

Joint Pub 3-53



Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations



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PREFACE

1. Scope

This doctrine addresses the use of military psychological operations (PSYOP) assets in planning and conducting PSYOP in support of joint operations across the range of military operations. The following information is also included.

a. The context for employment of PSYOP is provided.

b. The sources of policy and authority for the use of military PSYOP assets are identified.

c. PSYOP responsibilities of principal DOD and other US Government (USG) agencies are outlined.

d. Basic PSYOP principles and objectives are identified.

e. Guidance for the development or refinement of DOD PSYOP plans and annexes is provided.

f. Joint PSYOP capabilities are outlined.

g. Planning considerations for the employment of PSYOP assets to support strategic, operational, tactical, and consolidation military PSYOP objectives and the requisite coordination among other DOD elements and USG agencies necessary to execute their respective PSYOP responsibilities are delineated.

h. PSYOP logistic, intelligence, and command, control, communications, and computer systems support requirements are identified.

2. Purpose

This publication has been prepared under the direction of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It sets forth doctrine to govern

the joint activities and performance of the Armed Forces of the United States in joint operations and provides the doctrinal basis for US military involvement in multinational and interagency operations. It provides military guidance for the exercise of authority by combatant commanders and other joint force commanders and prescribes doctrine for joint operations and training. It provides military guidance for use by the Armed Forces in preparing their appropriate plans. It is not the intent of this publication to restrict the authority of the joint force commander (JFC) from organizing the force and executing the mission in a manner the JFC deems most appropriate to ensure unity of effort in the accomplishment of the overall mission.

3. Application

a. Doctrine and guidance established in this publication apply to the commanders of combatant commands, subunified commands, joint task forces, and subordinate components of these commands. These principles and guidance also may apply when significant forces of one Service are attached to forces of another Service or when significant forces of one Service support forces of another Service.

b. The guidance in this publication is authoritative; as such, this doctrine (or JTTP) will be followed except when, in the judgment of the commander, exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise. If conflicts arise between the contents of this publication and the contents of Service publications, this publication will take precedence for the activities of joint forces unless the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, normally in coordination with the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has provided more current and specific guidance. Commanders of forces operating as part of a multinational (alliance or coalition) military command

should follow multinational doctrine and procedures ratified by the United States. For doctrine and procedures not ratified by the United States, commanders should evaluate and follow the multinational command's doctrine and procedures, where applicable.

For the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



CARLTON W. FULFORD, JR.
Major General, USMC
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY COMMANDER'S OVERVIEW

- **Provides an Overview of Psychological Operations (PSYOP)**
- **Discusses the Organizational Responsibilities for PSYOP**
- **Covers Command and Control in PSYOP**
- **Discusses PSYOP Planning**
- **Covers PSYOP and the Range of Military Operations**
- **Provides an Overview of Support for PSYOP**

General Considerations for Psychological Operations

The purpose of psychological operations (PSYOP) is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives.

Psychological operations (PSYOP) are **operations planned to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.** PSYOP are a vital part of the broad range of US political, military, economic, and informational activities. When properly employed, PSYOP can lower the morale and reduce the efficiency of enemy forces and could create dissidence and disaffection within their ranks. There are four categories of military PSYOP; strategic, operational, tactical, and consolidation PSYOP, which are used to establish and reinforce foreign perceptions of US military, political, and economic power and resolve.

PSYOP may be either long or short term to influence foreign conclusions and enhance potential US military capabilities.

The principles of developing PSYOP apply across the range of military operations. Although the complexity of the methodology varies with the target audiences, **basic considerations for development of all PSYOP actions are the same.** Actions essential to successful PSYOP are: a clearly defined mission; analysis of all targets; actions that are evaluated for psychological implications; a reliable medium or media for transmission; rapid exploitation of PSYOP themes; and continual evaluation of the results of PSYOP for relevance to the mission and goals. Intelligence, counterintelligence, command, control, communications, and

computers systems (C4), and logistics support military PSYOP and are invaluable for the success of such actions.

The PSYOP relationship to truth projection and public affairs ensures that targets receive and consider the information being disseminated.

PSYOP techniques are used to plan and execute truth projection activities intended to inform foreign groups and populations persuasively. Public affairs (PA) provide objective reporting, without intent to propagandize. As open sources to foreign countries and the United States, PA channels can be used to disseminate international information. **To maintain the credibility of military PA, steps must be taken to protect against slanting or manipulating such PA channels.** PSYOP messages must be coordinated with counterintelligence planners and operators, with military deception planners, and with operations security planners to ensure that essential secrecy is realized, counterintelligence operations are not compromised, and messages reinforce the desired appreciations of counterintelligence and deception as well as PSYOP plans.

Organizational Responsibilities for PSYOP

The organizational responsibilities for PSYOP involve all levels of the chain of command.

The Department of the Defense (DOD), including the Secretary of Defense, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy or his designee, the DOD General Counsel, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, are responsible for establishing national objectives, developing policies, and approving strategic plans for PSYOP. **Geographic combatant commanders and subordinate joint force commanders** are responsible for designating specific staff responsibilities, ensuring that plans and programs are coordinated and sufficiently represented, and that PSYOP are monitored and reviewed. **The Commander in Chief, US Special Operations Command** ensures that all PSYOP and support requirements are addressed. **The Military Departments and Services** provide civilian and military personnel with appropriate training and planning skills.

Command and Control During PSYOP

The command and control of PSYOP depends greatly on the National Command Authorities, statutory policies, and treaties and agreements.

Unless otherwise directed by the National Command Authorities, combatant commanders exercise combatant command (command authority) over all assigned military PSYOP assets. **Centralizing planning for PSYOP should be focused at the combatant command level.** The combatant commander may place PSYOP forces under operational control of a subordinate joint force or component commander for appropriate mission support; however, it is essential that all PSYOP products (such as leaflets or radio scripts) use the same

themes and symbols, necessitating a single product development center.

The scale of joint operations will generally dictate the organization of PSYOP forces.

The organization of forces will vary with the nature of the mission, availability and qualifications of PSYOP personnel, and the supported commander's assessment of the PSYOP force requirement. At first sign of crisis the **PSYOP Assessment Team will assess the situation**, develop objectives and recommend appropriate actions. **A PSYOP Task Force may be required if significant forces will be needed to implement the JFC's PSYOP objectives.** The senior PSYOP officer in the theater will ensure that component staffs are aware of the PSYOP products available and that continuity remains within the psychological objectives.

PSYOP Planning

PSYOP in joint operations will be planned, developed, and executed in accordance with the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System.

Planned military PSYOP may affect not only military targets but political, economic, or social structures within the target area. The general objectives of joint PSYOP are: to reduce efficiency of opposing forces; further the US and/or multinational war effort by modifying or manipulating attitudes and behavior of selected audiences; facilitate reorganization and control of occupied or liberated areas in conjunction with civil-military operations; obtain the cooperation of allies or coalition partners and neutrals in any PSYOP effort; and support and enhance humanitarian assistance, foreign internal defense (FID), and/or foreign nation assistance military operations. A thorough knowledge of national and theater military security policies and objectives, joint operations planning skills, and a thorough understanding of the customs, mores, and values of the target audience are required for PSYOP success. **The development of the PSYOP plan requires research and analysis, development of a way to convey or deny information, production requirements, and dissemination plans.**

The most numerous and generally useful means to conduct PSYOP are open sources of information.

These sources of information should be accessible to or be activities observable by target groups. **When appropriate, deception means can be used to convey messages to foreign groups having access to foreign intelligence.** Planners must understand both the possibilities and limitations of each means and the factors to consider in their use. **Planners should understand the difference between planning for joint operations and planning for overt peacetime PSYOP programs.** Peacetime programs are planned in consonance with the respective US Ambassador's country plan and support

national objectives and policy. Plans for military operations other than war and war also support national objectives and policy but generally have a different focus for PSYOP than peacetime programs.

PSYOP and the Range of Military Operations

PSYOP supports joint and multinational conventional and special operations and other designated government agencies.

The role of PSYOP varies depending on the level of operational activity or environment. Typical military operations other than war (MOOTW) that can be supported by joint PSYOP include humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, nation assistance, security assistance, FID, counterdrug operations, and peace support operations. MOOTW not involving the use or threat of force activities provide training and in-theater access to allow for the facilitation and use of PSYOP during the transition to war. MOOTW involving the use or threat of force require the application of the diplomatic, military, economic, and informational instruments of national power. **Nonlethal activities, such as PSYOP, can be decisive in MOOTW involving the use or threat of force.** During war, PSYOP at the strategic, operational, and tactical level may enhance the success of operations at all echelons. **Employment of PSYOP can be equally effective in supporting both offensive and defensive operations conducted by conventional forces.** Special operations are also an integral part of modern warfare which may support conventional military operations or they may be conducted alone. Unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, direct action, special reconnaissance, counterterrorism, and civil affairs are some of the special operations that may support PSYOP.

Support for PSYOP

The use of PSYOP forces requires three types of support in order to adequately respond to the mission and objectives.

PSYOP planners must possess a thorough and current knowledge of these conditions to develop PSYOP targeted at selected foreign groups to influence the objective and emotional reasoning. **Intelligence Support:** This knowledge is obtained through the use of the intelligence cycle which is the process by which intelligence is obtained, produced, and made available to the PSYOP planner. The intelligence cycle has five steps: planning and direction, collection, processing, production, and dissemination. **C4 Systems Support:** Communication between staffs and commands that are planning and executing PSYOP actions are necessary for effective joint use of capabilities. A joint PSYOP communications plan should be prepared to ensure that communications systems are compatible and adequate. **Logistic Support:** PSYOP forces will normally

deploy with a 30-day basic load of PSYOP supplies. This is a baseline planning figure and may not be sufficient to meet specific contingency mission requirements. Joint planners must ensure that PSYOP support requirements are taken into account when planning logistic support.

CONCLUSION

Psychological operations are used to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, objective reasoning, and motives. In order to accomplish this goal, PSYOP must have a clearly defined mission, the ability to analyze and evaluate targets and their effects, a reliable media transmission, and a rapid ability to implement PSYOP. PSYOP depends on communication to ensure proper execution of the mission and objectives. This is carried out by command and control, preplanning and support from all levels.

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CHAPTER I

PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS: AN OVERVIEW

"The mind of the enemy and the will of his leaders is a target of far more importance than the bodies of his troops."

Brigadier General S. B. Griffith II, USMC
(Introduction to Mao Tse-Tung on Guerrilla Warfare), 1961

1. General

Psychological operations (PSYOP) are operations planned to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. **The purpose of PSYOP is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives.** PSYOP are a vital part of the broad range of US political, military, economic, and informational activities. When properly employed, PSYOP can lower the morale and reduce the efficiency of enemy forces and could create dissidence and disaffection within their ranks.

2. Military PSYOP

a. **PSYOP are an integral part of military operations and, as such, are an inherent responsibility of all military commanders.** PSYOP have been used throughout history to influence foreign groups and leaders. Modern PSYOP are enhanced by the expansion of mass communication capabilities. **Nations may multiply the effects of their military capabilities by communicating directly to their intended targets** promises or threats of force or retaliation, conditions of surrender, safe passage for deserters, invitations to sabotage, support to resistance groups, and other messages. The effectiveness of this communication depends on the perception of the communicator's credibility and capability to carry out promises or threatened actions. It is important not to

confuse psychological impact with PSYOP. Actions such as shows-of-force or limited strikes may have a psychological impact, but they are not PSYOP unless the primary purpose is to influence the emotions, motives, objective reasoning, or behavior of the targeted audience.

b. **Categories of Military PSYOP** are shown in Figure I-1.

c. **The employment of any element of national power, particularly the military element, has always had a psychological dimension.** Foreign perceptions of US military capabilities are fundamental to strategic deterrence. The effectiveness of deterrence, power projection, and other strategic concepts hinges on US ability to influence the perceptions of others. Military PSYOP constitute a systematic process of conveying messages to selected foreign groups to promote particular themes that result in desired foreign attitudes and behaviors that can augment the national effort. PSYOP are used to establish and reinforce foreign perceptions of US military, political, and economic power and resolve.

3. Basic Joint and Multinational PSYOP Doctrine

a. **US national policies and strategies** to resolve conflicts, deter hostile action, and attain objectives in crises or open hostilities are designed to influence foreign groups and leaders so that their behaviors and actions will promote the attainment of US national goals.

CATEGORIES OF MILITARY PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS (PSYOP)

Strategic PSYOP -

International information activities conducted by US Government agencies to influence foreign attitudes, perceptions, and behavior in favor of US goals and objectives. These programs are conducted predominantly outside the military arena but can utilize Department of Defense assets and be supported by military PSYOP. Military PSYOP with potential strategic impact must be coordinated with national efforts.

Operational PSYOP -

Conducted prior to, during war or conflict, and at the conclusion of open hostilities in a defined geographic area to promote the effectiveness of the area commander's campaigns and strategies.

Tactical PSYOP -

Conducted in the area assigned a tactical commander during conflict and war to support the tactical mission against opposing forces.

Consolidated PSYOP -

Conducted in foreign areas that are inhabited by an enemy or potentially hostile populace and occupied by US forces, or in which US forces are based, to produce behaviors by the foreign populace that support US objectives in the area.

b. **Operational-level strategies** are designed to strengthen US and multinational capabilities to conduct military operations in the theater and accomplish particular missions during crises and open hostilities. Along with other military operations, PSYOP may be used independently or as an integral part of other operations throughout the theater to support joint operations mission accomplishment.

c. **Tactical strategies** outline how military force will be employed against opposing forces to attain tactical objectives. PSYOP is conducted as an integral part of multinational, joint, and single-Service operations.

d. **Peacetime US military PSYOP** require USG interagency coordination and integration at the national level to be fully effective.

e. When the Armed Forces of the United States are integrated into a multinational command structure, peacetime PSYOP policies and wartime conduct should be coordinated and integrated to the maximum extent possible for the attainment of US and multinational security objectives.

4. Principles of Joint PSYOP

a. **Development Methodology.** PSYOP may be either long or short term to influence foreign conclusions and enhance potential US military capabilities. **The principles of developing PSYOP apply across the range of military operations.** Although the complexity of the methodology varies with the target audiences, basic considerations for development of all PSYOP actions are the same. The following are actions essential to successful PSYOP.

- **The PSYOP mission must be clearly defined** in terms that correspond to the supported commander's vision of how the campaign or operation will proceed.

Figure I-1. Categories of Military Psychological Operations (PSYOP)

- **PSYOP themes, activities, and symbols should be based on a thorough analysis of targets**, including friendly and adversary PSYOP capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Where possible, **the results of PSYOP should be continually evaluated for relevance to the mission and to national and military goals**. As with initial planning actions, decisions to terminate or revise PSYOP programs must be linked to careful analysis of all-source intelligence.



Selected information can be effectively conveyed through visual media during PSYOP.

b. **The psychological dimension affects those fighting the battle, their military leaders and staffs, the political leaders, and the civilian population.** On the field of battle, US forces want to face an enemy that is both unsure about its cause and capabilities and sure about its impending defeat—an enemy who, even if unwilling to surrender, has little will to engage in combat.

“To seduce the enemy’s soldiers from their allegiance and encourage them to surrender is of especial service, for an adversary is more hurt by desertion than by slaughter.”

**Flavius Vegetius Renatus,
The Military Institutions of the
Romans, c. 378 AD**

c. **Support Requirements for Successful PSYOP** are shown in Figure I-2 and discussed below.

- **All military actions should be thoroughly evaluated for their psychological implications** and, where necessary, supported by deliberate PSYOP actions to offset potentially negative effects or to reinforce positive effects.
- **The medium or media selected for transmission should be reliable and readily accessible by target audiences.**
- **Rapid exploitation of PSYOP themes is often critical.** Planning, pretesting, and approval procedures should be developed to exploit fleeting opportunities.
- **Intelligence.** Intelligence support for military PSYOP requires extensive information concerning the target identity, location, vulnerabilities, susceptibilities, and the political, economic, social or cultural, and historic conditions within the target area. **Effective PSYOP actions depend upon current and accurate intelligence information provided through application of the intelligence cycle.** Collection should be from all available sources and agencies and is based upon thorough mission and requirements planning that serves as a guideline for the PSYOP

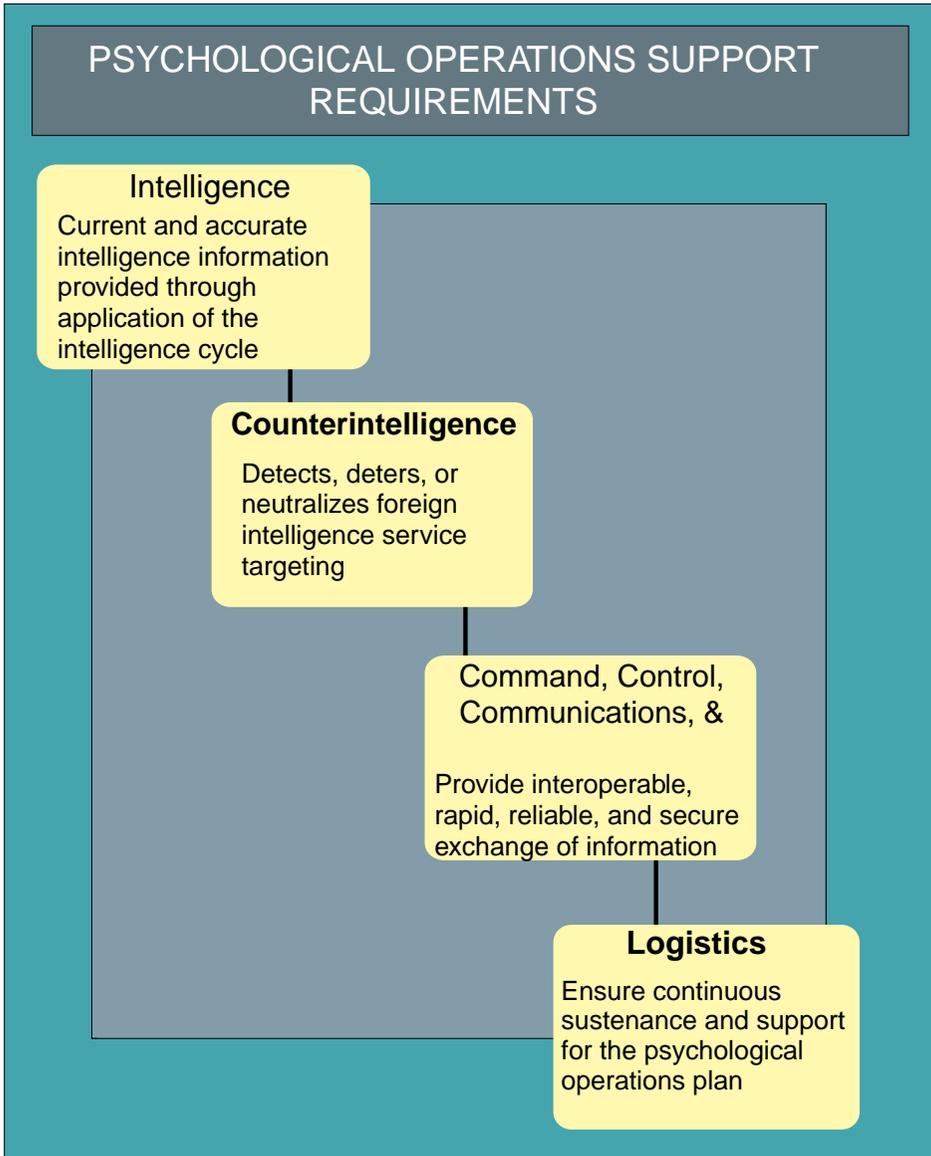


Figure I-2. Psychological Operations Support Requirements

intelligence collection effort. Development of a well-planned collection management architecture ensures that the requisite PSYOP intelligence is available to support the development of PSYOP actions.

- **Counterintelligence.** Counterintelligence support for military PSYOP consists of

detecting, deterring, or neutralizing foreign intelligence service targeting of PSYOP plans, operations, personnel, and equipment, especially at the operational and tactical levels. Upon execution of a PSYOP, counterintelligence and human resource intelligence (HUMINT) operations can provide feedback on its effect.