

Do We Need FA30?

Creating an Information Warfare Branch

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Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such questions.

—Ecclesiastes 7:10¹

TO BUILD the correct blend of capabilities necessary to conduct the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) during the information age, the Army should create an information warfare (IW) branch. Current information operations (IO) training and force composition are inadequate to meet the GWOT challenge.

Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, General Richard A. Cody, recently released "The Army IO Intent" to provide guidance for the Army IO campaign plan and to amplify and supplement IO capabilities.² Cody advocated creating "a proponenty capable of integrating with joint and Army IO and resourced for 'branch-like' advocacy."³ Cody's use of the phrase "branch-like advocacy" reveals high-level Army leaders realize the need for an IO or IW branch. What qualities should fully trained IW branch officers have, and what knowledge and understanding should they possess?

During the Army 2003 World Wide PSYOP [psychological operations] Conference, senior leaders discussed the future combined education path and the need for merging IO-related functional areas (FAs). In a paper titled "Merging IO, PSYOP, and FAO [foreign area officer], Concept for the New Foreign Officer," Major Fredric W. Rohm, Jr., proposed such a merger.⁴ The current FA30 (IO) program attracts officers from across the basic branches; however, most have little experience in core IO elements such as PSYOP, computer network operations (CNO), electronic warfare (EW), military deception, and operational security (OPSEC). The Department of Defense (DOD) "IO Roadmap" recommends developing "IO specialists who would be functional experts in one or more of the highly specialized core capabilities. . . ."⁵ The "IO

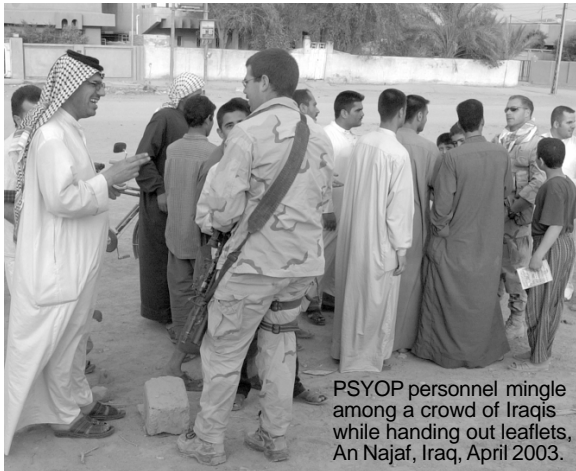
Roadmap" also states: "IO specialists should possess specialized expertise on a certain IO core capability, but gain experience in [planning and executing] the broader construct of IO."⁶

Courses of Action

To achieve the joint "IO Roadmap's" objectives, I propose two courses of action (COAs) for DOD and the Army. Currently, FA30 resides within the IO support career field, while key elements like FA39 (PSYOP) reside in the operations career field. Core pillars such as deception and CNO do not exist in an associated branch or functional area other than introductory training in the Army IO course. Currently, EW officers (EWOs) are in FA35G (Signal Intelligence [SIGINT]/EW) within the military intelligence (MI) branch, also in the operations career field. Few are available to serve as EWOs in division and corps IO cells because of their duties as SIGINT officers.

Delays in initiating the Army's 4-week IO training program at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and insufficient personnel available in the training pipeline compound the difficulties in producing trained IO officers. Many officers are thus forced into on-the-job (OJT) training. Can we really expect IO officers with only 4 weeks of IO training to fully understand the complexities of 12 IO elements and 2 related activities and successfully employ the 5 core IO pillars?

Recognizing this inability, commanders have often drafted officers from the most closely related specialties to carry the brunt of the IO burden. Public affairs (PA), PSYOP, or civil affairs (CA) officers often serve as IO officers, even when an untrained IO warrior is on station. Emphasizing this fact, Cody suggests the need for "specific marketing and international media skills to familiarize IO staff officers on how civilian entities plan, prepare, execute, and influence activities. Furthermore . . . , IO



PSYOP personnel mingle among a crowd of Iraqis while handing out leaflets, An Najaf, Iraq, April 2003.

officers should have cross-cultural communications and awareness.⁷⁷ These are the traits and characteristics that comprise the backgrounds of current PA, PSYOP, and CA officers, and FAOs.

The IO community loses credibility by not having trained IO warriors. Because of this deficiency, PAOs and PSYOP or CA officers often perform IO duties instead of their primary duties, resulting in mediocre performance in those areas as well because they must split their focus. I recommend two COAs to correct the problem:

1. Create a system that feeds related functional areas into FA30.
2. Create an IW branch.

FA feeder system. Using officers from IO-related FA specialties as IO officers is the norm. Commanders fill the void caused by the lack of trained IO planners with officers from related specialties. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, senior PSYOP officers were primary IO planners for the Central Command IO staff, the Third Army/Combined Force Land Component Command, the V Corps IO staff, and the Joint Special Operations Task Force-North. In all these commands, PSYOP officers served quite capably as IO planners during the first three phases of combat.⁸ Based on this, the Army should establish a formal system that identifies, tracks, and feeds FA30 with individuals from IO-related specialties to produce well-rounded IO officers.

Officers who want to enter the IO field would no longer do so directly from

their basic combat arms, combat support, or combat service support branches. Instead, future IO officers would first be trained and serve as captains and majors in one of the IO-related functional areas, such as PSYOP (FA39B), PA (FA46), CA (FA39C), FAO (FA48), strategic intelligence (FA34), or information systems engineer (FA24). These IO-related functional areas would coexist with IO FA30, but only lieutenant colonels and colonels from these functional areas would become FA30 IO officers. This would ensure a level of understanding and expertise in one of the supporting IO-related fields. Even so, some might say this COA is only another form of OJT instead of a solution to the Army's IO education and experience problem. (See figure 1.)

Creating an IW branch. A bolder COA would be to immediately create an IW branch by merging the IO (FA30) and PSYOP (FA39B) career fields, drawing personnel from the strategic intelligence (FA34), information systems engineer (FA24), and SIGINT/EW (35G) career fields. CNO, deception, and EW core IO subspecialties and training would be created within FA30 specialties.

A future structure could be comparable to the MI branch where several intelligence-related specialties exist under one umbrella, although the expertise within each subspecialty (such as human intelligence [HUMINT] or SIGINT) is drastically different. Or, a future IW branch might be compared to the Special Forces (SF) Branch, which contains various specialties, such as weapons, communications, medical, and engineer specialists, but only in the noncommissioned officer (NCO) realm under one branch. The officer composition of the IW branch would be similar to SF or MI branches, composed of IO (30A), PSYOP (30B), EW (30C), CNO (30D), deception (30E), and strategic intelligence (formerly FA34) as

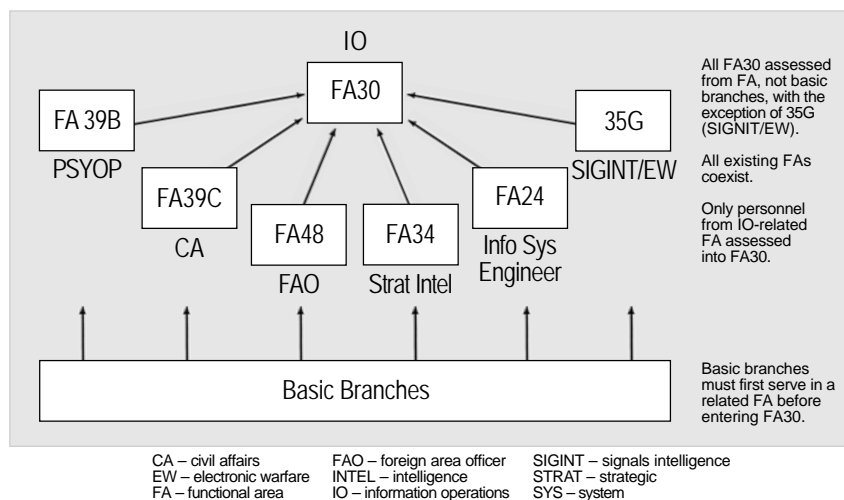


Figure 1. Functional Area 30 feeder system of IO-related disciplines.

FA30F, with an officer and NCO corps composition for each IW subspecialty. Officers would only enter the IW branch after they completed captain basic-branch qualification.

All FA30-series branch officers would be 30B, 30C, 30D, 30E, or 30F before being designated as 30A information operations, the overall synchronizers and coordinators of information operations. Only lieutenant colonels and colonels would become 30A officers to ensure the officers would have had time to complete their joint professional military education and can fully comprehend the complexities of joint operations and interagency coordination. Officers could continue their careers in one of the various IO specialties or cross train in an additional core IO subspecialty within the IW branch. Many officers could then become 30As on promotion to lieutenant colonel.

Although not part of the IW branch, FAOs and CA and PA officers would be offered the chance to transfer to 30A and cross train in one of the IO subspecialties after becoming lieutenant colonels. (See figure 2.)

Advantages of a Merger

Creating an IW branch containing PSYOP, EW, CNO, and deception would increase the ability to conduct effects-based operations (EBO), which former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard B. Meyers says is “a way of thinking about and solving military problems [that] incorporates effects-based thinking, processes, operations,

and targeting.”⁹ According to Meyers: “Improvement will require not only technological solutions, but also cultural change—a willingness to challenge standard practices, and question current organizational patterns and command practices.”¹⁰

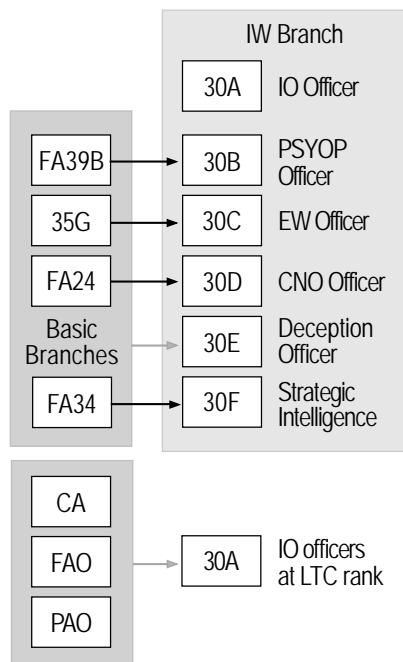
The new IW branch would break down barriers of communication by doing away with traditional bureaucratic FA stovepipes. The new, close association of key IO-related core components within one branch would increase understanding and enable innovative approaches to targeting enemy forces, decisionmakers, and key systems or networks.

Although many might oppose these ideas, DOD and the Army must determine what is best for national security, not what is best for maintaining individual branch or FA fiefdoms. The major source of opposition to these proposals will most likely come from within the special operations or PSYOP communities on the grounds the merger of functional areas would cause a dilution of the PSYOP message; that PSYOP units or task forces would no longer exist; or that PSYOP might be removed from the special operations community.

The opposite is more likely. Synchronization and coordination will improve when core IO pillars reside within the same branch. The merger would also improve PSYOP dissemination by providing direct access to CNO and EW means and planning expertise to ultimately facilitate precision-influence targeting of key decisionmakers. PSYOP units would not cease to exist, but could actually be structured to more fully support full-spectrum information operations.

Joint PSYOP task forces and PSYOP units could be manned with PSYOP, IO, EW, CNO, and deception officers to enable a more holistic approach to PSYOP support to IO. Because the PSYOP community is already well established, the merger might also result in many officers, primarily with PSYOP backgrounds, assuming mantles of leadership within the new IW branch.

The merger would not affect strategic intelligence because it would have the same function as FA30F, drawing this intelligence field close to support IO needs. The information systems engineer functional area would continue to coexist separately, but many of its personnel would become FA30Ds to jumpstart a viable Army CNO capability. Officers currently in Army CNO billets



All 30-series branch officers are assessed at the captain level after branch qualification, minus 30A officers.

All 30A officers must be 30B, 30C, or 30D before being 30A.

CNO and deception core IO subspecialties created within the 30 branch.

An officer might remain in branch specialties (30B, 30C, 30D, or become 30A).

Officers might cross train in two or more core IO subspecialties within IW Branch.

FA48, PA and CA officers, and FAOs might become 30A officers at the lieutenant colonel level, but remain separate and distinct.

Figure 2. Proposed Army information warfare (IW) branch.



An Iraqi responsible for choosing families in need of food in Baghdad's Al Thawra district speaks with a 1st Cavalry Division IO officer, December 2004.

US Army

should be permanently transferred to FA30D (CNO) regardless of their basic branch. The MI branch would benefit from the merger, with its officers focused solely on SIGINT, while officers with an EW focus would be part of the IW branch as FA30Cs to provide much needed EW planners.

Public affairs, CA, or FAO functional areas should not oppose the plan because these functional areas would continue to coexist as separate, distinct specialties. Such a separation would ensure PA, CA, and FAOs' efforts were not tainted by the stigma an IW branch insignia might carry with foreign audiences. However, because of their close relationship to information operations, many PAOs and CA and FA officers should be offered transfers to the new IW branch as lieutenant colonels.

Professional Education

What type of knowledge and understanding should a fully trained IW branch officer possess? Producing a fully trained PSYOP or CA officer or an FAO requires 18 to 24 months. An IO officer must understand not just one, but five, core capabilities and two related activities and be able to apply these in a particular region.

The Army cannot conduct successful information operations without planners who are regionally oriented and culturally attuned. Regional focus and

understanding is paramount. The "Army IO Intent" outlines the need for IO officers who understand "human factors and [possess] cultural awareness at the tactical level."¹¹ Within the PSYOP, CA, and FAO fields, officers are regionally oriented and trained with foreign-language training especially essential for FAOs and PSYOP and CA officers. To truly understand a region and its culture and to influence foreign audiences, proficiency in the target's native language is essential. Understanding interagency processes is also essential. Information warfare officers must be able to think, plan, and communicate at the operational and strategic levels. Any future IO training path should include the opportunity for attaining advanced degrees in related disciplines.

Information operations are inherently joint and are planned, coordinated, and approved at the strategic level. The "Army's IO Intent" states training and education for IO officers must ensure officers are "capable of integrating (plan, prepare, execute, and assess) and executing to achieve desired effects [and understand] joint, interagency, and multinational interdepend[ence]."¹² The Army must train IW branch officers in joint planning and operations, EBO, and interagency roles and capabilities. To be truly effective contributors to the IO process, they must become joint-qualified.

The Army should carefully examine the current training path for FA30 IO officers. If it takes from 18 months to 2 years to produce a fully trained PSYOP officer or FAO, can we train an IO officer in 4 weeks? Information warfare branch training should include a 24-month program to create regionally oriented, culturally attuned IW officers who understand joint and interagency processes. Training should consist of the following:

- Information operations specialty training (PSYOP, EW, CNO, or deception), including from 1 to 3 months of training focused on one of the core IO elements. After initial qualification and utilization, each 30-series officer would be trained in depth in an additional core specialty.

- OPSEC training. All 30-series officers would receive one week of OPSEC planning, but it would not be a separate branch-specialty area.

- Regional orientation. Officers would receive from 4 to 5 months of focused regional orientation and cross-cultural training on a primary region and an overview of Europe, Africa, Asia, Middle East, or South and Central America.

- Interagency orientation. Officers would have a 1-month assignment in Washington, D.C., with a primary focus on agencies such as the Joint Staff's Deputy Director for Global Operations and key departments and agencies like DOD, National Security Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the CIA, with temporary duty as interns in these departments or agencies.

- Language training (mandatory for PSYOP officers). Officers should receive from 4 to 6 months training at the Defense Language Institute focused on a language from the officer's target region.

- Joint IO planning. Officers should receive 1 month of training focused on planning, synchronizing, and coordinating IO core elements.

- Master of arts program. Officers should complete a 1-year to 18-month graduate study program focused on one IO-related program such as International Relations, International Studies (regional focus), National Security Studies, Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, Systems Engineering, Security Management, International Marketing, or Business Administration.

Without warrant officers (WOs) and NCOs, coordination and execution of IO can be nearly impossible. NCOs with IO-related military occupational specialties (MOSs) are filling the void in various IO cells and staffs at various levels. The most common NCO specialties found on IO teams are PSYOP, Special Forces, MI, and SIGINT. These key MOS

fields should feed future WO and NCO IO MOSs and ease of transfer should be the norm.

The Future

We are in a period of Army Transformation and development of IO as part of warfare not unlike that of the transition from the horse cavalry to armor. However, America's enemies will not wait for us to ponder, train, reorganize, and act. The American people face a real psychological threat, as demonstrated by the al-Qaeda terrorist attack on 11 September 2001; the current carnage in the streets of Iraq; and the Web-based propaganda insurgents and terrorists employ. The enemy's message is present daily on the Internet and other media. We have no choice but to produce a force trained in the art of influence, operating and serving from the tactical to strategic levels. Army IW officers must fully understand the pillars of information operations; be able to integrate them into joint planning processes; be regionally oriented and culturally attuned; and be able to interact and coordinate with government agencies.

In "The Way Ahead: Our Army at War—Relevant and Ready," Chief of Staff of the Army General Peter J. Schoomaker says: "Transformation during a time of sustained campaigning will not be easy; but it is a practice that appears many times in the history of our great Army. We must examine, design, and develop new solutions for a new and dangerous world, as we have done so successfully in our past."¹³ The Global War on Terrorism makes the creation of an Army IW branch an urgent necessity. *MR*

NOTES

1. *The Bible*, New International Version, on-line at <www.ibs.org/niv/>, accessed 6 January 2005.

2. Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, GEN Richard A. Cody, "The Army IO Intent," personal message, no date given.

3. *Ibid.*
4. MAJ Fredric W. Rohm, Jr., "Merging IO, PSYOP, and FAO: Concept for the New Foreign Officer (FIO)," paper presented at the World Wide PSYOP Conference, Raleigh, North Carolina, 2003.

5. U.S. Department of Defense, "IO Roadmap" (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], October 2003). Excerpts are unclassified. Overall document is classified SECRET/NOFORN; Rohm.

6. *Ibid.*; Rohm.
7. "IO Intent."

8. Rohm, personal experience.
9. GEN Richard B. Meyers quoted in *Major Combat Operations, Joint Operations Concepts* (Unclassified), draft ver. 1.10 (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 8 June 2004), 56, on-line at <www.dtic.mil/jointvision/draftmco_joc.doc>, accessed 6 January 2005.

10. *Ibid.*, 26.
11. "IO Intent."

12. *Ibid.*
13. Chief of Staff of the Army, GEN Peter J. Schoomaker, "The War Ahead: Our Army at War—Relevant and Ready," U.S. Army Strategic Communications, The Pentagon, Washington, D.C., 11 December 2003, on-line at <www.army.mil/thewayahead/>, accessed 17 December 2004.

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