



NORTH ATLANTIC MILITARY COMMITTEE
COMITE MILITAIRE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD



22 June 2012

MC 0402/2 (Military Decision)

SECRETARY GENERAL, NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

MILITARY DECISION ON MC 0402/2

NATO MILITARY POLICY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

1. On 22 Jun 2012 the Military Committee endorsed MC 0402/2, NATO Military Policy on Psychological Operations, a copy of which is attached at enclosure. MC 0402/2 is forwarded to the North Atlantic Council for their consideration and approval.
2. This document clears IMSWM-0119-2012, 09 May 2012 and all SDs thereto.

FOR THE MILITARY COMMITTEE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bornemann". The signature is fluid and cursive.

J. BORNEMANN
Lieutenant General, DEUAR
Director General
International Military Staff

Enclosure

1. MC 0402/2, NATO Military Policy on Psychological Operations

Copy To SDL Z, IS/OPS, IS/DPP, IS/PDD

Action Officers LTC P. Brooks, OPS (5674); COL T. Lorber, OPS (5553)

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MC 0402/2

NATO MILITARY POLICY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

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NATO MILITARY POLICY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

References

- A. PO(2009)0141, NATO Strategic Communications Policy, 29 Sep 2009
- B. PO(2011)0141, Political Military Framework for Partner Involvement in NATO-Led Operations, 13 Apr 2011
- C. PO(2011)0045-AS1. Updated List of Taskings for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Approach Action Plan and the Lisbon Summit Decisions on the Comprehensive Approach-Action Sheet, 07 Mar 2011

GENERAL

1. The role of Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) is to induce or reinforce the perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of North Atlantic Council (NAC) approved audiences in support of Alliance political and military objectives. Additionally, PSYOPS can mitigate the effective use of hostile propaganda against friendly forces, local civilian audiences and other audiences of importance to NATO.
2. The pervasive and ubiquitous nature of today's global Information Environment (IE), including the importance of virtual and physical social networks and new media has increased the demand and importance of effective PSYOPS. This has been exacerbated by NATO's involvement in Non-Article 5 Crisis Response Operations and information attacks against NATO and its member nations. In today's IE, NATO can expect to operate for an extended period of time with limited resources in areas where sophisticated indigenous media, traditional communication and information from external sources compete to influence the perceptions of local audiences. The organisation, state, or entity more able to effectively and rapidly influence the understanding of a crisis or conflict, especially inducing or reinforcing the perceptions of particular influential audiences, will likely be the most successful.
3. PSYOPS are an indispensable part of the broad range of modern Military, Political, Economic, Civilian and Information (MPEC(I)) activities aimed at conflict prevention and crisis response. PSYOPS may multiply the effects of military capabilities by communicating messages directly through all available means, thus influencing the perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of their intended audiences.
4. The application of PSYOPS can have a significant impact in the long and short term to influence behaviour and act as a force multiplier and enabler to enhance NATO military capabilities. The principles of developing a PSYOPS plan apply across the full spectrum of operational themes (combat, security, and peace support) as discussed in AJP-1 and military activities (offensive, defensive, stability and enabling) as discussed in AJP-3. Although the complexity of the methodology varies with the audiences, basic considerations for the development of all PSYOPS actions are the same.
5. In order to preserve Alliance and PSYOPS credibility, PSYOPS are based on true and factual information, and are generally attributed to NATO or a concurring partner nation or organization.

6. NATO PSYOPS are part of the wider NATO Strategic Communications (StratCom) effort which aims to enhance coherence of all information and communication activities and capabilities as described in Reference A. At the strategic level the NAC and the Military Committee (MC) provide guidance to the Strategic Commanders through the Operational Planning Process (OPP) and StratCom guidance documents as described in References A and B. Through SHAPE's Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD), PSYOPS incorporates this guidance on operational and tactical levels in support of the Commander's operational objectives. NATO PSYOPS will be coordinated in line with other capabilities affecting the IE by the Information Operations (Info Ops) function. PSYOPS can contribute to other Information Activities (IA).

7. PSYOPS can support objectives at all levels from the strategic to tactical within the full spectrum of operations. PSYOPS conducted at the operational and tactical level are the responsibility of the respective NATO Commander and will be in consonance with NATO strategic objectives.

DEFINITION

8. Psychological Operation (PSYOPS). Planned activities using methods of communication and other means directed at approved audiences in order to influence perceptions, attitudes and behaviour, affecting the achievement of political and military objectives.

AIM

9. To prescribe the NATO military policy for PSYOPS.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

10. The employment of any element of power projection, particularly the military element, has always had a psychological dimension. This psychological dimension effects audiences' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours in ways favourable and unfavourable to Alliance goals and objectives.¹ It is vital that all Alliance activities are integrated and coordinated to ensure that those aimed at achieving psychological effects coherent with, and reinforce, physical actions and other activities within the IE. The responsibility for this coordination lies with the Info Ops staff who will ensure that the influence on audiences achieved through activities such as Fires, Manoeuvre, PSYOPS and other IA are coherent with, and reinforce as applicable, the Commander's objectives and the NATO StratCom guidance.

11. PSYOPS provides the NATO Commander a function to directly address audiences to achieve desired effects in the IE. It can lower the morale and reduce the efficiency of an adversary by creating doubts, dissidence and disaffection within their ranks. It can also provoke or discourage adversary actions by influencing the decision making process. PSYOPS may induce potential adversaries to actively or passively cooperate with NATO's goals and objectives in an operation. In

¹ It should be noted that not all actions in the physical domain, such as shows-of-force, air strikes, or the deployment of combat forces, are by definition PSYOPS; however, all have a psychological dimension that must be taken into account.

addressing civilian populations located in areas of conflict, PSYOPS often is employed to encourage a desired behaviour to support military objectives and the Commander's operational freedom. PSYOPS is one of the Commander's tools for convincing the undecided audiences to support NATO's goals and objectives through direct broadcasting of messages to relatively large audiences. PSYOPS can be expected to perform many of these functions simultaneously.

12. The PSYOPS staff contributes to the Commander's decision making process, advises on the psychological impact of planned actions or operations to be expected within the IE and on target audiences and can recommend IA to be performed by non-PSYOPS units in support of information effects.

AUTHORITY

13. The Military Committee is the authority for NATO PSYOPS policy. It exercises this responsibility through the International Military Staff, Operations Division. To assist in this responsibility, the MC has authorised the formation of a NATO PSYOPS Working Group (NATO PSYOPS WG), with Terms of Reference at Annex C, to provide advice on NATO PSYOPS policy and doctrine matters.

RESPONSIBILITIES

14. Military Committee (MC).

- a. To approve and maintain an effective PSYOPS policy and ensure that PSYOPS aspects are included, where appropriate, in other MC policy documents.
- b. To provide guidance for the conduct of PSYOPS to include operations, exercises and training.
- c. To develop and promulgate NATO PSYOPS doctrine through the Military Committee Joint Standardization Board (MCJSB).
- d. To encourage co-operation and co-ordination of all PSYOPS matters within NATO.
- e. To provide military advice to the NAC regarding PSYOPS effects, audiences and PSYOPS contributions to NATO StratCom.
- f. As appropriate, to coordinate counter-propaganda among the NATO and troop contributing nations (TCNs) at the strategic level.

15. Strategic Commanders (SC). Specific responsibilities of the SCs for NATO PSYOPS are:

- a. To consider PSYOPS resource requirements, effects, contributions to StratCom, and audiences at the earliest possible time to enable MC and NAC consideration and approval.

- b. To ensure subordinate commands have the doctrine, Standing Operating Procedures (SOP) and plans required to implement PSYOPS in accordance with the NATO Crisis Response System (NCRS).
 - c. To develop, co-ordinate and update PSYOPS concepts, plans and procedures.
 - d. To include PSYOPS in operational plans and integrate it into all phases of the operation as appropriate.
 - e. To initiate requests for scientific research and development for the improvement of PSYOPS techniques and means.
 - f. To develop training standards and include PSYOPS in NATO training and exercises.
 - g. To establish and maintain trained PSYOPS personnel within their own headquarters and subordinate commands.
 - h. To review and develop PSYOPS related NCRS measures and/or options for MC approval.
 - i. To develop PSYOPS force proposals, force standards and goals.
16. Nations. The specific responsibilities for PSYOPS are:
- a. To consider PSYOPS during the national planning process and implement PSYOPS into directives and planning documents.
 - b. To develop national plans and programmes to support NATO PSYOPS policy and doctrine.
 - c. To ensure that, within their capabilities and overall priorities, intelligence is provided in support of NATO PSYOPS.
 - d. To ensure that, within their capabilities and overall priorities, research and analysis is provided in support of NATO PSYOPS.
 - e. To ensure interoperability is taken into consideration during development and procurement of PSYOPS capabilities.
 - f. To provide resources and trained personnel to support NATO PSYOPS PE/CE and exercises.
 - g. As appropriate, to contribute with personnel and other means, to counter propaganda conducted against NATO, NATO nations and troop contributing nations (TCN) at the strategic level.

LIMITATIONS

17. The application of PSYOPS can have a significant impact on the situation in the IE in the long and short term. While NATO Commanders conduct PSYOPS only with respect to NAC approved audiences, the possible impact of PSYOPS on unintended audiences must be taken into account.

CO-ORDINATION AND CO-OPERATION

18. PSYOPS will be coordinated through Info Ops and assist in the achievement of specific effects in support of operational objectives. Info Ops is the staff function to analyze, plan, assess and integrate IA to create desired effects on the will, understanding and capability of adversaries, potential adversaries and NAC approved audiences in support of Alliance mission objectives.

19. PSYOPS are generally planned under the authority of the J5/Plans section and executed under the authority of the J3/Operations section. This does not affect the Info Ops' responsibility for coordination, synchronisation of IA. If the HQ foresees the formation of a Communication Directorate, or a similar staff element combining information and communication functions, PSYOPS authorities may be adjusted as appropriate. At the operational and tactical level PSYOPS are the Commander's voice to address specific audiences directly and unfiltered.

20. Because of its potential complexity and inherent risks, PSYOPS are planned, conducted, and represented on staffs by a special staff (element), specially trained in the planning and execution of PSYOPS. PSYOPS activities are incorporated within the normal planning and targeting cycles of a unit and are reflected in the products developed within these cycles. Direct access to the Commander is provided through the headquarters' planning and targeting process.

21. Unity of effort is essential to achieve consistency of word and action in all operations. National and NATO PSYOPS in a theatre must be closely coordinated by the highest NATO representative within theatre² responsible for IA to present consistent messages aligned with the NATO StratCom guidance to approved audiences in support of alliance goals and objectives.

22. PSYOPS require an appreciation for the culture and language of the particular target audience. It is critical that products are developed in the appropriate language dialect, including audio and visual signs and symbols that will resonate with the target audience, and are placed in the appropriate social context. These requirements are fundamental to PSYOPS and must be identified and acquired early in the military planning cycle. To fulfil these requirements PSYOPS needs All Source Intelligence support as well as cultural specific production support.

23. With the approval of the PoI-Mil Framework for Partner Involvement in NATO Led Operations at Reference B, NATO set out procedures for formally recognising operational partners and their involvement in the decision-making process for a

² The highest NATO representative responsible for IA could include DCOS Communications, Chief Info Ops, COM CJPOTF, etc.; however, in accordance with paragraph 27 of MC 0457/2, PAO staff officers will not be used for this function.

particular operation. PSYOPS staffs will maintain appropriate contacts with all operational partners that have a relation or intersection with NATO PSYOPS. Additionally, operational partners will be included as appropriate in coordination boards and working groups in accordance with the governing principles, procedures and mechanisms described in Reference B.

24. In accordance with the Comprehensive Approach Action Plan at Reference C, NATO recognizes that the IE is increasingly complex with a variety of individuals and organizations which may be addressing many of the same audiences. NATO Info Ops staffs will monitor the activities of these elements in order to improve situational awareness and provide advice where applicable to avoid information fratricide.

25. PSYOPS units are not precluded from supporting and providing technical assistance (e.g. printing support, radio broadcast equipment) to non-PSYOPS activities such as Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), Troop Information or Public Affairs, which also have a responsibility to address audiences in the IE.

26. PSYOPS tools and techniques are essential to communicating effectively to a variety of audiences in conflict. Commander's should consider the inclusion of PSYOPS training as part of comprehensive programmes to coach, teach and mentor indigenous forces.³

SUPPORT TO COUNTER-PROPAGANDA

27. Counter-Propaganda is a multidiscipline effort led and coordinated by Info Ops function to analyse an adversary's information activities, its source content, intended audience, media selection and effectiveness. Themes stressed in the adversary's propaganda activities are identified and then possibly countered in a multidisciplined effort to counter the theme while avoiding addressing individual products or messages if not specifically required. NATO PSYOPS forces and assets take a lead role in the analysis of adversary's propaganda and support counteractions.

Annexes

- A. List of Acronyms Used in Psychological Operations and/or This Document
- B. Bibliography
- C. Terms of Reference for The NATO Psychological Operations Working Group (NATO PSYOPS WG)

³ The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines "indigenous" as an adjective meaning: originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native.

**LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS
AND/OR THIS DOCUMENT**

CIMIC	-	Civil Military Co-operation
CJPOTF	-	Combined Joint Psychological Operations Task Force
CONPLAN	-	Contingency Plan
IE	-	Information Environment
Info Ops	-	Information Operations
JOA	-	Joint Operations Area
NCRS	-	NATO Crisis Response System
NPECoI	-	NATO PSYOPS Enhanced Community of Interest
OPLAN	-	Operation Plan
PA	-	Public Affairs
PSYOPS	-	Psychological Operations
SC	-	Strategic Commander
SOP	-	Standing Operating Procedures
StratCom	-	Strategic Communications

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MC Documents

MC 0133	-	NATO'S Operations Planning
MC 0327	-	NATO Military Policy for Non-Article 5 Crisis Response Operations
MC 0348	-	NATO Command and Control Warfare Policy
MC 0389	-	NATO's Combined Joint Task Force Capability
MC 0411	-	NATO Military Policy on Civil Military Co-operation
MC 0422	-	NATO Military Policy on Information Operations
MC 0457	-	NATO Military Policy on Public Affairs

Allied Publications and STANAGs

AJP-1	-	Allied Joint Doctrine
AJP-3	-	Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations
AJP-3.4	-	Allied Joint Doctrine for Non-Article 5 Crisis Response Operations (Draft)
AJP-3.4.1	-	Peace Support Operations
AJP-3.10	-	Allied Joint doctrine for Information Operations
AJP-3.10.1	-	Allied Joint Doctrine for Psychological Operations
ATP-35	-	Land Force Tactical Doctrine
AAP-6	-	NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions
AAP-15	-	NATO Glossary of Abbreviations

BI-SC Documents

CPPSPL/4010-79/10, Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive – Interim
Version, 17 Dec 2010

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE NATO PSYCHOLOGICAL
OPERATIONS WORKING GROUP (NATO PSYOPS WG)**

INTRODUCTION

1. In an evolving security environment, the area of Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) requires ongoing re-examination. Policies, directives, doctrine and guidance require co-ordination within the Alliance.
2. The aim of the NATO PSYOPS WG is to ensure the Alliance maintains an effective PSYOPS capability by:
 - a. Developing and examining all Alliance Psychological Operations issues.
 - b. Developing and reviewing NATO PSYOPS policy.
 - c. Overseeing the development of NATO PSYOPS doctrine (reporting through AJOD WG).
 - d. Applying lessons learned from operations to policy and doctrine documents.

MEETINGS, RECORDS and COMPOSITION

3. The WG Chairman is to be the Director Operations Support, SHAPE. Typically, the Director Operations Support, SHAPE, will delegate his role as WG Chairman to the Branch Chief, Joint Operations, SHAPE. In addition to providing the WG Chairman, the SHAPE PSYOPS office is responsible for providing a secretary for each meeting.
4. The WG will have scheduled meetings twice annually. One meeting will normally coincide with the annual BI-SC PSYOPS Conference. Other meetings may be scheduled, as the WG deems necessary, to carry out its responsibilities. The Chairman will ensure that agreed minutes of each meeting, including decisions taken and actions pending, is submitted to the Military Committee, as well as to the groups members. Members and representatives are responsible for informing their respective chains of command.
5. The SHAPE PSYOPS office 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 the SHAPE PSYOPS Office.
6. The NATO PSYOPS WG membership consists of one representative from each of the NATO signatory nations, the two Strategic Commands (SC) and other

NATO organisations as appropriate. The national member is normally the senior national PSYOPS military official. The SC representative is the senior PSYOPS officer in that command. Observers from non-NATO partners and Troop Contributing Nations (TCN) may be invited to attend on a case by case basis.

7. Members representing the SCs and representatives from other NATO bodies and non-NATO nations, contributing PSYOPS resources to NATO led operations 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 their headquarters' 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.

TASKS

8. The mission of the group is to:

- a. Examine all aspects of Alliance psychological operations.
- b. Adopt and review terms of reference for the working group.
- c. Co-ordinate NATO PSYOPS policy and doctrine in accordance with other NATO policies and doctrines.
- d. Review and make recommendations for updating and revising all NATO and SC PSYOPS policies, directives, doctrine and procedures.
- e. Ensure that nations and commands are kept informed of all developments and that their concerns are adequately addressed in the deliberations of the WG.
- f. Discuss requirements and make proposals for force standards and capabilities.
- g. Develop, co-ordinate, promote and provide NATO PSYOPS training guidance in co-operation with the nations.
- h. Initiate requests for scientific research and development for the improvement of PSYOPS techniques and media.
- i. Provide a forum for the discussion and fulfilment of PSYOPS requirements for both operations and exercises.
- j. Review and direct topics, work packages and tasks for the NATO PSYOPS Enhanced Community of Interest (NPECoi). Ensure information on all relevant issues, policy and doctrine is provided to the NPECoi to support this work.

- k. Foster the development and implementation of complementary PSYOPS capabilities among the nations.