

Rear Area Functions	Component	MAGTF
Security	MRAC	RACom
Sustainment	Marine Logistics Command (MLC)	Force Service Support Group (FSSG)
Communications	MRAC	G-6
Intelligence	MRAC	G-2
Movements	MLC	G-4
Area Management	G-3	G-3
Infrastructure Development	MLC	FSSG
Host-Nation Support	G-4	G-4

Figure 4. Rear area functions delineated. (See Note.)

is that commanders always have the "Com" designation and work from a command post. If an acronym starts with the letter "M" it then refers to the Marine Corps component.

Remembering that the rear area evolves over time, the MAGTF commander may initially retain direct control of his rear area by executing the eight functions of rear area operations through his various staff sections. (See Figure 4.) At some point, as the MAGTF area of operations expands, the commander's ability to command and control through his staff may be significantly challenged. Therefore, the commander may appoint a rear area coordinator or rear area commander to improve his ability to command and control a larger battlespace.

The key to the successful planning and execution of rear area operations is the inclusion of appropriate rear area representation within the operational planning team (OPT) from the beginning of any planning effort through to mission completion. The planner designated as the rear area "proponent" in the OPT must ensure that operational planning reflects the evolving nature of rear area operations from minimal combat service support to early entry forces to a fully developed rear area to support sustained operations by a Marine expeditionary force. He must also ensure that appropriate organization, structure, and resources necessary to sustain and protect the force are provided.

Conclusion

Rear area operations must be integrated into overall mission planning as part of the commander's single battle vice being conducted as an afterthought. The evolutionary nature of rear area operations must be recognized and dealt with. The commander and his staff must envision the ultimate organization, structure, and resources necessary to conduct a given operation and then conduct reverse planning to support that vision. Simply put, they must "begin with the end in mind."



>Note: This is an example of how one Marine Corps component commander and his subordinate MAGTF commander delineated the rear area functions based on METT-T. The ComMarFor appointed a Marine rear area coordinator and established the MLC. He delineated the rear area functions between those agencies and his staff as depicted above. The MAGTF commander, however, designated a rear area commander and apportioned the rear area functions differently. There are no standard solutions. Commanders have the option to delineate the rear area functions as the situation dictates.

>>This article is part of a series of articles by the MSTP staff that addresses MAGTF operations and lessons learned. Readers may download copies of these articles on the MSTP web site <www.mstp.quantico.usmc.mil> under Publications/Team Positions.

Information Operations Planning: A Model For the Marine Air-Ground Task Force

by Maj James E. McGinley

When deciding how to operationalize information operations, the Marine Corps should start with the fundamentals—integrated planning and execution synchronized through the Marine Corps Planning Process.

The world is going through dynamic changes that will change the operational environment in which Marines will deploy and fight. These changes have been brought about by many factors.

The rapid advance of technology; the emergence of new adversaries; and the Marine Corps' increasing involvement in humanitarian, peace support, and peace enforcement missions are all contributing to a

new, and increasingly complex, expeditionary environment.

Information operations¹ (IO) is inherently suited to a broad range of expeditionary operations due to its lethal and non-lethal aspects,

ability to project force or influence, ability to provide a tailored response to a specific mission or crisis environment, and its ability to help shape the end state for crisis termination. IO can readily shift in focus and can increase or decrease in intensity to support emerging circumstances. Scalability to enable crisis management, the ability to enhance economy of force operations, and the ability to project force and/or influence as the situation dictates are all aspects of IO that reinforce the Marine Corps' ability to project and sustain decisive military power and influence. Consideration of IO must be made within the way Marines plan operations.

The Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP) is the basis for all Marine Corps operational planning, and IO planning must be synchronized with the overall planning effort. The MCP is a sequential and logical problem-solving method. Its tenets of top-down planning, the single battle concept, and integrated planning are derived from maneuver warfare. The MCP is applicable across the full range of military operations and is designed for use at any echelon of command.

Not a warfighting function itself, IO serves as a force multiplier when integrated with the warfighting functions of command and control (C²), maneuver, fires, intelligence, logistics, and force protection through the application of the MCP.

IO is a combination of offensive, defensive, and informational activities that are integrated and concurrently planned. Effective IO planning requires a framework that focuses the staff, ensuring a plan that supports the commander's concept of operations by integrating the elements of IO into a coherent, synchronized plan. In a sense, defensive IO is the shield that protects our own information, systems, and decision processes, while offensive IO is the sword used to attack the adversary.

However, the full scope of IO is broader than the concepts of attack and defense. IO also includes those

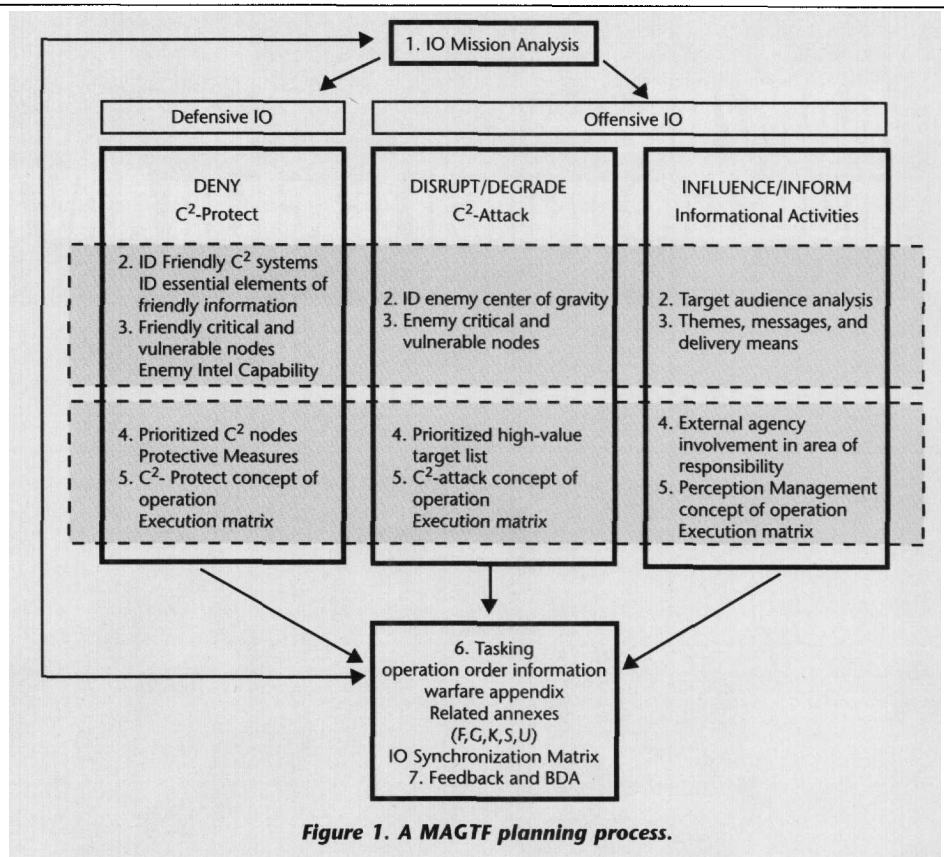


Figure 1. A MAGTF planning process.

actions taken to provide information and to influence selected groups and decisionmakers. So, it is also necessary to include the integration of informational activities within IO. These informational activities achieve the broad synchronization of truth projection (public affairs), operations security, cover and deception, civil affair activities (including civil information), and psychological operations (PsyOps). Management of informational activities may be a key contributor to Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) shaping efforts and may have increased relevance during mili-

tion and planning efficiency are achieved by conducting analysis simultaneously across the functional areas of IO. For example, nodal analysis is conducted simultaneously to determine key friendly nodes (for C² protect), key enemy nodes (for C² attack), and key target audiences (to guide MAGTF informational activities). Then, each node (or center of gravity) is subsequently prioritized (according to commander's guidance), has specific IO measures (proposed tasks) placed against it, and is coordinated within the MAGTF concept of operations (reviewed by IO cell, if established, and the operations planning team). IO tasks and guidance form the basis for the IO-related operations order sections. The establishment of feedback mechanisms and the battle damage assessment (BDA) cycle permit the ongoing evaluation of operational effects.

The underlying processes are twofold. First, all IO elements are logically analyzed to arrive at an executable course of action within the framework of mission planning. And, second, IO feedback mecha-

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tary operations other than war. A disciplined IO planning process, conducted within the MCP, helps keep IO planning in step with the overall planning effort. It ensures targets, tasks, themes, and measures are logically derived. (See Figure 1.) Mission and intelligence analysis are essential to IO planning. Integra-

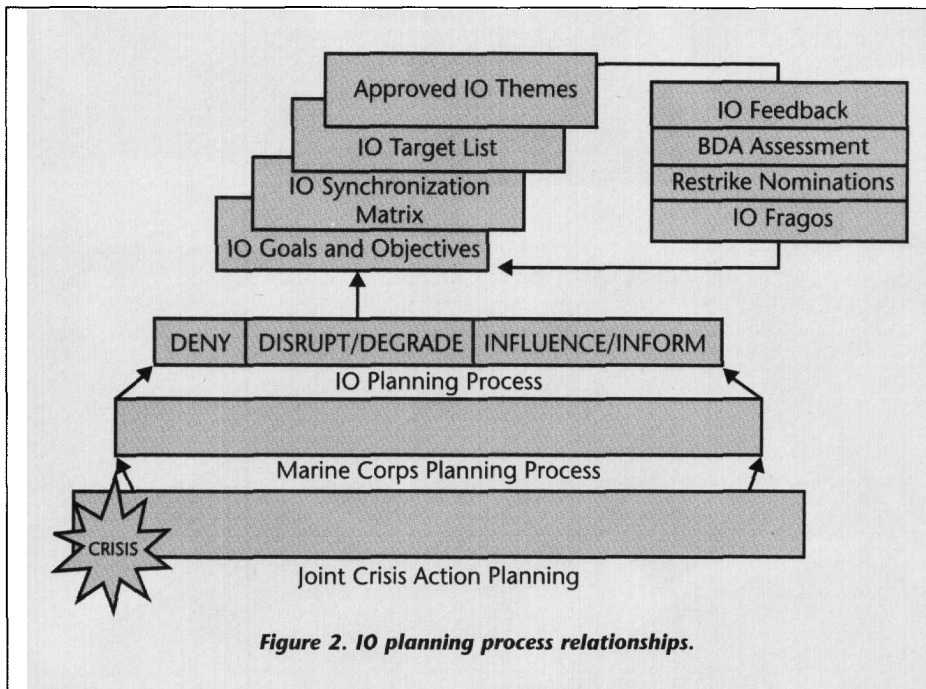


Figure 2. IO planning process relationships.

nisms are put in place to create a repeatable loop of action or sustainable IO process.

A rigorous IO planning process is essential in achieving the integration of IO within the scope of the MCPP. An IO planning process, through offensive, defensive, and informational planning, enables the MAGTF to develop the essential building blocks of:

- Stated IO goals and objectives.
- An IO synchronization matrix (that links mutually supporting IO actions).
- An integrated, effects-based IO target list.
- Approved messages and themes to guide informational activities. (See Figure 2.)

These building blocks provide the essential elements for integrating IO planning. As the operational plan moves into execution, the MAGTF will be challenged to monitor the execution of the IO plan and develop changes consistent with evolving conditions.

Sustained IO is influenced by the MAGTF operations battle rhythm, the targeting cycle, the BDA cycle, and the intelligence cycle. Taken together, these processes allow the MAGTF to gather information and analyze feedback (intelligence cycle), assess the functional capability (or destruction) of enemy centers of gravity and their supporting nodes (BDA cycle), reattack as necessary to maintain

suppression of enemy C² and other centers of gravity (targeting cycle), and modify and issue changes to ongoing plans (operations battle rhythm). These cycles determine the IO battle rhythm of the MAGTF IO cell. The transition from IO plan to IO battle rhythm is illustrated in Figure 3.

In the face of a dynamic and ever-changing world, the Marine Corps may find its ability to confront new changes is partially founded in its heritage as expeditionary planners. The ability to integrate combat power in order to resolve crises and win in conflict is inherent in Marine Corps organization and the expeditionary mindset

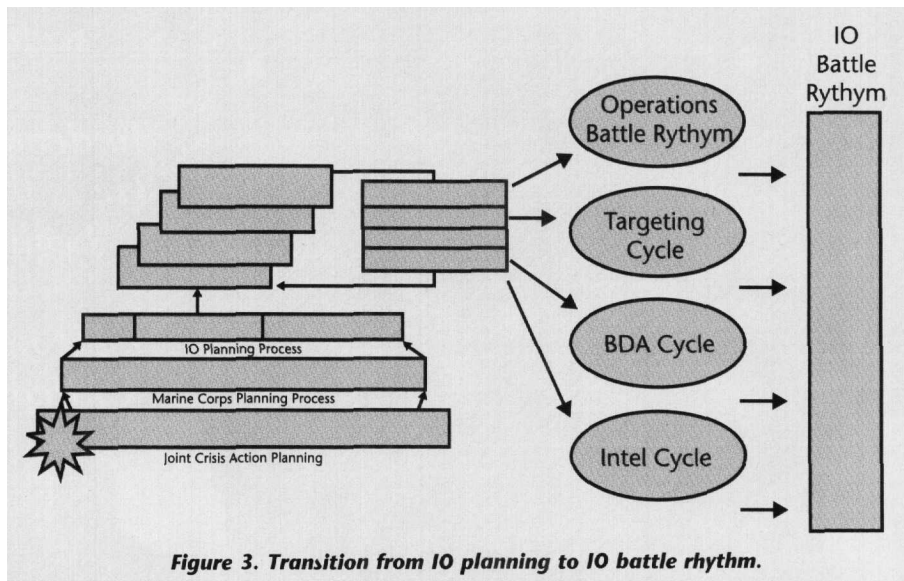


Figure 3. Transition from IO planning to IO battle rhythm.

of the individual Marine. Integration of capabilities within a unified plan is a part of how Marines fight. The operationalization of IO must build upon that foundation.

Note

1. Joint Publication 3-13, Joint Doctrine for Information Operations, defines IO as actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems. It lists major IO capabilities as operations security, PsyOps, military deception, electronic warfare, physical attack/destruction, and possibly including computer network attack. Public affairs and civil affairs are listed as IO-related activities.



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