

Importance of
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The Importance of Information and Influence activates in the so-called “Hybrid Warfare”

Abstract

Information and Influence Activities (IIA) is an integral part of today's modern Hybrid Warfare. As time and methods and names have changed over the centuries in relation to any type of Influence activates, it still has the same purpose in mind, which is using all information-related capabilities in order to synchronize themes, messages and actions with operations to inform global audiences, influence audiences and affect adversary and enemy decision-making process. The transformation of influence operations to what is considered as today's major threat, which is Hybrid Warfare. Understanding the importance of Hybrid Warfare and looking at our own vulnerabilities in instrumental powers that include political, military, economic, social infrastructures and information systems in addition to developing ways to counter any future hybrid attack will secure any alteration in our foreign policy and our way of life.

This analysis will focus on the importance of Information and Influence Activities (IIA) in hybrid warfare. Before the significance of this can be discussed, there needs to be a good comprehension on distinguishing both information and influence, along with knowing what encompasses Hybrid warfare. After understanding these terms, we will look at the history of influencing and lastly, the distinction of Information Operations (IO) and Inform and Influence Activities (IIA). Only then we will be able to understand the importance of Inform and Influence Activities are in Hybrid warfare.

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Information and the purpose of it are that it turns raw data collected from all varieties of means that can be used for decision making for an organization. Raw data refers to bits and pieces of information and is not necessarily information in itself but the combination of all this data creates information. Now, in terms of Information in the military, “ Information is a powerful tool (used) to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp an adversary’s ability to make and share decisions.” (Staff, 2017) Information is the needed fuel to conduct influence. Information is the element that focuses on three dimensions to help shape Inform and Influence Activities in the Information Environment which is Cognitive, Information and physical. In its cognitive dimension, this is “ composed of values, beliefs, concepts, intentions, and perceptions of individuals and groups transmitting and receiving information.” (Headquarters, 2013) The physical dimension requires tangible components such as infrastructures, groups, and people. These tangible mechanisms enable a steady flow of information among audiences and organizations. Lastly, is Information in itself, referring back to the raw data collectively forming information in its entirety.

Influence by definition is the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something or the effect itself. Influence in the military is used to “ persuade selected foreign audiences to support U. S. objectives” (Headquarters, 2013) or to persuade those audiences to discontinue supporting the adversary or enemy. In a strategic level influence activates refers according to (Eirc V. Larson, 2009) “ Influence operations/activities are the coordinated integrated and synchronized application of national diplomatic, informational, military, economic and

other capabilities in peacetime, crises, conflict, and post-conflict to foster attitudes, behaviors, or decisions by foreign target audiences that further U. S. Interests and objectives.” (Eirc V. Larson, 2009) With this definition in mind, there is a huge emphasis on the implications of influence at all levels of government in order to supplement U. S. intentions and goals.

Bringing these terms together we get Inform and influence activities which “ is the integration of designated information-related capabilities in order to synchronize themes, messages and actions with operations to inform the United States and global audiences, influence audiences and affect adversary and enemy decision-making” (Headquarters A., 2013) You can say that Inform and Influence Activities (IIA) is a function of integration, it owns no capabilities but rather brings together Information-Related Capabilities (IRCs), these capabilities refers to Public Affairs, Psychological Operations, Civil and cultural considerations, Soldier and leader engagements, Combat camera, Civil Affairs operations, Operations security and Military deceptions. Other capabilities that can support Inform and Influence Activities would be in Cyber electromagnetic activities like Electronic Warfare, Cyber Operations, and Electromagnetic Spectrum Management Operations.

Differentiating Inform and Influence Activities (IIA) with Information Operations (IO), which has a similar definition, Both Joint Publications 1-02 (Dictionary of Military Terms) and 3-13 (Information Operations) still define IO as “ The integrated employment, during military operations, of information-related capabilities in concert with other lines of operations to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision-making of adversaries and potential adversaries while protecting our own” (Scaggs, 2013) Information <https://assignbuster.com/importance-of-information-and-influence-activates-in-the-so-called-hybrid-warfare/>

Operations (IO) as well as Inform and Influence Activities (IIA) own no capabilities but as a function require the integration of Information-Related Capabilities (IRCs) to be in synch across all levels of operations to be considered effective. The difference here is that Inform and Influence Activities (IIA) informs and influences audiences simultaneously while Information Operations (IO) does not. By doing so, Inform and Influence Activities supports both Information Operations tasks and the national strategic communication effort.

Historically, Influencing, in general, has been around for centuries and has been used in antiquity to dominate the course of history books. In 525 BC during the expansion of the Persian Kingdom and ancient Egypt, the Persian Forces understood the beliefs of Egyptians in respect to cats. The Egyptians held cats as sacred and avoided harming them. With this “ information”, the Persian Empire would take cats into battle, eventually defeating the Egyptian Army. The “ influencing” behavior or change of behavior from the Egyptians was to not attack Persian Soldiers carrying cats because of their religious beliefs and spells associated with felines which worked. Another example of influencing was in the 13th century AD, Genghis Khan understood the power of influencing and how to generate certain behaviors using it. From using severed heads and catapulting them into cities to instill fear and disease into the inhabitants, to while conducting movement operations at night, Khan had his Soldiers light three torches each to deceive enemy scouts into believing his numbers seem greater than they actually were. These forms of information and influence were mostly done with tangible items and resources available during that time.

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Fast forward into the First World War, mass media was now available in the form of newspapers and posters. British and Germans began distributing propaganda domestically and internationally at the start of the War. British forces had several advantages which allowed them to succeed for world opinion. They had much experience than the Germans in international and cross-cultured communications. The Germans tried to stimulate a revolution in different parts of the British Empire but were ineffective, while the British successfully persuaded the Arabs to revolt against the Ottoman Empire.

When World War II came around, Adolf Hitler was intrigued of influence tactics used by the British that he became committed to using mass propaganda to effect the minds of the German populace in the years to come. These influencing techniques convinced the Germans that the way Hitler was taking them was not just a trend but the way to their future and they believed him. Hitler's power of influence was due to being informed and using all distribution platforms available to inform and influence the masses.

By the time the Vietnam war hit and decades later with the Cold War with fighting Russian influence in different areas like Central America, Africa and areas in the Middle east. Television was now a tool incorporated into the use of information and influence operations. From delivering unlicensed TV broadcast to areas that were denied to the U. S. military forces and Operations like dropping leaflets in Nicaragua on informing the Nicaraguans on how to sabotage the Sandinista-led government. These brief stories of history illustrates that Inform and Influence Activities have played a significant role in shaping the future in which we live in today.

Inform and Influence Activities now and modern warfare are nothing like they were before with the traditional military strength which we have seen for so many years that solely relied on overwhelming air power, fire, and maneuver. This new threat is Hybrid Warfare. Hybrid Warfare according to Cullen is “ the synchronized use of multiple instruments of power tailored to specific vulnerabilities across the full spectrum of societal function to achieve synergistic effects.” (Dr. Patrick j. Cullen, 2017). Breaking it down a little further, hybrid war is a combination of military forces supported by irregular and cyber warfare tactics. This tells us three things, one is the use of military operations, the traditional force on force. Two, the use of cyber warfare, cyberwarfare being the use of technology to disrupt the activities of a state or organization, especially the deliberate attacking of information systems for strategic purposes. And lastly, irregular warfare which is “ a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over relevant populations.” (Stowell, 2018) These irregular warfare tactics include and not limited to Counterterrorism (CT) Unconventional Warfare (UW) Foreign Internal Defense (FID) Counterinsurgency (COIN) and Stability Operations (SO). Definition of Hybrid Warfare also explains the use of “ multiple instruments of power to exploit their vulnerabilities” these powers refer to political, military, economic, social, information and infrastructure (PEMSII). Examples of these include instances of influencing others by either endorsing sanctions (Economic) to alliances (Political) to further and protect (infrastructure) the foreign policy of a given nation. Bringing all this together emphasizes the importance of Inform and Influence activities in Hybrid Warfare at all levels. Now, let’s take a closer look at entities that have used IIA in Hybrid Warfare.

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Modern hybrid war practitioners apply not just conventional capabilities, and terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence, irregular tactics and formations, coercion and criminal activity they practice Inform and Influence Activities as a whole in all realms of Hybrid Warfare. The following illustrations will explain the importance of information and influence activities in hybrid warfare. One of these practitioners of IIA are the Mexican drug cartels, they have used Inform and Influence activities strategies to gather support from civilians and coerce and attack the vulnerabilities of government institutions at the same time weakening their opponents for years. From laundering money which gave them influence at international levels, to taking advantage of corruption and bribing the powerful officials in the system. When money alone was insufficient, intimidation tactics were used whether by kidnapping, threaten or tortured into submission. Also, exploiting weaknesses of individuals by using their loved ones. The cartels Inform and Influence Activities included getting government officials to look the other way and media control by having them scale back coverage of drug violence in their area of operations, and also using traditional messaging techniques and other information denial techniques (Cook, 2007). Cartels understood the importance of Information and Influence activities which they used in persuading individuals to act a certain way to understanding the power of social media by censoring and controlling it.

Another organization that has been successful in Hybrid Warfare has been Hezbollah. Well-armed and equipped due to the accessibility of equipment innovative weapons at low prices and pre-existing marketable tools such a cell phone and digital systems. During the Israel-Hezbollah War, an irregular

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campaign using social media showed that they had won to the most of the world against a conventional Israeli adversary. Hezbollah used information as fighters immediately began uploading battlefield photos and video in near real-time, controlling the battle of perception throughout the operation, even though Israel did not lose the battle on the conventional side, at a strategic information environment or campaign, the perception of the international community showed an Israeli defeat against Hezbollah forces.

As a result, looking at the application of hybrid threats and how it has leverage opinions and attitudes across international communities, we can see the importance of it now more than ever. This has become a multifaceted challenge that involves an adaptable and versatile military to overcome. Countries like Russia and China according to (Eirc V. Larson, 2009) have excelled in Hybrid Warfare from influence, media operations, deception, leveraging narratives, cyber operations, censorship of information and control, use of Information Related Capabilities and leveraging social media. The U. S. as far as application of highly integrated command and control networks to rapidly defeat adversary formations and command and control nodes goes, we have a successful track record but when it comes to Inform and Influence Activities in Hybrid Warfare, we have fallen short in the information environment at the strategic, operational and tactical level. “ Information environment is not well integrated into military planning, doctrine, or process” (Dr. Patrick j. Cullen, 2017)

In conclusion, Inform and Influence Activities in Hybrid Warfare is not just important now more than ever, it is already rampant and prevalent and is likely to continue growing in its complexity as well. There should be a greater <https://assignbuster.com/importance-of-information-and-influence-activates-in-the-so-called-hybrid-warfare/>

emphasis and priority in Inform and Influence Activities if the United States wishes to be superior in this new era of warfare. One way to do this is to encourage a view of operations in and through the Information Environment as part of combined arms. By doing so, it will not just focus on just the kill and destroy mentality, but also the implications before, during, and after Inform and Influence Activities have on all operations. Another is to tie political, physical and cognitive objectives together in plans and communicate these objectives clearly to maneuver elements, not just Information Related Capabilities components. Department of Defense along with coordination with U. S. government more broadly to seek and expand authorities to operate in the realm of information and influence activities short of declared hostilities. Lastly, “ closing gaps in key areas like cyber, influence, OPSEC, MILDEC by making IRCs more attractive, larger and prestigious” (Dr. Patrick j. Cullen, 2017). Warfare, Inform and Influence Activities (IIA) is no longer the traditional force on force along with tangible type influencing products as it has been for many years, it has now moved into the digital world and in all levels of hybrid components.

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