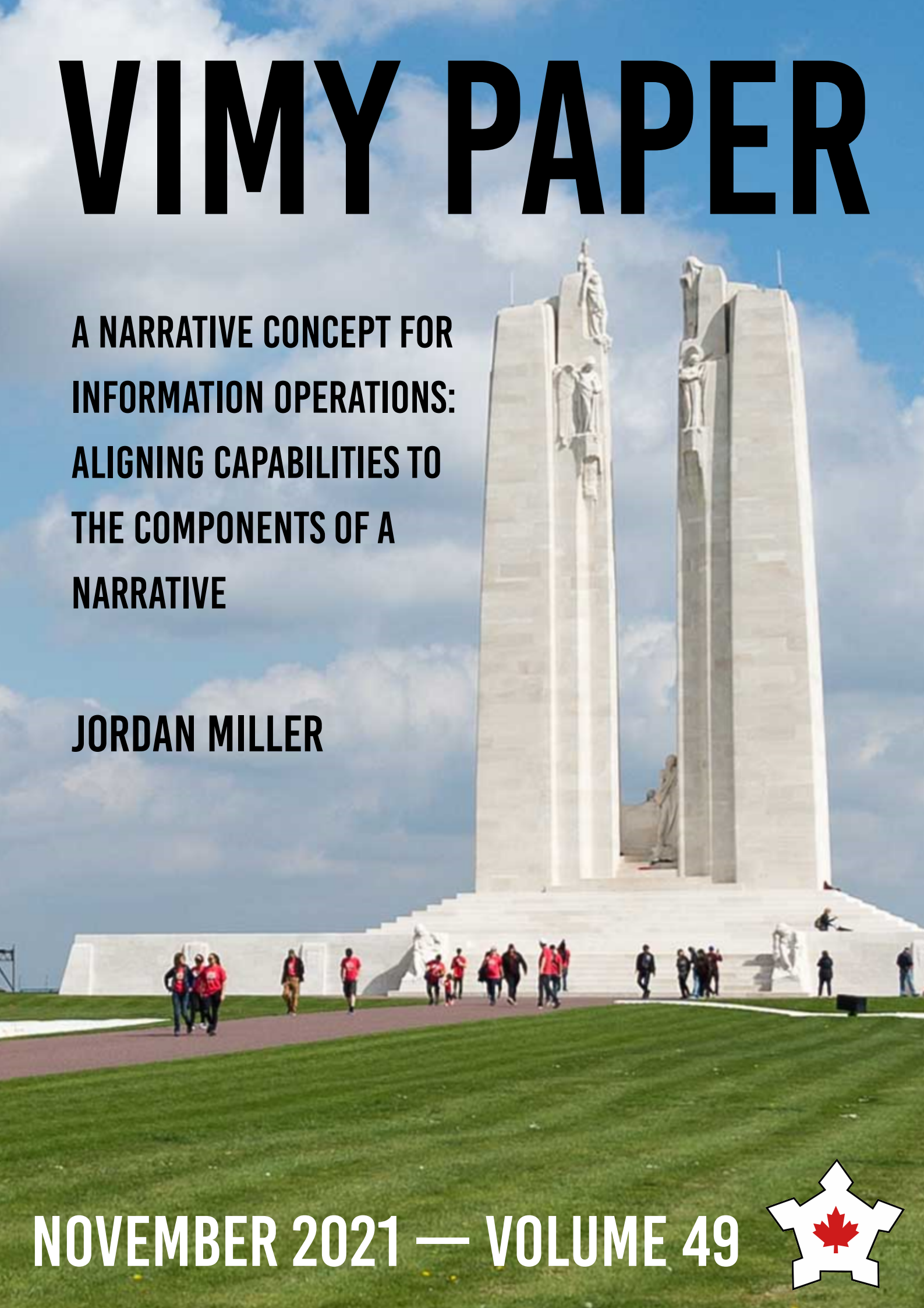
VIMY PAPER



A NARRATIVE CONCEPT FOR INFORMATION OPERATIONS: ALIGNING CAPABILITIES TO THE COMPONENTS OF A NARRATIVE

JORDAN MILLER

NOVEMBER 2021 — VOLUME 49

Conference of Defence Associations Institute

The Conference of Defence Associations Institute is a charitable and non-partisan organisation whose mandate is to provide research support to the CDA and promote informed public debate on security and defence issues and the vital role played by the Canadian Armed Forces.

Conference of Defence Associations Institute 75 Albert Street, suite 900 Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E7 613 236 9903 www.cdainstitute.ca

Institut de la Conférence des associations de la défense

L'Institut de la Conférence des associations de la défense est un organisme caritatif et non partisan dont le mandat est de fournir l'appui de recherches à la CAD, et de promouvoir le débat public sur les questions de sécurité et de défense, et le rôle essentiel des forces armées canadiennes.

Institut de la Conférence des associations de la défense 75 rue Albert, bureau 900 Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 5E7 613 236 9903 www.cdainstitute.ca

A NARRATIVE CONCEPT FOR INFORMATION OPERATIONS: ALIGNING CAPABILITIES TO THE COMPONENTS OF A NARRATIVE

JORDAN MILLER

INTRODUCTION

Canada's defence policy (Strong, Secure, Engaged) *SSE* acknowledges the complexity of the contemporary security environment, including the role of misinformation and information operations in so-called 'hybrid warfare' or the 'grey zone', and the increasing importance of the cyber and space domains.[1] *SSE* initiative 65 focuses on the development of military-specific information operations capabilities and offensive cyber operations to target, exploit, influence, and attack in support of military operations. [2] *SSE* initiative 76 focuses on enhancing information activities (including influence activities, or IA) as part of reserve force development.[3]

There is not much in the way of details for either initiative, though existing doctrine and policy documents, and statements from leaders give us some indication of roles and boundaries. The Public Affairs (PA) policy direction emphasizes the role of PA in communicating with Canadians about what

[1] Government of Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged (SSE): Canada's Defence Policy.* 2017. 50-53, 56-57.

[2] Ibid. 41.

[3] Ibid. 69.

the CAF and DND are doing on their behalf.[4] The PA mandate is clearly focused on communicating with Canadians, not foreign populations. Most notably, this view of Public Affairs focuses on delivering messages to the public, with less emphasis on competition over narratives and the meaning of messages. Narratives refer to a broad presentation about the meaning of facts in a particular context, and will be discussed in more detail below. Competition from adversaries through information operations has become more prevalent in recent years, underlining the asymmetry between the legal and procedural norms in democracies like Canada and the willingness of authoritarians to engage more aggressively in information operations. Adversaries are limited only by the means of dissemination to reach target audiences, and plausibility of the key messages directed at a target audience. This challenge is inherent for democracies competing against the information operations of authoritarian who operate without the same legal limitations and almost always control and use state media for that purpose.

The previous CDS spoke about the need to 'weaponize Public Affairs' to sharpen this capability.[5] There was some recently controversy over how the Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) expanded PA activities beyond the bounds of previous practices during COVID-19. PA operations under the auspices of protecting long-term care (LTC) homes as part of the CAF's domestic deployment included collecting data targeting Black Lives Matter (BLM), who staged no protests at any LTCs.[6] Another incident in Nova Scotia involved an exercise with forged letters from the Department of Lands and Forestry warning about wolves on the loose being distributed among the population, with no reference to the material being an exercise only.[7] The purpose of both operations is unclear. BLM is not a listed terrorist entity in Canada, though BLM is listed as a frequent target of the Proud Boys and the Three Percenters – both of whom *are* listed as terrorist entities.[8] For the wolves in Nova Scotia, it is difficult to discern what military purpose was served by warning the local population about non-existent wolves on the loose. In both cases it is difficult to understand what each operation was intended to achieve, who the target audience was, and how those messages fit into a broader narrative about the CAF. In short, these efforts do not appear to be part of any broader effort to build and present a narrative.

---

[4] Government of Canada, *DAOD 2008-0, Public Affairs Policy.* https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/defence-administrative-orders-directives/2000-series/2008/2008-0-public-affairs-policy.html

[5] David Pugliese, 'Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Jon Vance and the "weaponizing of public affairs,"' *Ottawa Citizen.* 21 September 2015.

[6] David Pugliese, 'Military leaders saw pandemic as unique opportunity to test propaganda techniques on Canadians, Force report says,' 27 September 2021.

[7] David Pugliese, 'Military propaganda exercise that caused panic about wolves on the loose "lacked oversight" – investigation finds,' Ottawa Citizen. 12 August 2021.

[8] Public Safety Canada, *Listed Terrorist Entities: Currently Listed Entities.* 25 June 2021.

The CAF recruiting website describes the role of PA Officer as advising the Commander on public affairs and focusing on media and stakeholder relations.[9] While this is certainly part of an information operations capability, the PA component – as defined – focuses on CAF messaging only. That is, outputs. The focus of IA, on the other hand, is explicitly foreign, not domestic. The recruiting website emphasizes that personnel seeking to be part of IA will be part of a high-readiness organization, deploying abroad with the disaster assistance recovery team (DART) or as part of non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO).[10] The focus is on the use of loudspeakers, radio broadcast equipment, medica production suites, and other production equipment.[11] Like PA, the IA focus is also on outputs.

A joint information operations force employment concept was developed in draft, and as of March 2021 this concept was in draft and pending approval. The contents are expected to "define the CAF's functional approach to compete, contest, confront, and when necessary, combat our nation's adversaries in the information domain."[12] This definition is specifically focused on addressing the adversary's attempts to convince or persuade populations or a perspective that could hamper the CAF's operations or credibility, and to address them accordingly. Vitally, it also acknowledges competition with adversaries and confronting adversary information operations. Also, the Joint Concept does not reference domestic or foreign populations specifically. PA and IA could fall under the Joint Concept, though this is not certain.

Whatever is contained in the Joint Concept, it should include an examination of all the components of a narrative, not just outputs. Outputs are critical for communicating: the message needs to be connected with an audience. However, there should be emphasis on constructing narratives that resonate with target audience's core beliefs, for a specific purpose, and can stand in the broader informational context. The BLM and wolf examples above are hard to place in the context of a broader narrative, for example. Understanding how narratives resonate – or don't – with a target audience is important for competing with state and armed non-state group narratives. The global reach of digital communications means that adversaries can simultaneously target deployed CAF elements and the domestic population in Canada as part of a coordinated campaign. This means that the concept of narrative is equally important to PA personnel communicating with the Canadian population and IA communicating with foreign population, or some combination in a joint capability. To better understand how the adversary targets both the domestic audience (Canadians in Canada) and CAF operations (populations in expeditionary operating environments), the CAF should take a broader view of the information competition that is larger than delivering CAF messages.

---

[9] Canadian Armed Forces – Careers: Public Affairs Officer. https://forces.ca/en/career/public-affairs-officer/

[10] Government of Canada, Canadian Army. *Influence Activities Task Force (IATF).* 2 March 2021. http://www.army-armee.forces.gc.ca/en/5-canadian-division/influence-activities-task-force/index.page

[11] Ibid.

[12] Department of National Defence, *Departmental Plan 2021-22: Operations.* March 2020. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/departmental-plans/departmental-plan-2021-22/planned-results/operations.html

The potential for using 'offensive' information operations or psychological operations (PSYOPS) as part of competition raises a number of ethical questions about the circumstances under which the CAF could use these kinds of operations, and when the CAF is the most appropriate organization to do so. Similar discussions were had about the use of offensive cyber offensive operations. In 2010 Canada's cyber operation policy focused on defensive operations to protect networks and share information with allies about attacks and threats.[13] Published in 2017, *SSE* makes explicit reference to offensive operations in initiative 65, marking a major shift in policy. Before offensive operations became official policy questions were raised about the wisdom of not making clear that Canada would undertake offensive cyber operations to defend its interests.[14] While the conditions of Canada's use of offensive cyber operations is not spelled out in *SSE* for obvious reasons, there is concern that that Canada may be falling behind. An industry association report involving multiple interviews with military, government and industry leaders warned that offensive cyber operations are not keeping pace with adversaries targeting the Canadian government and industry.[15]

Similar concerns should be part of policy discussions about the use of PSYOPS against Canada's adversaries. For the offensive use of information operations, there are many considerations to address. Information operations being used 'offensively' can easily be mischaracterized as targeting foreign publics with lies and confusion for nefarious purposes. These concerns have merit. There is an apparent contradiction – at least on the surface - between the democratic values cherished at home, and engaging in the manipulation of information abroad in potentially disingenuous ways. This work does not present an ethical framework or test for the conditions and limits of the CAF conducting offensive information operations. This is a significant concern, both as a question of Canadian values and ethics over what the Government can ask the CAF and its personnel to do on behalf of Canada, and the practical matter of developing clear policy guidance and drawing clear boundaries for what the CAF can and cannot do in the information space. This question merits additional discussion, and is beyond the scope of this work.

This remainder of this work provides an overview of 1) contemporary information operations, 2) the structure and components of narratives, and finally 3) a framework for how CAF capabilities could align to the components of a narrative. First, this work will explain the importance of information operations in the contemporary security environment, particularly below the threshold of traditional concepts of armed conflict. Second, it presents a theoretical model for understanding how narratives

---

[13] Alexander Rudolph, 'Canada's Active Cyber Defence is Anything But Active,' CGAI Policy Perspective. July 2021.

[14] John Adams, 'Canada and Cyber,' CGAI Policy Perspective. July 2016.

[15] Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries (CADSI), 'From Bullets to Bytes: Industry's Role in Preparing Canada for the Future of Cyber Defence.' 2019 Report.

are structured, the importance of aligning messages with core beliefs, context, and group identity, and what it means for developing counter-narratives. Lastly, it provides a framework for how CAF functions could be applied throughout the narrative development process.

INFORMATION OPERATIONS

The use of information as a tool of international politics is not new. Revolutionary leaders like Lenin, Mao, and Giap made information operations and propaganda central to their revolutionary strategies. Contemporary Islamist insurgent leaders like Abu Musab al-Zarqawi of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Anwar al-Awlaki of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi of the Islamic State all made effective use of the information operations and propaganda to promote their activities, recruit new members, and terrify their enemies – both where they waged war and for the populations of Western countries.[16] The United States used Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, and the Voice of America during the Cold War to bring competing voices to listeners behind the Iron Curtain that could only otherwise access state-controlled media. In all these examples, information operations and narratives were just another plane of competition, whether in the context of revolutionary war or as part of the stalemate of the Cold War where competition took other forms.

The challenge today is understanding how information operations fit into the strategic thinking of both Western powers and of their potential adversaries. It is important to be clear about what is meant by 'information operations'. In the Pentagon's 2016 'Strategy for Operations in the Information Environment' information operations (IO) are defined as the integration and employment of "information related capabilities (IRCs)…to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision making of potential adversaries" and defines IRCs as "tools, techniques or activities employed within a dimension of the information environment…" including operations security, deception, information support operations, electronic warfare (EW), cyberspace operations (CIO) and special technical operations.[17] The inclusion of EW and CIO in this definition shows that technical disruption of command and control systems is a central component of the concept, with less emphasis on the perceptions of those using the systems. This definition puts greater emphasis on systems that store, process, and transmit information than on the perceptions and decision-making faculties of the humans in the command-and-control network. Canada's land operations doctrine from 2008 defines information operations as "coordinated actions to create desired effects on the will, understanding and capability of adversaries, potential adversaries and other approved parties in support of overall objectives by affecting their information, information-based processes and systems while exploiting

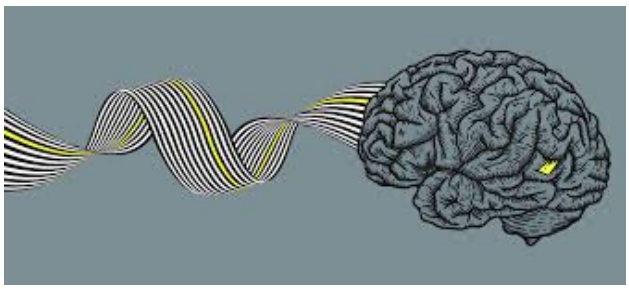
---

[16] Ali Soufan. *Anatomy of Terror: from the Death of bin Laden to the Rise of the Islamic State.* W.W Norton & Co. 2017. 142-143, 151-156; Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, *Incitement: Anwar al-Awlaki's Western Jihad.* Harvard University Press. 2020. 65-87, 236-240; Abdel Bari Atwan, *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate.* SAQI. 2015. 126-137.

[17] Department of Defense (US), 'Strategy for Operations in the Information Environment'. June 2016. 3.

and protecting one's own."[18] This definition includes the impact on will, presumably by persuasion, and concludes with emphasis on information systems. Broadly, both the Canadian and American definitions blend persuasion and disruption of technical systems as part of the same definition of information operations

Russian military doctrine, by contrast, acknowledges persuading people and impacting technical systems as separate concepts clearly differentiating between 'information-psychological warfare' and 'information-technology warfare'.[19] Information-psychological operations are conducted continuously against the perceptions and attitudes of the adversary's population and defence forces, and information-technology operations are conducted against an adversary's technical systems and machines only.[20] The information-psychological aspect is more applicable to discussions around influencing perception and attitudes because it focuses on human perception and decision-making. The Pentagon and Canadian definitions combine both the psychological and technical definitions outlined in Russian doctrine into a single concept, without differentiating the psychological aspect. This is an important limitation, because the technical means are military assets for military purposes, while the psychological persuasion can target military leaders and the civilian population by persuading them. In technical means the target is the machine or system. For psychological persuasion, the target is the human psyche.



For the purposes of this work, we are more concerned with the psychological aspect of persuasion, and less with the information systems that deliver the message. The individual means of dissemination are important as the vector for persuasion; however, we are more concerned with the content of the message. The messages are part of a broader narrative that is intended to persuade and convince the target audience of a perspective, and shift the target audience's thinking on a subject. When Marshall McLuhan wrote about the medium being the message this was a metaphor for the constant access to information through the proliferation of communications technology in the 1960s changing society profoundly from the behaviour of the family unit, how children are educated, the potential for mass surveillance, and the promotion of previously disenfranchised voices.[21] This was a clear reference to the ubiquity of information technology allowing many more voices, at higher speed, to influence popular opinion and perception. The importance and ubiquity of information technology is well appreciated, however, the medium needs to be filled with something – the narrative.

---

[18] Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GL-300-001/FP-001, Land Operations. Ottawa, ON: Chief of the Defence Staff, 2008-01, 5-44.

[19] Michael J. Mazarr, Abigail Casey, Alyssa Demus, Scott W. Harold, Luke J. Matthews, Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga, James Sladden. *Hostile Social Manipulation: Present Realities and Emerging Trends.* 2019. 57.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Marshal McLuhan, Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage: an Inventory of Effects.* Ginko Press. 1967. 11-17.

A useful conceptual division is to think about the more technical American definition of information operations and the Russian information-technology definition as the 'digital' aspect of information operations (sophisticated sensors and processing systems that enable the exchange of information) and the Russian concept of information-psychological warfare definition as the 'analog' (the content of the message, and its value in influencing and persuading). 'Digital' systems are used to disseminate the message; but the message itself is 'analog' because it targets the human psyche. Study of the 'digital' space is about the architecture of computer networks, data flows, and information technology. Study of the 'analog' space is about understanding why messages and narratives impact a human audiences. We are concerned with the 'analog' aspect of information operations. NATO has used the term 'cognitive' space when referring to a similar concept. Competing in the cognitive space is about influencing the way people thing and act about certain subjects, and can be done through either promotion of false or misleading news and information, or some combination of true and misleading information that presents a certain narrative about a subject.[22] Cognitive space is not about changing a perspective on one story, one time. It is about shifting perceptions and thoughts about an entire subject or topic.

The term 'propaganda' has a negative connotation in most Western societies, implying the use of lies, fabrications, and misleading exaggerations for the purpose of persuading or tricking the public into believing things that are not true.[23] During the First World War Lasswell recounts how calling public information about the war 'propaganda' created challenges for public perception and credibility of the organization presenting the information.[24] Propaganda can be built on lies, but is in fact much more effective when based on truths that are then utilized to derive an emotional impact or sense of emotional meaning. [25] In the context of hybrid warfare and grey zone conflict, all types of information can be used as part of a multi-domain effort – either through clear, factual messaging, or through propaganda intent on eliciting an emotional response or building a sense of emotional meaning. This means that messages are limited only by what the sender presumes the audience can be convinced has greater emotional meaning.

Information operations are often coordinated with other activities, including conventional and irregular military operations. *SSE* clearly articulates the challenge of coordinated efforts by an adversary to combine multiple tools to achieve their aim, including military and information tools

---

[22] Lawrence Aronhime et al, 'Countering cognitive warfare: awareness and resilience,' *NATO Review.* 20 May 2021. https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2021/05/20/countering-cognitive-warfare-awareness-and-resilience/index.html

[23] Edward Bernays, *Propaganda.* IG Publishing, 2005 (reprint of original publication, 1928). 37-39.

[24] Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War.* Martino Publishing, 2013 (reprint of the Peter Smith publication, 1938). 15-20.

[25] Gustave LeBon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind.* Dover Publications, 2002 (translated from original *La psychologie des foules,* 1895). 23, 74-75; Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: the Formation of Men's Attitudes.* Vintage Books. 1965, 1973. 47-48, 84-86; Ajit Mann, *Narrative Warfare.* Narrative Strategies Ink. 2018. 14-17

(including misinformation). In the context of hybrid warfare or grey zone warfare information is manipulated or exaggerated or minimized in alignment with discrete military force in a manner that circumvents or skirts traditional international norms.[26]This means combining elements of national power in ways that are novel, unanticipated, and for which international norms are not clear or where there is no consensus. This risk perception by the West's adversaries relies heavily on assumptions about western perceptions of inter-state competition and the proportionality of retaliatory force. The intent is to stay below 'the red line' of kinetic retaliation (or worse, kinetic escalation) as best possible, with the deliberate calculation that information operations will take longer to generate effects than the application of kinetic force against material targets.[27] The calculation is done deliberately, balancing the desire to achieve effects and the time necessary to achieve them, all while minimizing the risk of retaliation. The potential costs and implications of using kinetic force is also higher than using non-kinetic means, which influences cost-benefit analyses. If the use of kinetic force is 'new' (i.e.: initiating the use of military force, where none had been previously used as part of a discrete – if ongoing dispute) policy-makers are often weary that the escalation of the use of kinetic force cannot easily be controlled once initiated. [28] Therefore, the use of information operations and discrete kinetic force – separately or as part of combined approach – is specifically intended to stay below the threshold for kinetic retaliation, and thereby limit the risk of escalation. The purpose of information operations is to optimize the effects with the potential consequences: deliberate enough to have the desired effects on perceptions and therefore decision-making, but not so damaging or significant that information operations prompt meaningful retaliation and imposition of costs.

Chinese and Russian strategic planners have articulated these concepts clearly. Chinese strategic planners view all levers of national power as connected, and likewise view all global actions as connected. The greatest focus is on the psychological and political implications of actions, with military campaigns as a secondary concern.[29] The Chinese strategists that wrote *Unrestricted Warfare* rejected the idea of any division between kinetic and non-kinetic tools in modern competition between states; do not differentiate between military and civil instruments of policy; and even rejected the ideas of peace and war as the West tends to understand them. Thucydides pointed to the growth of Athenian power in the 4th century BCE as provoking a response from Sparta to fight an inevitable war while the balance of power was still competitive.[30] The process of going to war from peace shows a clear differentiation of each state of being in Thucydides work. In the early 16th century Machiavelli wrote about the importance of being clever to avoid confrontations to reduce the likelihood of war.[31] This was an appeal to be clever and manage peacetime relations to avoid war, showing a clear

---

[26] Jahara W. Matisek, 'Shades of Gray Deterrence: Issue of Fighting in the Gray (Grey?) Zone,' *Journal of Strategic Security.* Vol 10, No 3. 2017. 4-6.

[27] Daniel Bagge. Unmasking Maskirovka: Russia's Cyber Influence Operations. Defense Press. 2019. 28.

[28] Micah Zenko, *Between Threats and War: US Discrete Military Operations in the Post-Cold War World.* Stanford University Press: Council on Foreign Relations. 2010. 22-28.

[29] Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides Trap?* Mariner Books. 2018. 148-149.

[30] Michael W. Doyle, *The Ways of War and Peace.* W.W. Norton & Co. 1997. 59-65.

[31] Machiavelli, *The Prince.* Book XXVII and Book XIX. Penguin Books. 1962. 99-114.

differentiation in each state. By the 19th century and into the early 20th century, raising soldiers and managing their movements and re-supply in time of war became a major factor in how effectively armies could mobilize.[32] This speaks to the challenge of moving an industrial nation from peace to war. The common vein connecting all of these concepts is a clear delineation between war and peace; the attempt to either avoid war if possible, and when it cannot be avoided to mobilize and win as best possible.

The concepts in *Unrestricted Warfare* reject this division as central to understanding competition between states. Competition is seen as perpetual, sometimes including military confrontation and sometimes absent.[33] Competition is perpetual, thus making non-military tools vital to competition outside of military confrontation. Information tools figure prominently in this concept and can include the use of Chinese media moguls "weaponizing their media outlets as tools of state power".[34] China's "Three Warfares" policy includes elements of the *Unrestricted Warfare* concept, and provides a more formal statement about the types of non-kinetic tools to use for non-kinetic confrontation. The policy outlines 1) the use of psychological warfare to undermine adversary decision-making, 2) media warfare to present messages intended to persuade domestic and international audiences of China's perspectives, and 3) legal warfare to attempt to defend policy choices against critics through international legal means.[35] The Pentagon has identified that China's purpose with the Three Warfares policy is to undermine the narratives of its adversaries (America and the West) and its media and cultural institutions, to appeal to the ethnic Chinese diaspora abroad to support the Chinese government's policies abroad, and where possible to recruit and retain agents in academia and foreign governments to promote Chinese policy positions.[36] The combination of influence and media activities with legal means shows a preference for convincing its audiences through persuasion, and a clear intent not to back down when challenged. Legal means will be leveraged in the case of dispute. The use of media and legal tools shows a willingness to leverage the free press and fair and equitable access to the legal system against democratic societies for authoritarian purposes, and to so without any reference or threat of military action. These are simply additional tools for competition.

None of the three warfares are seen as lesser than the use of military power: simply different from military power and for specific application, always in pursuit of national objectives. The relevance for the CAF and the Government of Canada is that China does not view its global strategy – either in military operations, economics, or politics – as divided between military and civil. All tools are used

---

[32] Thomas X. Hammes. *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century.* Zenith Press. 2006. 18-20.

[33] Qiao Liang, Wang Xiangsui. *Unrestricted Warfare*. Translated from the original People's Liberation Army documents. Echo Books. 1999. 10-12.

[34] Ibid. 35-36.

[35] Stefan Halper, *China: Three Warfares.* Prepared for the Director of Net Assessment; Office of the Secretary of Defense. Washington D.C. May 2013. 27-29.

[36] Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China.* 2019. 112-113.

to meet strategic needs, meaning that information operations targeting the CAF could come from either military or civil agencies or organizations. Moreover, China's use of information operations should be viewed as equally important as other tools of statecraft – that is, still a deliberate use of national power to secure advantage.

Russia, too, uses information operations for the purposes of competition. Russian military doctrine emphasizes the combination of military power with information tools to achieve maximum effect across all types of military operations.[37] Russian diplomats have drawn parallels between military operations and foreign policy, emphasizing the utility of all elements of state power to pursue their interests.[38] Information tools are seen as the most powerful tool for achieving geo-strategic objectives; even more important that military power.[39] The value of information operations as means of achieving geo-strategic objectives without risking military confrontation is part of what makes their use so attractive.

Russia's use of the 'Internet Research Agency' (IRA) to conduct hacking and information operations in the lead up to the 2016 election began with reconnaissance efforts as early as 2013.[40] They were used to manipulate perceptions and actions of voters for the US election of 2016 and the 2016 Brexit referendum vote as part of an 'information confrontation' approach. [41] The operation included hacking material that was potentially embarrassing to the Democratic Party in the United States, releasing it at time of the IRA's choosing, and amplifying that material through social media accounts the IRA controlled.[42] The American intelligence community determined that the IRA was cut-out or proxy controlled by the Russian military intelligence (or GRU), even if not engaged in traditional military operations.[43] The 2016 election timeline shows that these operations were planned, resourced, and executed with operational security like any other military operation. This operation was clearly intended to sow confusion, spark anger, and generally foment controversy among voters. The combination of non-attributed sources and official sources, presenting a mix of half-truths, wild conjectures and conspiracy theories is deliberately intended to confuse audiences about what is true, possible, plausible, and false.

---

[37] Ofer Friedman, *Russia's Hybrid Warfare: Resurgence and Politicisation.* Oxford University Press. 2018. 107.

[38] Mark Galeotti, Controlling Chaos: How Russia Manages its Political War in Europe. European Council on Foreign Relations. Volume 228. August 2017. 1.

[39] Daniel Bagge. Unmasking Maskirovka: Russia's Cyber Influence Operations. Defense Press. 2019. 71.

[40] Select Committee on Intelligence – United States Senate, on Russian Active Measures, Campaign Interference in the 2016 U.S Election. Volume 2: Russia's Use of Social Media with Additional Views. 29-31.

[41] Sean McFate, *The New Rules of War: How America can Win – Against Russia, China, and Other Threats.* William Morrow. 2019. 198-202.

[42] Kathleen Hall Jamieson. *Cyber-War: How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect a President. What We Don't, Can't and Do Know.* Oxford University Press. 2018. 153-155, 173-178.

[43] David E. Sanger, 'Obama Strikes Back at Russia for Election Hacking,' *New York Times.* 29 December 2016.

The relevance to future military operations is the degree to which Russia is willing to use military assets for broader strategic purposes that are not conventionally military, and the potential for similar tactics and approaches to inform other information operations. The concern for CAF operations is hardly theoretical. While nowhere near as comprehensive as attempts at influencing elections, disinformation is real and has targeted the CAF. Throughout their deployment to the Baltic states, CAF task forces have been both the subjects and targets of disinformation. A campaign told the Latvian population false stories about Canadian service members bringing a high risk of COVID-19 infection with them on their deployment to that country.[44] While it appears that the Russian state was not interested in direct military confrontation with NATO forces in Latvia, Kremlin sponsored actors sought to undermine favourable impressions of NATO and the CAF through information operations instead.

It could be argued that democracies are somewhat disadvantaged in competing with authoritarian societies in information operations. Democracies cannot shut down competing perspectives by silencing all media outlets (nor should they), and publicly funded media outlets in democracies are not simply vessels for government messaging. Authoritarians typically control the domestic press and limit access to foreign media outlets. Open societies do not typically treat the press as a counter-intelligence threat, used by foreign agents to foment uprisings or political dissent. Open societies with free press outlets regularly fact-check falsehoods or factually incomplete statements made by government, industry, or civil society groups. For instance, the C.D. Howe Institute[45] and the Washington Post[46] both have a 'Pinocchio Index' for fact checking, evaluating statements as true, partially true, in need of more context or clarification or false. Authoritarians (and armed non-state groups) have no such practical limitation, giving them a decided advantage in being able to craft misleading messages. The only factor that matters for them is generating a narrative that will resonate with the target audience. This means that democracies are structurally vulnerable to the asymmetry of free speech that exists between democracies and authoritarians, giving authoritarians greater opportunity to leverage propaganda and disinformation through information operations.

This section provided a brief summary of the importance of information operations as a tool of statecraft being used against the CAF and Canada's allies, including Canada's operations in Latvia where the CAF has been targeted by information operations.[47] Most importantly, viewing information

---

[44] Murray Brewster, 'Canadian-led NATO battlegroup in Latvia target by pandemic disinformation campaign,' CBC News. 24 May 2020.

[45] 'The Pinocchio Index of Budget Overshoots'. *C.D. Howe Institute.* 17 July 2019.

[46] Glenn Kessler, 'Fact Checker: The Truth Behind the Rhetoric,' *Washington Post.* https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/

[47] Alexandra Richards, Christian Leuprecht, Alexander Moens and Alexander Lanosz, 'Four years on the Latvia mission is Canada's quite success,' *McDonald Laurier Institute.* 26 January 2021.

operations intended to persuade an audience as totally separate from kinetic force is not appropriate to understanding today's challenges. Some potential adversaries perceive competition without traditional boundaries, defying the war / peace binary. The boundaries between armed conflict and diplomacy are not as relevant or meaningful for some adversaries either: they are both part of perpetual competition. The tools for competition can be anything that provides progress toward the objective. We must therefore understand how narratives work to identify ongoing information operations quickly, understand what the adversary is trying to achieve, and then to craft effective counter-narratives.

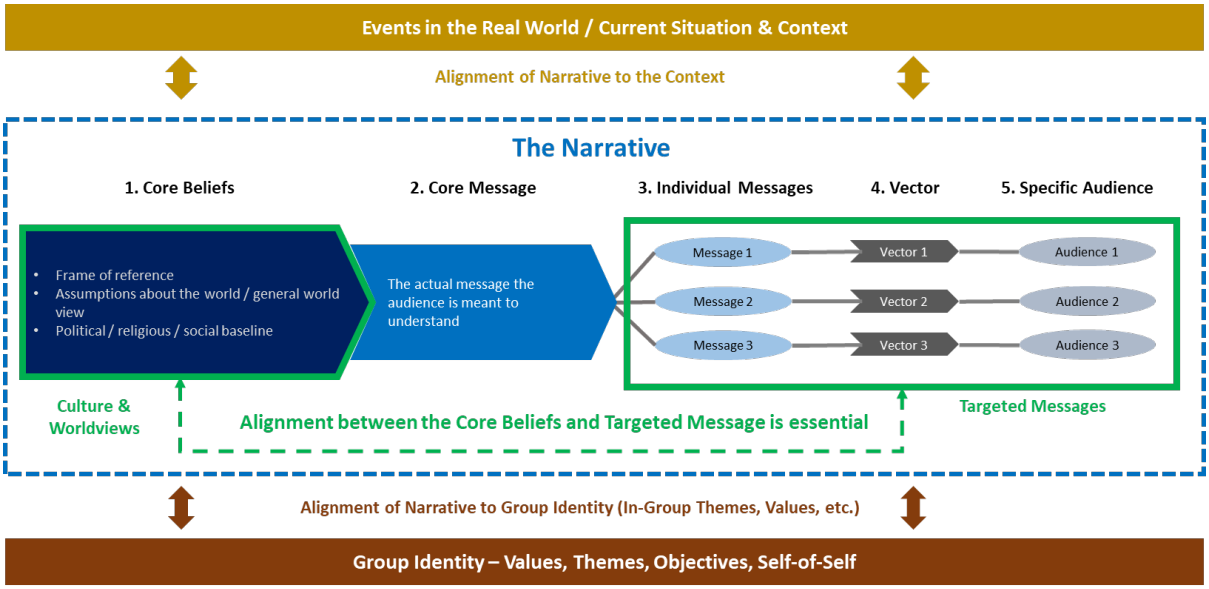
NARRATIVES: STRUCTURE AND COMPONENTS

Information competition requires Identifying and understanding adversary narratives, and understanding how they can undermine CAF and coalition narratives at home and abroad. Understanding why adversary narratives resonate with their target audiences means understanding cultural sub-text and nuance, and understanding what the messages are *actually* saying to individual audiences. This is vital to understanding an adversary's information operations, how they are structured and why, and the implications for crafting effective counter-narratives. Seeking to understand the purpose and structure of adversary narratives goes well beyond the scope of what is currently defined for PA or IA.

Persuasion is about telling a story that resonates with the audience's assumptions and worldviews. For the purposes of information operations, we can call these 'narratives'. The term 'narrative' has a specific meaning in this context. Narratives comprise a story that is deliberately targeted to communicate a message that aligns with existing cultural world views in an *emotionally resonant way*. Narratives are nested in a social context, a current-events context, and communicate something about membership in a group whose cause is just. The figure below shows the narrative and the components that comprise it, linkages to the target group's sense of identity, and linkages to contemporary events.

Figure 1: The Narrative Concept for Information Operations[48]

[48] This is the author's product, not reproduced from elsewhere.



Ajit Mann's work *Narrative Warfare* presents competition in narratives as a competition over the *meaning* of facts, not the facts themselves. Narrative competition is about presenting a version of the facts that has more emotional resonance with the audience than a competing narrative.[49] There is a 'master narrative' about a group and why its cause is just. The 'master' is broken into supporting narratives, giving the flexibility to present different analogies and appeals to the sense of group identity. Classical theorists Jacques Ellul and Gustave LeBon both emphasize that emotional appeals are more effective for persuasion than logical or measured explanations when trying to connect with both individuals and groups.[50] The facts in a narrative should be broadly true, however the emotional impact of the narrative is more important than objective truth, so long as no element is demonstrably false – that is, can be disproven.[51] The goal of a good narrative is to provide a message that presents a moral or values-based perspective on events – either promoting the values of the in-group or attacking the values of the out-group – that at is based in truth, but more importantly provides an 'emotional truth' to the audience.

So, how are narratives built? As we see above, there are five components to a narrative: the core beliefs, the core message, and the targeted messages which contain three individual components – the individual message, the specific audience, and the vector. Core beliefs are the broad ideas an audience has about social order, the role of authority, norms and mores, the role of religion, and shared historical concepts. We can call this 'culture' as a shorthand. The core message is the thing the sender wants the audience to understand. The message the sender wants the audience to understand is not necessarily the same as the text of the message that is sent. Professor of philosophy Jason Stanley describes this phenomenon succinctly with the Nazi political statement "there are Jews among us".[52]

---

[49] Ajit Mann, *Narrative Warfare*. Narrative Strategies Ink. 2018. 16-17.

[50] Ellul, 56; LeBon, 23.

[51] Ellul, 54.

[52] Jason Stanley, *How Propaganda Works.* Princeton University Press. 2015. 140.

The surface messages is the existence of Jews in society. This is not the message the Nazis intended their audience to hear. The core message the audience is meant to take away is that the presence of Jews in society is a negative thing; that is, Jews are somehow a negative force and merely stating their presence is enough to communicate the alleged threat to the audience. That is not the text of the message, but that is what the audience is intended to take away. The core message *can* be as direct as the stated message, in the case of government statements about events, policies or decisions; but it does not need to be. If we accept that the core message is not necessarily what is being said, it means that we must discern what the sender is *actually* trying to communicate.

The components that make up the targeted message speak directly to the cultural nuances of the specific audience being targeted. Each specific audience may need a slightly different message, delivered to them using the means they prefer. People working in marketing and advertising often tailor messages to different sub-groups to appeal to their individual tastes.[53] The early days of the Nazi regime provides an illustrative example of targeted messaging. In the early 1930s the Nazis decided not to leverage anti-Semitic themes when targeting urban middle-class Germans because that message was unlikely to resonate with that audience, and in rural northern Germany the Nazis decided to leverage anti-Danish messages instead of anti-Semitic messages because the Danish were more likely to be seen as a threat.[54] The different messages were intended to rally both urban middle-class voters and rural voters around the Nazi vision, but through messages customized for that specific population's presumed preferences and prejudices. Delivering individual messages to a range of specific audiences means understanding nuances about that population, and connecting with the specific audience through the right means.

Western intelligence services were no stranger to information operations either, especially in the early days of the post-war period. They showed a clear understanding of exploiting the contradictions in adversary narratives and in using the appropriate vector to reach the audience. Beginning under Truman, these operations were targeted at audiences in Soviet-occupied countries, and intended to contrast and expose the gap between the ideological rhetoric of the Soviet Union and the way people were actually treated under Soviet occupation.[55] The core message was that the Soviets were brutal, despite what they said about communism. By providing Soviet citizens with reliable, truthful information they could not otherwise access through state-controlled media in Warsaw Pact countries, American intelligence services were attempting to undermine the 'confuse-and-divide' approach of Soviet messaging.[56]

---

[53] Edward Bernays, *Propaganda*. Ig Publishing. 2005 (Originally Published in 1928). 80-81, 121.

[54] Nicholas O'Shaughnessy, 'How Did Hitler Seize Supreme Power?,' *Dan Snow's History Hit.* 23 July 2020.

[55] Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War.* University of Pennsylvania Press. 2008. 45

[56] Allen Dulles (in his capacity as Director of Central Intelligence). Memorandum to Robert G. Murphy, Deputy Undersecretary of State, State Department. 3 May 1957. https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP80B01676R002600100042-9.pdf

The individual messages the CIA used mixed a combination of authentic and fact-based stories about Soviet atrocities against people in East Germany gathered from defectors published in front-publications, and engaged in street action like graffiti, pamphleting, and street lectures to undermine Soviet credibility in Berlin in the late 1940s and early 1950s.[57] The truthful individual messages were intended to show that the Soviets were treating the population under occupation poorly, and were doing so out of vindictiveness over the war. Individual messages through street actions with exaggerations were intended to provoke a response from the East German authorities, which they did. In the case of graffiti, East German authorities modified painted slogans to make them look pro-communist, not anti.[58] This level of ground-level targeting of the people of Berlin was intended to connect with people at a very local level. Individual messages were intended to target both the readers of print media publications, and street action targeted people moving on foot through the city. Many people were likely both, giving people multiple exposures to CIA messaging.

The Soviets responded to fact-based stories by publishing factual stories about lynching in the United States and how white perpetrators were rarely, if ever, convicted of the crimes. This leveraging of facts prompted the 'Voice of America' (VOA) officials to conclude that a "lynching should be reported without comment" by VOA.[59] The VOA officials were effectively forced to accept the truth in Soviet messaging, and apparently wagered that accepting these stories would sustain credibility on all subsequent messaging about Soviet brutality. This decision was likely motivated by the need to maintain credibility with the audiences on the received end of one of the most important American vectors for information operations during the Cold War: radio. Radio was an important means during the Cold War because it allowed Western messages to reach audiences all across the Warsaw pact with fact-based messaging, and to do so without being in physical contact. For targeted messages to resonate with specific audience, the means and the individual message must be appropriate to how the specific audience consumes information. The former head of the Voice of America emphasized the importance of connecting the specific audience to the message using the right vector. If the vector is not appropriate, the resonance of the overall message will suffer because it does not align with how the specific audience prefers to consume information.[60] This lesson applies today most clearly to the consumption of digital and non-digital media. Digital natives under the age

---

[57] Thomas Rid, *Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare.* Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux. 2020. 64-84

[58] Ibid, 77.

[59] Belmonte, 167.

[60] Robert R. Reilly: Information Operations – Successes and Failures. Westminster Institute. Uploaded to YouTube, 30 September 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kw_YdHJkDcs.

of the age of 65, for example, are much more easily targeted using social media platforms than older people that are not digital natives.[61] Older non-digital natives may prefer television or radio or traditional print media. In countries with low literacy rates and large rural populations, radio broadcasts have been effective in reaching audiences that cannot be as easily reached through either digital media or physical media like print.[62]

For a narrative to resonate with a specific audience, all five pieces described above need to work together. Alignment is what gives the narrative coherence. In every narrative the targeted message needs to align with core beliefs, and the core message must be understood and connect with core beliefs of the specific audience. If the core message and the targeted message do not provide an emotional truth or sense of meaning, the whole narrative will fall flat. Worse, a narrative could end up causing unintentional offence and/or loss of credibility if the message has a culturally offensive implication or double-entendre the sender does not understand.

The brackets above and below the narrative in the diagram show how the narrative must fit into the context of the world in which the audience exists and shows the need to link the narrative to a sense of group identity for the specific audiences. The core message should align with events in the real world for two reasons. First, messages that provide meaning to the day's events gives the sender credibility as the revealer of the 'hidden truth', [63] especially if the events are complex, hard to understand, or confusing. Second, referencing the day's events allows the sender to wrap and manipulate new and topical information into the pre-determined narrative.[64] The day's events are not necessarily the sender's creation, but the sender will give them a sense of meaning. With a constant flow of events in the news cycle, the sender will never run out of new material that apparently validates the pre-determined narrative.

The 'truths' depicted are not simply for the benefit of making the most of the news cycle. They are central to connecting a narrative to a person's sense of membership and identity in a group. Revealing 'truths' with a motivated agenda allows the sender to depict a binary condition for every story: something that clearly identifies who 'we' are who 'they' are,[65] helping to reinforce the sense of group belonging. Information operations generally (and especially for armed conflict) identify a friendly group and a hostile group. There is a group with whom we should empathize, and a group with whom we should not empathize; in fact we should blame them for harm to the group with whom we should empathize. J.M. Berger articulates the importance of an 'in-group' and an 'out-group' along the path to extremism, where the health and success of the in-group depends on harm being committed against

---

[61] Jordan Davidson, Christoph Schimmele, 'Evolving Internet Use Among Canadian Seniors,' Statistics Canada. 10 July 2019.

[62] Bhaskar Samah, Sukmaya Lama, 'Radio as an Educational Tool in Developing Countries,' *Conference Paper - International Conference on Developmental Interventions and Open Learning for Empowering and Transforming Society.* Presented 16-17 December 2017.

[63] LeBon, 30.

[64] Ellul, 111-113.

[65] Ibid, 24-25.

the out-group.[66] To reinforce the sense of group identity, imagery, symbols, myths, and stereotypes provide useful totems to generate an immediate emotional response from the target audience,[67] whether that response is affinity for the in-group or hostility toward the out-group. Imagery and symbols are very effective in communicating complex ideas quickly. Imagery distills complex identity narratives about a group, its aspirations, its identity, and any applicable ideas about victimhood or glory into snippets that members of the group will instantly understand. Imagery and symbols condense highly complex emotional ideas about group identity that would take pages of text to explain in words. This is as true for internet memes today as it was for propaganda posters during both World Wars.

Understanding narratives, their components, and how they work enables us to understand what an adversary is trying to communicate. It also enables more effective counter-narratives to be developed. Developing counter-narratives is a major challenge. Counter-narratives should not simply argue the opposing point that the adversary is making. Counter-narratives should rather examine the full narrative – the emotional meaning – the adversary is trying to communicate, and then identifying contradictions, inconsistencies, or illogical analogies in the adversary narrative.[68] Pointing out the fissures and inconsistencies between the core beliefs and core messages can help undermine the impact of the full narrative. If there are factually disprovable components in an adversary's narrative, those should be pointed out directly because only those things that are demonstrably disprovable can be shown as false.[69]

However, counter-narratives should also bring an emotional resonance of their own, and should not rely exclusively on just pointing out demonstrably disprovable things. The purpose of a narrative is emotional meaning, and even if some facts as part of the narrative are proven false the emotional satisfaction of the original narrative may not be undermined.[70] This is especially true if the message has already evoked an emotional response in the audience, regardless of whether or not the message is fully true.[71] The more committed a person is to their membership in the group, the less likely that competing facts will undermine their belief in a central narrative,[72] meaning the more committed a person is, the less susceptible those individuals are likely to be to counter-narratives on their own. Effective counter-narratives therefore should both target fissures and inconsistencies in a narrative, and should also be a narrative of its own. That is, it should be present something more than just fact and contain some element of emotional appeal on its own. This is a significant challenge for the CAF

---

[66] J.M. Berger, *Extremism.* MIT Press. 2016. 121-130

[67] Ellul, 94.

[68] Kurt Braddock, *Weaponized Words: The Strategic Role of Persuasion in Violent Radicalization and Counter-Radicalization.* Cambridge University Press. 2020. 83-93.

[69] Ellul, 54.

[70] Ibid, 56-57.

[71] Russell Muirhead, Nancy L. Rosenblum, *A Lot of People are Saying: The New Conspiracism and the Assault on Democracy.* Princeton University Press. 153-158.

[72] Arie W. Kruglanski, Jocelyn J. Belanger, Rohan Gunaratna, *The Three Pillars of Radicalization: Needs, Narratives, and Networks.* Oxford University Press. 2019. 83-85.

when operating in an expeditionary capacity. The CAF as an institution and in terms of personnel may lack to knowledge of what is or isn't culturally significant in the operating environment.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT: ALIGNING CAPABILITIES TO COMPONENTS IN A NARRATIVE

The table below shows the specific functions that address each element of a narrative. The table below is not intended to present a view of a unit or formation. Information operations can be included in other intelligence and targeting processes, and this capability development concept is not intended to supplant or replace any of those. Operationalization of this concept is an important consideration for integrating the ideas into existing processes and protocols. However, this is outside the scope of this work, and merits additional research and consideration. This is intended as a capability development exercise to show what types of capabilities are required for each stage of developing and delivering narratives or counter-narratives.

Figure 2: Aligning Capabilities to Components in a Narrative

Element of the Narrative	Function
Core Beliefs	Intelligence: regional area experts or cultural experts, or human terrain teams (or equivalent)
Core Message	• Command • Liaison (whole-of-government messages, ally and partner messaging) • Public Affairs • Information Activities / Influence Activities
Individual Message	• Public Affairs • Information Activities / Influence Activities

Element of the Narrative	Function
Vector	Context specific
Identifying the Audience	• Public Affairs • Information Activities / Influence Activities
Connection to the Narrative	**Element**
Current Events	Intelligence: analysis of current events, and how they impact the adversary's narrative choices.
Group Identity	• Intelligence: areas experts or cultural experts • Human terrain teams (or equivalent).

Providing assessments of core beliefs requires deep cultural understanding, both of the people and the operating environment. This should be an intelligence function: specifically, the kind of capability the United States refers to as Foreign Area Officers (FAO). The FAO capability involves personnel becoming experts on a region, including culture, history, and possibly learning the language. This knowledge is important to building cultural intelligence (CQ), whose central value is allowing those who have developed region-specific CQ to avoid mirror-imaging when trying to understand the culture in which they are operating.[73] The importance of CQ during Canada's commitment to Afghanistan was understood through gaps identified during operational planning, and prompted recommendations for a CAF Centre for Cultural Studies to address this gap.[74] Identifying the need for specific cultural knowledge will be based on forecasting of likely operating environments – regions and countries – where the CAF may be deployed. The future is unknowable, so forecasting cannot be expected to provide perfect predictions of where the CAF may be deployed. For this reason, accessing cultural knowledge for unforeseen missions and operating environments may require the CAF to be creative in finding personnel with cultural knowledge if none exists. Developing FAO-type knowledge can take years, and not something that can be rapidly generated. Identifying people from regions or countries where the CAF is deployed, or with specific education on the region, could provide valuable.

The people for this could include military personnel or civilians. The ethnic and cultural diversity in Canadian cities presents an opportunity to recruit from (or into) the reserve component. Recruiting personnel born and raised in a specific cultural context where the CAF currently has insufficient understanding would deliver much-needed understanding with less time and training than an 'outsider' would require. Civilians with the appropriate background or personal aptitude could also be recruited into this function, either from current DND employees, from other Government of Canada

---

[73] Nick Chop, Karen D. Davis, 'Chapter 8: Cultural Intelligence,' in: Gary Ivey, Kerry Sudom, Waylon H. Dean, Maximbe Tremblay, *The Human Dimension of Operations: A Personnel Research Perspective.* Canadian Defence Academy Press. 2014. 161-163.

[74] Emily Spencer, Tony Balasevicius, 'Crucible of Success: Cultural Intelligence and the Modern Battlespace,' *Canadian Military Journal.* Vol 9, No 3. 2007. http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo9/no3/07-spencer-eng.asp#n2

agencies, or from outside. There is also a potential role for the 'human terrain team' (HTT) concept, where academics educated in anthropology and social psychology were embedded with US Army units in Iraq and Afghanistan. While the HTTs the US Army fielded were expensive and the source of significant controversy over the use of academics for direct military purposes,[75] the concept could still be useful in some shape. We are not recommending simply re-creating the same capability, or even advocating that previous models were necessarily the appropriate ones. However, detailed expert analysis on group identity, sense-of-self within the group, and the meaning of cultural touchstones (symbols, imagery, etc.) would provide valuable supplementary context to intelligence analysis on adversary groups and on the populations being targeted. The core purpose is to provide cultural understanding of the operating environment to better understand the nuances and subtext of narrative in the appropriate context.

The other elements of context that are essential to understanding the operating environment are current events, and the identity of groups in the operating environment. Adversaries are the most important entity to understand because they are the most likely group to be competing with the CAF using information operations. Identifying potential cut-outs or proxies, ostensibly working independently but conducting information operations on behalf of adversary groups, is important. The IRA discussed previously is good contemporary example. Adversaries may use cut-outs to preserve a veneer of perceived neutrality of a source who is acting as a conduit for adversary messaging. Likewise, adversaries are likely to attempt to launder disinformation through official press outlets to further distance themselves from the disinformation. Like cut-outs, laundering disinformation through official press outlets is intended to lend legitimacy to disinformation and conceal its source, and therefore motive. Providing analysis on current events and identifying potential disinformation and cut-outs should be an intelligence role. Likewise, providing assessments of group identity should be an intelligence role as part of understanding the adversary. There is also a potential role for the HTT concept here

Once cultural and social context and group identities are understood, core messages need to be developed to promote the CAF's purpose and to undermine adversary narratives – especially narratives that contain false information about the CAF's operations and its personnel. There are many functions involved in the development of core messages. The core message is a command decision that should be integrated with other operations and activities. CAF information operations are likely to take place in a multi-agency (and possibly multi-national) context in support of the Government of Canada's strategic objectives. The multi-agency and possibly multi-national nature of operations means that the CAF is only one stakeholder in the Government of Canada's responsibility in presenting narratives.

As with all information operations, they do not exist in isolation from other media and narratives. There is a need for liaison with other Government of Canada agencies, allies, and possibly the need to

[75] Christopher Sims, *Academics in Foxholes: the Life and Death and Human Terrain System.* Foreign Affairs. 4 February 2016.

consult with international NGOs or civil society groups. The specifics of the context will vary between operations, driven by things like situation, government objectives, role of allies, etc. CAF messaging will take place in a whole-of-government context, regardless of whether the audience is Canadians at home, or target audiences as part of expeditionary operations, or more likely both simultaneously . The roles of PA and IA will dictate the target audience, and therefore the types of core messages. The purpose of coordination is to maintain continuity across Government of Canada narratives to the greatest extent practical. The need for coherence in the narrative applies to tactical and strategic messaging.

The continuity of the core message within a narrative is essential for two reasons: first, the messages must all support the same 'master narrative' that presents a coherent story; and second, small ambiguities or perceived inconsistencies in core messages will almost certainly be exploited by adversaries for the purposes of counter-narratives or disinformation. Providing an opportunity to the adversary for counter-narratives not only undermines the CAF and Government of Canada message, but also creates additional work to develop CAF counter-narratives, costing time and possibly the information initiative.

Tailoring individual messaging for specific audiences should be the role of PA or IA, depending on whether the audience is domestic or foreign. There may be a role for intelligence or Global Affairs Canada to provide demographic data (age breakdown, languages, occupations, lifestyle, etc.) to identify different audiences in an expeditionary operating environment.

Selecting the vector of communications will likely be the responsibility of PA or IA, however other enablers may be required. Many information operations will rely on existing vectors like television, radio, print media and social media. Those vectors exist already, and are either managed through private sector media outlets, social media operators, or through public broadcasters. In austere operating environments – especially those ravaged by war or natural disaster – infrastructure may be significantly reduced. If radio, television, or high-speed broadband networks are destroyed or significantly curtailed, the CAF will likely need to work with allies or the host nation to establish some kind of broadcasting capability. This could include ground-based fixed infrastructure (towers and dishes) or relying on periodic broadcasting from aircraft, vehicles, or ships. The appropriateness of the vector will depend on how the audience typically consumes information and the availability of resources. The vector may also be verbal. Verbal engagement with key leaders may be the most appropriate vector to deliver messages to people that exercise social influence. Patrol leaders, CIMIC (civil-military cooperation) operators, liaison officers, or others may be the most appropriate function, depending on the context of the operating environment and the target audience. Verbal messages can also be passed through more official means, like meetings with allies, civil society leaders, host nation officials, etc. to communicate official messages from the CAF to those audiences.

CONCLUSIONS

The CAF delivers military capabilities to satisfy the needs of the Government of Canada, domestically and internationally. As Clausewitz reminds us, war is but the continuation of politics by other means. Increasingly, the means of politics include information operations to communicate legitimate information and deliberate disinformation and propaganda as part of a broader campaign. As *SSE* outlines, the plane of competition is increasingly complex and unclear. Competition will not be waged by combat action alone, or even by measures of military power alone. Concepts like grey zone and hybrid warfare blend political communications and combat action as part of international political competition. Potential adversaries know this very well, and are organized to compete in the grey and hybrid space.

SSE identified the need for a joint information operations concept, and that concept is pending completion and is currently being reviewed as a draft. The complexity of the information operations environment means that understanding the emotional and cultural significance of narratives that adversaries are putting forward is essential to determining what adversaries are saying, what they are *really* saying if the meaning differs from the text, and as a basis for developing counter-narratives. PA and IA are focused on producing messages for target audiences. This role is important, though on its own is not broad enough for understanding what an adversary is communicating and why. Using a narrative-based approach will enable greater understanding in that regard.

Information operations and competition in the information space is not something that the CAF can ignore. Whether domestically or deployed, adversaries are likely to use narratives to attempt to undermine the CAF's credibility and that of Canada. Pericles is often quoted as saying "just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you."[76] Potential adversaries have a deep interest and intent in using information operations as part of their international political competition, and that includes influencing the perception of target audiences in expeditionary contexts and narratives aimed at Canadians in Canada. The CAF will therefore be implicated in the information space (within the context of DND/CAF's mandate) as part of the Government of Canada's narratives. Taking a narrative-based approach will enable a systematic approach to understanding the adversary's narratives and to guide the development of counter-narratives.

[76] Lucian Gideon Conway III, Ryan L. Boyd, Tara C. Dennehy, Devin J. Mills, Meredith A. Repke. 'Introduction: Political Behaviour Inside and Outside the Lab: Bringing Political Research to the Real World,' *Translational Issues in Psychological Science.* Vol 3, No 3. 2017. 227.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jordan is currently a PhD student at RMC. His area of focus is on information operations and propaganda, its structure, methods, and its role in modern warfare and conflict. His previous research topics include the triggers of state failure, political-military wargaming, social network analysis in irregular warfare, and evaluating emerging technologies for military application. He is currently employed in corporate strategy and public relations with specific focus on defence, security, and program development.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, J. 'Canada and Cyber,' CGAI Policy Perspective. July 2016.

Allison, G. *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides Trap?* Mariner Books. 2018.

Aronhime, L., et al, 'Countering cognitive warfare: awareness and resilience,' *NATO Review.* 20 May 2021. https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2021/05/20/countering-cognitive-warfare-awareness-and-resilience/index.html

Atwan, A.B *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate.* SAQI. 2015.

Bagge, D. *Unmasking Maskirovka: Russia's Cyber Influence Operations.* Defense Press. 2019.

Belmonte, L.A. *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War.* University of Pennsylvania Press. 2008.

Berger, J.M. *Extremism.* MIT Press. 2016.

Bernays, E. *Propaganda.* IG Publishing, 2005 (reprint of original publication, 1928).

Braddock, K. *Weaponized Words: The Strategic Role of Persuasion in Violent Radicalization and Counter-Radicalization.* Cambridge University Press. 2020

Brewster, M. 'Canadian-led NATO battlegroup in Latvia target by pandemic disinformation campaign,' CBC News. 24 May 2020.

Canadian Armed Forces – Careers: Public Affairs Officer. https://forces.ca/en/career/public-affairs-officer/

Canadian Association of Defence and Security Industries (CADSI), 'From Bullets to Bytes: Industry's Role in Preparing Canada for the Future of Cyber Defence.' 2019 Report.

C.D. Howe Institute. 'The Pinocchio Index of Budget Overshoots'. 17 July 2019.

Chop, N; Davis, K.D. 'Chapter 8: Cultural Intelligence,' in: Ivey, G; Sudom, K; Dean, W.H; Tremblay, M. *The Human Dimension of Operations: A Personnel Research Perspective.* Canadian Defence Academy Press. 2014.

Davidson, J; Schimmele, C. 'Evolving Internet Use Among Canadian Seniors,' Statistics Canada. 10 July 2019.

Conway L.G; Boyd, R.L; Dennehy, T.C; Mills, D.J; Repke, M.A. 'Introduction: Political Behaviour Inside and Outside the Lab: Bringing Political Research to the Real World,' *Translational Issues in Psychological Science.* Vol 3, No 3. 2017.

Department of National Defence, *Departmental Plan 2021-22: Operations.* March 2020. https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/departmental-plans/departmental-plan-2021-22/planned-results/operations.html

Department of Defense (US), 'Strategy for Operations in the Information Environment'. June 2016.

Department of National Defence. B-GL-300-001/FP-001, Land Operations. Ottawa, ON: Chief of the Defence Staff, 2008-01.

Doyle, M.W. *The Ways of War and Peace.* W.W. Norton & Co. 1997.

Dulles, A (in his capacity as Director of Central Intelligence). Memorandum to Robert G. Murphy, Deputy Undersecretary of State, State Department. 3 May 1957. https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP80B01676R002600100042-9.pdf

Ellul, J. *Propaganda: the Formation of Men's Attitudes.* Vintage Books. 1965, 1973.

Friedman, O. *Russia's Hybrid Warfare: Resurgence and Politicisation.* Oxford University Press. 2018.

Galeotti, M. 'Controlling Chaos: How Russia Manages its Political War in Europe.' European Council on Foreign Relations. Volume 228. August 2017.

Government of Canada, Canadian Army. 'Influence Activities Task Force (IATF).' 2 March 2021. http://www.army-armee.forces.gc.ca/en/5-canadian-division/influence-activities-task-force/index.page

Government of Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged (SSE): Canada's Defence Policy.* 2017.

Government of Canada, *DAOD 2008-0, Public Affairs Policy.* https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/defence-administrative-orders-directives/2000-series/2008/2008-0-public-affairs-policy.html

Hall Jamieson, K. *Cyber-War: How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect a President. What We Don't, Can't and Do Know.* Oxford University Press. 2018.

Halper, S. *China: Three Warfares.* Prepared for the Director of Net Assessment; Office of the Secretary of Defense. Washington D.C. May 2013.

Hammes, T.X. *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century.* Zenith Press. 2006.

Kessler, G. 'Fact Checker: The Truth Behind the Rhetoric,' *Washington Post.* https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/

Kruglanski, A.W; Belanger, J.J; Gunaratna, R. *The Three Pillars of Radicalization: Needs, Narratives, and Networks.* Oxford University Press. 2019.

Lasswell, H.D. *Propaganda Technique in the World War.* Martino Publishing, 2013 (reprint of the Peter Smith publication, 1938).

LeBon, G. *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind.* Dover Publications, 2002 (translated from original *La psychologie des foules,* 1895).

Liang, Q; Xiangsui, W. *Unrestricted Warfare*. Translated from the original People's Liberation Army documents. Echo Books. 1999.

Machiavelli, *The Prince.* Book XXVII and Book XIX. Penguin Books. 1962.

Mann, A. *Narrative Warfare.* Narrative Strategies Ink. 2018.

Matisek, J.W. 'Shades of Gray Deterrence: Issue of Fighting in the Gray (Grey?) Zone,' *Journal of Strategic Security.* Vol 10, No 3. 2017.

Mazarr, M.J; Casey, A; Demus, A; Harold, S.W; Matthews, L.J; Beauchamp-Mustafaga, N; Sladden, J. *Hostile Social Manipulation: Present Realities and Emerging Trends.* 2019.

McFate, S. *The New Rules of War: How America can Win – Against Russia, China, and Other Threats.* William Morrow. 2019.

McLuhan, M; Fiore, Q. *The Medium is the Massage: an Inventory of Effects.* Ginko Press. 1967.

Meleagrou-Hitchens, A. *Incitement: Anwar al-Awlaki's Western Jihad.* Harvard University Press. 2020.

Muirhead, R; Rosenblum, N.L. *A Lot of People are Saying: The New Conspiracism and the Assault on Democracy.* Princeton University Press. 2019.

O'Shaughnessy, N. 'How Did Hitler Seize Supreme Power?,' *Dan Snow's History Hit.* 23 July 2020.

Public Safety Canada, *Listed Terrorist Entities: Currently Listed Entities.* 25 June 2021.

Pugliese, D. 'Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Jon Vance and the "weaponizing of public affairs,"' *Ottawa Citizen.* 21 September 2015.

Pugliese, D. 'Military leaders saw pandemic as unique opportunity to test propaganda techniques on Canadians, Force report says,' *Ottawa Citizen*. 27 September 2021.

Pugliese, D. 'Military propaganda exercise that caused panic about wolves on the loose "lacked oversight" – investigation finds,' *Ottawa Citizen*. 12 August 2021.

Reilly, R. R. Information Operations – Successes and Failures. Westminster Institute. Uploaded to YouTube, 30 September 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kw_YdHJkDcs.

Richards, A; Leuprecht, C; Moens, A; Lanosz, A. 'Four years on the Latvia mission is Canada's quite success,' *McDonald Laurier Institute.* 26 January 2021.

Rid, T. *Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare.* Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux. 2020.

Rudolph, A. 'Canada's Active Cyber Defence is Anything But Active,' CGAI Policy Perspective. July 2021.

Samah, B; Lama, L. 'Radio as an Educational Tool in Developing Countries,' *Conference Paper - International Conference on Developmental Interventions and Open Learning for Empowering and Transforming Society.* Presented 16-17 December 2017.

Sanger, D.E. 'Obama Strikes Back at Russia for Election Hacking,' *New York Times.* 29 December 2016.

Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China.* 2019.

Select Committee on Intelligence – United States Senate, on Russian Active Measures, Campaign Interference in the 2016 U.S Election. Volume 2: Russia's Use of Social Media with Additional Views.

Sims, C. *Academics in Foxholes: the Life and Death and Human Terrain System.* Foreign Affairs. 4 February 2016.

Spencer, E; Balasevicius, T. 'Crucible of Success: Cultural Intelligence and the Modern Battlespace,' *Canadian Military Journal.* Vol 9, No 3. 2007. http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo9/no3/07-spencer-eng.asp#n2

Soufan, A. *Anatomy of Terror: from the Death of bin Laden to the Rise of the Islamic State.* W.W Norton & Co. 2017.

Stanley, J. *How Propaganda Works.* Princeton University Press. 2015.

Zenko, M. *Between Threats and War: US Discrete Military Operations in the Post-Cold War World.* Stanford University Press: Council on Foreign Relations. 2010.