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# Informed Terminology for Non-Lethal Targeting

By Lt. Col. Daniel S. Williams

Words have meaning and perceptions drive behaviors. Information Operations (IO) has a unique challenge in the contemporary informational environment supporting the Commander's intent through cultural and social sensitivities of partners, allies, and citizens. The deployment experiences of the 110th IO FSB over the past decade, in support of both Federal and Domestic missions, have proven that the use of the word "target" (or "targeting") can hinder or impede non-lethal missions. Effective use of less aggressive terminology can improve mission coordination and cooperation issues with key U.S. and foreign agencies and organizations.

The term pre-disposes State and AID organizations to reject proposed plans and usually inspires nervous laughter, with only half-joking questions about how "nobody's getting killed, right?" The 110th IO Field Support Team in Djibouti experienced this as recently as January, 2016, while briefing the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) operations to the U.S. Africa Command and AFRICOM Combatant Commander. The AFRICOM Senior Foreign Policy Advisor expressed concern with the use of the word "target" in reference to a CJTF-HOA operation.

Military use of the word "target" is most common in the context of kinetic operations, and most commonly associated with combat, roads to war, battlefield operations and missions related to combating enemy forces. However, in many operational environments the military mission necessitates that non-lethal effects be applied against unlawful citizens, as opposed to combatant enemies or military adversaries. In the U.S. Federal operational environment, U.S. military IO operations frequently support the Department of State in non-conflict areas (e.g. Combat Camera, Key Leader Engagements, Public Affairs, etc.), developing targets and ways to constructively influence them within U.S. and international law.

In a similar way, National Guard units can be called upon to support Civil Authorities through Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) operations, including informational-related capabilities (IRC), such as Public Affairs, Civil Affairs, combat camera, and Key Leader Engagements). This occurred during Hurricane Katrina (2005), Hurricane Sandy (2012), and most recently during the Baltimore civil (2015) unrest response. Whether supporting CJTF-HOA or the State of Maryland, the 110th IO FSB has experienced and learned that using the term "target" creates issues when supporting operations involving non-combatants.

Targeting is not a new or separate process from the military decision making process, it has been in use for centuries. Still today, targeting is a critical process for integrating the six warfighting functions. (For more information on the targeting process, refer to FM 3-60.)<sup>1</sup> IO professionals use the same traditional targeting process as the Fires community, implementing inform and influence activities (IIA), to synchronize limited resources in time and space to achieve the desired effects for the commander, versus kinetic rounds on target. The mission command warfighting function is the related tasks and systems that develop and integrate those activities enabling a commander to balance the art of command and the science of control in order to integrate the other warfighting functions.<sup>2</sup> IIA is a mission command staff task which supports both *information operations* and strategic communication. This integration serves as economy of force to gain advantage in the information environment and to reduce the risk of information fratricide.<sup>3</sup> *Information operations* is the integrated employment, during military operations, of IRCs in concert with other lines of operation to influence, disrupt, corrupt, and usurp the decision-making of adversaries and potential adversaries while protecting our own (JP 1-02).<sup>4</sup>

Targeting and IIA use the same targeting process and formats as Army Techniques Publication (ATP)



3-60, *Targeting*, - no separate IIA method exists. The targeting process allows the IIA staff to synchronize limited resources in time and space in order to achieve desired effects for the commander. The targeting focus of the G-7 (S-7) essentially answers the following questions for the staff: who are U.S. forces targeting, how will U.S. forces find them, what message will U.S. forces send them, and how effective was the sent message?

IO uses targeting, not in the traditional kinetic framework, but in the information-influence relational framework, at the joint strategic level to illustrate how ways (integrated application) and means (information-related capabilities) achieve an end (influencing, disrupting, corrupting, or usurping an adversary's decision making cycle).<sup>5</sup>

IO Officers on CJTF and National Guard staffs are working with other agencies or authorities in their area of operations to make critical decisions to achieve desired effects. These IO Officers coordinate, synchronize and deconflict IRCs when planning the inform or influence lines of effort to support the commander's objectives. There are many groups IO Officers work with to achieve the desired end state: the IIA working group, electronic warfare working group, targeting working group, standard staff coordination, and other working groups as necessary. This collaboration leads to a variety of outputs, including: refined message and talking points, refined operational (Military Information Support Operations (MISO)) messages, information requirements and long-term assessments, an updated combined information overlay, plans and orders update (asset allocation, resource, and task), or targeting meeting input.<sup>6</sup>

When working with these groups, an IO Officer has to be very careful not to refer to the audience as a "target," which could imply (and normally means) a kinetic military operation is being directed at them. The Joint Staff defines a target as

- 1) "an entity or object that performs a function for the adversary considered for possible engagement or other action;
- 2) in intelligence usage, a country, area, installation, agency, or person against which intelligence operations are directed;
- 3) an area designated and numbered for future firing; and
- 4) in gunfire support usage, an impact burst that hits the target.<sup>7</sup>

Targets include mobile and stationary forces, equipment, and facilities that an enemy commander can use to conduct operations. "Targeting is the process of selecting and prioritizing targets and matching the appropriate response to them, considering operational requirements and capabilities."<sup>8</sup>

The issue with this definition of "target" and "targeting," is the enemy-combative perception it creates in the minds of the lead agencies of Foreign National Governments and in U.S. Domestic Civil Authorities. The U.S. Army should consider the use of a new term or terms to be used when addressing non-lethal targeting, so as not to insight undue anxiety escalation or mission impairment by a choice of terminology. Army professionals with similar experiences may have best practices from their experiences and some possible solutions or options that should be shared with colleagues.

Use of the word "target" or "targeting" during military planning is essential to common understanding of mission and planning, across warfighting functions and units. Military units understand the targeting process, and it would be detrimental to change the internal use of the term. As with all information operations, the meaning and insinuations of a term will vary, depending on the culture and traditions of an operational environment. IO veterans of the 110th IO recommend the following for alternative terminology when planning, coordinating, and socializing IO operations with outside organizations, and the use of non-kinetic (IRC) means to achieve the desired effect: Prospect, Audience, Focal, Object or Objective. Be aware that some of these alternate terms have similar connotations as "target" in certain informational environments.



In terms of the process itself, the word “targeting” refers to a formal process of influencing someone or something. One suggestion for IO planners is to refer to the non-kinetic planning process as “shaping.” Shaping is a common term in corporate America, used to describe the formal planning and coordination for a company or contractor seeking business with someone or some organization. It might be more effective if Army personnel emphasize that the shaping (vs. targeting) working group is where the coordination of the six warfighting functions’ through non-kinetic means occurs. This can be implemented at any level of the organization, or down-directed through doctrine, to standardize it across the Army. The purpose of the shaping working group, similar to a targeting working group, is to synchronize IRCs and nonlethal effects to achieve the Commander’s desire effect (influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp adversary decision making), while also protecting friendly abilities. One simple change can improve operational effectiveness by saving time in coordination and mitigating unintended emotional responses that could impair or impede a very constructive operation.

In the IO Operational Environment, use of the word “target” has proven time and time again, to be controversial and counter-productive to the mission, foreign and domestic. The IO profession has a unique and challenging role in supporting the commander’s mission, requiring them to acutely understand and manage cultural and social sensitivities through all phases of an operation. For example, no Army personnel should refer to fellow U.S. citizens as “targets” or “enemies” during military support to civil authority operations. Any discussion or reference to “targeting” citizens of any nation has negative interpretations and perceptions of the U.S. Military, and perceptions drive behavior. U.S. Army leadership should consider the use of different terminology when planning and coordinating non-lethal targeting with Government agencies and organizations to mitigate barriers and resistance to effective IO foreign and domestic operations.

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#### NOTES:

1. Field Manual (FM) 3-13, *Inform and Influence Activities (IIA)* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO] January 2013), 6-1.
2. Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, May 2012)
- 3 FM 3-13, v.
- 4 Ibid., 2-15.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid., 5-16, 2-15.
- 7 Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, 8 November 2010), 239.
8. JP 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, 11 August 2011), GL-17.



