NORTH ATLANTIC MILITARY COMMITTEE

COMITE MILITAIRE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD

*2o* July 2012          MC 0422/4 (Military Decision)

SECRETARY GENERAL, NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**MILITARY DECISION ON MC 0422/4**

**NATO MILITARY POLICY ON INFORMATION OPERATIONS**

1.     On 19 Jul 2012 the Military Committee endorsed MC 0422/4, NATO Military Policy on Information Operations, a copy of which is attached at enclosure. MC 0422/4 is forwarded to the North Atlantic Council for their consideration and approval.

2.     This document clears IMSWM-0118-2012, 09 May 2012 and all SDs thereto.

**FOR THE MILITARY COMMITTEE**

For J. BORNEMANN
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<u>Enclosure</u>
1.     MC 0422/4, NATO Military Policy on Information Operations

<u>Copy To</u>     SDL Z, IS/OPS, IS/DPP, IS/PDD
<u>Action Officers</u>   LTC P. Brooks, OPS (5674); COL T. Lorber, OPS (5553)

IMS Control Nr: O12002525

# MC 0422/4

# NATO MILITARY POLICY ON INFORMATION OPERATIONS

## NATO MILITARY POLICY ON INFORMATION OPERATIONS

### References

A.      PO(2009)0141, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, 29 Sep 2009
B.      MC 0133/4 (Final), NATO's Operations Planning, 07 Jan 2011
C.      MCM-0164-2009, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, 29 Sep 2009
D.      MCM-0085-2010 (Revised), Military Concept for NATO Strategic Communications, 11 Aug 2010
E.      MC 0457/2 (Final), NATO Military Policy on Public Affairs, 08 Feb 2011
F.      PO(2011)0045, Updated List of Tasks for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Approach Action Plan and the Lisbon Summit Decisions on the Comprehensive Approach, 01 Mar 2011
G.      PO(2011)0141, Political Military Framework for Partner Involvement in NATO-Led Operations, 13 Apr 2011

### GENERAL

1.      The Information Environment (IE) comprises 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. This environment has seen significant changes in recent years. The importance of worldwide distributed information, the speed at which information is communicated, the role of social media and the reliability of information systems have created a situation in which no Alliance decision or action can be taken without considering its potential impact on the IE. The ubiquitous nature of information and the potential strategic ramifications of tactical actions add to the challenge faced by NATO Commanders. In this new IE it is more difficult to distinguish between the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The coordination, synchronisation and execution of information activities (IA)[1] that deliberately create desired effects in the IE is essential to the Alliance's successful functioning in peace, crisis and conflict.

2.      Info Ops is a staff function to analyze, plan, assess and integrate activities focused on the IE rather than a capability in its own right. As a staff function, Info Ops provides the Commander with an assessment of the IE and a mechanism to plan and coordinate Information Activities on a continuous basis to achieve Information Effects in support of operational objectives.

3.      At the Political-Military (Pol-Mil) level, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the Military Committee (MC), establish mission specific guidance, including StratCom guidance, to enable and maximize the effects of all information-related aspects of NATO's operations and activities. Throughout the full spectrum of operations, peace, crisis and conflict, the integration and implementation of IA at every level of command is essential to overall success. The early application of IA can save resources, improve force protection and the effectiveness and efficiency of military capabilities through the establishment of planning and targeting priorities, and de-confliction and synchronization of activities.

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[1] Information Activities (IA) are defined as actions designed to affect information and/or information systems. They can be performed by any actor and include protection measures.

4.     Info Ops integrates the employment of a range of capabilities, tools and techniques to conduct IA as well as protect Alliance decision-making process and capabilities from external influence.

5.     NATO IA are generally planned under the authority of the J5/Plans section and executed under the authority of J3/Operations sections.  However, they are part of the wider NATO StratCom effort which ensures coherence of all information and communication activities and capabilities, both civilian and military.

6.     The analysis of the IE by the Info Ops function is an integral part of the development of Military Response Options (MRO).  This analysis requires the exchange of insights with other disciplines (e.g. J2, KD, Military PA, CIMIC, etc.). The resulting assessment of the situation in the IE is the basis for the planning and execution of IA and serves as an additional input to the overall estimate of the situation provided by the J2.  These features should be included in MROs to enable effective Pol-Mil guidance for Info Ops from the MC and NAC.

**AIM**

7.     To state the NATO military policy for Info Ops.

**SCOPE**

8.     MC 0422 provides the military policy for the implementation of Info Ops within the Alliance structure at all levels. It provides direction to analyse and assess the IE and effectively plan, synchronise and evaluate activities, including task specific fires and manoeuvre, to create desired effects in this environment.  It specifically addresses the following aspects:

     a.     Definition.

     b.     Info Ops Framework.

     c.     Counter-Propaganda.

     d.     Intelligence and targeting.

     e.     Info Ops coordination/ synchronisation and key relationships.

     f.     Non-NATO Entities and Partner Involvement

     g.     Exercises and Training.

     h.     Responsibilities.

**DEFINITION**

9.     <u>Information Operations</u>.  Info Ops is a staff function to analyze, plan, assess and integrate Information Activities to create desired effects on the will,

understanding and capability of adversaries, potential adversaries and NAC approved audiences in support of Alliance mission objectives.

**INFO OPS FRAMEWORK**

10.     At the strategic level, the NAC and the MC provide guidance to SACEUR regarding IA including approved audiences and general themes through the Operational Planning Process (OPP) and StratCom guidance documents as described in References A and B.[2] Through SHAPE's Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD), NATO Info Ops transforms this guidance on operational and tactical levels in accordance with the Commander's operational objectives.

11.     NATO StratCom guidance enables the synchronization of all information and communication activities. NATO Info Ops support StratCom by planning effects and coordinating IA on the operational and tactical levels in accordance with the Commander's Operational Objectives. The synchronization of effects and messaging occurs through the regular conduct of coordination boards and working groups to ensure that the communication disciplines are effectively harmonized and mutually reinforcing.

12.     The focus of Info Ops is on preserving and protecting alliance activities in the IE at all times while addressing, during military operations, NAC approved audiences, whose effectiveness is a function of their will, understanding and capabilities. As part of the operational and tactical planning, Info Ops plans, coordinates IA to reinforce or affect changes in behaviour, influence the will, shape perceptions, improve or degrade capabilities, and affect information and information systems.

13.     Info Ops is comprised of three inter-related activity areas:

   a.     Preserve and protect Alliance freedom of manoeuvre in the IE at all times;

   b.     Induce, reinforce, influence, convince and encourage perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of NAC-approved audiences as part of NATO's military missions;

   c.     Counter adversary's propaganda as well as command functions and capabilities which support his opinion-forming and decision making processes.

14.     The execution of IA focused on affecting the perceptions, attitudes and behaviors as well as countering command functions take place within the framework of a MC and NAC approved OPLAN. However, IA focused on understanding the IE, building support for Alliance goals and objectives and protecting Alliance data and information systems occur on a daily basis and do not require additional NAC approval.

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[2] NATO StratCom is directed by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and Secretary General (SG) through the Assistant SG for Public Diplomacy as set out in Reference A.

15.     The effective execution of IA requires appropriate and collectable measures of effectiveness (MOE) to ensure desired information effects are achieved. Info Ops personnel will plan, synchronize and monitor these measures as an integral part of their role in planning and coordinating the execution of IA.

## COUNTER-PROPAGANDA

16.     Counter-Propaganda is a multidiscipline effort led and coordinated by Info Ops to analyse an adversary's counter command and propaganda activities, to develop approaches and synchronize actions to counter these as appropriate. NATO PSYOPS forces and assets, supported by other functions, take a lead role in the analysis of adversary's propaganda and support a variety of IA to counter it.

## INTELLIGENCE AND TARGETING

17.     Information Activities are based on a comprehensive and systemic understanding of the IE across the PMESII spectrum[3]. This includes all source intelligence from a wide variety of military and civilian sources, and the subsequent assessment of actors and audiences, their social context and bias, objectives, Centres of Gravity (COG), critical themes, capabilities, vulnerabilities, information systems and media.  The analysis and assessment of the IE is an integral part of the Info Ops function and should be continuously updated and refined to ensure that IA are applied to maximize their effect.

18.     Info Ops personnel are embedded in the planning and targeting process to identify where, early in the COA development and throughout the process, IA could be applied to achieve desired effects and ensure appropriate capabilities are matched against target sets.  Info Ops personnel also play a vital role in advising the commander and targeting team of the potential secondary and undesired effects of operations on the IE.

## CO-ORDINATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

19.     The analysis of the IE, as well as planning and coordination of IA must be initiated early and conducted continuously throughout an operation.  As part of this effort, it is essential that resources and capabilities are identified early in the planning process and provided in a timely manner, often prior to the deployment of military forces, to ensure NATO's ability to conduct effective IA.  The employment of IA should be seen as a continuum, in which their considered application throughout all phases of an operation will help to shape and define the conduct of the military mission.  Info Ops staff must be embedded within the operations, planning and targeting functions to ensure early and continuous coordination across the full spectrum of operations.

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[3] AJP-3 states that understanding the operational environment requires a comprehensive view of all factors and actors relevant to the crisis. Modern crises are characterized by complex combinations of historical, political, military social, cultural and economic issues. The operational environment can be initially viewed through the following six aspects: political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, and information commonly known as by the acronym PMESII.

20.    Strategic Communications.  In accordance with Reference C, NATO StratCom is a Pol-Mil process to ensure that NATO communications and information activities and disciplines are coherent, mutually reinforcing, and advances NATO's aims.[4]  It closes the gap between Alliance actions and messages.  IA have potential strategic level effects. For this reason IA, planned and conducted at all levels, must reinforce relevant StratCom objectives and the overall narrative.  In accordance with Reference D, Commanders at the operational and tactical level ensure through the Info Ops function that all military information activities are properly coordinated as well as integrated into the operational planning process and support the overall StratCom approach.

21.    NATO Military Public Affairs (Military PA).  Military PA and Info Ops are separate, but related functions.  Both directly support military objectives, counter adversary disinformation and deter adversary actions; however, Military PA is the commander's interface with the media and the public in accordance with policy described in Reference E.   Military Public Affairs is intended to improve public awareness and understanding of the military aspects of the Alliance's role, aims, operations, missions, activities and issues, thereby enhancing organisational credibility.  NATO StratCom guidance provides the means to effectively synchronize military PA with IA, through the appropriate staff mechanism, in support of the Commander's operational objectives.

    a.    Although Military PA and Info Ops require similar planning, message development and media analysis and are both conducted within the same overarching StratCom framework, their activities differ in audience, scope and intent. Therefore all IA must be closely coordinated with Military PA in order to ensure consistency in the messages to external audiences and to promote overall effectiveness and credibility of the campaign.

    b.    This coordination is initially achieved through NATO's StratCom guidance documents.  At the operational and tactical level it is advanced through regularly scheduled coordination boards and working groups.  The chairmanship for these bodies is stipulated by the Commander.  While coordination is essential, the lines of authority will remain separate and there shall be no overlap of personnel during operations.

22.    Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC).  As with all NATO activities, CIMIC sends direct and indirect messages to audiences, internally within the JOA and externally to the wider international community.  While it is not the primary purpose of CIMIC, these activities present an avenue to directly inform leaders and organizations regarding NATO's activities, goals and objectives in order to minimize friction between organizations.  Often these leaders and organizations have access to key host nation audiences with whom they have established credible communications.  For these reasons CIMIC is a capability that is relevant to the achievement of

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[4] NATO policy defines Strat Com as "the coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities - Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs (PA), Military Public Affairs, Information Operations (InfoOps) and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), as appropriate - in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO's aims."

Information Effects and should be coordinated and harmonized with IA and Military PA through the Info Ops function.

## NON-NATO ENTITIES AND PARTNER INVOLVEMENT

23.    With Reference F nations updated tasks for the implementation of the Comprehensive Approach Action Plan.  Taking this into account, NATO commanders will conduct IA in an increasingly complex IE with a variety of local key leaders, opinion makers, International Organizations (IO) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) all of which may be addressing many of the same audiences. The Info Ops personnel must recognise that these persons and organisations may have channels to audiences that NATO does not possess.  Info Ops may coordinate messaging with other actors in the JOA when common goals and objectives exist. The sharing of classified and unclassified information will be in accordance with extant NATO Security Policy, approved supporting documents and information sharing arrangements.

24.    NATO has set out procedures for formally recognising operational partners and their involvement in the decision-making process (Reference G).  Info Ops will maintain appropriate contacts with all operational partners that may be affected by IA.  Additionally, partners will be included as appropriate in coordination boards and working groups in accordance with the governing principles, procedures and mechanisms described in Reference G.

## EXERCISE AND TRAINING

25.    The Info Ops function requires dedicated and appropriately trained personnel, who can effectively plan, coordinate and oversee the integration of IA within an operation.  Consequently, prior to taking an Info Ops position, personnel will have qualified at the NATO School in Oberammergau and/or through a national training programme that provides an understanding of the differences between national and NATO doctrine as well as tactics, techniques and procedures in place for the coordination of NATO IA.

26.    Info Ops are to be integrated into NATO military training and exercises based on AJP-3.10 Allied Joint Doctrine for Information Operations to ensure that commanders and staffs are aware of the requirement and procedures to integrate IA into planning and conducting operations, the effects of those operations on the IE, and the negative consequences of not doing so.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

27.    Military Committee (MC).  The MC exercises its responsibility for NATO Info Ops through the IMS, Operations Division. To assist in this responsibility, the Military Committee Working Group (Operations) in Info Ops format (MCWG(OPS)Info Ops) is used to provide expertise, working capacity and advice on NATO Info Ops, particularly with regard to operations, policy and doctrine matters.  The Terms of Reference (TOR) for this group are contained in Annex A. The specific responsibilities of the MC for NATO policy on Info Ops are:

a.      To provide Info Ops related military advice to the NAC and seek its guidance.

b.      To maintain an effective Info Ops policy and ensure that Info Ops aspects are included in other MC policy documents.

c.      To provide military guidance for Info Ops including operations, exercises, capabilities and training.

d.      To promulgate, monitor, co-ordinate and contribute to the development of Info Ops doctrine.

e.      To develop, maintain and disseminate information essential for the identification and protection of critical NATO information by appropriate organisations.

f.      To develop and maintain Info Ops related Crisis Response Measures.

g.      To direct the SCs as required.

h.      To consider adjustments to NATO Info Ops guidance to reinforce NATO goals in supporting allied and partner operations outside of NATO's area of operation.

28.      Strategic Commanders (SC).  Specific responsibilities of the SCs for NATO Info Ops are:

a.      To consider Info Ops resource requirements, effects, and audiences at the earliest possible time to enable MC and NAC consideration and approval.

b.      To integrate Info Ops analysis and assessments as core part of the planning process, throughout the continuum of operational planning and execution.

c.      To designate Info Ops staff and mechanisms to integrate Info Ops doctrine/plans at the strategic level and to ensure that subordinate commanders assign responsibilities as necessary.

d.      To develop and/or improve capabilities, techniques and security guidance within their commands, including incorporating Info Ops into their lessons learned process, ensuring their adequacy to conduct information activities in support of operational objectives.

e.      To integrate Info Ops into existing and future operational planning documents in agreement with the guidance of the MC.

f.      To advise the MC on the requirements for IA and associated resources in support of Information Effects.

g. To review, and as required, request approval of Info Ops related Crisis Response Measures.

h. To ensure IA of subordinate commands (JFC/JHQ/AJHQ) are coordinated and consistent with the approved mission specific strategic guidance.

i. To develop training standards and integrate Info Ops into training, exercises and tests in representative environments.

j. To provide guidance for instruction on Info Ops in NATO military educational institutions.

29. <u>Nations</u>. The specific responsibilities for Info Ops are:

a. To consider Alliance Info Ops requirements during the NATO defence planning process and implement these requirements as appropriate into national planning.

b. To develop Info Ops procedures within the framework of this document, and for Allies concerned, within the capabilities under NATO command, assigned, earmarked and other forces for NATO.

c. To provide within capabilities and overall priorities adequate intelligence in order to support NATO Info Ops in all applicable NATO plans and operations.

d. To prepare standards and procedures in co-ordination with NATO military authorities to ensure that interoperability is taken into consideration during development and procurement of capabilities to plan, conduct, and assess IA in support of Information Effects.

e. To include Info Ops in training and exercises.

f. To provide resources and trained personnel to source NATO requirements and execute NATO Info Ops in operations and exercises.

g. To consider possible effects on NATO military capabilities and operations resulting from national information activities.

h. As appropriate, to contribute with personnel and other means, to counter information activities conducted against NATO, NATO nations and troop contributing nations (TCN) at the strategic level.


<u>Annexes</u>
A. Terms of Reference for the Military Committee Working Group (Operations) in Information Operations Format (MCWG(OPS)Info Ops)
B. Lexicon of Terms

# TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE MILITARY COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP (OPERATIONS) IN INFORMATION OPERATIONS FORMAT (MCWG(OPS)INFO OPS)

## INTRODUCTION

1.　In an evolving security environment, the area of Information Operations (Info Ops) requires ongoing re-examination. Policies, directives, doctrine and guidance require co-ordination within the Alliance.

## AIM

2.　The aim of the MCWG(OPS)Info Ops is to ensure the Alliance maintains an effective Info Ops function by:

　　a.　Providing military advice to the MC on operational resource requirements, objectives, and audiences to enable early and robust conduct of Info Ops.

　　b.　Developing and examining all Alliance Info Ops issues.

　　c.　Reviewing and confirming NATO military policy on Info Ops.

　　d.　Coordinate NATO Info Ops doctrine.

　　e.　Examining Info Ops requirements for both operations and exercises/training.

　　f.　Applying lessons learned from operations to policy and doctrine documents.

## MEETINGS, RECORDS and COMPOSITION

3.　The WG Chairman and Secretariat is provided by Operations Division, International Military Staff (IMS), NATO HQ. The WG will meet on a quarterly basis with representatives from the military delegations. Additionally, the working group will meet as required/requested, but at least once per year, in a reinforced format with national representatives in the field of Info Ops. The Chairman will ensure that a mutually agreed summary record of each meeting, including decisions taken and actions pending, is prepared and distributed to all members and participants. Members and representatives are responsible for informing their respective chains of command.

4.　The Chairman will issue a proposed agenda for each meeting. WG members may propose items for discussion as additions to this agenda. Following the meeting, the WG Secretary will prepare the summary record, and action list for approval by the Chairman and distribution by IMS/OPS Division.

5.      The MCWG(OPS)Info Ops membership consists of one representative from each of the NATO nations, ACT and ACO as well as other NATO organizations as appropriate. The national member is normally the senior national Info Ops military official. The ACT/ACO representative is the senior Info Ops officer in that command.

6.      Members representing ACT/ACO and representatives from other NATO bodies do not have a vote in proceedings nor the power of reservation. They do have an acknowledged right to express views in proceedings and have such views recorded if they so desire. National representatives are the voting members of the WG. WG members should come to meetings fully briefed and prepared to present national or HQ views. They are expected to participate in discussions on proposals with a view to reaching agreement. Final acceptance of major proposals will be obtained from the nations through the normal staffing process.

7.      Activities of the working group are focused on the tasks described below in support of the MC.  The Bi-SCs are encouraged to support initiatives to further develop broader issues related to Info Ops such as advances in the science and technology of communications, social network analysis, Military Deception in the current IE, Allied IA capabilities and organizations, or other areas.

## TASKS

8.      The MCWG(OPS)Info Ops will:

a.      Examine all aspects of Alliance Info Ops.

b.      Support the MC in the development of military advice for the MC's approval covering Info Ops planning in particular in terms of resource requirements, objectives, and audiences as required.

c.      Adopt and review terms of reference for the working group.

d.      Review and advise the MC on actions required to develop and maintain Info Ops related Crisis Response Measures.

e.      Co-ordinate Info Ops doctrine in accordance with NATO Military Policy on Info Ops (MC 0422), AJP-01, AJP-3, and Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD)/AJP-5.

f.      Review and make recommendations for updating and revising all NATO and ACT/ACO Info Ops policies, directives, doctrine, and procedures.

g.      Ensure that nations and commands are kept informed of all developments and that their concerns are adequately addressed in the deliberations of the WG.

h.      Discuss Info Ops requirements and make proposals for force standards and capabilities.

i.      Develop, co-ordinate, promote and provide NATO Info Ops training guidance in co-operation with the nations.

j.      Initiate requests for scientific research and development for the improvement of Info Ops related techniques and methods for the coordination and conduct of IA.

k.      Provide a forum for the discussion and fulfilment of Info Ops requirements for both operations and exercises/training.

l.      Ensure that Info Ops considerations are coordinated with the StratCom Policy Board/StratCom Standing Working Group.

## LEXICON OF TERMS

### Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC)
The coordination and cooperation, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civil actors, including the national population and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organizations and agencies.

### Information Activities
An action designed to affect information and/or information systems. They can be performed by any actor and include protection measures.

### Information Effects
A desired condition created in the information environment as a result of information activities. Information Effects should be measurable in order to enable analysis, planning, execution and assessment of related actions and the effects them self.

### Information Environment
Is 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.

### Information Systems
An assembly of equipment, methods and procedures and, if necessary, personnel, organized to accomplish information processing functions.

### Message
Any thought or idea expressed briefly in plain, coded, or secret language, prepared in a suitable form for transmission by any means of communication.

### Messaging
The transfer of any thought or idea from one person or device to another, by using any medium of communication.

### Narrative
The translation of an organization's mandate and vision into a fundamental, persistent story of who the organization is, what its guiding principles are, and what it aspires to achieve. *(working definition)*

### Theme
The unifying subject or idea of a message or set of messages.