

# NEWS FROM THE CTC

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# Leveraging Information at the Brigade Level

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Information related capabilities (IRCs) such as military deception, civil affairs, electronic warfare, or cyber operations can be effectively exercised during phase III operations at the brigade (BDE) level. Successfully integrating IRCs improves BDE operations during all phases. Units have varying degrees of success in leveraging information for phase III. Here are trends Observer, Coach, Trainers (OC/Ts) at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) observed from U.S. and NATO Allies and partners as they executed decisive action (DATE) rotations.

#1. Synchronization of BDE IRCs does not occur at any BDE battle rhythm event; which limits IRC input to BDE targeting processes and operations synchronization.

- The information operations working group (IOWG) exists informally (or not at all) with no expected outputs for BDE targeting or intelligence synchronization.
- IRC is not given input to BDE products such as decision support matrices or intelligence requirements. This minimizes IRC ability to provide meaningful input to phase III operations.
- A well-planned IOWG serves to give BDE guidance to information enablers and receive information from the field. This enables units to deftly maneuver through daily changes that occur in the operational environment.

#2. Units sometimes fail to leverage partner forces for intelligence preparation of the battlefield or for information-gathering during the fight.

- Mandates and missions of partner forces on the battlefield are not fully understood by the rotational unit. A conversation between partner forces and unit representatives will shed light on how (or "if") a partner element can facilitate BDE operations.
- Some Useful information some partners are privy to on the battlefield (through local police, local leadership, or other key civilian agencies) is not utilized which leaves gaps in early BDE military decision making process (MDMP) and missing opportunities for efficient consolidation of future gains the unit achieves.
- Once partner forces have connected with the unit, information they provide has no venue to enter the BDE intelligence apparatus to be analyzed. The civ-mil operations center (CMOC) is ideal as a clearinghouse for this information, but it should be tied into BDE intelligence.

#3. Tactical deception principles are considered by the BDE, but the full range of IRCs at BDE disposal are not leveraged to achieve tactical effects over opposing forces (OPFOR).

- Operational planners are keen to use tactical deception to gain leverage over JMRC's experienced OPFOR. Tactical deception is seen as a "PSYOP-speaker job" without leveraging the host of information capabilities (CA, PAO, PSYOP, EWO, et al) which make tactical deception effective.
- Presence and posture of tactical maneuver units are not brought into deception planning which cause planning to "die on the vine." BDE planners should account for combat power needed, and gain buy-in from its owners during initial planning.

#4. Units sometimes fail to protect information in operational planning and lose key information to OPFOR during battle.

- Rotational Training Unit (RTU) Soldiers are not effectively trained for social engineering attacks on the exercise social media available at JMRC. OPFOR is often able to steal vast amounts of key information important to BDE operations.
- Operational Security (OPSEC), information assurance (IA), and general awareness of information protection are key topics that units can train Soldiers to mitigate this type of attack. Units can find creative ways (not with canned IA briefs) to effectively train Soldiers to connect their everyday social media skills with enemy challenges.

#5. Civil affairs (CA) operations are not leveraged to produce updates to the BDE common operational picture.

- CMOCs are stationary in towns in the rear of the fight without moving forward as the forward-line-of-troops (FLOT) moves. This allows the BDE to prepare for future stability operations, but makes it difficult to gain timely civil information that units could use near the front lines.
- BDEs fail to give guidance to CA teams on BDE operations and intelligence requirements, with the result that teams are not sure what information they are looking for. This relegates the teams to "listening to townspeople's problems" rather than leveraging civilians for operations and gleaning useful civil information.

#6. Psychological Operations enablers produce outstanding product on their own, but do not integrate it into BDE operations

- Talented PSYOP technicians produce excellent product but fail to be plugged into BDE combat operations; this keeps PSYOP product reactive and unable to be used effectively in on-going operations.
- Products produced by PSYOP units is not assessed in any manner which negates its usefulness to the unit. To properly assess PSYOP product, the BDE should coordinate planning with PSYOP professionals from cradle-to-grave of any product.

#7. Commander's narrative does not tie into operations. In other words, unit deeds do not match the narrative.

- Commanders will often produce messages and form a narrative (mission command) for the unit with the local people; including holding press conferences and meeting with local authorities.
- Public affairs and information staff fail to leverage this powerful tool for operational advantage, either to tie messaging into operations or to detect and negate effects of enemy misinformation.

#8. NATO Allies and partners struggle to incorporate IRC synchronization into operational planning considerations.

- Some NATO Allies and partners are unfamiliar with incorporating information-warfare processes at the BDE level, or synchronizing them at the BDE to achieve effects. Units struggle to grasp U.S. CA, PSYOP, IO, and JIIM enablers, and incorporate them into operational planning at the BDE level.
- Often, NATO Allies and partners are willing to work with enablers at JMRC, and we see a high degree of improvement from first to last day of rotations. When any unit is willing to include an S2 or S3 representative at an IOWG, this sets the stage for successfully integrating these capabilities into operations.

In sum, in the absence of an information operations officer, brigades can assign a staff member for information operations synchronization (a 131A targeting officer has been successful here at JMRC). This officer can provide a venue (IOWG) where information enablers synch their processes with operations, become enablers for BDE PH III operations, and set the stage for PH IV planning by consolidating gains the BDE achieves in the short term.