

BULLET BACKGROUND PAPER  
ON  
COUNTER-ISIL INFORMATION OPERATIONS STRATEGY

PURPOSE

Provide an IO campaign strategy to counter, discredit and undermine the ISIL narrative.

ISIL NARRATIVE & RECRUITING STRATEGY

- Three overarching themes:
  - God: represent “true” Islam, enact vengeance against enemies, obtain God’s favor and instill a sense of camaraderie in a tight-knit ideologically aligned community
  - Gold: monetary acquisition, educational benefits, positional power, marital/sexual fulfillment, improvement of living conditions/lifestyle
  - Glory: the opportunity to matter, find purpose, obtain divine protection/martyrdom, live adventurously
- Recruiting strategy is sophisticated, expansive, multifaceted, and global:
  - High quality material, action-based, often tailored to a specific audience
  - Personal/relational outreach, attracts lonely/disconnected members
  - Dramatization of an idealized/utopian life in ISIL Caliphate
  - Portrays enemies as warring against Islam, ISIL acting mercifully/boldly for victims

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Offer a positive alternate narrative demonstrating how Muslims obtain God, Gold & Glory
- Undermine ISIL narrative by exposing ISIL’s inability to provide God, Gold & Glory

CONCLUSION

To defeat ISIL’s recruiting effort; the US must employ an IO campaign utilizing non-attributable means to attack ISIL’s centers of gravity. Such a campaign must also further an alternative end state, specifically one that features Muslims and non-Muslims coexisting and supporting one another in peace.