

Information Operations in Coalition Warfare

Christopher L. Christon

Autometric, Inc.
7700 Boston Boulevard
Springfield, VA 22153

Abstract

Information Operations are often planned and executed through closely held channels. This enhances the success of the operation through improved security and reduces the ability of the adversary to counter the operation. Information operations also often have collateral effects that usually go beyond the intended target. A simple example is an operation that reduces the ability the adversary to communicate by radio with subordinate echelons. The obvious “collateral damage” is that communications intelligence collection from that channel will be reduced and certain key information may not be collected.

Most IO operations are devised by individual services; the bulk of IO practices, procedures and doctrine are developed by the individual services. As the emphasis on information operations has increased, some joint doctrine has been developed to improve coalition planning and execution. As we move to the coalition operations dictated by U.S. national security strategy, the challenge is even greater. We need to develop ways to effectively plan and conduct information operations to ensure that the “collateral damage” from information operations and the impact of that collateral damage on the entire coalition is factored into the planning process. This paper will particularize the challenges offered by coalition IO planning and execution and offer some suggestions for overcoming them.

Mr. Chris Christon is a consultant for the Air Force’s Command and Control Technology Innovation Group (AFC2TIG) on Information Operations. He was the director of intelligence for CENTAF during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and director of intelligence for U.S. Air Force Space Command from 1992 to 1995.