

# Joint Publication 3-13.4



## Military Deception



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY COMMANDER'S OVERVIEW

- Provides an Overview of Military Deception (MILDEC) and the Goals, Objectives, Functions, and Principles
  - Describes the Relationship between MILDEC and Information Operations
  - Explains MILDEC Planning Methodology and Planning Steps
  - Discusses Execution of MILDEC Operations
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### Military Deception and Its Goals, Objectives, Functions, and Principles

*Military deception (MILDEC) is actions executed to deliberately mislead adversary military, paramilitary, or violent extremist organization decision makers, thereby causing the adversary to take specific actions (or inactions) that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly mission.*

Specific guidance from the joint force commander (JFC) or higher authority during planning will determine the military deception (MILDEC) role in a joint operation. **MILDEC is intended to deter hostile actions, increase the success of friendly defensive actions, or to improve the success of any potential friendly offensive action.** Use of MILDEC during any phase of an operation should help to mislead adversaries as to the strength, readiness, locations, and intended missions of friendly forces. In combat situations, the focus is on driving the adversary to culmination and achieving the objectives defined by the JFC. In noncombat situations, the JFC seeks to dominate the situation with decisive operations designed to establish conditions for an early, favorable conclusion.

*MILDEC and Information Quality*

Care should be taken to protect the quality of information available for friendly decisions and public dissemination. This will help ensure the JFC has accurate information by not allowing staffs to unknowingly perceive the joint task force's MILDEC efforts as accurate information. This will also ensure the information made public by the JFC is not part of any MILDEC action and lose the public's trust.

*MILDEC Goals and Objectives*

The **MILDEC goal** is the commander's statement of the purpose of the MILDEC as it contributes to the successful accomplishment of the assigned mission. It is important for the commander to first envision the deception goal in terms of its specific contribution to accomplishing the designated mission. The **MILDEC objective** is a concise statement of what the MILDEC will cause the adversary to do or not do. It is expressed in terms of the adversary's action or inaction

that directly leads to the purpose or condition stated in the MILDEC goal.

*MILDEC Targets*

The **deception target is the adversary decision maker** with the authority to make the decision that will achieve the deception objective. The deception target or targets are the key individuals on whom the entire deception operation will be focused.

*Conduits to Targets*

Within MILDEC, **conduits are information or intelligence gateways to the deception target.** Conduits may be used to control flows of information to a deception target.

*Deception Story*

*The cornerstone of any deception operation is the deception story.*

The **deception story** is a scenario that outlines the friendly actions that will be portrayed to cause the deception target to adopt the desired perception. It is a succinct statement or narrative of exactly what the MILDEC planner wants the target to believe to be the true situation, then decide and act on that basis.

*Functions of MILDEC*

Function of MILDEC include:

- Causing ambiguity, confusion, or misunderstanding in adversary perceptions of friendly critical information.
- Causing the adversary to misallocate personnel, fiscal, and material resources in ways that are advantageous to the friendly force.
- Causing the adversary to reveal strengths, dispositions, and future intentions.
- Conditioning the adversary to particular patterns of friendly behavior to induce adversary perceptions that can be exploited by the joint force.
- Causing the adversary to waste combat power with inappropriate or delayed actions.

*Principles of MILDEC*

The six principles of MILDEC provide guidance for planning and executing MILDEC operations. The six principles are:

- **Focus.** The deception must target the adversary decision maker capable of causing the desired action(s) or inaction(s)

- **Objective.** To cause an adversary to take (or not to take) specific actions, not just to believe certain things
- **Centralized Planning and Control.** MIDEDEC operations should be centrally planned and directed
- **Security.** Deny knowledge of a force's intent to deceive and the execution of that intent to adversaries
- **Timeliness.** A deception operation requires careful timing
- **Integration.** Fully integrate each MILDEC with the operation that it is supporting

*MILDEC Means, Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*

MILDEC employs three basic means: physical, technical, and administrative. Employ these means independently or in collaboration depending on the situation. The applications of tactics vary with each operation depending on variables such as time, assets, equipment, and objectives and are assessed for feasibility accordingly. MILDEC operations apply four basic deception techniques: feints, demonstrations, ruses, and displays. MILDEC procedures vary with each MILDEC operation and are conducted in accordance with the commander's guidance and the processes used to synchronize the tactics and techniques in real time.

**Military Deception and Information Operations**

*MILDEC as a Capability of Information Operations*

MILDEC and other information operations (IO) capabilities must be planned and integrated to support the commander's campaign and/or operation. Collectively, these capabilities target adversary decision makers to affect their information systems and decision-making processes.

*Counterdeception as an Element of MILDEC*

Counterdeception contributes to situational understanding and IO by protecting friendly command and control systems and decision makers from adversary deception. Friendly decision makers must be aware of adversary deception activities so they can formulate informed and coordinated responses.

*Information Operations Planning*

The JFC's senior MILDEC planner is normally a standing member of the IO cell. Within the IO cell, the MILDEC planner provides deception plan information and is

responsible for incorporating and deconflicting MILDEC with other IO.

***MILDEC and Camouflage and Concealment***

Camouflage and concealment provide protection for MILDEC, particularly at the tactical level, by manipulating the appearance or obscuring the deceiver's actual activities.

***MILDEC's Relationship to Legal Support***

Staff judge advocate personnel assist in planning the operation to meet the objective while complying with legal requirements, such as providing training to deception planning cell (DPC) personnel on the law of armed conflict, foreign law, and ethics as applied to MILDEC operations.

**Roles, Coordination, and Considerations for Military Deception**

***Roles and Responsibilities of MILDEC Planners***

**Commander.** While MILDEC may not be appropriate to every joint operation, each JFC determines whether MILDEC could contribute to the achievement of assigned objectives. Commanders should guide and support applicable MILDEC operations and should also be readily available to the MILDEC planners. The conduct of MILDEC is the responsibility of the commander.

**Operations Directorate of a Joint Staff (J-3)/Plans Directorate of a Joint Staff (J-5).** The division of planning labor between the J-3 and the J-5 is command-specific. The J-3 normally supervises the execution of MILDEC. The J-3 normally establishes a staff deception element to manage MILDEC operations as part of the IO cell. The IO cell chief is also responsible for monitoring the implementation and execution of the MILDEC portion of IO.

**Command MILDEC Officer (CMDO).** The CMDO is the primary designated officer with overall oversight and management responsibility for each MILDEC program within the combatant commands, agencies, and Service components which support joint military operations.

**MILDEC Planner.** The MILDEC planner is the commander's lead agent responsible for drafting the MILDEC objectives for various courses of action.

**Intelligence Directorate of a Joint Staff (J-2).** The process of identifying MILDEC objectives to complement operational objectives is an iterative process, with the commander in a central role orchestrating the efforts of the

operations, intelligence, and counterintelligence resources. The J-2 is a primary participant in this process.

***Coordination Requirements***

The Joint Staff has the authority and responsibility to plan, coordinate, and integrate Department of Defense IO capabilities that cross areas of responsibility or that directly support national objectives. For those MILDEC plans, the Joint Staff J-3 serves as the coordinating authority for the planning of MILDEC and the integration of Joint MILDEC with other elements of IO. The JFC-designated IO coordination officer normally is the single point of contact to manage and obtain coordination requirements and related points of contact information pertaining to the deception element. However, a JFC may want to appoint a CMDO who would be the single manager for MILDEC.

***MILDEC Considerations***

JFCs should ensure that their staffs and units receive training in MILDEC. Additionally, joint operation and MILDEC planners should receive appropriate MILDEC training.

***Military Deception Planning***

***MILDEC Planning and the Joint Planning Processes***

As with all joint planning, MILDEC planning is an iterative process that requires continual reexamination of its goals, objectives, targets, stories, and means. MILDEC planning can be deliberate planning (used normally during peacetime to develop operation plans and operation plans in concept format), or during crisis action planning (during time-sensitive situations to rapidly develop campaign plans and orders).

***MILDEC Planning Methodology – “See, Think, Do”***

Successful deception operations are those that do more than make the target “believe” or “think” that the deception is true. MILDEC must end in an action, or inaction, that supports the JFC operational plan. The following interrogatories describe the process:

- **See:** What does the target see from friendly operations?
- **Think:** What conclusions does the target draw from those observations?
- **Do:** What action may the target take as a result of the conclusions based upon those observations?

*The MILDEC Planning Process*

Deception planning is an iterative process that requires continual reexamination of its objectives, target, stories, and means throughout the planning and execution phases. A key factor that must be considered during MILDEC planning is risk. The overriding consideration in risk analysis is the comparison between the risk taken and the possible benefits of the deception. **The MILDEC planning process consists of six steps:** deception mission analysis, deception planning guidance; staff deception estimate; commander's deception estimate; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff estimate review; deception plan development; and deception plan review and approval.

*MILDEC Capabilities, Limitations, and Risks*

**Capabilities** in MILDEC operations vary with the mission type, adversary, location, assets available, and even the political climate. The scope of the MILDEC operation is **limited by the amount of time and resources available** for its planning and execution, the adversary's susceptibility to MILDEC, and our ability to measure the effectiveness of the MILDEC. **Risk** is a key factor that must be reexamined during every phase of MILDEC planning and execution. Fully integrate risk management into planning, preparing, executing, and assessing. The failure or exposure of the deception can significantly affect the friendly commander's operational activities.

**Execution of Military Deception Operations**

*Execution of MILDEC Events and Actions*

The MILDEC plan is normally executed as a component of the operation order. As with all military operations, the process of execution involves two basic functions, assessing and control. Assessing involves the receipt and processing of information concerning the MILDEC operation, and control entails making iterative decisions and issuing instructions until termination. The deception plan is the basis for execution, but execution may take place in conditions that are more dynamic than the plan anticipated.

*Deception Execution Coordination*

Once the planning process is complete, it is critical that constant coordination at the strategic, operational, and tactical level continues to ensure success. The potential for a tactical or operational level deception to have strategic implications is high. With this in mind, a continual process of coordination, called the deception execution cycle, must take place.

*Terminating MILDEC  
Operations*

The termination of a MILDEC is concerned with ending the MILDEC in a way that protects the interests of the deceiver. The objective of a successful termination is to conclude the MILDEC without revealing the MILDEC to the adversary. The DPC is concerned about terminating the overall MILDEC, as well as the termination implications embedded in each MILDEC event. Planning how to end an individual deception event in a way that does not leave suspicious traces of the MILDEC operations is an inherent aspect of MILDEC event preparation.

**CONCLUSION**

This publication provides joint doctrine for the planning, execution, and assessment of MILDEC in support of joint operations.

# CHAPTER I

## GENERAL

*"I make the enemy see my strengths as weaknesses and my weaknesses as strengths while I cause his strengths to become weaknesses and discover where he is not strong...I conceal my tracks so that none can discern them; I keep silence so that none can hear me."*

Sun Tzu  
*The Art of War, c. 500 BC*

### 1. Policy

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 3211.01E, *Joint Policy for Military Deception*, provides joint policy guidance for military deception (MILDEC). Refer to that document for information concerning responsibilities relating to MILDEC and for specific guidance and restrictions relating to MILDEC planned and conducted in support of joint operations.

### 2. Definition

MILDEC is actions executed to deliberately mislead adversary military, paramilitary, or violent extremist organization (VEO) decision makers, thereby causing the adversary to take specific actions (or inactions) that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly mission.

### 3. Applicability

MILDEC is applicable at all levels of war, across the range of military operations, and can be conducted during all phases of military operations. Specific guidance from the joint force commander (JFC) or higher authority during planning will determine the MILDEC role in a joint operation. During the planning of an operation, MILDEC should be integrated into the early phases of an operation. The MILDEC role during the early phases of an operation will be based on the specific situation of the operation or campaign to help set conditions that will facilitate phases that follow.

a. MILDEC is intended to deter hostile actions, increase the success of friendly defensive actions, or to improve the success of any potential friendly offensive action. Use of MILDEC during any phase of an operation should help to mislead adversaries as to the strength, readiness, locations, and intended missions of friendly forces. MILDEC, as an element of an integrated information operations (IO) plan, can be a viable flexible deterrent option. In combat situations, the focus is on driving the adversary to culmination and achieving the objectives defined by the JFC. In noncombat situations, the JFC seeks to dominate the situation with decisive operations designed to establish conditions for an early, favorable conclusion. There are three categories of MILDEC supporting joint military operations:

(1) Joint MILDEC. Joint MILDEC is planned and conducted in a theater of operations to support military campaigns and major military operations. Joint MILDEC activities are planned and executed by, and in support of, combatant commanders (CCDRs), JFCs, and joint task force (JTF) commanders to cause adversaries to take actions or inactions that are favorable to the US commander's objectives. The majority of combatant command planned and executed MILDEC will be Joint MILDEC with operational-level effects. Joint MILDEC is normally planned prior to, and conducted during, combat operations.

(2) Deception in Support of Operations Security (DISO). DISO is a MILDEC activity that protects friendly operations, personnel, programs, equipment, and other assets against foreign intelligence and security services (FISS) collection. The intent of a DISO is to create multiple false indicators to confuse or make friendly force intentions harder to interpret by FISS, limiting the ability of FISS to collect accurate intelligence on friendly forces. DISOs are general in nature, they are not specifically targeted against particular adversary military, paramilitary, or VEO decision makers, but are, instead, used to protect friendly operations and forces by obfuscating friendly capabilities, intent, or vulnerabilities. Joint commanders may conduct approved DISOs pre-execute order, or as part of an operation plan (OPLAN), operation plan in concept format (CONPLAN), or operation order (OPORD).

(3) Tactical Deception (TAC-D). TAC-D is deception activities planned and conducted to support battles and engagements. TAC-D is planned and executed by, and in support of, tactical-level commanders to cause adversaries to take actions or inactions that are favorable to the US commanders' objectives. TAC-D is conducted to influence immediate military operations in order to gain a temporary tactical advantage over an adversary, to mask vulnerabilities in friendly forces, or to enhance the defensive capabilities of friendly forces.

b. **Termination and Strategic End State.** In later phases of an operation, prior to termination, MILDEC should support the transition of responsibility to civil control or other authority. The complexity of joint operations in later phases is compounded by the attempt to disengage the joint force; support for host nation, other government agencies, and nongovernmental organizations as they assume responsibility; the nonlinear nature of the operating area; and the possible lack of sequential timing in the transfer of responsibilities for control of the area. Thus, MILDEC planning and execution during later phases of a campaign may involve selected nonmilitary members, complicating operations security (OPSEC) concerns, and should focus on national objectives and end state, not just the military termination. During this time, the JFC focuses on synchronizing and integrating joint force actions with the activity of the other instruments of national power to bring operations to a successful conclusion, typically characterized by self-sustaining peace and the establishment of the rule of law. MILDEC may be conducted to: support redeployment or withdrawal operations; protect sensitive operational capabilities from being revealed; establish favorable conditions for subsequent military operations; support possible counterinsurgency operations; defend or rebuild critical infrastructure; and aid in the transition of responsibility to civil control or other authority.

#### 4. Military Deception and Information Quality

Information quality refers to the accuracy, completeness, relevance, and believability of information available for decision making. Care should be taken to protect the quality of information available for friendly decisions and public dissemination. This will help ensure the JFC has accurate information by not allowing staffs to unknowingly perceive the JTF's MILDEC efforts as accurate information. This will also ensure the information made public by the JFC is not part of any MILDEC action and lose the public's trust. MILDEC by design should affect the quality of information available for adversary decisions in the following ways:

- a. Deliberately presents misleading information to adversaries to degrade the **accuracy** of adversary information.
- b. Seeks to give adversary decision makers a false sense of **completeness** about friendly forces or intentions.
- c. May cause the adversary to misjudge the **relevance** of available information and misallocate operational or intelligence resources.
- d. May cause adversaries to **doubt the validity** of their own intelligence gathering systems.

#### 5. Military Deception Goals and Objectives

The MILDEC plan should clearly delineate both the goal and the objective of the MILDEC. This provides the commander with a solid understanding of how the deception supports the overall operation and establishes a firm foundation for planning and executing MILDEC operations.

a. **The MILDEC Goal.** The MILDEC goal is the commander's statement of the purpose of the MILDEC as it contributes to the successful accomplishment of the assigned mission. The goal of a MILDEC is usually stated in a positive result, such as: "Successful MILDEC will improve the friendly force advantage on a designated axis of advance." Like any other form of military operation, the measure of success for MILDEC is its direct contribution to the accomplishment of the mission. MILDEC often requires substantial investments in effort and resources that would otherwise be applied against the adversary in a more direct fashion. Consequently, it is important for the commander to first envision the deception goal in terms of its specific contribution to accomplishing the designated mission.

b. **The MILDEC Objective.** The MILDEC objective is a concise statement of what the MILDEC will cause the adversary to do or not do. It is expressed in terms of the adversary's action or inaction that directly leads to the purpose or condition stated in the MILDEC goal. An example of a MILDEC objective is: "Cause the adversary to misdirect reconnaissance and surveillance assets away from the friendly attacking force and to defend the wrong sector." Further MILDEC objectives may include:

(1) Cause the adversary commander to employ forces and assets in ways that are advantageous to the joint force.

(2) Cause the adversary to reveal strengths, dispositions, and intentions.

(3) Cause the adversary to withhold strategic reserves until friendly forces have achieved mission success.

(4) Condition the adversary to particular patterns of friendly behavior to induce adversary perceptions that are exploitable at a time chosen by the joint force.

(5) Cause the adversary to waste combat power with inappropriate or delayed actions.

### **6. Military Deception Targets**

The deception target is the adversary decision maker with the authority to make the decision that will achieve the deception objective. The deception target or targets are the key individuals on whom the entire deception operation will be focused. In selecting the deception target, several factors should be considered.

a. The deception target must be capable of causing the desired action(s) or inaction(s) to occur. The target has the authority to make decisions that will aid US forces in achieving the desired deception objective.

b. There must either be existing conduits to the deception targets, or there must be a reasonable expectation that conduits to the deception targets can be established.

c. During development of the deception, sufficient intelligence regarding the deception target should exist to determine what (if any) preconceived perceptions the deception target may have. History has shown that deception operations that play upon the preconceived perceptions of a deception target have been very successful. The MILDEC planner should submit request for information (RFI) inputs to the intelligence community (IC) requesting behavioral influence analysis (BIA)/human factors analysis (HFA) data on adversary military, paramilitary, and VEO decision makers.

### **7. Conduits to Targets**

Within MILDEC, conduits are information or intelligence gateways to the deception target. Conduits may be used to control flows of information to a deception target. It is rare that a deceptive message is sent directly to the deception target itself. Most often, deception messages are sent to intelligence collectors (conduits) with the expectation that the deceptive message will systematically make its way to the deception target.

a. Examples of conduits include FISS, intelligence collection platforms, open-source intelligence, and individuals through whom information reaches the deception target.

b. The development and utilization of conduits should be approached systematically. A path should be discernable from the initial input to the conduit to the deception target. Ideally, conduits are part of a closed loop system which facilitate and enable feedback regarding receipt of the deceptive message by the intended deception target and whether or not the desired adversary actions are occurring or will occur. Factors to be considered include: Are there stop gaps between the initial receptor and the final desired end point (the deception target)? Are there filters that might skew the desired perception? Are there conduits that might potentially validate or contradict the desired message? In the case of FISS, could the conduit potentially serve as a feedback mechanism?

## **8. Deception Story**

The cornerstone of any deception operation is the deception story. The deception story is a scenario that outlines the friendly actions that will be portrayed to cause the deception target to adopt the desired perception. It is a succinct statement or narrative of exactly what the MILDEC planner wants the target to believe to be the true situation, then decide and act on that basis. In other words, the deception story parallels what the deception would want the opponent's intelligence estimate to say about your own commander's intentions and your own unit's actions. The deception story identifies those friendly actions, both real and simulated, that when observed by the deception target will lead it to develop the desired perception. Deception story development is both an analytic and creative process that involves a variety of information on enemy data acquisition and processing.

a. An exact understanding of the perceptions and observables required for the deception provides a concrete basis for crafting the deception story. The deception story weaves these elements together into a coherent depiction of the situation the target will reconstruct from the information provided. Ideally, the deception planner wants the deception story to be the exact mental picture of the target forms as the deception unfolds. The deception story should read like the adversary's own intelligence estimate. The deception story is, in effect, the equivalent of a completed puzzle. As such, it serves as a means of checking the logic and consistency of the internal elements of the deception. This allows the deception planner to identify desired perceptions, observables, and executions that may need refinement, and to add supporting observables as needed to strengthen certain elements of the deception story or diminish the impact of troublesome competing observables. Each element of the deception story should have associated deception means that can credibly portray the data, plus identified conduits that transfer this information into the enemy's information processing system. Unavoidably, various nodes in this line of communications also become filters of the information conveyed, allowing the target to introduce their own predispositions and biases that the MILDEC planner must anticipate. As the story is developed and elaborated, the MILDEC planner continuously monitors changes in the situation and validates the deception story against other friendly plans and/or actions.

b. The story should be believable, verifiable, consistent, and executable.

(1) **Believable.** The story must correspond to the deception target's perceptions of the friendly force's mission, intentions, and capabilities.

(2) Verifiable. The adversary should be able to verify the veracity of the deception story through multiple channels and conduits. The deception story, therefore, takes into account all of the adversary's intelligence sources and is made available through all or many of those sources.

(3) Consistent. Deception stories should be consistent with the deception target's understanding of actual friendly doctrine, historical force employment, campaign strategy, battlefield tactics, and the current operational situation. This calls for the MILDEC planner to have as complete a picture as possible of the deception target's level of knowledge and belief in these areas.

(4) Executable. As with any course of action (COA), the MILDEC option that forms the deception story should be within the capabilities of the friendly force as the deception target perceives it. The deception target must believe that the friendly force has the capability to execute the operations that are being portrayed by the deception story.

### 9. Functions of Military Deception

The functions of MILDEC include:

- a. Causing ambiguity, confusion, or misunderstanding in adversary perceptions of friendly critical information, such as unit identities, locations, movements, dispositions, weaknesses, capabilities, strengths, supply status, and intentions.
- b. Causing the adversary to misallocate personnel, fiscal, and material resources in ways that are advantageous to the friendly force.
- c. Causing the adversary to reveal strengths, dispositions, and future intentions.
- d. Conditioning the adversary to particular patterns of friendly behavior to induce adversary perceptions that can be exploited by the joint force.
- e. Causing the adversary to waste combat power with inappropriate or delayed actions.

### 10. Principles of Military Deception

Just as the principles of war provide general guidance for the conduct of military operations, the six principles of MILDEC (see Figure I-1) provide guidance for planning and executing MILDEC operations.

a. **Focus.** MILDEC should target the adversary decision maker capable of causing the desired action(s). The adversary's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) system is normally not the target; rather, it is the primary conduit used in MILDEC to convey selected information to the decision maker.

b. **Objective.** The principal objective of MILDEC operations is to focus actions and resources to cause an adversary to take (or not to take) specific actions, not just to believe certain things.

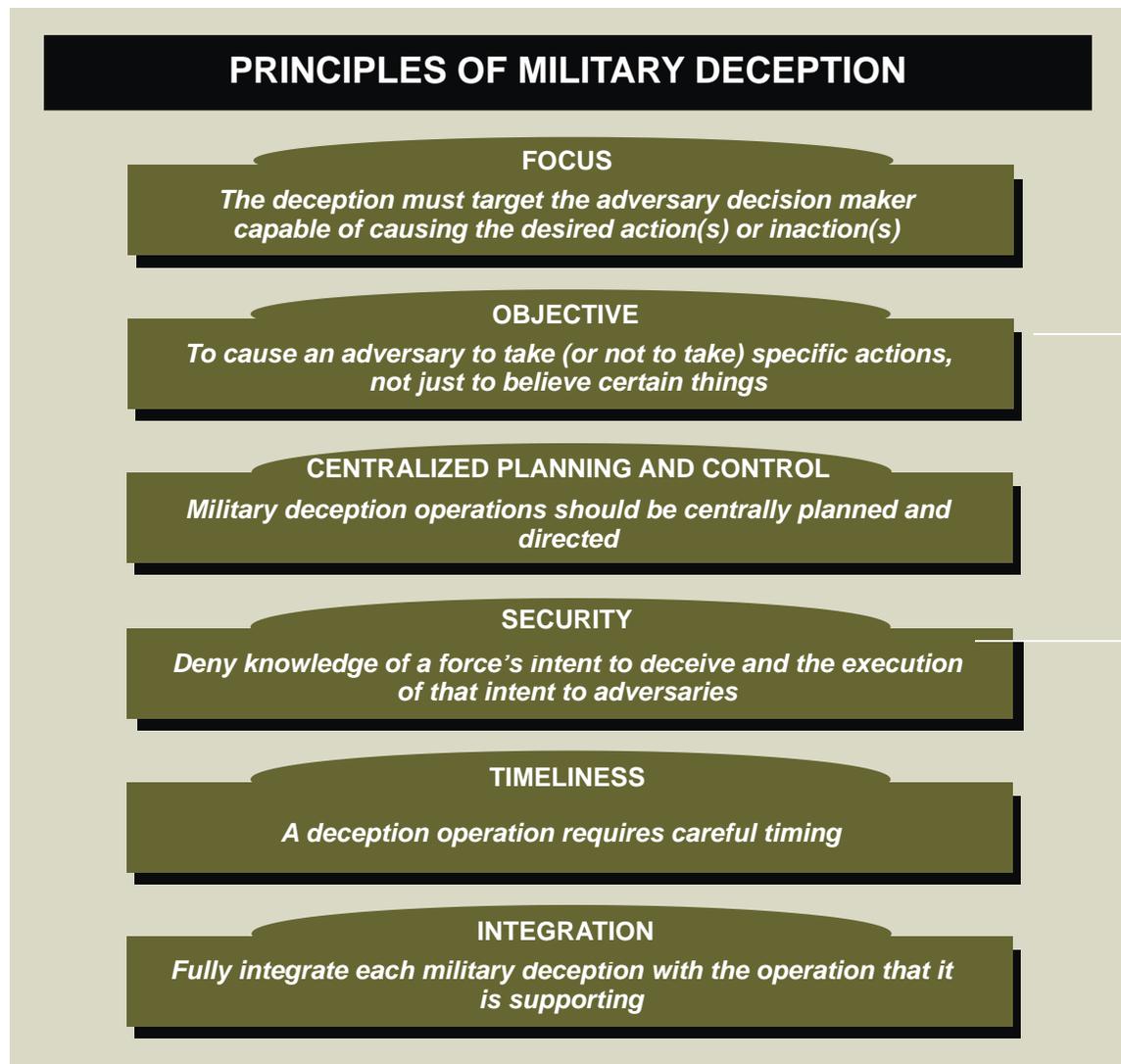


Figure I-1. Principles of Military Deception

c. **Centralized Planning and Control.** MILDEC operations should be centrally planned and directed. This approach is required in order to avoid confusion and to ensure that the various elements involved in MILDEC portray the same story and are not in conflict with other operational objectives. Execution of MILDEC may, however, be decentralized as long as all participating organizations adhere to a single plan.

d. **Security.** Successful MILDEC operations require strict security. This begins prior to execution with measures to deny knowledge of the friendly force's intent to deceive. Apply strict need-to-know criteria to each MILDEC operation and to each aspect of that operation. Employ active OPSEC to deny critical information about both actual operations and MILDEC activities; knowledge of MILDEC plans and orders must be carefully protected. To ensure adequate protection of information, all MILDEC information must be correctly classified and handled in accordance with the current *Joint MILDEC Security Classification Guide*.

e. **Timeliness.** A MILDEC operation requires careful timing. Provide sufficient time for its portrayal; for the adversary's ISR system to collect, analyze, and report; for the adversary decision maker to react; and for the friendly ISR system to detect the action resulting from the adversary decision maker's decision. Further detection may lead to a decision point, requiring a friendly commander's decision on how to proceed with an operation.

f. **Integration.** Fully integrate each MILDEC with the operation that it is supporting. The development of the MILDEC concept must occur as part of the development of the commander's concept of operations (CONOPS). MILDEC must be considered early in planning at all levels to ensure that subordinate deception plans are integrated within higher-level plans.

## 11. Military Deception Means, Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

a. **MILDEC Means.** MILDEC employs three basic means: physical, technical, and administrative. Employ these means independently or in collaboration depending on the situation.

(1) **Physical Means.** Activities and resources used to convey or deny selected information to an adversary. Physical means include operational activities and resources such as:

- (a) Movement of forces.
- (b) Exercises and training activities.
- (c) Dummy and decoy equipment and devices.
- (d) Tactical actions.
- (e) Logistics actions, and location of stockpiles and repair facilities.
- (f) Test and evaluation activities.
- (g) Reconnaissance and surveillance activities.

(2) **Technical Means.** Those military material resources and their associated operating techniques used to convey or deny selected information to an adversary. As with any use of US military material resources, any use of technical means to achieve MILDEC must comply with domestic and international law. A variety of technical means include:

- (a) Deliberate emission, alteration, absorption, or reflection of energy.
- (b) Emission or suppression of chemical or biological odors.
- (c) Multimedia (radio, television, sound broadcasting, computers, computer networks, smart phones, and personal digital assistants).

(3) **Administrative Means.** Administrative means include resources, methods, and techniques designed to convey or deny oral, pictorial, documentary, or other physical evidence.

b. **MILDEC Tactics.** The applications of tactics vary with each operation depending on variables such as time, assets, equipment, and objectives and are assessed for feasibility accordingly. The tactics of MILDEC may:

(1) Mask an increase in or redeployment of forces or weapons systems spotted by the adversary.

(2) Shape the adversary's perception and/or identification of new forces or weapons being introduced into combat.

(3) Reinforce the adversary's preconceived beliefs.

(4) Distract the adversary's attention from other activities.

(5) Overload adversary ISR collection and analytical capabilities.

(6) Create the illusion of strength where weakness exists.

(7) Desensitize the adversary to particular patterns of friendly behavior to induce adversary perceptions that are exploitable at the time of friendly choosing.

(8) Confuse adversary expectations about friendly size, activity, location, unit, time, equipment, intent, and/or style of mission execution, to effect surprise in these areas.

(9) Reduce the adversary's ability to clearly perceive and manage the battle.

c. **MILDEC Techniques.** MILDEC operations apply four basic deception techniques: feints, demonstrations, ruses, and displays.

(1) **Feints.** A feint is an offensive action involving contact with the adversary conducted for the purpose of deceiving the adversary as to the location and/or time of the actual main offensive action.

(2) **Demonstrations.** A demonstration is a show of force where a decision is not sought and no contact with the adversary is intended. A demonstration's intent is to cause the adversary to select a COA favorable to US goals.

(3) **Ruses.** A ruse is a cunning trick designed to deceive the adversary to obtain friendly advantage. It is characterized by deliberately exposing false or confusing information for collection and interpretation by the adversary.

(4) **Displays.** Displays are the simulation, disguising, and/or portrayal of friendly objects, units, or capabilities in the projection of the MILDEC story. Such capabilities may not exist, but are made to appear so (simulations).

d. **Unlawful Deceptions.** Certain deception techniques may amount to “perfidious acts” due to their treacherous nature. Perfidious acts are prohibited under the law of armed conflict (LOAC) because they undermine the effectiveness of the law of war and thereby jeopardize the safety of civilians and noncombatants and/or the immunity of protected structures and activities. Acts of perfidy are deceptions designed to invite the confidence of the enemy to lead him to believe that he is entitled to, or is obliged to accord, protected status under the LOAC, with the intent to betray that confidence. Under this deception technique, the deceiving unit intends to use the enemy’s compliance with the law of war to gain an advantage with respect to the enemy. Acts of perfidy include, but are not limited to, feigning surrender or waving a white flag in order to lure the enemy into a trap; misuse of protective signs, signals, and symbols in order to injure, kill, or capture the enemy; and using an ambulance or medical aircraft marked with the Red Cross, Red Crescent, or Red Crystal to carry armed combatants, weapons, or ammunition in order to attack or elude enemy forces.

#### **AMPHIBIOUS DEMONSTRATION—OPERATION DESERT STORM**

**During the early days of DESERT SHIELD, a powerful 18,000-man amphibious task force steamed into the North Arabian Sea to add an important element to the allied arsenal. Within less than a month after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, more than 20 amphibious ships from ports in Virginia and California completed the roughly 10,000-mile trip to the Gulf of Oman, where nearly 8,000 Marines and 10,000 Sailors commenced full-scale preparations to “hit the beach” to eject Iraq’s army from Kuwait. The task force, with Marines from the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) and 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit embarked, included air, land, and sea assets tailor-made for coastal assault—Harrier attack jets and assault support helicopters to provide air cover for infantry, and armor that would hit the beach aboard high-speed landing craft, aircushion vehicles. The Task Force, quickly forged from several amphibious ready groups, represented the largest amphibious assault force assembled in more than 30 years. They also completed demanding shipboard drills and amphibious assault training on coalition beaches. That training grew more intense as the amphibious forces performed high-visibility exercises off the coast of Saudi Arabia to heighten the enemy wariness of an invasion from the sea. The amphibious presence grew larger following President Bush’s 8 November decision to nearly double US forces in theater.**

**The 13 ships of Amphibious Group Three arrived from three west coast ports with nearly 15,000 Marines of the 5th MEB embarked to join the amphibious task force. As the ground war commenced, nearly 17,000 Marines stood ready aboard the largest combined amphibious assault force since the Inchon landing in Korea. Only then did the Sailors and Marines of the amphibious force learn that their warfighting skills would not be immediately required as they had expected. But their preparation had not been in vain. It was at the core of the deceptive tactics which played a major role in the quick allied victory.**

**Amphibious operations focused enemy attention on the threat from seaward and tied down at least seven Iraqi divisions, even after the coalition ground campaign was well under way.**

**SOURCE: Department of the Navy, Naval Historical Center**

e. **MILDEC Procedures.** MILDEC procedures vary with each MILDEC operation and are conducted in accordance with the commander's guidance and the processes used to synchronize the tactics and techniques in real time. Consequently, they are specific (unique or changing) with regard to each operation. For more detailed information, refer to Marine Corps Reference Publication 3-40.4A/Navy Tactics, Techniques and Procedures, 3-58.1/Air Force Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (Instruction) 3-2.66, *Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Military Deception Operations*.