use this tactic against the extremists in an information campaign to separate the bad people from the general population who need and desire the services.

One has to question American information and intelligence gathering techniques – to include the offering of huge sums of money for the capture of extremists. Clearly the \$25 million offered for Osama has not worked. It may even offend some of the people we are trying to convince of our good intentions. We need to understand that this is much more than just about money. Money may be the most visible symbol of what our enemies despise about us the most. It is not difficult to turn this blatant bribe technique against us, and they do in spades.

Jobs, however, are a different matter. The Iraqi extremists threaten anyone who dares to help the Americans, including barbers, and the threat alone may be the true measure of success. It shows the extremists are opposed to anything that will bring about a return to normalcy, and this is another flaw that has to be attacked with information arrows.

¹⁶ John Poole, *Tactics of the Crescent Moon: Militant Muslim Combat Methods*, Emerald Island, NC: Posterity Press, 2004, p. 141.

The fact that the Americans did nothing to stop the looting in the immediate post-invasion period clearly alienated many Iraqis. Although it was not perceived to be a legitimate mission of the American combat troops at the time, we have since learned the hard way that policing operations are essential to restoration of order and normalcy.

A New Paradigm

In an as yet unpublished paper, Major Isaiah (Ike) Wilson III, U.S. Army, has stipulated that until we approach the 4GW problem with a full-spectrum (holistic) warfare mindset and game plan, we will fail not only to leverage our advantages, but also we will possibly lose to a rag tag set of malcontents and extremists.¹⁷ MAJ Wilson points out the trend of the military to separate the political and operational parts of modern war and the consequent attempts to deal with them separately. He correctly identifies that under security and support conditions, higher fidelity information and intelligence is required at the lowest echelons.¹⁸ MAJ Wilson has the audacity to challenge conventional thinking about the separation of “security” and rebuilding the infrastructure in post-major combat conditions. “There could be no modicum of security (in northern Iraq) until the essential services and economic sectors could be stabilized.”¹⁹ He goes on to say: “The challenge, in addition to safeguarding the infrastructure as well as possible, was in *keeping the public informed*.”²⁰ In his words, “All of these activities, these challenges, these threats, and these operations were seamless; thesis and antithesis of war and peace.”²¹ This holistic approach to war is the foundation of what I believe has to be a reformation of how we fight 4GW.

Instead of information operations being a sub-set of intelligence, it should be the other way around. **Intelligence is a subset of information operations.** Most functions that

¹⁷ Isaiah (Ike) Wilson III, Ph.D. and Major, United States Army, in a draft paper prepared for delivery to the Peace Studies Program, Cornell University, 14 October 2004, “Thinking Beyond War: Civil-Military Operational Planning in Northern Iraq”, copy of this paper in author’s possession and cited with permission of MAJ Wilson, p. 37.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 33.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 41.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 42.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

we currently recognize as staff functions are information operations. 4GW is all about information. We want to win the hearts and minds? We have to fight the war smarter with information, not just with bullets. And the military may be the last organization which should be in charge of information warfare. It has to be coordinated from the top as an inter-agency combined effort, and it has to be practiced by everyone from top to bottom.

Intelligence is key to effective information operations. It has to be gathered from every echelon. The use of signals intelligence to intercept enemy cell phone calls is critical use of technical intelligence. The intelligence warrior also has to operate at the bottom of the ladder as well. The Army trained intelligence specialist Sergeant John McCary to interrogate prisoners of war in secure military facilities, but in Iraq, he discovered that the best hope for gathering useful intelligence was to accompany combat patrols.²² Sergeant McCary, fluent in Arabic, improvised often, but he knew generally who was more likely to talk to him. He also knew that the best way to interrogate suspects was during the conduct of an operation or immediately thereafter while they were temporarily disoriented.²³ The critical information obtained then has to be put to use immediately if the unit is to have any chance of taking the insurgents off guard. Whether we use information warfare, combat soldiers, or both to attack the enemy depends on the information and how quickly we can formulate plans to use the information. The fundamental breakthrough here is that the intelligence specialist could do the collection and initial analysis in real time. This provided almost instantaneous dissemination of tactical intelligence to the commander who could take decisive action on the spot -- without having this process take hours if not days inside the intelligence bureaucracy.

The Army doesn't like using highly trained interrogators in this very risky manner, but if we are to develop basic intelligence from the people who have it in real time, we will have to adapt, just as Sergeant McCary learned to adapt.

²² Greg Jaffe, "On Ground in Iraq, Soldier Uses Wits to Hunt Insurgents", *Wall Street Journal*, September 10, 2004, p.1.

To truly use the intelligence in a combined and coordinated fashion, we should consider Regional Cultural Information Centers. These centers would be made up of long term personnel who would man these centers for up to three years or more. The foundation of these centers would be intelligence gathering, but they would include cultural specialists, linguists, PSYOP and civil affairs elements, public affairs officers, and representatives from Department of State such as Foreign Service Officers and USAID, Agriculture, law enforcement, and commerce. Finally, to eventually hand over these functions, these centers would also be staffed with host nation counterparts who could be trained on-the-job. Combat units could come and go in the region, but the data compiled and analyzed at the regional cultural information centers would provide a tremendous data base of information about the enemy and the population for the combat units. These centers would not have to be large organizations, but rather, they would remain small and be able to defend themselves if necessary. These centers would all be connected by networks that would allow the exchange of information.

Lieutenant General David Barno, U.S commander in Afghanistan, set up similar regional centers for coalition and Afghan security elements called Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). These teams provide a complete package of government services to the Regional Development Zones. According to Colonel Thomas X. Hammes, author of *The Sling and the Stone*, these PRTs and Regional Development Zones are one of the most positive aspects of our presence in Afghanistan in that they allow the Afghan government to make its presence felt in the rural areas.²⁴ There are now twelve such teams and they are expanding into other areas of Afghanistan, according to Hammes.

The goal of any such organization has to be to separate the insurgents from the population and deny them support. Even better, we want to compel the benign population into self-separation from the enemy. The message of Iraq for the Iraqis could help distinguish our presence as an occupier as legitimate and desirable from other transnational occupiers. The precepts have to include the maintenance of the moral high

²³ *Ibid.*

ground, the enhancement of security, the active use of information with minimal use of military force, and the focused application of physical force by combat units in the area of operations. All of this suggests a paramilitary culture that would adapt to the needs of the particular region. It would also provide essential local cultural training and information to combat forces in the area.



Figure 1: Regional Cultural Information Centers

There are other ways to use collected information, and one of those ways is the detailed piece by piece analysis process in much safer reach-back environments. Dr. Mark Sageman, wrote an essay posted on the Foreign Policy Research Institute's web site

²⁴ Colonel Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century*, St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004, pp. 169-170.

(<http://www.fpri.org>) about evidence-based research on the perpetrators of 9/11.²⁵ He gathered data on 400 terrorists who were targeted against the “far enemy”, i.e., the United States, as opposed to local governments. Some of his findings are critical to understanding the enemy; such as the interesting fact that most of the terrorists were not particularly religious. They only became religious when they joined the jihad not too long before they committed their atrocities.²⁶ In other words, the cloak of religious fanaticism was more of a peer group for discussion, and later, action.

Thus the information collected by Sergeant McCary not only has relevance to the combat unit he supports, but also the information has relevance to the local area and, depending on who the terrorists are, perhaps to a much wider array of intelligence analysts, such as Dr. Sageman.

The problem is, and always has been, the intelligence collection and analysis effort is like a black hole. Very little useful information comes back out in the way of dissemination. Once analyzed, the information (intelligence) is placed in the bin of classified information, and usually that classification prevents it from getting back down to the users who most need it, whether that be the combat soldiers of company and below level who are actually fighting the war or academics who are interested in analyzing it.

Processed intelligence is usually husbanded for the commander’s eyes only, and it is a “gotcha” because there is little he can do with it because it is so highly classified – and usually it is provided too late for any immediate reaction. Little wonder operators do not trust intelligence people. Yet, in fighting 4GW, there must be harmony between the operators and the intelligencers and it must be through the common denominator of information sharing. We need to derive maximum benefit of open source information and intelligence mainly because of a prevailing educational gap in our way of warfare. Anti-intellectualism still prevails. The 4th Infantry Division used pattern analysis, link

²⁵ Dr. Marc Sageman, “Understanding Terror Networks”, 16 November 2004. This essay is based on his FPRI Book Talk on October 6, 2004. His book *Understanding Terror Networks*, was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 2004.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

analysis, and hypothesis testing in eventually determining the whereabouts of Saddam. We need to capitalize on the good information at the ground level where this war is being fought, and “it takes a village” to develop not only the intelligence picture but also the appropriate actions.

Information sharing on staffs is difficult not only because of separate functions and time limitations – despite the efforts of the operations officer to coordinate the staff planning process – but also because of the structure itself. We need to re-think how we organize staffs for combat.

This could also lead to a whole new way of thinking about staff functions in general, not just for 4GW. Instead of an intelligence officer as a primary staff officer, the function should be “information officer” which includes the intelligence function. Confusion arises as the operations officer (G3) controls the EW function. As a consequence the entire paradigm of information operations is split up under the current concept of staff functions. The EW and communications sub-functions belong to the Information Officer as well.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) has recently handed off a project called Command Post of the Future (CPOF) to the U.S. Army which demonstrates how command and control can occur with much smaller staffs, much like that predicted by the Army in the TRADOC Concept for Force XXI Operations.²⁷ The flatter organizational staffs which were a highlight of this concept have yet to be realized.

We must look at reducing manpower by increasing automation in areas that deal with rations, fuel, and other *housekeeping* staff functions. We must not reduce staffs solely for the sake of reducing them. The assimilation of data and information and application of judgement for key decisions will continue to require competent teams assisting commanders. Clearly, though, future automated information operations promise a capability to operate with unprecedented control in routine staff

²⁷ U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, “Force XXI Operations: A Concept for the Evolution of Full-Dimensional Operations for the Strategic Army of the Early Twenty-First Century”, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5, 1 August 1994. See p. 3-2.

formations, allowing commanders and staff to focus on more complex, integrative tasks.²⁸

The generic staff organization chart (Figure 2) outlines how the three principal staff functions should be realigned. The condensation of the Administrative and Logistics functions could be achieved with greater reliance on computerized methods as suggested in the TRADOC document, but we are not there yet. The Admin function would give up the chaplain and the public affairs officer to the Information function. The Information function is what is shown in more detail below. The Action function would be the operations function of the S3/G3 staffs minus Electronic Warfare and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV).

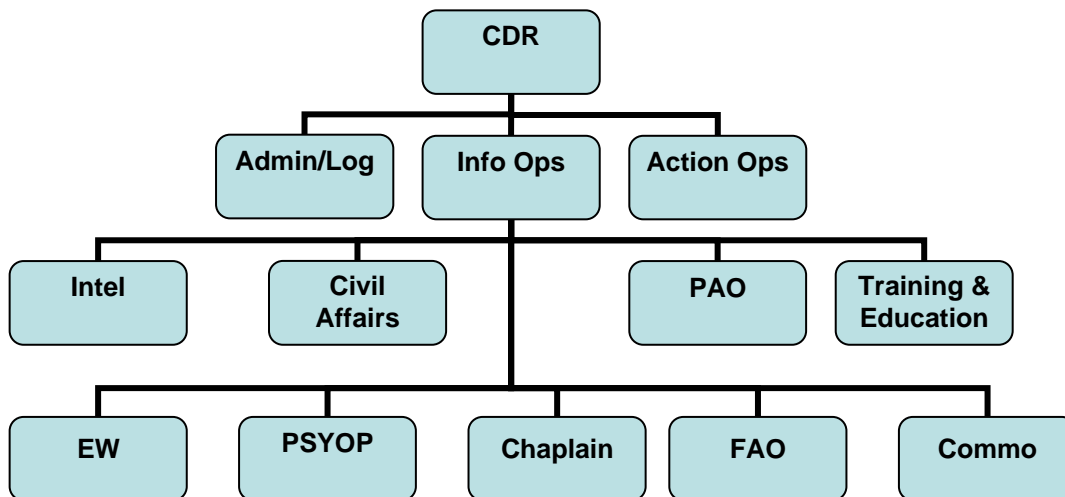


Figure 2: Staff Organization for Integrated Information and Action

In addition to this military organization chart for staff, the State Department Foreign Service Officer and AID administration officer as well as host nation counterparts would be providing inputs as well. This represents a higher level staff, and subordinate units would not necessarily have all these dedicated staff officers, but as operational control of

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 3-20.

elements is added, this is where the commanders would fit as a dual hat. Ideally, the information officer is a functional integrator.

Retired Army Colonel Douglas Macgregor has written two books, *Breaking the Phalanx* and *Transformation Under Fire*. His basic thesis is that if you change the structure of organizations, substance will follow. Structural change such as I have suggested above parallels Macgregor's thinking. In the 1990s, the Army proposed a more horizontal structure as a result of the onset of digitization, but that concept died an early death. The elimination of unnecessary staffs was not all that popular. At the same time, the current move to focus on brigade-size units as "Units of Action (UA)" is an effort to create more adaptive organizations for rapid reaction and employment. None of the division or corps staff structure has been streamlined to make divisions or corps more adaptive, or to eliminate unnecessary staff, but we are experimenting as we fight with the new UAs which are structured differently than we have known in the past.

Retired Marine Colonel Thomas X. Hammes, a premier student of 4GW suggests: "Insurgencies are first and foremost political struggles, not military ones." "The only way to defeat them is to gain the widespread support of the people"²⁹ Tactical success has to be turned into strategic advantage, and this can only be done through widespread application information relating to those tactical successes. And as incongruous as this may sound, Hammes has a better handle on information warfare than all of the definitions found in the field manuals or in the current literature.

Despite all the neat doctrinaire manuals on how to conduct information operations, including the many studies done by the National Defense University, we have yet to discover how to apply information to warfare in a manner even remotely as sophisticated as the terrorists are doing to us throughout the world. The 4GW enemy does not need a specific definition. They know what it is instinctively, and they apply it with great effect.

In Iraq, as elsewhere, one of the keys to understanding and action is the tribal and kin-base networks, the de facto “public administration” systems that continue to function despite the decapitation of the national leadership. We need to work within these networks to a point of being able to “maneuver” within them. This may be the essence of information operations and countering 4GW.

And if information is truly more powerful than kinetic weaponry, then the primary staff of the Commander-in-Chief should be his information warriors, not his assault forces. Dr. Chester W. Richards has gone so far as to suggest that the commander be his own intelligence officer in combating 4GW.³⁰ Historically, that has frequently been the case. I would take that one step further and say that the commander should be his own information officer in combating 4GW.

The Marines have been doing a lot of original thinking about war which may come as a surprise to many but not to those who have been working in the field of operational concepts. Major G. John David, writing in the Marine Corps Gazette, states:

We must recognize that ad hoc cells formed somewhere down in the staff chain and responding to amorphous guidance based on loose understandings of IO no longer meet the mission. IO is now a command-level issue requiring structural change.³¹

Major David goes on to state that we have to understand where the main effort is, meaning battle or information operations, but more importantly, he reinforces the fact that intelligence is a sub-set of information and not vice versa.³²

A Basic Philosophy

²⁹ Thomas X. Hammes, “Victory In Iraq, One City At A Time”, *New York Times*, October 5, 2004. A far better perspective of Colonel Hammes views can be found in his book: *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century*, St. Paul: Zenith Press, 2004.

³⁰ Dr. Richards is a retired colonel of Air Force Intelligence and close confidant of the late Colonel John Boyd, designer of the OODA Loop construct. See Chester W. Richards, *A Swift, Elusive Sword: What if Sun Tzu and John Boyd Did a National Defense Review?*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Defense Information, 2001, p. 67.

³¹ Major G. John David, USMC, “Leading the Information War”, *Marine Corps Gazette*, (89:2) February 2005, p. 24.

³² *Ibid.*

Where possible, Americans must **tell the truth and tell it often**. The truth has its own strengths. Rather than trying to spin the bad news into good, we need to tell it like it is in order to regain credibility. Arab culture gives great credit to this sort of “truth”. Because of an American military culture that is overly “positive” or “Can Do”, we continue to have problems with this basic philosophy. The fact of the matter is that in working with the media and the public, unadulterated honesty is the best policy. It also just happens to be the best policy in dealing with superiors and subordinates alike. In 4GW, the decisive victory comes through a successful IO campaign.

The best media coverage of the war came out of the mouths of troops talking to the embedded media on the march up to Baghdad. They were simply tellers of the truth. It resonates in the field, at home, and in the rest of the world as well. While the idea of embedding is difficult to sell in stability and support operations, the philosophy of telling the truth should be a lesson well learned. Since we are in this Global War on Terrorism for the long run, we should understand that unless we do tell the truth, we are destined to lose ourselves as well as the populations we purport to support.

There are two circumstances where one cannot always be forthright: deception and operational security. Deception operations require a lie. Generally such deception is aimed at the enemy leadership, but not always. The Allied deception about landing in the vicinity of Calais during World War II was an elaborate lie that worked. In war, such falsehoods are justified. Sun Tzu said that all war is deception. In today’s world, all war might begin and end with information warfare. What is unjustified is where we release disinformation that results in fooling ourselves. Commanders sometimes give the impression that they do not want to hear bad news. The results can be that they do not hear any “bad” news. This is a form of disinformation to ourselves.

Operational security may not require a lie, but it requires silence in order not to reveal an impending or in-progress secret operation. This is necessary to protect the lives of the personnel involved. For example, one may have to lie if asked directly about such a

secret operation by a media representative. Once the operation is begun and the security requirements are no longer valid, the public affairs officer should be forthright and spell out the reasons why.

Still the basic tenet of American information operations should always be to tell the truth. This helps capture the moral high ground so important to this type of war. The “Friday Night Follies” of the Vietnam era and the current Baghdad equivalent are public affairs and information failures of the first order and subjects of derision. This leads to mistrust and disbelief in anything officials may say that need to be heard. This need for speaking the truth is crucial to information operations. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was the darling of the press – even as he berated their own for what he considered stupid questions. Rumsfeld was believable, but as the war dragged on and casualties mounted, Rumsfeld’s irascibility and even his credibility became a political liability. The media has now resorted to a more combative mode with respect to the Secretary’s press briefings.

Historian and military reformer William S. Lind reported that the late Colonel John Boyd said the greatest weakness a person or nation can have is a contradiction between what they say and what they do.³³ Lind was talking about Psychological Operations (PSYOP), but he was also talking about telling the truth. He suggested a basic definition of PSYOP in Fourth Generation Warfare: “(P)syops are not what you say but what you do.”³⁴ I suggest that this applies equally to information warfare of which PSYOP must be an integral part.

Measures of Effectiveness

Just how do we know when we have won the information war? We will know when the Iraqis stop dancing in the street when American soldiers are killed and wounded as a result of a command detonated mine. We will know when we start getting information

³³ William S. Lind, “PSYOPS In Fourth Generation War”, 25 May 2004. This essay can be found on the web at: http://www.d-n-i.net/fcs/lind_5_25_04.htm

³⁴ *Ibid.*

on the whereabouts of Osama Bin Laden freely offered from Afghani citizens. We will know because there will be a significant decrease in the levels of violence. We will know when Al Jaazera becomes more objective in their reporting and refuses to broadcast tapes like the beheadings. The absence of Al Jaazera, for example, either through direct action or through political pressure on the Government of Qatar, will not alter the equation one way or the other until the conditions are changed.³⁵ Those conditions are effective heuristic information warfare conducted by an integrated U.S. team that includes Iraqis – and perhaps even led by Iraqis.

Recommendations

If anything needs fixing, it is our failure to use the information arrows in our quiver better than we have, especially in Stability and Support Operations.

First we had better call it something other than information warfare which has serious negative connotations. It may well be just that, information warfare, but to obtain purchase, we need to look for another term. The Defense Science Board report uses the term “Strategic Communications” which is much more encompassing than just the technical meaning. By co-opting the word “Communications” and using it to express what we want to do with our information at all three levels, strategic, operational, and tactical, we could better express what it is we are talking about. To most military personnel, the term “communications” means only the hardware and the signals by which we transmit messages. We need to subordinate this understanding by changing what is now termed “communications” to “signals” and to use the term “communications” in its more robust definition.

The Army recently began an initiative to call Information Operations “Influence Operations” which may gain purchase, but this concept will have to be widely accepted, not just by the Army and the military, but also by the Administration in order to become a

³⁵ *Cf.*, Steven R. Weisman, “Under Pressure, Qatar May Sell Jazeera Station, *New York Times*, January 30, 2005, p.1.

coordinated effort. Such a concept deserves more study, but we have to get away from old-thinking about information operations and information warfare. It ties us down.

Second, we have to understand the linkage between action and words. That is, we need to integrate communications with our operations. To do this, we need to look at the Boyd OODA Loop paradigm. We need to get ahead of the enemy decision cycle, and therefore we need to make sure that the real weapons of this type of war, the information arrows are coordinated with the operational arrows and vice versa. In order to have our information more valuable than that of anyone else, we must strive **to tell the truth** with as much candor as the private from Tennessee rather than the proverbial used car salesman. In fact, until we are able to admit our mistakes, we will not begin to correct them.³⁶ We need to follow that maxim of telling the truth with appropriate actions to demonstrate that we are sincere and credible.

I would be so bold as to suggest that this starts within the officer corps of all services. There has to be informed and acceptable debate about concepts and ideas within the military profession. With some few notable exceptions (notably this journal) there is no serious exchange of ideas in today's military ranks except perhaps at the war colleges. Somehow we have come to the point where subordinates do not feel free to offer opinions to seniors and seniors do not solicit opinions from subordinates. There are some exceptions to this trend, but it has been measured in too many reports to ignore.

Third, we need to bring together all agencies that deal in information to include CIA, State, and all military stovepipe organizations into a family of information analysts and integrators under an Information Officer at all echelons: strategic, operational, and tactical. Again, we have to allow and welcome debate as to methods and techniques before decisions are made.

³⁶ Colonel T.X. Hammes brings out how basic mistakes in reporting, cover-ups, and dissembling by military officers created an unhealthy rift between the media and the military in Vietnam in his book: *The Sling and the Stone*, op. cit., p. 71.

Fourth, we need to reform our approach to military staffs. They slow us down. We need much slimmer staffs that can adapt and react and present very rapid initiatives to the enemy that cause him to react instead of vice versa. Strip the combat forces of all but three primary staff officers. They would be the Administrative/Logistics officer, the Information officer, and the Action officer. Reconsider the doctrinaire and deliberate decision-making process that usually results in 30 page operations orders at the battalion level, escalating exponentially in volume and time at each echelon above, where fragmentary orders might suffice. Commanders would howl, but this needs to be done if we want to become more adaptable, get ahead of the decision cycle, and use our information advantages against the enemy rather than being on the receiving end of the extremists' OODA Loops. The former unit staff officers would be integrated in the recommendation below.

Fifth, we need to take many of the functions formerly done in the tactical units and place them in regional and district cultural centers in combat zones. These regional and district centers would be responsible for the political, social, religious, economic, and military intelligence aspects of the area of responsibility. There might be one district center for every 50 or 100 mile radius. The officer in charge of these regional or district centers would be an Information Officer, and under him would be all of the functions of combat units but his primary mission would be to collect, analyze, disseminate, and influence activities in his area of operations with projects such as medcaps and reconstruction efforts. Combat units could come and go from these regions, but the regional center would remain in place over many years to develop the necessary skills and data bases necessary to prosecute the war. These centers would include host country staffers, coalition staffers, as well as public media. Over time, these centers would become the responsibility of the host nation with only a few coalition advisors – and eventually, none.

The measures of merit of the regional and district centers will be the degree of accurate and useful information volunteered cooperatively over time by the inhabitants themselves.

Sixth, there is merit in the Rumsfeld idea of a Strategic Information Center to protect our rear as well as coordinate our efforts in the field. This function is not well placed in the Department of Defense but at some higher level. Ideally, it would be a function of the National Security Council.

Seventh, we have to recognize the value of knowing the language and culture of a country or region and place a premium on those that possess these skills. We need to require language skills for officer entry programs. We need to conduct educational exchange programs with other nations on a much wider scale than today. We need to provide basic language education to our soldiers as part of the training schedule when they are alerted for overseas movement.

Finally, we need a much more heuristic approach to information warfare. We need to integrate the concept of information to include all aspects of communications. People who can rapidly filter the information needs pertinent to our message need to be promoted and placed in positions where they can help direct our now scattered and ineffective informational efforts. We have to place a premium on the person who can do this and not the branch or the rank or the politics from whence he comes. These people may not necessarily be military at all, but they need to be given status and placed in the ranks where they can direct our information efforts. Consider a Foreign Service Officer or a National Guardsman who also happens to work in public relations in his civilian career to be part of a military staff as the “Information Officer”. Find the best man for the job – and let the Personnel Management Office pull its collective hair out by the roots.

While radical, these measures are necessary to deal with even more radical extremist enemies who take advantage of our doctrinaire approaches to warfare. 4GW is all about taking advantages of the enemy vulnerabilities, and we have to recognize that our own failure to act in our own interest leaves exploitable gaps to the enemy. The information arrow needs to be fixed so it can fly straight and true. We have a great opportunity to

break out of old bureaucratic and dogmatic strictures and structures if only we take advantage of this window of opportunity given to us, ironically, by the enemy.

And yes, we can muddle through without adapting to this information age and 4GW, but at what cost?

"The premise of fourth-generation warfare, (otherwise known by the acronym 4GW) is that the world itself has changed, so that terrorism and guerilla warfare - and other elusive techniques that are still being invented - are now ready to move to center stage. It would be a mistake, however, and perhaps a goal of our opponents might be to encourage this mistake, if we were to focus on the techniques and not the nature of 4GW itself." 4th Generation Warfare Free Download. Fourth-Generation Warfare simulates warfare in the 21st century, which, in addition to the direct opposition of military forces, now includes espionage, international politics, cyberwarfare, media manipulation, and trade wars. Game Details. Title: 4th Generation Warfare Genre: Indie, RPG, Strategy Developer: Eversim Publisher: Eversim Release Date: 5 Mar, 2020 Steam: https://store.steampowered.com/app/1204230/4th_Generation_Warfare/. About This Game. Fourth-Generation Warfare simulates warfare in the 21st century, which, in addition to the direct oppositio 4GW (fourth generation warfare) is the term used by military thinkers to describe conflict at the end of the 20th century. In general, 4GW is an extremely effective method of warfare that the US and its allies will find very... I have outlined the basics of 4GW warfare below to enhance your understanding of the term. Definition 4GW can be defined as a method of warfare that uses the following to achieve a moral victory: Undermines enemy strengths (this may seem obvious, but most of modern warfare has involved direct attacks on enemy strengths -- find the enemy army and destroy it). Exploits enemy weaknesses. Uses asymmetric operations (weapons and techniques that differ substantially from opponents). Drivers The rise of 4GW is both a product and a driver of the following ASPJ Africa & Francophonie - 4th Quarter 2012. Fourth Generation Warfare and the US Military's Social Media Strategy. Promoting the Academic Conversation. Christina M. Knopf, PhD* Eric J. Ziegelmayer, PhD. Information is a commodity receptive to weaponization, and the information environment has become vital to the success of military operations: "The information domain" primarily the internet "is now key terrain to be seized" in the domination of economic and diplomatic influence.10 Consequently the United States has formally incorporated what Kenneth Payne calls "communication war" into doctrine.11 This shift in.