



Allied Joint Doctrine for Information Operations



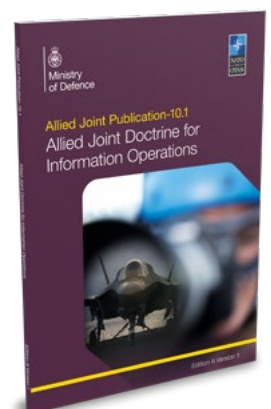
Nations are in constant competition to influence people and elicit support for their way of thinking. Winning this competition depends on the ability to understand different audiences and their likely reaction to the actions, images and words that result from the conduct of military operations. **The central idea of current UK and NATO doctrine is to design all our activities around influencing attitudes and behaviours.** Allied Joint Publication (AJP)-10.1, *Allied Joint Doctrine for Information Operations* is now published with UK national elements and sits at the very centre of this thinking. With considered application, this doctrine can enable us to transform how we think about, plan and execute military operations to deliver the outcomes we seek.

What is meant by information operations? Information operations (Info Ops) is a headquarters' analysis and planning activity that coordinates information activities at the operational level. Info Ops provides understanding of the information environment¹ using a methodology called the 'information environment assessment' (IEA) that involves conducting analysis on the audiences involved. This analysis can then be fed into the campaign design so that objectives are achieved by influencing key audiences to change or maintain their attitudes and behaviours. The process also assesses the effectiveness of our actions on the information environment.

How does it fit with strategic communications? In NATO operations, Info Ops is nested within strategic communications (StratCom). The StratCom function itself is new; NATO Joint Force Commands have recently started to adopt a new branch to deliver StratCom: the J10-StratCom branch. Under StratCom, the Info Ops staff deal with the coordination and integration of information activities. Info Ops comprises two key communication capabilities: military public affairs (or media operations, as the UK refers to it) and psychological operations.

In a headquarters, the staff involved in Info Ops provide the integration of direction and guidance emanating from the StratCom branch. This includes creating plans that are bound together by a narrative. **Central to these plans is analysis of the information environment, the primary purpose of which is to create cognitive effects.** The UK has not yet created StratCom branches;

¹ Information environment is defined as: an environment comprised of the information itself, the individuals, organizations and systems that receive, process and convey the information, and the cognitive, virtual and physical space in which this occurs. (NATO Agreed)



in Defence, the StratCom direction and guidance flows from central government into the Military Strategic Effects branch at the Ministry of Defence and from there down to the operational level.

What are the information operations outputs? The Info Ops process consists of four steps: analyse the information environment; plan; integrate all activities that have communicative effect; and assess their impact. The Info Ops staff provide the commander with six outputs: the IEA; Info Ops planning; information activities synchronisation and integration; strategic engagement; contribution to joint targeting; and countering hostile information activities.

Conclusion. Understanding and influencing audiences is central to all operations. The Info Ops staff generate that understanding using the IEA; they also continuously assess the impact of activities on the information environment. Info Ops is indispensable in the pursuit of creating behavioural change in audiences and is relevant at all levels, throughout the continuum of competition.²

² The continuum of competition is a model used by UK and NATO to describe international competition. See JDP 0-01, *UK Defence Doctrine*, Chapter 1, Section 3.

Want to read more?

The full edition of AJP-10.1 is designed to be a simple and concise explanation of information operations, and it is written at the OFFICIAL classification to be accessible to the widest possible audience. It should be of value to joint commanders and staffs, the single Services, the broader defence community and other government departments, as well as UK partners and allies.



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