



Combined Joint Task Force- Horn of Africa: Winning the War on Terror with Information Engagement (Defense)

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CJTF-HOA developed a course of action to win the War on Terror in the Horn of Africa. Because of the mission, resources available to the task force, and the nature of the conflict, the command chose a course of action that used Information Operations as the decisive operation. Specifically they focused on the Information Operation task of Information Engagement to accomplish the mission. Joint Military doctrine states that a valid COA is one that is adequate, feasible, acceptable, distinguishable, and complete. Since CJTF-HOA already implemented the course of action, the analysis was limited to adequate, feasible, and acceptable. CJTF-HOA's performance in the past five years proved that Information Operations were an adequate, feasible, and acceptable course of action to fight the Global War on Terror in the Horn of Africa. This Information Operations success story begs the question – What are Information Operations? The Theory of Information Operations presumes that there is an Information Environment that consists of three domains, Cognitive, Informational, and Physical. Information resides in and travels between these domains. Joint and Army doctrine provide a common point of departure for how Information Operations align with the warfighting functions. Proposed Army Doctrine would change the current alignment to better facilitate planning and execution of Information Operations. This new doctrinal alignment is extremely relevant to facilitating the replication of CJTF-HOA's success in other regions of the globe. Aligning the capabilities of Information Operations along warfighting functions facilitates the synchronization and coordination of Information Operations during planning and execution. This is especially important in an operational command such as CJTF-HOA. The rewrite of FM 3-0 Operations divides Information Operations into five tasks and aligns responsibility for planning and executing these tasks along warfighting functions. The new FM 3-0 also assigns staff responsibility for each of the IO tasks. Under this construct, the task of Information Engagement is part of the Command and Control warfighting function and the G-7 has staff responsibility for that task. The new construct eliminates the need for an Information Operations Working Group. The IO tasks are coordinated and synchronized by the responsible staff sections in the course of executing the Military Decision Making Process or the Joint Operation Planning Process. This war is a war of ideas, similar to the Cold War. The key to continued success is for the U.S. to continue the mission until the terrorists are convinced of their defeat. Continued presence and action in the Horn of Africa demonstrates that the U.S. has the will to prevail in the long conflict. As the U.S. Military reduces troop commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, it should apply this course of action to other regions in the globe similar to the Horn of Africa. For the U.S. Military to achieve the maximum benefit of this course of action in new regions, the Military must incorporate the lessons learned from CJTF-HOA. Those lessons cover a range of topics but the most important are command and control, interagency coordination and timeframe. Implementing these lessons learned reduces risk in future operations.

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