
**"Information Operations Matters: Best Practices," Leigh
Armistead, (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2010)**

Robin L. Thompson
Henley-Putnam University

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Book Reviews

***Information Operations Matters: Best Practices.* By Leigh Armistead. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2010. ISBN 978-1-59797-463-3. Bibliographical references. Index. 153 pages. \$24.00.**

For those leaders who have the wisdom, knowledge, vision, and authority to institute true transformational change throughout the U.S. Government, the use and implementation of Information Operations (IO) tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) should be at the top of the list of tools for change and influence. Unfortunately, even in the post-9/11 U.S. Government that emphasizes reform and transformation, its leaders continue to lack the ability (knowledge and wisdom may also be lacking) to understand the value of IO. The events of early 2011 in the Middle East and Northern Africa show the domino effect of governments transitioning in response to population protests, which used elements of IO for social and political change. Transformational change can quickly occur when information is manipulated or simply passed along to "send a message." In fact, the *messages* from populations in Tunis and Egypt to their respective governments were so loud and clear that the leaders from other countries in those general regions made *transformational* changes (some overnight) in their governments to avoid the levels of violence inherent in the Egyptian population protests.

Leigh Armistead's book is a research study exploring the topic of Information Operations, primarily within the perspective of the U.S. Government. He uses the following point as his hypothesis in *Information Operations Matters: Best Practices*. He states: "In the U.S. Government, a significant gap exists between the theory and reality of IO. The gap exists because the federal bureaucracy is unwilling or unable to make the transformational changes that are needed to best utilize information as an element of power" (p. 2). In the six chapters presented in the research study, Leigh Armistead provides a clear understanding of the problem, the relevant theory of IO in the United States, the development of IO policy and procedures over time, recent changes to IO, a chapter on the questions he feels matter, and finally, in true research study fashion, his key findings and areas for future research.

This is not Leigh Armistead's first book published on the topic of Information Operations. His first book, *Information Operations: Warfare and the Hard Reality of Soft Power* (2004) and second book, *Information Warfare: Separating Hype from Reality (Issues in Twenty-First Century Warfare)* (2007) were edited volumes discussing pertinent IO issues. In his current book, his discussions of power (changing views and soft power) are relevant and important in contemporary military and political world affairs. If one examines the undercurrents of world events, one will see that this book is a "how-to" guide to understanding contemporary world events. This book would be a fantastic addition to the bookshelves of government and military leaders who should read and heed its advice.

The majority of books currently offered to the public that are related to IO address the cyber realm. While cyber is a legitimate faction of IO, and Leigh Armistead addresses computer network operations in his book, it is not the only area that needs attention and understanding. Actually, the abundance of attention relating IO to the cyber world has probably *put off* more people from wanting to understand the IO discipline, since many people think they need a computer science degree to understand IO, which is not the case at all. Leigh Armistead also addresses perception management, which is equally necessary in influencing public opinion and in many cases is more relevant than cyber operations. Overall, he does an exceptional job of addressing the importance of IO, and his position is for a stronger IO foundation in the U.S. Government. The only way that is going to occur is for leaders to understand all the facets of IO instead of only the cyber-related ones.

This book is limited in regard to its applicability to understanding IO issues external to the U.S. Government. While aspects of the book can be applied to or by the governments in other countries, the focus is U.S. Government-centric. Leigh Armistead does not hide this fact, but considering that the book is in the form of a research study, one should expect that it has research limitations and applicability to other research populations.

One problem government leaders have in trying to understand IO issues is that IO is an overarching and all-encompassing discipline. It is simply too big to comprehend as a single entity when multiple agencies and organizations fall under the IO umbrella, and the discipline encompasses kinetic and non-kinetic activities, including public affairs, diplomatic affairs, offensive and defensive computer operations, deception, operational security (OPSEC), etc. Leigh Armistead provides the reader key findings that reel in the scope of IO to a more manageable discipline within one department level organization, which is more pragmatic in nature. He suggests making IO a DOD-centric discipline

where the DOD can create and oversee IO policy and doctrine. Another key finding is the DOD management of IO training and education, along with metrics to measure IO successes. He proposes that all these findings should be implemented "as part of an overall plan to provide a way forward with regard to the more efficient conduct of IO by the U.S. Government" (p. 104).

Robin L. Thompson, Henley-Putnam University faculty