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Cognitive Domain: Centre of Gravity in Multi-Domain Operations

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Abstract

The paper reconceptualises operational art within the context of Multi-Domain Operations (MDO), identifying the cognitive domain as the decisive Centre of Gravity (CoG) wherein multi-domain effects intersect to influence adversary perceptions, decision-making, and resolve. Anchored in HQ IDS, JP 2.06 Doctrine (2025) and the 5C conflict continuum (Competition-Crisis-Confrontation-Conflict-Combat), it advocates a shift from 'land-centric approaches' to a focus on 'cognitive-centric orchestration', aiming to achieve objectives without destruction, particularly under the nuclear overhang and grey zone challenges posed by Pakistan and China. The analysis offers a doctrinal template for cognitive CoG analysis, detailing adversary-specific processes (Pakistan/China) with steps including vulnerability identification, cognitive Lines of Operation (LsOO) and objectives, tempo manipulation, determination of culmination points and Measures of Effectiveness (MoE) such as decision latency assessed through Red Teaming. The paper also recommends institutional reforms, WONA integration, psychographic targeting and virtual reality training to ensure cognitive superiority. In conclusion, operational art should prioritise cognitive orchestration over kinetic engagement, positioning tempo as perceptual and momentum as physical, thereby securing strategic success across the modern battlespace.

"The adversary must either yield or bend to our will, which is inherently a cognitive process".

— Para 10.6, Joint Doctrine for Multi Domain Operations

Keywords: Jointness, Cognitive Domain, MDO, CoG, National Security

Introduction

The need for Multi-Domain Operations (MDO), especially given the current and potential adversaries' actions and their use of advanced technologies to achieve parity or overmatch (Sheth, N.A. 2025) translated into the JP 2.06, released by Headquarters, IDS on 27 August 2025. This document is the scaffolding on which all future articulation of MDO must rest on for organisational coherence. The Armed forces cannot predicate victory on single domain superiority when facing future threats (Joint Doctrine for Multi Domain Operations (HQ IDS, 2025). Employing Multi-Domain Battle with integrated cross-domain capabilities provides a credible capability to deter adversary aggression, ensure the forces access to key

terrain and consolidate gains for sustainable outcomes. MDO provides the cognitive and operational framework that enables us to win future conflicts.

Senior military leaders have rightly recognised that ‘cognitive dominance of the adversary and resilience of one's own cognitive domain dictates the decisive advantage over future near-peer threats. Future force will include a multi-agency whole- of- nation approach (WONA) (HQ IDS, 2025) and multinational partners, adding their personnel and capabilities to the calculus. The former COAS during an address described contemporary warfare as a continuum of ‘5Cs viz. Competition, Crisis, Confrontation, Conflict and Combat’, blending statecraft and diplomacy with kinetic and non-kinetic actions (PIB, 2024). A pragmatic recognition of the fact that there is blurring of boundaries between war and non-war and an evolving battlespace wherein the soldier and/or armed forces are not the only participant but one of the many. The implication is the risk of relinquishing strategic influence, operational advantage and tactical leverage while preparing for a war that never occurs, as well as the potential of “losing without fighting (Kautilya’s *Tusnimityuddha*)” (Gautam, P.K., Mishra, S. and Gupta, A. 2016). To address this risk, the Indian Army must reimagine how it understands the modern battlespace, which is vast, amorphous and an indeterminate competitive space. The current doctrine of the Indian Army outlines two imperatives for operational art. They are: -

- To actively create the most ‘advantageous tactical conditions’ possible.
- To ensure that ‘unlocking of the CoG’ of the adversary is the focus of military operations and it aligns directly with national strategy (Kanwal, G. 2008).

In order to be prepared for future wars, redefining operational art and the application of military instrument of national power across the conflict continuum is *sine qua non*. In the classical Clausewitzian construct, a Center of Gravity (CoG) is the source of an adversary’s strength, freedom of action or will to fight (Singh, J. 2002). In MDO, while effects are generated across land, air, maritime, cyber, space and EM domains, their decisive impact converges in the cognitive domain— the domain of human perception, decision-making, morale, legitimacy and political will. ‘Domains deliver effects; cognition decides outcomes’. If operational art is to become the primary tool for unlocking the CoG, then this compels a paradigm shift in the Indian Army hypothesis on operational art. It is not to sequence tactical battles for operational advantage on land, operational art in MDO is the art of arranging multi-domain actions so that the adversary loses the ability to ‘think coherently, decide with alacrity and act succinctly’, without necessarily being destroyed.

The central argument of the paper is that the ‘cognitive domain increasingly emerges as the decisive CoG in MDO’, however, it is pertinent to recognise that the identification of a CoG remains inherently contextual and contingent on the 5C continuum and which part of the spectrum is being engaged and strategic objectives assigned. In India, land may remain the currency of victory (PTI, 2025), however, in contemporary grey-zone confrontations between near peers and under a nuclear overhang, physical CoGs are increasingly mediated, protected or targeted through outcomes in the cognitive domain. Ipso facto, even when the CoG is not purely cognitive in form, it is increasingly accessed, shaped and neutralised through actions in the cognitive domain. Thus, this paper does not posit cognition as a universal or exclusive CoG, but argues that operational art in MDO must be fundamentally cognitive-centric, as it is within the cognitive domain that CoG are now most effectively contested, defended and exploited.

Aim of this paper is to analyse cognitive domain as the CoG in MDO and practice of operational art in Indian Army.

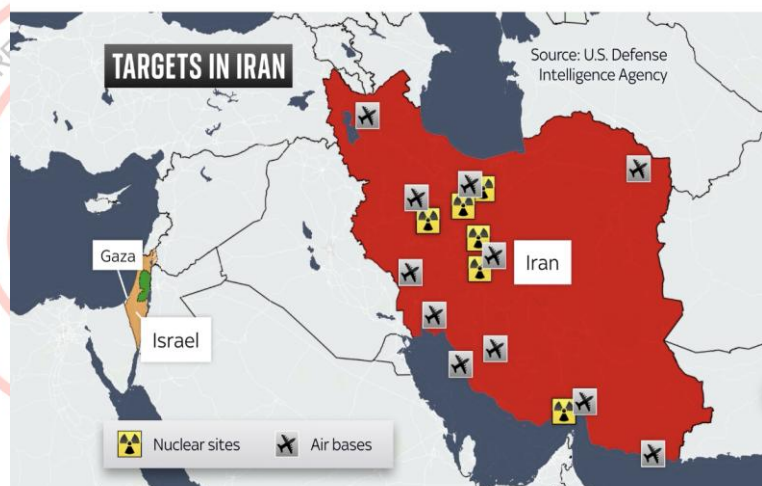
Part1: Redefining Operational Art

Binary war-peace constructs constrain operational art’s potential across the 5C continuum, hence necessitating departure from Jominian emphasis on tactical superiority for decisive battles. Modern warfare views enemies as complex adaptive systems-of-systems, requiring operational art to target critical nodes, disrupt functions and induce cognitive paralysis. Systems theory provides the foundation for reconceptualising war as open-system confrontations wherein multi-domain actions isolate subsystems and exploit dissonance for freedom of manoeuvre. Operational art links battles and operations to harness systemic means, disrupting nodes connecting physical, information and electromagnetic domains to cognition. To successfully conduct war on a complex adaptive system, it is necessary to target critical nodes and disrupt system functions, to create opportunities to paralyse “enemy’s cognition”. This create windows for ground manoeuvres to destroy the enemy’s will, transcending force-on-force engagements. The Indian Army must institutionalise this mindset by studying competing warfare conceptions, adapting to current and future strategic environments. Given the dogma of a near peer conflict of India-Pakistan or India-China, Israel’s operations in Iran in 2024(Kabir, T. 2024) is a correct metric to draw lessons from. This conflict demonstrated a

widened application of military force that transcends force-on-force land engagements and effects in the cognitive domain.

On 25 October 2024, Israel launched ‘Operation: **Days of Repentance**’— a coordinated multi-wave strike on Iranian military targets (Figure 1 refers) {Kiyada, S. and McClure, J. 2025} across the country (IDSA,2024). This attack was the culmination of a meticulously sequenced set of actions targeting micro-components of the Iranian system that fused airpower, cyber operations, electronic warfare and covert action into an integrated operational design. The campaign targeted the enemy’s sense of coherence and leaders’ perception of survivability while setting conditions for the future.

The critical takeaway for India is the necessity to identify and prioritise irreplaceable dependencies of the adversary’s system on which he relies heavily such as centralised command structures, fragile logistics chains and ISR-intensive models of warfare. Success must be measured not only in physical damage but in induced hesitation, decision paralysis and loss of confidence among adversary leadership, especially in escalation-sensitive environments. At the highest level, the operation demonstrates the emergence of the cognitive domain as a theatre-level objective. By undermining coherence, confidence and control, Israel pursued cognitive end-states rather than purely territorial or attritional ones; modern conflict is increasingly about eroding the adversary’s belief in ‘system survivability and decision control’, while simultaneously setting conditions for future manoeuvre.



Theatre campaigns in the twenty-first century should utilise operational art’s system perspective to employ military forces in ways that alter the cognitive space, ultimately supporting strategic objectives. Given this overarching imperative, the following proposed redefinition of operational art captures the specific requirements facing the Indian Army: “Operational art is the organisation’s continuous and adaptive orchestration of multi-domain actions, informed by sense-making and feedback, to shape outcomes in the cognitive domain by influencing adversary perceptions, decisions and legitimacy, thereby creating opportunities

across the tactical and strategic levels and precipitating the cognitive collapse of the adversary's system”.

However, to ensure that the above-mentioned definition translates into tangible action, the glue that binds the key Multi-Domain Battle ingredients into a whole is the philosophy of ‘Mission Command’ (Crevald, M.v. 1985). At its core, the



philosophy of Mission Command is the empowerment of soldiers to take initiatives to ensure ‘controlled chaos’. Controlled chaos does not imply disorder or loss of control; rather, it depicts a deliberately designed operating environment where friction, ambiguity and tempo are exploited to dislocate the adversary, while own forces retain coherence through intent, trust and adaptive leadership. It is a commitment to find or create windows of opportunity, solve problems and take action to accomplish the mission. Controlled chaos is bounded by the ‘Yodha Ethos’ (Singh, A.K. 2024) and by the commander’s informed well-thought-out intent. Operating in and unleashing controlled chaos is bolstered by effective education and training, reinforcing experiences and a climate of candour and trust. Subordinates are empowered to take initiative when superiors create shared understanding of the situation, communicate expectations clearly, impose minimum essential controls, accept prudent risk and potential mistakes and failures made within the scope of their intent, and value each individual as part of a cohesive team. Subordinates are also empowered when properly resourced with the combined arms capabilities needed to succeed.

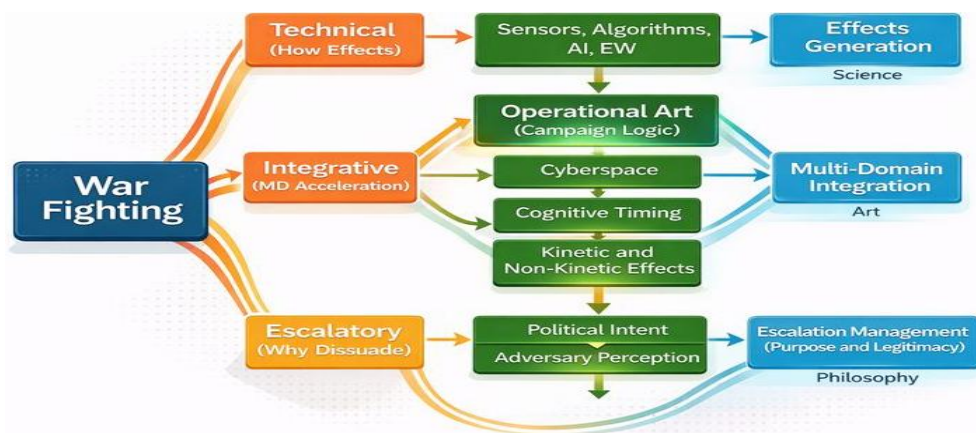


Figure: Operational Art as the Integrative Decision Logic in MDO

Part 2: Manoeuvre Of Mind In Multi- Domain Operations

Operational art as a "manoeuvre of the mind"(Clausewitz, C.v.1976) in MDO refers to the commander's and staff's cognitive ability to integrate and synchronize military actions across all domains to generate outcomes in the social environment (Singh, J. 2005), to achieve strategic objectives. Operational art is fundamentally a conceptual thinking process, not a rigid checklist or a specific level of war. It involves the following: -

- **Conceptual Planning.** It resides primarily in the commander's mind as a vision or estimate that precedes detailed staff planning. It is the intellectual bridge that translates abstract strategic goals into concrete operational approaches and guidance for planning.
- **Creative Imagination.** It requires commanders to use creative imagination, skill, knowledge and experience to design campaigns and major operations that an adversary may not anticipate and may paralyse the enemy's cognitive processes.
- **Systems Thinking.** The "manoeuvre of the mind" involves viewing the operational environment as a complex system with many interconnected actors and subsystems (political, military, economic, social, informational and infrastructural). This allows commanders to understand the root causes of a conflict and identify critical vulnerabilities of the CoG of the adversary in the cognitive domain.

In operational art application in MDO, the leaders use this cognitive manoeuvre to create synergistic effects across all domains, which is more complex than traditional warfare that focused primarily on physical domains. It entails the following actions: -

- **Integration of Domains.** MDO requires the seamless integration of capabilities across the physical domains (land, sea, air) and non-physical domains (space, cyber, information and electromagnetic spectrum) in three operating environments. (HQ IDS, 2025) The final outcome of the effects must be the culmination of all LsOE into the cognitive domain.
- **Managing Tempo.** The high tempo of MDO, driven by new generation and disruptive technology along with ubiquitous sensors, requires faster decision-making and the ability to rapidly develop and execute multiple LsOO and develop contingency options. Operational art is essential for shaping time and tempo to overload adversary systems. The goal is the convergence of lethal and non-lethal effects at the right time and place to achieve military objectives and contribute to national security goals with tempo that can be regulated by decision makers.

- **Strategic Communication:** The famous line from the Mahabharata "*Ashwatthama Hatah, Iti Narova Kunjarova*" meaning "Ashwatthama is dead, but whether a man or an elephant, [I don't know/it's unclear]" (Payyanur, V. 2025) was the core of the strategy, devised by Lord Krishna, to target Dronacharya's emotional vulnerability by engineering a narrative which led to his despondency and final defeat. Operational art helps in ensuring that tactical actions send a cohesive strategic message and shape a favourable narrative. A key aspect is the ability to "weaponise perception", "engineer narratives" and "inject uncertainty" into the adversary's decision-making loops, aiming for cognitive paralysis and shock rather than just physical destruction.

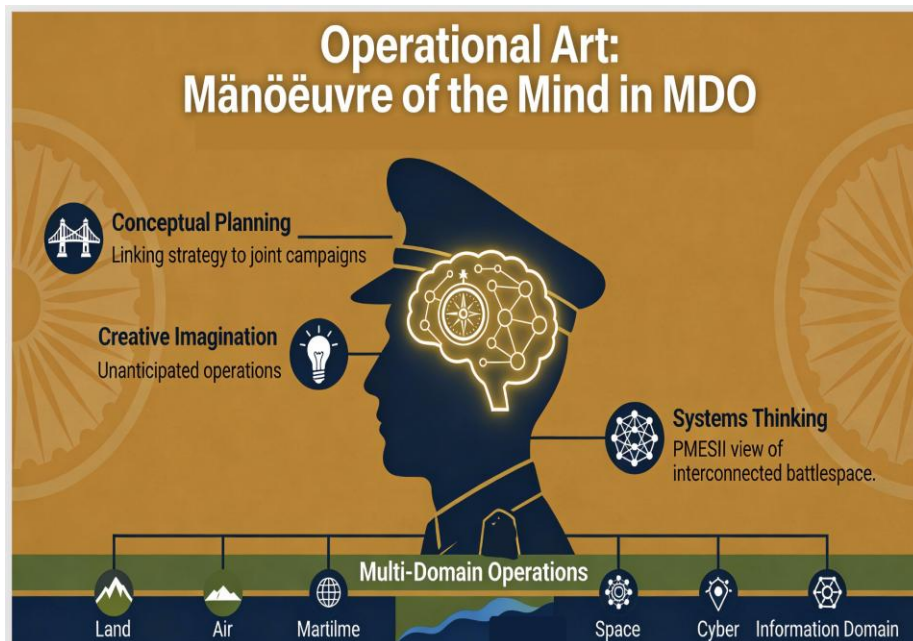
The central idea is that these LsOE illustrates the emerging importance of cognitive effects and battle networks to modern operational art. Unlike traditional force structures that emphasise mass formations, battle networks prioritise speed, precision and adaptability, shifting from a platform-centric to a system-centric approach to warfare. Battle networks encompass two key critical concepts: command, control, communications, computers, systems, intelligence, surveillance and targeting (C4SIST) and kill webs. The core concept allows the armed forces with robust C4SIST networks to execute a faster OODA loop and create multiple decision dilemmas to the adversary leading to a cognitive collapse. The concept of kill webs, reflects the lethal application of fused data from a battle network. Kill webs support operational manouvre through concepts like kill boxes, which defines three dimensional geographic spaces where forces have deconflicted engagement authorityⁱ. This accelerates tempo, including rapidly shifting authorities and attack guidance based on feedback loops analysed at machine speed.

In other words, increasing tempo requires a robust network, structured data, and AI assisted human analysis to create an advantage. Battle networks are not merely digital enablers; they are cognitive accelerators. The Indian Armed Forces are challenged by two/three front contingencies, compressed decision time, sensitivity to escalation and dense information environment; AI/ML is indispensable to preserving decision superiority. Indian operational art does 'not seek automated warfare, but augmented leadership', where machines compress time

ⁱ The term "webs" identifies the importance of more scalable and resilient networks consistent with maturation of an earlier idea of reconnaissance-strike complexes, which has dominated Russian military thought for decades.

and complexity while humans retain judgement, intent, and ethical control. In essence, the "manoeuvre of the mind" is the creative and intellectual capacity of military leaders to visualise and orchestrate disparate actions across a complex, multi-domain environment, ensuring they all serve a single, overarching strategic purpose.

Israel combined technical reconnaissance with HUMINT, open-source targeting and decentralised command nodes to fracture Iran's battle networks (Savill, M. and Ozcelik, B. 2024). Future military formations will need to emulate this model by fusing civilian and military ISR, applying real-time analytics and pushing decision authority (mission command) to forward echelons. Manoeuvre will happen across the domains, creating tempo that overloads adversary systems. In this vision, "seizing the initiative" will entail the force injecting uncertainty into decision-making loops, fracture trust in systems and make leaders feel personally vulnerable. This will shape strategic outcomes long before a single brigade deploys.



Part 3: Doctrinal Template For Cognitive Domain Cognitive Analysis

The doctrinal template being proffered is predicated on the base fact that force employment must explicitly recognise cognition as the decisive arena of 5C and reorient MDO accordingly. Failure to do so, risks tactical proficiency without strategic success and in extreme cases, strategic defeat without fighting. Recent conflicts demonstrate that adversaries increasingly pursue strategic advantage by targeting cognition rather than capability. They seek to induce shock, paralysis, mistrust or legitimacy erosion while avoiding decisive kinetic engagement. Forces may succeed tactically yet fail to influence the adversary decision-making

which would result in loss of escalation dominance despite battlefield superiority like it has been displayed in OP SINDOOR (Pant, H.V. and Kaura, V. 2025).

Multi-domain operations generate distinct but interrelated effects, each contributing to a cumulative cognitive impact, the key derivatives are: -

- ***Kinetic Effects.*** Kinetic action remains a powerful instrument, not merely for physical destruction but for its psychological consequences. Precision strikes, limited punitive actions and demonstrative use of force aims at shocking leadership and military hierarchies that in turn instils fear and uncertainty. Such cognitive dissonance can reinforce own deterrence strategies or challenge deterrence credibility of the adversary. Hence, kinetic force must be calibrated for cognitive impact, not maximum destruction. Excessive force risks escalation and legitimacy loss; insufficient force risks emboldening the adversary.
- ***Cyber Effects.*** Cyber operations target the nervous system of the state and military apparatus by creating ambiguity about system integrity. The system of systems construct rests on the presumption of reliable connectivity, trusted data flows and confidence in distributed decision-making. When adversaries subjects these networks to sustained cyber duress, it generates cognitive paralysis. Commanders become uncertain of data veracity, reluctant to delegate authority, and increasingly risk-averse, leading to delayed decisions and loss of operational tempo despite the physical availability of forces. Cyber capabilities should be integrated into operational planning as decision-disrupting tools to maximise cognitive dislocation.
- ***Space and ISR Effects.*** Space-based assets and ISR architectures shape how adversaries perceive the battlespace. Persistent surveillance and precision targeting can generate a perception of omniscience and inevitability and accentuated vulnerability among leadership and forces leading to behavioural modification without engagement. Conversely, degradation of space or ISR capabilities can create blindness, anxiety and risk aversion. Space and ISR policy must move beyond enablement and be recognised as active instruments of cognitive pressure.

The Cognitive Convergence Model

While each domain produces distinct effects, their decisive impact converges in the cognitive domain. Shock without narrative engineering is transient, ISR without decision disruption invites adaptation and cyber effects without kinetic credibility lacks coercive power. Accordingly, cognitive dominance, and not domain superiority should be the organising principle of operational art in MDO. The implications for leadership at the operational level would be as under: -

- Redefining Success Metrics must move beyond traditional measures such as territory seized or targets destroyed in the given context of the 5C continuum. Cognitive measures of effectiveness should be latency in adversary decision making, changes in signalling and posture and/or narrative concessions or defensive messaging.
- Operational art must be reconceptualised as the sequencing of cognitive effects, not merely tactical battles for strategic outcomes. This would mandate the commanders to identify cognitive CoG and its analysis, development of effect based LsOO and tempo manipulation to overload decision cycles of the adversary.
- Cognitive centric MDO demands closer integration between military forces, diplomatic apparatus, information vectors, media agencies as well as cyber and space organisations. This reinforces the necessity of a WONA, with clear policy mechanisms for coordination and authority at operational level.

Decision making is the real battlefield and future conflicts would be less about destroying forces and more about shaping choices, disrupting OODA loops to undermining strategic coherence. Thus, the decisive struggle is for decision superiority, not firepower superiority. This is only possible when the cognitive domain is targeted as the primary CoG, through ambiguity, plausible deniability, narrative engineering and psychological shock. A template for Cognitive Targeting Process, with respect to the Western and Northern Adversary, is attached as Appendix. The template is by no means exhaustive or complete but would offer a datum line for operational level planners to further build on.

To operationalise cognitive dominance within MDO, the Indian Army must institutionalise several enabling practices. Psychographic targeting (Bakir V, 2020), powered by big-data analytics, to map adversary belief systems, identity markers and behavioural

triggers, enabling personalised narrative delivery while actively countering adversarial manipulation. Immersive training methodologies, particularly VR-based cognitive simulations, must be integrated to expose commanders to decision-making under ambiguity and cognitive stress, thereby inoculating them against bias and narrative shock. Central to this evolution is “human–AI sensemaking”, where human judgement is fused with AI-enabled analytics to generate real-time feedback loops, accelerating adaptive operational art without eroding mission command.



Conclusion

Operational art in MDO requires creative insights and infusions by the leader rather than a mechanistic arrangement of forces and actions (Hoffman, F. 2021). Good operational art provides coherence to the military force in multiple domains over multiple operational environments, considering achievable steps to meet strategic objectives. However, the effectiveness of operational art depends upon a clear understanding of the nature of the military and non-military aspects of a conflict in an era of strategic competition where grey zone and hybrid warfare tactics are at commonplace and the human mind has emerged as a distinct and the most critical domain of conflict.

However, the final word must be of the *Vidur Vakta* (Dutta, A. 2025): for Cognitive Dominance in MDO to succeed, several hard preconditions must be met. Institutional and command reform is indispensable: cognitive-domain objectives require clear ownership at the

theatre level, empowered joint staff and decision authority that is genuinely delegated rather than centrally retained. Inter-agency integration must move from rhetoric to systemic; cyber, space, intelligence, diplomatic and information instruments cannot be synchronised on ad hoc basis during crisis; they require standing coordination structures and pre-approved playbooks across the 5C continuum. Most importantly, ‘mission command as a culture must be preserved and persevered, not merely proclaimed’; it is not a switch that can be turned ON or OFF. ‘Measurement and feedback systems must be realistic’ and must be fused with human red-teaming and adversary adaptation analysis to avoid false confidence. Without these enabling conditions— organisational and cultural, the doctrinal transition would be conceptual and not physical.



Appendix

COGNITIVE TARGETING PROCESS : PAKISTAN

1. Step 1: Cognitive CoG Analysis

1.1. Identify the Cognitive CoG

- 1.1.1 Political leadership confidence.
- 1.1.2. Civil–military trust.
- 1.1.3. Strategic narrative legitimacy and acceptance.
- 1.1.4. Decision-making cohesion with CDF.
- 1.1.5. Escalation risk tolerance with international support.

1.2 Identify Critical Vulnerabilities (CVs)

- 1.2.1. Elite fractures between military and landlords.
- 1.2.2. Narrative contradictions within Sunni Islamic sects.
- 1.2.3. Over-centralised decision loops converging at GHQ.
- 1.2.4. Public sensitivity to losses in Punjab.
- 1.2.5. Economic or diplomatic anxieties with Afghanistan and MENA.

2. Step 2: Define Cognitive Operational Objectives (COOs)

- 2.1. Induce **decision paralysis** at the political–military interface.
- 2.2. Force **premature escalation or restraint**.
- 2.3. Undermine **confidence in escalation dominance**.
- 2.4. Create **strategic ambiguity** that delays response.
- 2.5. Shift **international perception** against the adversary

3. **Step 3: Design Cognitive LsOO (C-LsOO).** To create **one cognitive effect**.

Cognitive LsOO	Purpose
Decision Disruption	Break coherence of adversary decisions
Narrative Dominance	Control meaning of events
Escalation Manipulation	Shape risk perception
Legitimacy Erosion	Undermine moral authority
Time Compression	Force rushed choices

4. **Step 4: Synchronisation through “Cognitive Manoeuvre”.** The deliberate positioning of the adversary into a decisional dilemma where all options incur cognitive, political, or legitimacy costs. This is achieved by: -

- 4.1. Asymmetric timing (temporal displacement between domains).
- 4.2. Cross-domain simultaneity (convergence in cognitive domain).
- 4.3. Controlled ambiguity (deniability and use of non-state actors).
- 4.4. Information saturation (narrative engineering).
- 4.5. Cyber disruption (confusion and disruption).
- 4.6. ISR visibility (fear of exposure and vulnerability).
- 4.7. Limited kinetic action (credibility to the narrative).

5. **Step 5: Tempo as Cognitive Weapon.** Operational art must exploit **tempo asymmetry**, not speed alone. The aim is to **own the adversary’s decision clock**, not the battlefield clock and the principles to be followed are: -

- 5.1. **Irregular tempo** disorients cognition.
- 5.2. **Pulse operations** prevent adaptation.
- 5.3. **Pauses** are as important as actions (force anticipation).

6. **Step 6: Cognitive Culmination Point.** Operational art must identify a **cognitive culmination point**. Cognitive culmination occurs when: -

- 6.1. Further action risks restoring adversary coherence.
- 6.2. Escalation begins to favour the adversary.
- 6.3. Narrative legitimacy starts to erode for own side.

7. **Step 7: Measures of Effectiveness (MoE).**

S No	Cognitive Impact	Objective	MoE	Metrics	Interpretation
01	Decision Latency	Delay decision making	% increase in OODA time cycle	Time Stamps during RED TEAMING exercise	Cognitive Overload
02	Command Coherence	Military dissonance	Variance in Directive	Staff Wargaming Score	Increase in System Stress
03	Narrative Saturation	Control narrative	Sentiment polarity shift	NLP analysis of media outputs	Legitimacy Erosion
04	Network Integrity	Centralised Command	Frequency of Feedbacks	System work flow analysis	Check backs imply lack of trust
05	Tempo Disruption	Upset battle rhythm	Time differential in decisions	Event sequence simulation	Loss of opportunity
06	Leadership Confidence	Undermine authority	Signalling variance	Discourse analysis	Dilemma & insecurity

COGNITIVE TARGETING PROCESS: CHINA

Step 1: Cognitive CoG Analysis

1.1. Identify the Cognitive CoG

1.1.1. CMC/Politburo confidence in escalation dominance

1.1.2. Centralized C2 trust and delegation coherence

1.1.3. Nationalist narrative legitimacy (Taiwan/LAC invincibility)

1.1.4. Theatre commander autonomy vs. Beijing oversight

1.1.5. Economic/societal resilience to sustained conflict costs

1.2. Identify Critical Vulnerabilities (CVs)

1.2.1. Rigid centralized decision loops (CMC bottleneck)

1.2.2. Lack of combat experience and untested jointness

1.2.3. Over-reliance on AI/C4ISR networks vulnerable to disruption

1.2.4. Internal distrust (party over military initiative)

1.2.5. Grey-zone overstretch (Taiwan, SCS, LAC, global interests)

1.2.6. Factionalism within Armed Forces.

Step 2: Define Cognitive Operational Objectives (COOs)

2.1. Induce CMC paralysis through multi-theatre dilemmas.

2.2. Erode theatre-level initiative via conflicting directives.

2.3. Undermine “intelligentised warfare” confidence.

2.4. Amplify domestic economic anxieties to constrain risk appetite.

2.5. Fracture global narrative of inevitable victory.

Step 3: Design Cognitive LsOOs (C-LsOOs)

Cognitive LsOO	Purpose
Decision Disruption	Overload CMC OODA with simultaneity
Narrative Dominance	Expose PLA untested globally
Escalation Manipulation	Force horizontal theatre trade-offs
Legitimacy Erosion	Highlight party-military frictions
Time Compression	Accelerate crises beyond C2 tempo

Step 4: Synchronisation through Cognitive Manoeuvre Position adversary in irresolvable trilemma: obey Beijing (slowness), act tactically (disobedience), or freeze. Achieved by:

- 4.1. **Asymmetric timing:** Pulse cyber/ISR pre-kinetic.
- 4.2. **Cross-domain simultaneity:** LAC+ maritime + cyber convergence.
- 4.3. **Controlled ambiguity:** Proxy/non-attributable actions.
- 4.4. **Information saturation:** Leak internal dissent signals.
- 4.5. **Cyber disruption:** Degrade AI-dependent sensemaking.
- 4.6. **ISR visibility:** Demonstrate penetration of kill webs.
- 4.7. **Limited kinetic:** Target untested joint nodes for shock.

Step 5: Tempo as Cognitive Weapon Exploit PLA's "command paradox" (centralism vs. tempo needs):

- 5.1. **Irregular tempo:** Disrupt scripted exercise rhythms.
- 5.2. **Pulse operations:** Force reactive adaptation cycles.
- 5.3. **Pauses:** Induce over-analysis and second-guessing.
- 5.4. Age profile of CMC members; performance under duress.

Step 6: Cognitive Culmination Point:

- 6.1. Further actions risk CMC loss of face/coherence.

6.2. Escalation exposes logistical/jointness gaps.

6.3. Own narrative shifts to victimhood, eroding WONA.

6.4. International coalition against PLA belligerence.

7. Step 7: Measures of Effectiveness (MoE).

S No	Cognitive Impact	Objective	MoE	Metrics	Interpretation
01	Decision Latency	Delay decision making	Increase in CMC Directives & TSO	Time Stamps during RED TEAMING exercise— SIGINT	Cognitive Overload, cliques at logger-heads
02	Command Coherence	Military dissonance	Mov of TRSO Assets	Staff Wargaming Score	Increase in System Stress
03	Narrative Saturation	Control narrative	Sentiment polarity shift	NLP analysis of media outputs	Erosion of position in world
04	Network Integrity	Centralised Command	Frequency of Feedbacks	System work flow analysis	Check backs imply lack of trust
05	Tempo Disruption	Upset battle rhythm	Time differential in decisions	Event sequence in simulation	Loss of opportunity and dissent in PLA
06	Leadership Confidence	Undermine authority	Signalling variance	Discourse analysis	Dilemma & insecurity

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