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Deception for the Operational Commander

by

LCDR Deborah A. Headrick, USN

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Operations Department.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: Deborah A. Headrick

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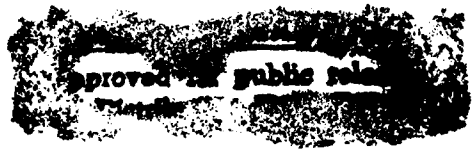

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This paper focuses on deception for the operational commander. Deception is a powerful force multiplier that can acquire opportunities and advantages of special benefit to commanders of U.S. forces. This paper aggregates recognized deception theories, discusses their applicability for today's operational commander. Specifically, the benefits and liabilities of deception, its operational imperatives, and the deception tools available to the commander will be examined, with references to historical strategic and operational examples. Successful stratagem is cheap, extremely effective, and can provide opportunities for low own-force costs and casualties, and rapid conflict resolution. Commanders should avoid the historic pitfall of viewing deception as unnecessary. Rather, stratagem should be considered another tool to aid in achieving his objectives. Conversely, the commander should expect his enemies to incorporate deception into all levels of wartime planning.

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Abstract of
DECEPTION FOR THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER

This paper focuses on deception for the operational commander. Deception is a powerful force multiplier that can acquire opportunities and advantages of special benefit to commanders of U.S. forces. This paper aggregates recognized deception theories, and discusses their applicability for today's operational commander. Specifically, the benefits and liabilities of deception, its operational imperatives, and the deception tools available to the commander will be examined, with references to historical strategic and operational examples. Successful stratagem is cheap, extremely effective, and can provide opportunities for low own-force costs and casualties, and rapid conflict resolution. Commanders should avoid the historic pitfall of viewing deception as unnecessary. Rather, stratagem should be considered another tool to aid in achieving his objectives. Conversely, the commander should expect his enemies to incorporate deception into all levels of wartime planning.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Thesis: Deception is an ancient force multiplier which will remain effective in the future. Through use of stratagem, operational commanders can acquire powerful advantages and opportunities which have special benefits when employing U.S. military forces. A thorough and accurate knowledge of the enemy, and consideration of the commander's basic operational questions are essential to effective use of deception. Conversely, commanders must always expect the enemy to use deception to gain an advantage at all levels of war.

Introduction: Deception is not among the operational principles of war. Why, then, is it a worthy subject for an operations paper? Deception has been recognized for over three millennia as a key to victory. Dr. Michael Handel defines deception as "the process of influencing the enemy to make decisions disadvantageous to himself by supplying or denying information."[1] This ancient force multiplier was esteemed by Sun Tzu, the Chinese military philosopher, who said, "All warfare is based on deception."[2] Deception is found in great battle epics, such as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Historical records provide accounts of its use by ancient Egyptians, Chinese, numerous Biblical figures, Greeks, Romans, and even Genghis Khan. More recently, it was very successfully used by the Japanese, British, Soviets, and Germans in World War II, and by the United States during Operation Desert Storm. It is practiced in other human endeavors, such as business, diplomacy, politics, and even love. In nature, deceptive adaptions are favored in the natural selection process. A creature that is *not* what it seems has an undeniable advantage, whether its opponent is prey or predator. Perhaps nature provides the most compelling proof of deception's

power, for biological energy is never squandered on ineffectual survival strategies. Similarly in war, creating a successful illusion gains powerful advantages and provides great rewards. Its benefits are of special value to U.S. commanders, who must achieve their goals within the constraints imposed by our democratic political system. This paper will aggregate recognized deception theories, and discuss their applicability for today's operational commander. Specifically, the *benefits* and *liabilities* of deception, its *operational imperatives*, and the *deception tools* available to the commander will be examined, with references to historical strategic and operational examples.

Definitions: Since deception exists at many different levels, it is useful to differentiate between the military use of strategic, operational, and tactical deception. Although each can affect the operational level of war, strategic and operational deception are of primary concern in this paper.

Strategic deception affects the enemy's total capability to wage war, and has a major impact on the direction of a war. It involves large numbers of individuals and organizations as either perpetrators or victims, including national command authorities on both sides. Strategic deception is relatively long term, recurring over weeks or months. The stakes are very high, and will affect the outcome of wars or large scale campaigns.[3] Strategic deception influences the enemy's concepts, doctrine, force structure, material procurement, and training. This, in turn, impacts operational deception by inducing the enemy to make desired pre-battle operational and sustainment decisions.[4]

Operational deception supports campaigns and major operations. Its objective is to influence the decisions of an enemy commander before battle so the tactical outcome is favorable and operationally exploitable.[5] Operational deception influences the enemy's force composition, disposition, and distribution, often by unexpected use of novel tactics or techniques.[6]

Tactical deception affects only the course of a particular engagement, and is often an unexpected attack or troop engagement technique at a local level.[7] However, these factors can have both a strategic and operational impact on planning by affecting the enemy's decision cycle.

CHAPTER II

BENEFITS

Force Multiplier: The benefits of successful deception for the operational commander are numerous and often decisive. Deception has been recognized throughout history as a powerful *force multiplier* that magnifies the strength of the successful deceiver. Prior to the advent of modern high-tech weaponry (itself a force multiplier), opposing forces used roughly similar weapons, and military conflicts were decided by either superior force or leadership. In that environment, the commander who deceived his enemy gained great advantage. History confirms the existence of an inverse relationship between force strength and the incentive to use deception.[8] The weaker force has the most incentive to use deception, while the stronger force often feels it can win regardless of the enemy's action, and so is less inclined to use guile. Thus, the weaker force, by virtue of successful stratagem, may compensate for its disadvantages and wrest the initiative from its superior opponent. The same holds true in the 20th century. During World War II, the very survival of the British and Soviet states was threatened when their territories came under German attack. Their extensive and effective use of deception gained decisive advantages that led to victory. In contrast, the United States was insulated by two oceans and, although galvanized in its war effort, did not fight desperate battles for its sovereign territory. Operating from a position of material superiority, America left deception to the British and rarely used it except tactically. [9] However, stratagem's unqualified success in Desert Storm earned it new respect from American commanders. Today's military commanders, even when controlling a superior force, should incorporate deception into strategic and operational thinking. The temptation to ignore deception grossly underestimates its powerful force multiplication benefits.

Deception is a two-edged sword. In near term conflicts, American military forces will almost always be recognized as superior. The weaker opponent will thus have a high incentive to resort to guile. A commander should always expect the enemy to attempt to gain an advantage through deception.

Stratagem's force multiplication advantages are achieved by facilitating implementation of one or more basic principles of war, while simultaneously causing the enemy to violate these same principles. Deception permits the commander to achieve operational goals, such as *surprise*, focusing *mass* (combat power) at the decisive place and time, acquiring the offensive *initiative*, maximizing *economy of force*, allowing effective *maneuver*, and enhancing *security*. Conversely, successful deception can (through surprise) cause the enemy to lose the initiative, compel him to disperse or otherwise use his forces ineffectively, maneuver to his disadvantage, and be predictable in his actions through breached security. Over time, successful deception can profoundly demoralize an enemy, as exemplified by the low state of German morale in 1944 after many successful Soviet deception operations at the Eastern front.[10]

Opportunity for Quick Victory: Deception provides a special benefit to U.S. military commanders who must achieve their strategic and operational goals within constraints imposed by political imperatives. Specifically, the American public has a low tolerance for casualties and protracted military conflicts. Furthermore, Desert Storm has proven that the media *will be* on future battlefields to bring the war into the homes of American citizens. Public opinion will dramatically influence the political requirements imposed upon a commander. More than ever before, operational commanders will feel political pressure to achieve decisive victory, low attrition, and rapid conflict resolution. Deception's force multiplication characteristics give operational commanders a

means to operate within these constraints by providing opportunities for quick and decisive victory.

Economical: An additional benefit of stratagem in this economically austere era of force reductions is that *forces can be used in the most economical manner.* Rapid conflict resolution not only lowers casualty levels, but also reduces costs and material expenditures. Furthermore, *deception is cheap* when compared to other force multipliers, such as high-tech weaponry. It is one of the most inexpensive types of modern intelligence work. Relative to the cost of other operational methods, deception uses fewer personnel and resources to yield very high returns. For instance, total participants used in deception operations supporting the 1944 Allied invasion of Europe numbered only about 2,000 troops; none of whom were first line combat troops.[11]

High Susceptibility: Interestingly, evidence indicates that there is a *universal susceptibility* to deception. Even those well versed in the art of stratagem, and fully aware of the threat, remain vulnerable. The reason is that heightened awareness impacts one's degree of openness to new information, and actually increases susceptibility to a ruse.[12] This paradox, simply stated, says that "the more alert one is to deception, the more likely one is to be deceived."[13] Although defensive measures are available, effective counter-deception is nearly impossible.

CHAPTER III

LIABILITIES

Deception's benefits are impressive, however its use cannot be considered a panacea. A commander must consider the negative aspects and risks associated with stratagem.

Side Effects: Deception efforts may produce *subtle, unwanted, and sometimes unavoidable side effects*; a phenomena termed "the monkey's paw."[14] One such side effect may be caused by a security constraint that strictly minimizes the distribution of deception plans (even to the point of misleading one's own forces). To illustrate, during World War I, uncertainty as to the success of ongoing British deception efforts, in combination with security concerns, caused an unnecessary mobilization of British forces. The British deception goal was to relieve pressure on their front lines by diverting German troops to counter a false invasion threat to Belgium. The ruse was successful, and the Germans moved large numbers of troops to the Belgian coast. However, British authorities who remained *unaware of ongoing deception efforts* concluded the Germans intended to invade England. To complicate matters, deception planners were not convinced their ruse was absolutely the *only* cause for the German movement. Thus, the deception planners watched in silence during Britain's worst scare of World War I.[15] In such a dilemma, a cost to benefit analysis must ultimately determine deception security.

Enemy Discovery: If deception is discovered, it can be *turned to the enemy's advantage*. Such a circumstance can prove devastating. A famous World War II example is the Double Cross system, in which the British turned, and then completely controlled the German espionage system. Information passed to the German high-command by this double-spy network helped ensure the success of the Allied invasion of Normandy. If such a deception scheme is uncovered, the

commander's best course of action is, of course, to play along with the ruse, even supporting it when possible, while planning to exploit the situation. The importance of security in deception operations is self-evident. Because the potential risk is so great, particularly at the strategic level, knowledge of deception plans and operations should be strictly limited in distribution. During World War II, only seven officers were privy to the entire extent of British deception efforts.[16]

Self-deception: Although the *risk of self deception* occurs mainly at policy and strategy levels, it has operational implications. A nation may attempt to overstate its military capabilities to give the illusion that its overall strength is greater than it is in fact. In 1938, Mussolini reduced the composition of an Italian army division from three regiments to two. The increase in number of divisions gave the illusion that ground strength was nearly double its actual strength. Several years later, Mussolini forgot this action and fatally miscalculated his true force strength.[17]

Failure to Exploit the Advantage: There is the risk that the commander will *not be prepared to fully exploit the opportunities* procured by a ruse. Deception may yield results so successful that the commander may fail to seize the initiative. A commander must carefully coordinate his forces beforehand to be prepared to fully grasp the advantage.

Overdependence: Conversely, a commander may become *overly dependent upon deception*. Deception is not a panacea which will replace wise employment of combat power and material strength.[18] Hard fighting may be necessary to exploit opportunities and gain rewards. Any belief that deception alone will "win the day" is based on naivete.

Failure of the Bait: There is the risk that the bait will fail. Specifically, the enemy *may not find the bait, may misinterpret it*, or *may not find it credible*.

For the commander, this risk is magnified when deception becomes an imperative, due to a desperate situation or hazardous operational requirement. Although Clausewitz put little credence in deception as a regular component of war, he did recognize its utility in desperate situations:

> *The weaker the forces that are at the disposal of the supreme commander, the more appealing the use of cunning becomes. In a state of weakness and insignificance, when prudence, judgment, and ability no longer suffice, cunning may well appear the only hope. The bleaker the situation, with everything concentrating on a single desperate attempt, the more readily cunning is joined to daring.* [19]

Although history provides ample proof that weaker forces can win by stratagem, a ruse is only effective if the bait is swallowed. The bait must be tailored specifically to the mind of the enemy. It must be discovered and believed. Despite the risk of failure, guile becomes the last hope in a desperate situation. Seldom is anything more lost in its attempt.

CHAPTER IV

DECEPTION IMPERATIVES

Let us now look at certain imperatives which operational commanders must fulfill to maximize their chances for a successful deception plan.

Effective Intelligence: The commander's intelligence and deception planning team must be effective. The essence of good deception rests on the premise that enemy intelligence believe the ruse and sell it to their own commander. To this end, the bait must be constructed so it will be discovered by the enemy, correctly interpreted, and found credible. A false lure cannot be so sophisticated that enemy intelligence will misinterpret it, nor so simple that it will arouse suspicion. Ideally, enemy intelligence should assemble pieces of a false puzzle, sell the desired conclusion, and thereby induce their commander to act on false information. To achieve these goals, one's own intelligence and deception planning forces must know and tailor the bait to the *mind of the enemy*. Such an endeavor involves accurate knowledge of enemy motives, goals, perceptions, objectives, preconceptions, attitudes, values, and culture. Also of value is understanding how the enemy has historically conducted operations. In essence, the deceivers must think like their adversary. In this context, the deceivers should not ask,"What would *we* do in this situation", but rather, "What would *they* do in this situation." The answers will often be quite different. Furthermore, the intelligence and deception planning forces are responsible for keeping the commander informed on enemy's beliefs and preconceptions, which can differ significantly from the actual situation.

Know Own Operations: Beyond the intelligence aspects, the deception planning team should have a thorough knowledge of own force capabilities and operational plans. They must ensure the deception plan meshes cohesively with the campaign plan. A working knowledge of operations ensures coordination of

deception with real operations at all levels, and helps in designing a realistic and credible cover plan scenario. Deception planners should work on the operations staff and be in constant touch with the commander.[20]

Indicate Desired Enemy Action: Successful deception planning rests on *what the commander wants the enemy to do* (not what he wants the enemy to think). This can best be determined by applying the *commander's basic operational questions* to deception. That is, what military conditions must be produced in the operational area to achieve the strategic goal?; and how can deception shape the battlefield to achieve these conditions? The plan is formulated based upon the answers. The remaining *basic questions* should also be asked in the context of deception planning. That is, what sequence of deceptive actions is most likely to produce those conditions?; how should resources be applied to accomplish those deceptive actions?; and what is the likely cost or risk?

Support of Real Operations: There are three sequential goals to deception: to condition the enemy's beliefs, to influence his actions, and to benefit from those actions. Ultimately, a commander should measure success *vis-a-vis* the final goal: the benefit his forces receive. Thus, it is important that the commander ensure a stratagem always supports a real operation. Deception for its own sake is a waste of assets and opportunities. In planning, it is most beneficial if the enemy is led to believe a false truth, rather than simply confusing him about the real truth. The latter option, termed *ambiguity-increasing*, or *A-type* deception seeks to compound uncertainties to make the enemy unsure of the truth, and thereby protect actual operational plans. Disadvantages are that the victim is highly unpredictable, and is not manipulated to the commander's benefit. The more powerful option is *misleading*, or *M-type* deception, by which enemy ambiguity is reduced as he becomes convinced of the correctness of a wrong alternative.[21] Stratagem should "make the enemy quite certain, very decisive,

and wrong."[22] M-type deception can both predict and guide enemy actions. A commander's statement of exactly what he wants the enemy to do becomes the heart of M-type deception planning, and also forms a base for real operational planning. The greatest benefits are gained if deception planning progresses on a continuing basis, and not just for one operation.

Coordination is Essential: The commander must *ensure the deception plan has been fully coordinated* and is being supported by all forces, including service, joint, and combined forces. Failure to do so would open the stratagem to failure through the enemy's discovery of some inconsistency. According to the Hesketh Report: "...the control of a deceptive operation must be decided upon the self-evident principle that no people can safely tell the same lie to the same person except by closely concerted action."[23] Whatever the illusion, it must appear to be consistent and truthful from all angles of enemy examination.

Time Requirements: The commander must *allow sufficient time* to carefully prepare a cover plan and execute the stratagem, while weighing time constraints imposed by real operational requirements. Resources, such as troops, materials, and weapons, may be needed to build the illusion of a real threat. Other requirements may include camouflaging, and creation of a bogus signals environment, notional forces, and operations. To illustrate, in June 1917 during World War I, British General Allenby attempted to delude the Turks that a large landing operation would take place in Northern Syria to support an attack on Palestine. Various signals supported the illusion that Cyprus was the base of operations. In response, the Turks flew a special reconnaissance mission over Cyprus which discovered no invasion threat at all. The British endeavor failed because there wasn't enough *time* to carefully prepare a cover plan or create the illusion of a convincing threat.[24]

Security: Related to the preceding example is the *imperative for concealment and security*. During World War II, air superiority was instrumental in maintaining a ruse by preventing close enemy examination of a perceived threat, and discovery that it was false. Today, air superiority may remain a viable method of protecting a stratagem *only* if the enemy (or its allies) has no other means of overhead verification. Deception must be tailored to the technological sophistication of the enemy. However, deception becomes more difficult as the number of information and verification channels available to the enemy increase. Technically sophisticated societies are more difficult to deceive than technically backward nations. However, in consideration of the benefits of information warfare, the more channels of enemy information a commander controls, the more easily the enemy can be deceived.[25]

During World War II, the Soviets became increasingly adept at using deception at all levels of warfare through control of German verification methods, concealment, and security. Soviet deception was relatively crude before the Battle of Moscow in 1941, when the Soviets successfully concealed at least three complete armies from German intelligence. In 1942 before the battle of Stalingrad, the Soviets used sophisticated camouflage techniques to hide the forward deployment of 160,000 troops, and their supporting artillery, vehicles, and ammunition. By the 1944 German offensive in Belorussia, German intelligence assessed Soviet tank strength to be 400 to 1,100 tanks. In reality, there were more than 5,000 Soviet tanks at that front! By the Manchurian campaign of August 1945, Soviet deception techniques had been so perfected that the Japanese underestimated the opposing Soviet force strength by 30 to 50%.[26]

Although Soviet deception techniques were simple and labor intensive, they were effective. The Soviets gradually became proficient at security and

denial of air reconnaissance by use of heavy smoke screens, force movements (deception maneuver) at night or in bad weather, bogus wireless traffic, disinformation, and rumors.

Soviet Imperatives: The Soviets acquired a wealth of deception experience during World War II. Soviet deception researchers have identified, from lessons learned, the following criteria for effective deception:

- Evaluate the enemy's intelligence collection methods, and devise counteractions.
- Develop deception expectations for operations. Ensure that operational deception measures conform to one's ability to conduct them.
- Plan all deception measures in detail, and centralize their execution.
- Systematize deception activities. Maintain their credibility, continuity, and diversity.
- Use initiative and creativity in organizing and executing deception measures.

Soviet deception measures during World War II seriously skewed German intelligence estimates, and surprised German commanders as to the location of the operational battlefields. By the end of the war, the Red Army had also achieved the psychological initiative, which resulted "in self-defeating German actions and reactions, smashed defensive lines, and catastrophic encirclements of major German forces."[27]

CHAPTER V

DECEPTION TOOLS FOR THE COMMANDER

Exploitation of Preconceptions: This tool, known as Magruder's Principle, states that it is easier to induce an enemy to continue a preexisting belief, than to present notional evidence to change that belief. To know enemy preconceptions, it is essential to know the enemy. One can then examine how existing enemy beliefs can be used to an advantage. A premise of deception theory is, "actors tend to perceive what they expect,"[28] which thereby provides a pre-positioned leverage toward a deception plan. Brigadier General Dudley Clarke, a leading World War II deception architect, was inflexible in his rule that "all cover plans should be based on what the enemy himself not only believes but hopes for."[29]

Operation FORTITUDE SOUTH, a deception cover plan for the D-Day invasion of Normandy, provides an outstanding example. Hitler believed the invasion of Europe would occur at the Pas de Calais, an area he considered, "the most logical point of attack."[30] Beginning in 1942, he ordered the heaviest guns available emplaced at this location to destroy the Allied invasion fleet. The Allies, fully aware of this belief, falsely presented the Pas de Calais as their real objective (Operation FORTITUDE SOUTH). This information was successfully offered through British infiltrated channels considered very reliable by the Germans: the German spy network (totally controlled by the British), and ULTRA (a top secret cryptologic communications system). The German's reluctance to redeploy 18 army divisions held near Calais in the week following the invasion testifies to FORTITUDE SOUTH's success. After the invasion, the Allies continued the ruse through Operation FORTITUDE SOUTH II. The cover plan's post-assault phase successfully convinced the Germans (by the same channels) that the Normandy invasion was a *diversion* to draw German forces away from Pas de Calais and Belgium. The main attack, led by Gen. Patton

(around whom had been built an imaginary army), would occur at Pas de Calais after German forces were drawn south.[31] The FORTITUDE SOUTH operations were

> *the largest, most elaborate, most carefully-planned, most vital, and most successful of all the Allied deception operations. It made full use of...visual deception and misdirection, the deployment of dummy landing craft, aircraft, and paratroops, fake lighting schemes, radio deception, sonic devices, and ultimately a whole fictitious army group.*[32]

Thus, Hitler was induced to hold the bulk of German forces in the north to repel a second false invasion. This allowed the Allies precious time to secure a strategically vital lodgement in southern France.

Analysis of historical evidence indicates deception planners subscribe to the principle of using pre-existing enemy beliefs. Deception analysis done at MIT by Dr. Wahley on a historical data base consisting of 232 military engagements that occurred between 1941 to 1973, indicates deception was used in 131 of 232 battles. In 110 (84%) of the 131 cases, deception schemes were keyed to enemy preconceptions.[33]

More significant to a commander, using enemy preconceptions as a basis for deception schemes is extremely effective. When stratagem incorporated enemy pre-existing beliefs, surprise resulted in 106 out of 110 battles, or 96% of the time! However, when deception was *not* linked to preconceptions, surprise resulted in only 17 (81%) of 21 battles.[34] Clearly, use of enemy preexisting beliefs in deception planning can significantly increase the chance of surprise.

Limitations to Human Information Processing: Deception schemes can exploit certain limitations to human information processing.

Law of Small Numbers: One such limitation is the *Law of Small Numbers*, which states that it is hazardous to draw critical inferences on the

basis of a small sample size, or from limited data.[35] A fine example is the inattentiveness of German troops on the eve of the Normandy invasion. Ryan states that, "All along the chain of German command the continuing bad weather acted like a tranquilizer."[36] The Germans mistakenly believed the allies wouldn't attack unless the weather was just right. This reasoning was based upon assessments of weather evaluations for three Allied landings (North Africa, Italy, and Sicily). Although weather conditions for each had varied, German meteorologists noted the Allies never attempted a landing unless favorable weather (to support covering air campaigns) was almost certain. For the Germans, there could be no deviation from the favorable weather rule.[37]

Paradox of Impossibility: Worth noting here is Handel's paradox, "The greater the risk, the less likely it seems, and the less risky it actually becomes. Thus, the greater the risk the smaller it becomes."[38] Commanders and their staffs should guard against dismissing unlikely events as impossible events, both when anticipating enemy action, and in making offensive plans. Historical examples of "impossible" achievements abound, such as Gen. MacArthur's brilliant amphibious landing at Inchon in 1950, the stunning Japanese conquest of Singapore in 1942 from Malayan jungles the British considered impassable, and Napoleon's surprise crossing of the Alps in 1800 with 40,000 men to attack the Austrian army's flank.

Succeptibility to Conditioning: Surprise can also be achieved by conditioning, or gradual acclimatization of an enemy. During World War II, the RAF used this tool to divert German attention during the British attack on Peenemunde (the main German rocket test facility). Almost every night prior to the event, the British dispatched about eight Mosquito bombers along the same northerly track, past Peenemunde, to Berlin. On 17 August 1943, eight Mosquito bombers lured 203 enemy fighters to Berlin, with only one Mosquito

lost. Meanwhile, of nearly 600 British bombers sent to raid Peenemunde, 96% attacked the target, and less than seven percent were lost. Post-mortem estimates indicated that, if not for the British ruse, fully one third of the bombers would have been lost.[39]

False Alerts: The desensitizing effect of false alerts, or the "cry-wolf" syndrome, is another effective deception tool. Analysis of 26 battles (in which deception was and was not used) indicated when one or more false alerts preceded a military engagement, surprise resulted in 24 (92%) of the cases. Analysis of 198 battles in which false alerts were *not* given (deception both was and was not used) showed surprise resulted in only 132 (67%) of the cases. Historical examples that illustrate the desensitizing effect of false alerts include: the Japanese surprise attacks on both Pearl Harbor (7 Dec. 1941) and Darwin, Australia (19 Feb. 1942), the outbreak of the Korean War, the opening of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, and the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.[40]

Surprise appears to be most consistently achieved by combining deception with false alerts. Analysis of 23 battles in which deception was attempted and false alerts occurred indicated surprise was achieved in all (100%) of the cases. Despite this high success rate, deliberately induced false alerts are rarely combined with deception. (The false alerts may have been a by-product of another deception effort.) In the Peenemunde example, the goal was to make the Berlin bombing raid credible by conditioning. Professor Werner von Braun's diary indicated a by-product was desensitization of Peenemunde scientists and engineers, who remained joking outside after air raid sirens sounded.[41]

Husbanding Assets: Deception assets should be held in reserve, despite maintenance costs and the risk of compromise, while awaiting the most fruitful moment (a big opportunity) to achieve surprise. Commanders should assume their opponent will do likewise. The commander's question then becomes: when

should a high stakes opportunity be taken? The solution is, if an opportunity's value exceeds a threshold, use the asset; otherwise, save it. The optimal threshold can be determined by the distribution of opportunities, risks to compromise, and maintenance costs. A good example is the Syrian decision to withhold use of its new SAM air defense system, despite losses, until the most opportune moment in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.[42]

Sequencing Rule: A commander and his deception planners should recognize that, as Jervis states, "actors tend to overlook the fact that evidence consistent with their theories may also be consistent with other views."[43] One's own operations should be sequenced so as to maintain the enemy's belief in the illusion. Activities which reveal one's true intentions should be deferred as long as possible. This principle actively exploits the victim's tendency toward misperception. A case in point is the World War II German surprise invasion of Norway. The Allies misinterpreted German ships transiting toward Norway as an attempt to break through their blockade into the Atlantic. German intentions were recognized too late.

Feedback: The importance of feedback as a tool to successful deception cannot be overstated. Feedback tells the commander how well a ruse has worked, and allows a measure of confidence in planning real operations. Ideally, feedback should provide insight into enemy perceptions. Inconsistencies can be fine tuned so a perfectly tailored scheme is presented to the enemy. An outstanding example is the role ULTRA played in World War II by providing feedback on Allied deception schemes. ULTRA, the cryptographic breakthrough that enabled the British to read German codes, became the key to the successful Allied invasion of Normandy (Operation OVERLORD). Feedback permitted evaluation of German acceptance of the Pas de Calais invasion ruse (FORTITUDE SOUTH), with fine tuning done as needed. Lewin states,

"...without ULTRA, the great web of deception spun around the Germans could never have been devised....without their efforts, OVERLORD might have been a disaster."[44]

Presentation of the Bait: Great care should always be exercised in the placement of deceptive material. A bait must be presented so the victim will accept its validity. Apparent intelligence windfalls are subjected to close scrutiny, and ease of acquisition may lower credibility. The following example illustrates how ease of acquisition lowers credibility. Early in World War II, a German aircraft enroute Cologne became lost and made a forced landing in Belgium. The three passengers, all German officers, were arrested. When left alone briefly in a police station, they unsuccessfully attempted to burn authentic top secret plans for the German attack on Holland and Belgium. Although Western powers were initially alarmed, they ultimately decided the documents were a German ruse to mislead them due to ease of acquisition.

Often the greater the effort invested in acquiring the bait, the greater will be its credibility. However, the famous World War II MINCEMEAT operation illustrates how care in bait presentation can affect credibility. After nighttime delivery by a British submarine, the body of a Royal Marine major, with a briefcase chained to his wrist, was found floating off the Spanish coast. The contents of the case, false Allied plans for the invasion of Greece, were delivered to the Germans. Subtle touches enhanced the ruse's credibility. The body used was that of a man who had died of pneumonia, a condition virtually indistinguishable in autopsy from drowning. The uniform and incidental papers showed appropriate wear.[45] The bait in Operation MINCEMEAT was swallowed whole, and it successfully deceived the Germans regarding the true Allied plans for invasion of Sicily.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In World Wars I and II, America relied upon superior material production capability to provide overwhelming force and firepower. More recently, the United States has used high-tech weaponry as a force multiplier to gain decisive wartime advantages. The temptation to rely upon either material superiority or technological sophistication is simplistically naive. The insidious pitfalls of such a course were seen in Korea and Vietnam. Although America now holds a significant edge in state-of-the-art warfare technology, the playing field may all too soon be leveled. Proliferation of advanced technologies, including computers, communications, weapons of mass destruction, and access to space, will rapidly narrow our lead and giving our opponents sobering capabilities. In short, operational commanders today enjoy force multiplication benefits from high-tech weaponry that may not guarantee victory tomorrow. Furthermore, America's democratic political system will continue to demand rapid resolution to wars and conflicts, all with low casualties. This may prove increasingly difficult as enemies recognize our Achilles heel and attempt to exploit American vulnerabilities, such as protracted war and high attrition, that were clearly evident in Korea and Vietnam.

Deception is not a panacea, nor a substitute for a clear understanding of the nature of a conflict. However, stratagem can provide valuable opportunities to rapidly achieve strategic, operational, and tactical objectives. Its rewards are low manpower and material costs, and rapid war termination. Deception operations have historically proven very effective, and can easily be supported by America's intelligence, technological, and material assets. Commanders should resist the temptation to view stratagem as unnecessary, a historical

mistake which has seen the fall of the mighty. Deception should be considered another powerful tool to achieve the commander's objectives.

Commanders should, however, heed deception's double-edged sword. Deception's powerful force multiplication benefits have been used by weaker forces for millennia to gain victory over stronger foes. History has shown an inverse relationship between a force's strength and its inclination to use deception. As America is the sole remaining superpower, our wartime opponents will nearly always feel out matched. They will not hesitate to use deception at all levels of war to exploit U.S. vulnerabilities and achieve, in the end, victory. Commanders should expect it. The more technologically sophisticated the enemy becomes, the more vulnerable our information channels will become, and the more susceptible U.S. forces will be to deception. Despite the difficulty of discovering a clever stratagem, our best defense is to remain vigilant, well armed, and thoroughly knowledgeable of our enemy. Commanders should continually plan to use deception in all future operations, and we should expect the same of our enemies.

Today's commander must ensure his intelligence and deception planning forces thoroughly know the enemy, the nature of the conflict, and how he wants the enemy to act to achieve his operational and strategic objectives. Stratagem recently gained the respect of American commanders in the Persian Gulf war. Warfighting CINCs should continue to use deception in operational planning to reap the opportunities and special benefits provided by this ancient, elegant and effective force multiplier.

NOTES

[1]Michael I. Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence* (London: Frank Cass and Co, Ltd., 1989), p. 361.

[2]Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Griffith, Samuel B., trans. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 66.

[3]Donald C. Daniel and Katherine L. Herbig, eds., *Strategic Military Deception* (New York: Pergamon Press, Inc., 1982), p. xi.

[4]United States Department of the Navy, *Strategic and Operational Military Deception: U.S. Marines and the Next Twenty Years* (Washington, D.C.: 1990), p. 3.

[5]Ibid., p. 4.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence*, pp. 311-312.

[9]Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence*, p. 312.

[10]Richard N. Armstrong, *Soviet Operational Deception: The Red Cloak* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1989), p. 44.

[11]Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence*, p. 339.

[12]Ibid., p. 395.

[13]Richard Heuer, quoted in Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence*, p. 395.

[14]*Deception Maxims: Fact and Folklore.* (Deception Research Program. Washington, D.C.: Office of Research and Development, Central Intelligence Agency 1980), p. 36.

[15]Ibid., p. 37.

[16]Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence*, p. 359.

[17]Ibid., p. 321.

[18]Ibid., p. 342.

[19]Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 203.

[20]Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence*, p. 405.

[21]Daniel and Herbig, p. 6.

[22]Barton Whaley, quoted in Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence*, p. 310.

[23]The Hesketh Report, quoted in Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence*, p. 381.

[24]Ibid., pp. 366-367.

[25]*Deception Maxims: Fact and Folklore*, p. 20.

[26]Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence*, pp. 413-414.

[27]Armstrong, p. 44.

[28]Robert Jervis, quoted in *Deception Maxims: Fact and Folklore*, pp. 6.

[29]David Mure, quoted in *Deception Maxims: Fact and Folklore*, pp. 6-7.

[30]Anthony Cave Brown, quoted in *Deception Maxims: Fact and Folklore*, p. 5.

[31]Daniel and Herbig, p. 226.

[32]Charles Cruickshank, quoted in Daniel and Herbig, p. 226.

[33]*Deception Maxims: Fact and Folklore*, p. 8.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid., p. 10.

[36]C. Ryan, quoted in *Deception Maxims: Fact and Folklore*, p. 12.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Michael I. Handel, *Perception, Deception and Surprise: The Case of the Yom Kippur War.* (Israel: The Hebrew University, 1976), p. 16.

[39]*Deception Maxims: Fact and Folklore*, pp. 13-14.

[40]Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[41]Ibid , pp. 18-19.

[42]Ibid., pp. 27-30.

[43]Robert Jervis, quoted in *Deception Maxims: Fact and Folklore*, p. 32.

[44]Ronald Lewin, quoted in *Deception Maxims: Fact and Folklore*, p. 34.

[45]Seymour Reit, *Masquerade: The Amazing Camouflage Deceptions of World War II* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1978), pp. 165-168.

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