

Battalion/Task Force Targeting and the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) in the Information Operations (IO) Environment

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CPT Smith, Commander C/1-11 IN, arrives in Vares to talk with the local leaders about the return of Croatians to the town. He discovers the brigade commander, two civil affairs (CA) teams, and a force protection team have already visited the mayor and police chief and communicated very different messages than the one he is ready to deliver. CPT Smith was already upset because his convoy was delayed 45 minutes getting out of the gate at Base Camp Demi. He did not even know these other SFOR missions were occurring inside of his area of responsibility, let alone the conflicting messages delivered. CPT Smith turns to the patrol leader in disgust, "We're working against each other here. Who is dreaming this stuff up?"

The success or failure of missions executed in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the mission rehearsal exercises (MRE) conducted at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) in large part falls on the battalion/task force battle staff's ability to conduct an Information Operations (IO) synchronization (synch) meeting. The IO synch meeting is similar in concept to a conventional targeting meeting. With the mention of IO though, units tend to forget the basics of the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP). Regardless of information operations involvement, the MDMP still remains the cornerstone for units to produce and supervise their plan. This article discusses the differences and similarities, and also offers some tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) for use in planning IO at the battalion/task force (BN/TF) level. A well-trained battle staff in the IO environment combines the decide, detect, deliver, and assess (D³A) methodology and the MDMP in producing sound orders to its subordinate units.

Differences. There are four major differences between the conventional and IO targeting processes. IO targets are soft targets, usually personnel. The conventional, or hard, targets are categorized into target sets in our targeting doctrine: command, control, communication (C³), fire support, maneuver, ADA, engineer, RSTA, REC, nuclear/chemical, Class III POL, Class V Ammunition, Class IX maintenance, lift, and lines of communication (LOC¹). IO target sets are derived from information campaign plans. In Bosnia, the SFOR Information Campaign Plan "was built on eight pillars: (an acronym guide is at the end of this article).

- Secure environment.
- Demining.
- Economic recovery.
- Displaced persons, refugees, and evacuees, (DPRE).
- Election results acceptance.
- The role of police in a democracy.
- Arms control.
- Common institutions supported by the Dayton Peace Accords."²

Figure 1 summarizes these eight pillars. The IO target sets will change with every operation's IO campaign plan. In conjunction with the IO target sets, SFOR publishes the IO themes and messages because of the strategic impact of the messages. The battalion staff may request additions or modifications for approval. The target set is important at the battalion level; however, when deciding on the actual high payoff targets (HPT), the person receiving the IO message is the most important step for the battalion staff. The Decide function of D³A Methodology is complete once the HPT, the IO effect, and the priority are determined.

Proposed Bosnian Target Sets

IO Pillars	Target Set	Typical HPT
Secure Environment	Force Protection	UXO, Celebratory fire, riots, sniper, laser pointer incidents
Demining	Demining	MF 1234
Economic Recovery	Economic Recovery	Local business leaders, Elected officials
DPRE	DPRE/Resettlement	Mayor, Police Chief, UNHCR, IOs, NGOs, and PVOs
Election Results Acceptance	Elections/Seating of Government	OHC, Local populace, Police Chief
Role of Police in a Democracy	Extremist/Criminal Activity	IPTF, Police Chief, Mayor
Arms Control	Compliance/Steady State Train & Equip Program	Entity Armed Forces (EAF) CDRs, WSS, TA
Common Institutions supported by the Dayton Peace Accords		

Figure 1

Targeting objectives and effects also differ. Targeting objectives for both conventional and IO are listed in FM 6-20-10: limit, disrupt, delay, divert, destroy, and damage.³ Each objective is defined differently depending on conventional or IO targeting (Figure 2). The effects are very different (Figure 3). The battle staff must understand these differences.

Targeting Objectives⁴

CONVENTIONAL	OBJECTIVE	INFORMATION OPERATIONS
Reduce Options of Courses of Action	LIMIT	Minimize Influence
Preclude Effectiveness	DISRUPT	Reduce Effectiveness
Alter Time of Arrival	DELAY	Hinder Decisionmaking
Tie up Critical Assets	DIVERT	Gain Cooperation
Ruin Target Structure	DESTROY	Physical Destruction
Unknown/Subjective	DAMAGE	Unknown/Subjective

Figure 2

Targeting Effects⁵

CONVENTIONAL		INFORMATION OPERATIONS	
EFFECT	CRITERIA	EFFECT	DESCRIPTION

Harass	Disturb, curtail	Inform	Provide information to counter misinformation
		Warn	Provide notice of intent to prevent specification
		Influence	Curtail or cause specification
Suppress	Degrade performance (specified period of time)	Disorganize	Reduce effectiveness or ability
		Isolate	Minimize power or influence
Neutralize	Render ineffective (10- to 29-percent destruction)	Co-opt	Gain Cooperation
Destroy	Physically render combat ineffective (30 percent or greater)	Deceive	Mislead to induce a reaction

Figure 3

A third difference is that the detect, deliver, and assess assets are unique. Figure 4 shows an example of some IO detect, deliver, and assess assets. Additionally, the assessment of the IO "attack" may not be as immediate as it often is on the conventional battlefield. It is relatively easy to quickly determine whether the mortar tube and crew on the conventional battlefield are destroyed after attacking it. IO assessment is not as clear-cut. More often than not, another designated asset must be sent later to determine whether the IO effect was achieved and to what extent. An example of this is how a commander's radio talk show broadcast at night will not be able to be assessed until the next morning or sometimes not even until weeks later; an assessment prior to this would be premature. The BN/TF staff must task a subordinate unit to detect, deliver, and assess the same way they do on the conventional battlefield. Every soldier can contribute to the IO effort because of his interaction with the civilian population, whether on or off the base camp. Inherent to this notion is all soldiers knowing the IO themes and messages. The battle staff must develop debriefing techniques to collect feedback from every soldier.

Detect, Deliver, and Assess Assets

ASSET	DETECT	DELIVER	ASSESS
MI CO Assets (GSS, UAV)	X		X
CA Tm	X	X	X
IOs, NGOs and PVOs	X	X	X
IPTF	X	X	X
Local authorities	X	X	X
PSYOP Tm	X		X
Leaflet Drop		X	
Print Operations		X	
Scouts	X		X
OPs	X		X

Checkpoints	X	X	X
Personal Security Det	X		
Infantry PLT (Presence Patrols)	X	X	X
WSS Inspection	X	X	X
EAF Training and Movement	X	X	X
Light QRF		X	X
Heavy QRF		X	X
Force Protection (C/I) Tm	X	X	X
Bilat Meeting	X	X	X
JMC Meeting	X	X	X
ENG PLT	X	X	X
Demining	X	X	X
ATK AVN	X	X	X
DIV QRF		X	X
Joint Patrol	X	X	X
MSU Patrol	X	X	X
PAO	X	X	X
Radio Talk Show		X	
Local Newspaper		X	
Local TV		X	

Figure 4

The fourth and final difference in this process is the information recorded during the targeting meeting and disseminated to subordinate units. This can be best accomplished by slightly modifying the Target Synchronization Matrix found in Appendix C, FM 6-20-10. See Figure 6 for one example of an IO Synchronization Matrix. This is simply done by adding several columns to the doctrinal TSM found in FM 6-20-10. These additional columns allow the company commander to write his mission statement in the task and purpose format. Tasks that will achieve the purpose and effect for a specific HPT fall out of the deliver phase.

Similarities. IO and conventional targeting are similar in many ways. A summary of the similarities is listed below:

- (1) The D³A Methodology.
- (2) Preparation for the IO meeting is just as important as for preparation for a conventional targeting meeting.
- (3) The commander's role in the IO synch meeting.
- (4) The need to issue an order and supervise the plan.

The D³A Methodology is how the commander focuses his limited assets on the HPTs. D³A Methodology works for IO planning because the uncertain nature of the missions requires effective targeting and constant assessment of the HPTs. Different IO delivery assets are more appropriate than others. On the conventional battlefield, attacking T80 tanks with mortar rounds will not achieve the desired effect. The battle staff must choose the most effective asset to accomplish the mission assigned. This holds true on both the IO and conventional battlefields. The D³A Methodology helps the battalion in focusing on the most critical HPTs during the time targeted and making the most of the assets available to the BN/TF.

Preparation for the IO meeting by the staff mirrors the preparation for a conventional targeting meeting. The XO runs the meeting attended by the S-2, S-3, FSO, JMCO, CA, S-5, PSYOPs, ENG, PAO, and SJA. This is by no means an all-encompassing list; some units may prefer to bring company commanders and specialty platoon leaders also. First, the XO establishes the targeted period, which should mirror brigade's targeted period. Specified and implied tasks are determined from the brigade's IO Synch Matrix and FRAGO. At a minimum, the S-2, S-3, FSO, and JMCO develop a recommended HPTL including the HPT, the IO effect, and priority. This recommended HPTL is placed onto a blown-up graphical representation of the IO Synch Matrix and placed in the meeting room. Additionally, the S-2 completes the detect columns for each recommended HPT. The information each staff member brings to the IO Meeting is found in Figure 5.

Staff Checklist for Preparation for IO Synch Meeting

	S2	S3	FSO & JMCO	OTHERS
Last Targeted Time Period	"BDA" on the HPTs	Combat losses	Problems at WSSs or w/EAF	
Current Time Period	EAF situation	Friendly situation		
	Status of R & S Plan	Changes to IOSM based on last 24		
Next Targeted Time Period	HVTs	BDE & DIV Guidance	Proposed HPTL and locations	Slice HHQ directives
	EAF Event Temp including NAIs	HHQ planned operations in AOR	Status of FS and JMC assets	Status of assets available
	Proposed PIR	Changes to Task Org	Pre-inspection, inspections of WSSs	Capabilities and limitations of like EAF assets
	Proposed R & S Plan	Status of subordinate units	Bilats or JMC Meetings	Capabilities and limitations of friendly assets
		Maneuver assets available	EAF training requests	
		Changes to CDR's Intent	Interpreters available & ethnic background	

Figure 5

The commander's role in targeting, whether conventional or IO, is absolutely critical. He does not need to attend the entire meeting, but attending the first 15 minutes is time well spent. In the first 15 minutes, the commander is briefed by the S-2 on the "BDA" from last targeted period and his estimate for the next targeted period. The S-3

briefs changes to the current and future operations. At this point, the commander approves or makes changes to the recommended HPTL and PIR. He also issues guidance and his intent. The staff is now prepared to finish developing the course of action. If the commander cannot be present, he must give his guidance prior to the IO Synch Meeting to the XO, S-2, S-3, FSO, and JMCO.

The last similarity and the last step of troop-leading procedures is to supervise and rehearse. The battalion staff accomplishes this in IO by the same techniques it uses on the conventional battlefield. The battle rhythm dictates when these briefings occur. During the mission rehearsal exercises (MRE), the daily battlefield update brief (BUB) is the technique used one time every day to gather the entire battalion's leadership. This drives the staff to target at least 48 hours in advance. During the BUB, the two days from now (D+2) FRAGO is briefed, and company commanders give a confirmation brief at the conclusion of the meeting. The following evening, D+1, the company commanders give a very detailed back brief for the following day's operation. The backbrief constitutes a rehearsal, although for more complex operations, a full or reduced force rehearsal might be preferred. In Bosnia, targeting is done once or twice a week which changes this battle rhythm.

Units tend to forget the MDMP and targeting process once the term IO is mentioned. Not using D³A methodology and MDMP causes the staff to struggle with the process. Once they figure the process out, then the company commander's begin to struggle with their piece. The basics, MDMP and troop-leading procedures, ensure successful execution whether or not the operation is conventional or IO oriented. Train the battle staff at home station to develop process proficiency.

TTPs. Based on Observer/Controller observations during MREs, the following problems created confusion in the targeting process. Some BN/TF staff TTPs that may be useful are:

- Use blown-up graphic representation products and a mapboard during the IO Synch Meeting.
- Be specific in each block of the IO Synch Matrix.
- Use the Task, Purpose, Method, and Effects technique for writing the IO paragraph in the base OPORD or FRAGO.
- War-game the COA developed in the IO Synch Meeting.

Units are not using a blown-up graphic representation of products which permits visualization by all staff planners to contribute to the planning process. The lack of these products allows more opportunity for the meeting to lose its focus. During the MRE, units need to have at least four blown-up IO Synch Matrices. The first one is the last 24 hours (D-1), second is the current targeted period (D-Day), third is the next 24 hours (D+1), and a fourth is the next 48 hours (D+2). These products double as planning tools for future operations as well as battletracking tools for current operations. In addition to a blown-up-sized IO Synch Matrix, units tend not to use a mapboard while completing the IO Synch Matrix. This creates several problems: a lack of common visualization of the IO battlefield and potential discrepancies between the various staff members, i.e., the S-2 and JMCO having two different locations for the same event. The mapboard assists the staff in planning, whether or not the planning is conventional or IO oriented. Other ideas to consider are blowing up and posting the IO themes and messages for easy reference during the meeting. Portray assets available on a chart using removable platoon and specialty team icon "stickies." Once committed, place the icons on the mapboard so the staff does not overtask units beyond their capabilities.

The IO Synch Matrix is a great planning and execution tool. However, if it is not detailed, then filling out the matrix is a waste of time. For subordinate units to execute successfully, the IO Synch Matrix must be very detailed. A technique is to work on one HPT at a time. Start with the HPTL and detect columns and then finish filling out the deliver and assess columns. Once complete, move to the next HPT. This technique allows the staff to use the best available assets for the most important HPTs. The matrix, when filled out properly, provides the subordinate units a task with a purpose, when, where, and with what assets allocated to achieve the task. Once a company commander is educated on how to read this matrix, he is armed with enough information to derive task and purpose and initiate his troop-leading procedures. If the matrix is posted in the current operations portion of the TOC, then the battle captain can use the matrix to determine whether or not the subordinates are executing in accordance with the BN operations order (OPORD). Figure 6 shows an example of a detailed IO Synch Matrix.

The third TTP offered is also borrowed from fire support TTPs. The fires paragraph written in the battalion order uses the task, purpose, method, effect method. Write the IO paragraph in much the same way the Fires paragraph is written. The only changes between the fires and IO paragraphs are terminology. For further explanation of the

fires paragraph, see the Fort Sill, OK, White Paper "Fire Support Planning for the Brigade and Below."⁶

A completed IO Synch Matrix is a developed a course of action. Many units stop the planning process here and go straight into orders production. **FM 101-5, Staff Organization and Operations**, directs staffs to conduct course-of-action (COA) analysis, more commonly known as a wargame, after the COA development.⁷ IO wargaming is every bit as essential to attaining synchronized operations as it is on the conventional battlefield. A possible TTP to synchronize the plan is using the box method to war-game the developed COA from the targeting meeting. During the synch meeting when a unit is committed to a mission in a given area, the icon for the unit is placed on the area where it will go. After the meeting, the staff convenes the wargame using the action, reaction, counter-action drill to synchronize the fight in each location. In the IO battlefield, the S2 cannot play the "enemy" all by himself; he needs the expert assistance of the CA, CI, and PSYOP staff officers to portray how the entities and local populace will react.

Four examples illustrate the importance of the wargame. First, the patrol assigned the number one HPT should probably have priority leaving the base camp. Too often a backlog exists at the front gate as every unit tries to leave simultaneously. This backlog is created by the staff by not establishing start point (SP) for patrols leaving that day. Second, the rules of engagement (ROE) in Bosnia are very restrictive; therefore, the battalion's planned responses to branches and sequels presented by the EAF are critical to determine in the wargame. These responses are coined graduated responses and often involve employment of an internal QRF or higher headquarters asset, such as attack aviation. Third, the CSS planner does not know the heavy QRF had a be-prepared or on-order mission and, therefore, needs both Classes III and V to execute that task. The medical platoon leader or the signal officer, as well, rarely does the necessary staff work to set the companies up for success in their specific areas. The fourth example results from the staff not war-gaming the targeted time period: five different elements from the same BN/TF see the same HPT in the same day. Most of the HPTs are important local officials who have many duties and responsibilities to accomplish and cannot get their work done if SFOR ties up their time with unscheduled appointments. Units need to war-game to synchronize their "fight" in time and space. A synchronized fight sets the conditions for an overall successful operation.

Information Operations at the BN/TF level is not difficult. IO is really targeting with new terminology. IO planned in conjunction with D³A methodology works very well. Some minor differences exist; however, the differences do not need to take units away from the basics of MDMP, troop-leading procedures, and D³A methodology. The goal of the IO process is focusing the limited assets available to the BN/TF commander when, where, why, and on who the commander and higher headquarters want targeted. Once synchronized, the staff can give the companies a complete order. The staff must supervise its plan by listening to backbriefs and participating in rehearsals. Lastly, the staff monitors the current fight and assists the company commanders, as needed, while they execute the battalion commander's intent. The IO terminology does not mean we need to reinvent the wheel. Units that use the MDMP and the D³A methodology will be successful on the IO battlefield.

ACRONYMS

Bilat meeting	meeting between SFOR and one of the EAF
EAF	Entity Armed Forces, two sides VRS (Serbian) and VF (Bosniac and Croatian)
IO	information operations
IOSM	Information Operations Synch Matrix
IPTF	international police task force
JMC	Joint Military Commission
JMC meeting	meeting between SFOR and two or more of the EAF
JMCO	Joint Military Commission Officer
MF1234	minefield number
NGO	non-governmental organization

OHC Office of High Commissioner
 PVO private voluntary organization
 TA training area
 UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
 UXO unexploded ordnance
 WSS weapon storage site

INFORMATION OPERATIONS SYNCHRONIZATION MATRIX												
UNIT: T F 1-11	PHASE: III	OPORD: 99-6	FRAGO: 17	EFF. TIME PERIOD: 170700 - 180659			AS OF: 151200	PG 1 OF 1 PAGE S				
DECIDE			DETECT				DELIVER			ASSESS		
Priority	Category	HPT	Location	NAI/TAI/ PIR	Agency	Asset	When	Agency	Asset	Effect	Asset	When
1	DPRE	Vares Mayor	Mayor's office	1	C/1-11	CA, INT	1100	C/1-11	Joint Patrol	Influence	FPT	180930
Theme: TF 1-11 will monitor your activities to ensure Croat Family Returns is completed IAW with the GFAP.												
2	DPRE	Vares Population	Vares Radio Station	1	PAO	INT	1900	C/1-11	CDR Radio Talk Show	Co-opt	FPT	181030
Theme: Supporting the Croat Family Returns is the best way to bring prosperity to Vares.												
3	Compliance/ Steady State	LTC Drago	Base Camp Demi	2	JMC	INT	1030	TF CDR	Bilat	Co-opt	B/1-11	181000
Theme: His compliance with the GFAP is expected to continue by assisting in the closure of WSS NB415.												
4	Extremist/ Criminal Activity	Illegal Checkpoint	452319	3	Scouts	INT	0800-2000	LT QRF (mortar PLT)	IPTF	Influence	LT QRF	0800-2000
Theme: SFOR supports the GFAP. Illegal checkpoints hinder freedom of movement to the Bosnian civilians.												
5	Force Protection	Kladanj Police Chief	Chief's office	4	B/1-11	INT	1045	B/1-11	PP/FTF	Warn	Gate Guards	2000-0500
Theme: Celebratory fires in support of upcoming Muslim holidays are not acceptable in the vicinity of Base Camp Demi.												
6	Elections/ Seating Govt	Kladanj Population	502287	5	B/1-11	OP	0630-1700	B/1-11	Hasty CP % HVY QRF	Dis-organize	B/1-11	0630-1700
Theme: SFOR supports the GFAP; part of the GFAP is seating the legitimate government in Srebrenica. Kladanj people don't need to interfere w/the reseating.												

Figure 6

Endnotes:

1. U.S. Department of the Army, **FM 6-20-10, *Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Targeting***, 8 May 1996, p A-11 and A-12. Hereafter cited as FM 6-20-10.
 2. **Center for Army Lessons Learned Newsletter No. 99-2, *Task Force Eagle Information Operations***, Fort Leavenworth, KS: CALL, Jan 99, p. 8. Hereafter cited as CALL 99-2.
 3. FM 6-20-10, p 1-2.
 4. CALL 99-2, p. 74.
 5. CALL 99-2, p. 76.
 6. U.S. Army Field Artillery School, White Paper, "Fire Support Planning for the Brigade and Below," 12 May 1998.
 7. U.S. Department of the Army, **FM 101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations***, May 1997, pp 5-4, 5-30 and 5-31.
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