



Instructional Narrative NS03



Introduction and Objectives

This lesson focuses upon the instruments of power (IOPs) available to the President in responding to potential threats in the strategic environment. The four national IOPs—diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME)—are essential tools for the President and the Executive Branch to influence the behavior of other nations and non-state actors, and to accomplish the goals and objectives of US national security. Rarely is one IOP exercised in isolation; they will be employed synergistically. Thus, it is imperative that students understand how the President may employ the military IOP in a coordinated fashion with other IOPs to accomplish national security objectives. The planning that occurred in preparation for operations in Afghanistan following the 11 Sep 2001 terrorist attacks demonstrates this process at work.

Introductory Video (0:02:04) [Download Video](#)
(4.3 MB)

Lesson Objectives

- Comprehend the capabilities and limitations of the IOPs and how they are used.
- Comprehend how the National Security Strategy's (NSS) intends to transform national security institutions.
- Comprehend why it is important to employ the IOPs synergistically to achieve national objectives.
- Analyze how policymakers use the IOPs.



The Instruments of Power Defined



This lesson provides you with an understanding of the tools available to the US Government in shaping and responding to the evolving strategic environment. Military officers cannot provide advice to policymakers, or plan for the use of military force without considering the relationship of that application of force to the other instruments of power (IOPs). In terms of the ends, ways,

and means of strategy, the IOPs are the means which the national decision makers create and use to achieve national ends. In the next lesson, you will see how national security actors plan to coordinate the use of the IOPs through the interagency system.

Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, defines four Instruments of National Power (IOP):

These instruments of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) are normally coordinated by the appropriate governmental officials, often with National Security Council (NSC) directive. They are the tools the United States uses to apply its sources of power, including its culture, human potential, industry, science and technology, academic institutions, geography, and national will [emphasis added].

Within a strictly American context, this description of the IOPs as tools of US national power is accurate yet somewhat misleading. This description lends itself to visions of the President turning to his staff in the White House Situation Room and ordering them to “activate the instruments of power.” In fact, the IOPs are useful, but broad, classifications of a wide range of resources, techniques, and processes that international (both state and non-state) actors can, and do use. Joint Publication 1 also describes the IOPs as being coordinated by the executive branch with NSC “assistance.” In reality, though, the US government is only one of many actors that seek to “activate the IOPs.” In capitals such as Paris, Beijing, London, New Delhi, Jakarta, as well as at the UN’s headquarters in New York and at the seat of the European Union in Brussels, in the councils of Al Qaeda, and Hamas – political leaders, through their own specific political and bureaucratic processes and within their specific cultural contexts, employ their IOPs to advance their interests.

Required Lesson Materials

 [Nation, R.C., “Chapter 10: National Power” \(2010\)](#) – Read pages 141-152 of the *US Army War College Guide to National Security Issues: Volume I*.

The article by Nation introduces the concept of national power, describes some of the key attributes, and provides examples of how national power is applied in and affected by the international environment.

 [Interactive Learning Module \(ILM\) “Instruments of National Power,” \(2004\)](#) - Entire ILM.

This interactive module provides an easy to understand explanation of the IOPs and allows you to test your knowledge of them.



The Diplomatic IOP



[Secretary of State
Hillary Rodham Clinton](#)

The diplomatic IOP is the means that states traditionally use to conduct political business with each other via both formal and informal structures. A number of key organizations and forums exist to support diplomatic efforts. The diplomatic IOP is a critical tool across the spectrum of conflict, from peace to war. The conventionally held viewpoint that diplomacy ends when hostilities start is an inaccurate perspective. In war, diplomatic communications continue between belligerents albeit at a lower volume and through intermediaries. Some sources refer to the diplomatic IOP as the political instrument. Considering diplomacy as a political instrument, the fact that the President is the US' chief diplomat and considering that war is a continuation of politics, you can see the extent of the interrelation between the diplomatic and military IOPs at the highest level. Effective diplomacy must be a fully integrated part of any effort to obtain and maintain US national security.

Diplomats serve as official communications links between their respective countries and the rest of the world. As ACSC Professor Dr. Edwina Campbell put it, “Diplomats not only seek to represent their states to the world, but also seek to represent the world back to their respective states, with the objective of keeping the whole ensemble together.” Though “transformational diplomacy,” which you read about in the NSS, involves a propagation of US values, traditional diplomacy has focused on national interests. Writing in the 1400s, Venetian ambassador Ermolao Barbaro asserted that, “the first duty of an ambassador is...to do, say, advise, and think whatever may best serve the preservation and aggrandizement of his own state.”

The diplomatic IOP, like the military IOP, is centrally controlled by the state. In the US, the President, as mentioned, is the “Chief Diplomat.” The Secretary of State is the cabinet-level diplomat and the entire State Department architecture forms the heart of the diplomatic IOP. Ambassadors in embassies around the world as well as ambassadors to organizations such as NATO and the UN serve as personal representatives of the President of the United States to their respective host governments and international organizations. Formal communication between states and other organizations often flows through the diplomatic channels that link these embassies, missions, State Department in Washington and the President.

The picture of the President, the Secretary of State and Ambassadors in embassies and missions is a useful but admittedly a simplistic view of the diplomatic IOP. Reality is more complex. For example, the military itself is part of the diplomatic means and may be used for diplomatic purposes. As a Geographic Combatant Commander travels and meets with heads

of state and other government representatives in that commander's AOR, he is, in part, a diplomatic tool of the US conducting military diplomacy. The role of the military in diplomacy is just another example of the interrelationship between the IOPs.

Required Lesson Materials

[Fendrick, R., "Chapter 12: Diplomacy as an Instrument of National Power" \(2010\)](#) - Read pages 167-172 of the US Army War College Guide to National Security Issues: Volume I. In this reading, Fendrick introduces the role of the diplomat and the uses of the diplomatic IOP. He outlines the tools available to diplomats and emphasizes the necessity of using the diplomatic IOP in concert with the other IOPs.

To Learn More

Campbell, E., "The Instruments of Power: Diplomacy" (0:43:49) - Watch entire video.

[Flash Download Video](#) (262 MB) [Download Slides](#) (490 kB)

In these lectures from ACSC's Wood Auditorium, Dr. Edwina Campbell introduces the instruments of power and then focuses on the diplomatic IOP.

[American Diplomacy Web Site](#) - Entire web site.

This University of North Carolina web site contains numerous papers and other items of interest on the subject of American diplomacy.



The Information IOP

Information, as an IOP, is grounded in the concept of soft power, which you read about in the first section. Information represents a means in which the US (or any actor for that matter) can shape the preferences of others, and thereby their decisions, in directions that support US objectives. A large element of this soft information power is the attractiveness or repulsiveness of US ideology or culture to the intended audience. The information IOP, therefore, extends beyond the control of the government. The active elements of the information IOP that the US uses fall into the categories of public diplomacy and public affairs, which you will read about below.

Unlike the diplomatic IOP, the information instrument of national power has a diffuse and complex set of components with no single center of control. In the US culture, information is freely exchanged with minimal government control. This means at the same time that the US government is seeking to impress an idea on world opinion or the population of a particular state, other information actors – the media, a single soldier, or even a fictional Hollywood movie – might be undermining that message. Take for example the contradiction between, on one hand, the US objective of “Championing Human Dignity,” pursued, in part, using the information IOP; and, on the other hand, the human rights abuses carried out by a small group of US soldiers at Abu Graib. The information damage caused by Abu Graib undermines years of US attempts to attract others to its objectives through active use of the information IOP. The

challenge in wielding the information IOP is to get the desired message out above the noise and divergent messages.

Public diplomacy is the component of the information IOP that the US uses to influence foreign audiences. If diplomacy, as we discussed earlier, represents communications to represent the US message to governments of other states and formal organizations, public diplomacy is the analogous effort to represent the US message to foreign publics. The use of the word “ diplomacy” both as an IOP in its own right



[The Declaration of Independence – A Public Diplomacy Tool to Influence Opinion in Europe](#)

and as a component of the information IOP may seem confusing, or you can take the relationship as further evidence of the interrelation of the IOPs and the necessity to use them in mutually supportive manners. Informing and influencing foreign audiences and countering misinformation about the US are critical to achieving US’ national security objectives. Public affairs, in the national security context, is closely related to public diplomacy as it too is concerned with effectively communicating the US message, but this time to domestic audiences. Public affairs is a function that does also extend beyond the national security boundaries of the information IOP. For example, White House press briefings concerned with issues other than national security are a public affairs function but not an example of the use of the information IOP as we are considering it for the purposes of national security. Speeches and press briefings that aim to shape US public perceptions related to national security issues are public affairs functions within the information IOP.

Great examples of public affairs as a component of the Information IOP are President Franklin Roosevelt’s later Fireside Chats in which he regularly engaged the US public through radio broadcasts to bolster support for the US effort in WWII. An umbrella term that encompasses both public diplomacy and public affairs is that of “strategic communication.” Joint Pub 3-13 Information Operations defines strategic communication as follows:

Focused United States Government (USG) efforts to understand and engage key audiences in order to create, strengthen or preserve conditions favorable for advancement of USG interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages and products synchronized with the actions of all elements of national power.

The US State Department Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs is the lead actor in the US Government for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. The undersecretary must integrate and synchronize messages from within the Department of State and in other government entities to coherently communicate in a complex information environment.



The Information Environment



[Bin Laden, Information Operations Practitioner](#)

JP 3-13 Information Operations defines the information environment as “the aggregate of individuals, organizations, and systems that collect, process, disseminate, or act on information.” In essence, the information environment has three interrelated dimensions: physical (computers, radio relays, television stations, etc), informational (content), and cognitive (in the mind of each individual). Some of the characteristics of the information operations environment are:

- It is flexible or malleable, easily expanded or contracted by specific actions. For example, actors can launch another satellite, make another connection to Internet, create new website or change communication methods/routes, etc.
- It can be manipulated by deception.
- It is shared and has no real owner.
- The ease of accessibility to the physical and informational dimensions increases the power of non-state actors.
- Information power can be quickly projected globally.
- The vast quantity of information available for decision making can lead to information overload.
- It affords some level of anonymity – it can be difficult to trace the source of information.

- It can provide actors means to engage in asymmetric strategies.
- It is filtered by culture.
- It is difficult to quantify “information power.” It may be based on physical assets, the appeal of one’s ideas and message, the speed of decision cycles, or a combination of all of these things.

Required Lesson Materials

[Murphy, D.M., “Chapter 11: Strategic Communication: Wielding the Information Instrument of Power” \(2010\)](#) - Read pages 153-165 of the US Army War College Guide to National Security Issues: Volume I. Murphy gives some insights into how the dimensions of information power are “used to engage, inform, educate, persuade, and influence perceptions and attitudes of target audiences in order to ultimately change behavior.” In addition, he explains some of the nuances of strategic communication and how the US government wields this IOP.

To Learn More

Duvall, L., “Information as an Instrument of Power” (0:51:41) - Watch entire video.

[Flash Download Video](#) (134 MB) [Download Slides](#) (965 kB) [Integrated](#)

In this lecture excerpt from ACSC’s Wood Auditorium, Maj Duvall discusses the nature and character of the information IOP, actors involved in the information arena and challenged in employing the information IOP.

[Dauber, C.E., Youtube War: Fighting in a World of Cameras in Every Cell Phone and Photoshop on Every Computer \(2009\)](#) – Read pages v-xi. The article by Dauber identifies some terrorist attacks as ‘media events’ often staged to draw the attention of the mass media. In addition terrorists are able to film, edit, and upload these horrifying events almost immediately and without review for veracity. As the enemy is able to bypass the traditional media the implications for information operations are many and some are still unknown.



The Military IOP

Few Wars, in fact, are any longer decided on the battlefield (if indeed they ever were). They are decided at the peace table. Military victories do not themselves determine the outcome of wars; they only provide political opportunities for the victors.

– Sir Michael Howard

Military power provides states with the ability to coerce or to employ violence as a means of reacting to or shaping the international environment. Because of its preeminent place in determining a state's power, it is appropriate to consider both the nature of military power and the manner in which leaders wield it. Military power is based on an array of tangible factors, such as manpower and materiel, but also on intangible factors, such as leadership, *esprit de corps*, and courage. Military power is also based on national identity factors, such as how a society views the use of military force.



[American Commission to Treaty of Paris, 1783, Which Ended the American Revolution](#)

States – including the US – field military forces to meet their political ends based on their understanding of the security environment. The US military, for example, is undergoing a series of changes based on its perception of changes in threats to refocus its capabilities on irregular and asymmetric warfare.

Given the preeminence of military power within international relations (after all, few empires are built on diplomacy, and even the great economic empires were bolstered and defended by significant military forces), some would argue that a state simply could not have too much military power. Yet military power comes at a significant cost. Trade-offs have to be made between military forces and social investments, for instance. There is more than merely economic costs at stake, however. Beyond those costs, the over reliance on military force can actually undermine a state's aims in terms of security. It can drive other states to feel threatened, pooling their resources in an effort to counter the single, powerful state. This leads to the burning question, “ how much military power is sufficient?”

Though you may first think of warfare when you consider the military IOP, the military has broader uses. For example, a nation may use its military to deter war, as in the Cold War, or to assure its allies as the US does through forward deployment of forces. The point is simply this: the military IOP comprises more than just warfare. Furthermore, war is a relationship between belligerents and involves much more than the military IOP employed in warfare.

At the beginning of this lesson, you read a quote from Sir Michael Howard. This eminent military historian argued that wars were not decided by the outcome of battles, but through the efforts of diplomacy. Seldom in military history has the military IOP been decisive on its own. Military victory may be a necessary step toward achieving political objectives, but barring the complete destruction of an opposing society, the underlying conflict that prompted war could

smolder for years, only erupting into outright warfare again sometime in the future. In the combination of the military, diplomatic, information, and economic IOPs, however, the hostile society can be subdued, the conflict can be resolved, the agreement and cooperation can be broadcast, and the society can be rebuilt. It is through the combined efforts of the IOPs then, that victory can be translated into changed security environment.

Required Lesson Materials

[Troxell, J., “Chapter 17: Military Power and the Use of Force” \(2010\)](#) - Read pages 225-249 of the *US Army War College Guide to National Security Issues: Volume I*.

In this reading, the author provides an in-depth analysis of the military instrument of power. He describes the range of military operations and offers guidelines on the use of force.



The Economic IOP

The Economic IOP refers to both the economic foundations of national power and to a set of mechanisms and means used to achieve specific policy goals. Thus, the economic IOP commonly has a two-part definition. In the first, the economic IOP is the foundation for the creation and maintenance of the other IOPs, particularly the military IOP. Wealth and sustained economic productivity generate the ability to build the physical aspects of the other IOPs. Thus, key economic trends and the general economic health of a given political actor have important security ramifications. The second aspect of the definition of the Economic IOP is the ability to manipulate the economic health of another state or actor and to protect oneself from manipulation. Access to economic resources is also a key security consideration.

The active elements of the economic IOP include inducements, sanctions, and, in conjunction with the military IOP, interdictions. US aid to Israel and Egypt, which secured peace between the two states, is an example of an inducement. US sanctions against Libya following the destruction of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie Scotland is an example of sanctions, in this case aimed to secure an admission of guilt and payment of damages to families.

Required Lesson Materials

[Chun, C.K.S., “Chapter 15: Economics: A Key Element of National Power” \(2010\)](#) – Read pages 199-210 of the *US Army War College Guide to National Security Issues: Volume I*.

The Chun reading discusses the changing nature of the economic instrument of power. In particular he addresses how a strong economy can be a national objective, a tool to achieve national interests, and a base of power for the other IOPs. Overall, he foresees use of the economic IOP expanding as the US pursues future national security interests.

[Cronin, P.M. \(ed\), “Chapter 1: The Global Redistribution of Economic Power” \(2009\)](#) – Read pages 7-19 and 27-34 of the *Global Strategic Assessment 2009*.

Chapter 1 in the *Global Strategic Assessment 2009* provides current and relevant details on the dynamic economic IOP. This section discusses what economic power is and how globalization is impacting international economies and security. Finally, the readings investigate some of the challenges to economic security, how they may be addressed, and how the challenges could be prioritized.

To Learn More

Griffith, L., "The Economic Instrument of Power" (0:46:49) - Watch entire video.

[Flash Download Video](#) (318 MB) [Download Slides](#) (272 kB)

This lecture discusses the nature of the economic IOP, the opportunities and challenges that are involved in the effective use of the IOP and its relation to the other IOPs.



Using the IOPs

Up to this point in this course, we have looked at each IOP in isolation. Although each IOP is discrete, the US rarely employs a single IOP in isolation. The international security environment typically requires that IOPs be employed in concert with one another.

A difficult diplomatic demand can be more effective when backed by force or the threat of force. A classic contemporary example of the effective employment of all four IOPs in concert was the strategy employed by the allies to coerce the Serbs to negotiate the Dayton Peace Accords. Diplomatic efforts to end the civil war in the Former Yugoslavia began in 1992 but were still stalled four years later. In 1996, the United States, backed by its NATO allies, used the military to reinforce the diplomatic demands through Operation DELIBERATE FORCE and air strikes. The combined diplomatic-military leveraging changed the position of the Serbian government on negotiations.

Another example illustrates the linkages between the economic and diplomatic IOP. In 1962, the US imposed an embargo on Cuba, which it strengthened in 1996. The lack of US ability to secure cooperation from other countries through diplomacy weakened the economic sanctions within the embargo. In this case, though the sanctions have deprived Cuba of benefits for over 40 years, they have not achieved the desired effect. Had the US been able to diplomatically secure international support, the sanctions would have stood a better chance of meeting US objectives.

The RAND reading that follows provides lessons learned from operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan. These lessons lead to a series of requirements that should enable enhanced cooperative action in future applications of our nation's IOPs.

Required Lesson Materials

Hunter, R.E., E. Gnehm and G. Joulwan, *Integrating Instruments of Power and Influence* (2008) – Read pages vii-xx and 57-60.

This reading from RAND is “a compilation, a synthesis, and an analysis of lessons learned and best practices ranging across the full spectrum of activities from the time before military intervention takes place—indeed, insights from this phase might help to obviate the need for intervention—all the way through to what is generically called postconflict nation-building.” The lessons learned are from operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan.



Conclusion

In a world of immense change, where technological advances and political alliances change seemingly overnight, it is essential that a nation employ all of the instruments of power (IOPs) in order to influence the world and achieve its desired goals. This lesson has introduced you to each of the IOPS (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) and demonstrated how the US national security strategy employs the IOPs to achieve US objectives. In our next lesson we will consider some of the key actors who manage the use of IOPs and how those actors interact with each other.



Lesson 3 Bibliography

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