Good morning. I have to agree with Dean Nichol and with Scott (Silliman) here. I think it’s a good thing that there is no written requirement in our Constitution that we be “virtuous.” During Operation Enduring Freedom, as we were looking at targeting in Afghanistan, we saw that one of the more repressive, horrible and frightening ministries of the Taliban was their Ministry of Vice and Virtue. I am glad that we in the United States don’t have such a ministry that purports to tell us what we can and cannot do, particularly when it comes to strategic deception.

Walter Jajko (who was a career intelligence officer and now is Professor of National Security Studies at the Institute of World Politics in Washington D.C.) says that the U.S. should be serious about deception. Strategic deception is but one of the panoply of instruments that a state disposes and orchestrates to assert, retain, and aggrandize its power. Deception operations should be an integral component of peacetime and wartime national security. He says that deception is not inherently evil or inherently good. It just is. It’s available and it’s a tool that we have. That is sort of the approach that we take in the military.

Previous speakers have discussed definitions of deception and specifically military deception which is what I want to focus on in my remarks. We have also talked about the various levels of deception and seen that it can be strategic or tactical. One thing we haven’t mentioned so far is that deception can operate throughout all the phases of a conflict. You can employ military deception in the pre-hostilities phase of a conflict – as it was in World War II – through the decisive combat and stabilization phases, and even into post-hostilities phases. We see military deception simply as a tool. It can assist the military commander in attaining surprise, security, mass and economy of force. It also supports military operations by causing our adversaries to misallocate resources in time, quantity, place and effectiveness.

1 Captain Dalton, JAGC, USN is the Assistance Judge Advocate General (Civil Law) and Commanding Officer, Naval Civil Law Support Activity, Office of the Judge Advocate General, Department of the Navy. The views expressed in the following presentation are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Navy, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

As we’ve also heard, military deception has a long, robust and, I might say, an honorable history. Niccolo Machiavelli once said, “Though fraud in other activities be detestable, in the management of war it is laudable and glorious. He who overcomes an enemy by fraud is as much to be praised as he who does so by force.” Machiavelli’s comment reflects an important point. One reason deception is so valuable is that it doesn’t necessarily have to involve the use of force. It can be non-coercive and non-kinetic. It may encourage your enemies to flee from the fight altogether. That is the best result you can hope for. But even if they don’t flee, you can cause your enemies to misallocate their resources so that the fight is easier for your side and there is less injury, death and destruction on both sides. In effect both parties win.

I said that deception can be non-coercive and non-kinetic. In fact, I will point out that some deception is kinetic. During Operation Fortitude more bombs were dropped on the Pas de Calais— the false objective— than were dropped on Normandy during the days leading up to the invasion. It certainly did have the Germans fooled as to where we would be landing. I also said that if you can’t avoid the fight altogether then the use of deception can result in fewer injuries and a fight that’s more favorable for you. Believe me, the military never wants a fair fight. We want a fight that we’re going to win. Whatever we can do to encourage the other side to misallocate resources we think is a virtue. As Stonewall Jackson said in 1862 “Always mystify, mislead and surprise the enemy if that’s possible and when you strike and overcome him, never give up the pursuit as long as your men have strength to follow.” If you can get your enemies off guard, then when you strike they may be weaker and you may pursue them and follow them until you inflict on them the complete defeat that we’re generally looking for.

I won’t go into a lot of detail about Operation Fortitude, which we’ve already spent some time discussing. Let me just note that, in order to achieve the kind of success Operation Fortitude enjoyed, it is essential to have unity throughout an overall military mission. Operational and strategic level commanders do not really need to be involved in tactical deception. Quite the opposite is true, however, of strategic level deception. When strategic level deception is undertaken, you must have absolute unity of effort throughout the strategic, tactical and operational levels. You also have to have a lot of coordination. The right hand needs to know what the left hand is doing and you have to have everyone involved in the overall strategic deception plan. Joint Publication 3-58, “Joint Doctrine for Military Deception” is an unclassified publication from the Joint Staff. (This publication is a little bit dated - it’s 1996 - but it’s the one available to us.) It stresses the need for full cooperation when planning military deception.

Joint Publication 3-58 points out that deception plans have to be consistent with the Rules of Engagement. Although the Rules of Engagement do not constitute constitutional or domestic law, they do involve aspects of both domestic and international

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3 Niccolo Machiavelli, Discourses, 1517.
4 General Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson, quoted in Leadership: Quotations from the World's Greatest Motivators by Robert A. Fitton, p. 65
law. Legal counsel to military commanders are very much involved in helping to review and apply the rules of engagement both to our kinetic operations as well as to strategic deception operations.

There are also other considerations in our use of deception. First, there are the international agreements to which we are parties. Status of forces agreements, for instance, sometimes lay out what our forces can do when they are stationed overseas. If you are planning to involve forces stationed in another country in a strategic deception, you need to be sure that what you do is consistent with what you have agreed to do in the relevant Status of Forces Agreement. We always have staff judge advocates, such as the legal counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who review plans of all sorts to make sure that we are consistent with these agreements.

Second, military deception efforts have to be coordinated with civil affairs activities. Civil affairs activities are those that are conducted to gain maximum support for U.S. forces from the civilian population of a country with which we will be or are engaged (e.g. Afghanistan or Iraq.) We want to ensure that deception operations don’t inadvertently undermine relationships with the civilian population or with host nation military authorities.

Third, we must coordinate military deception with psychological operations. Deception and psychological operations are in some ways quite different. Psychological operations, for example, generally deal in truth not deception. However, there are similarities between deception and PSYOPS and both are closely interrelated. They are both systematic processes of conveying tailored messages to a selected foreign audience. They can also work together to enhance and support each other. During Operation Iraqi Freedom we dropped literally millions of leaflets and beamed hundreds of hours of broadcasts into Iraq providing truthful information about places to avoid; methods of surrender and actions that the population could take to better ensure their safety during the armed conflict. That's the typical type of PSYOP activity and it can be very successful. Nevertheless, PSYOPS and military deception can be employed to enhance each other.

Equally as important -- and my good friend who is the Chief Public Affairs Officer would say that this is more important than anything else -- is the need to coordinate military deception with our public affairs personnel. It is contrary to Department of Defense policy to misinform the media about military capabilities and intentions in ways that are intended to influence U.S. decision makers or U.S. public opinion. Deception operations that have activities that are potentially visible to the media or to the public need to be coordinated with public affairs.

We also have to be mindful about potential blowback. We have to review deception plans to ensure that the measures that are utilized to project the image out to the enemy or into the foreign audience take into consideration potential blowback and thereby take steps to minimize that blowback. I will point out that during World War II the British apparently did not have that same kind of concern because they actually
planted stories in Scottish newspapers about football matches with the nonexistent Fourth Army and they had the BBC broadcasting programs called “A Day in the Life With the Seventh Corps in the Field” when there was no such thing. Maybe we’ve become more sensitive in the first part of the 21st century!

Military deception also needs to be coordinated with Operational Security. OPSEC, like military deception, deals with the management of indicators. As in the case of PSYOPS and deception, OPSEC and deception can be very complementary. You need OPSEC for military deception and military deception may help enhance the OPSEC for true and actual operations.

One point I want to make is that, obviously, because of the complexity of strategic military deception plans and operations, you can’t just start them the day before a conflict begins. You have to be working at it in peacetime. You have to develop capabilities in peacetime. You have to develop the assets and the doctrine and be completely prepared because of the absolute complexity that is involved. You have to understand the enemy’s intelligence process; his intelligence gathering methods; his timelines - how long it takes him to process information and how long it will take for your operations to have an effect.

The U.S. is not only a practitioner of military deception; we can also be a very lucrative target. Several good articles have been written on this subject. Roy Godson and James Wirtz and Professor Jajko have talked about how the U.S. is, in fact, susceptible to military and strategic deception by other powers. This is especially true when one considers the asymmetric and asynchronous attacks directed against the U.S. here in the U.S. on the 11th of September and abroad in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The U.S. clearly needs to take steps to minimize the impact of denial and deception on the United States. But it needs to do so by gaining more information, by training, by awareness, and not by somehow trying to legislate either domestically or, heaven forbid, internationally new rules on how military or strategic deception ought to be handled.

In conclusion let me say that from the military perspective we certainly find deception to be a force multiplier. It should be a critical part of all campaign planning. Anything that can save lives, bring a decisive end to the conflict or avoid conflict altogether is a plus in planning a military operation. Ultimately, as Professor Jajko says, deception is neither intrinsically good nor evil. It is a tool; it’s available and our leadership - both civilian and military need to decide when and where it will be applied. Thank you.

Captain Jane G. Dalton, JACG, USN is Commanding Officer, Naval Civil Law Support Activity, Office of the Judge Advocate General, Department of the Navy. Prior to assuming this position, she was Deputy Legal Council (1996-1998) and then Legal Council (2000-2003) to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Between 1998 and 2000 she was Commanding Officer, Naval Legal Service Office North Central, Washington, DC. Commissioned in 1977, Captain Dalton received her first posting as Assistant Operations Officer, USS Puget Sound and thereafter served in the Naval legal Service Office, as Staff Judge Advocate (with various Commands in the Pacific) and with the Oceans Law & Policy Specialist, Strategic Plans & Policy Directorate (J-5/CMDAC). Captain Dalton, who has taught in the Department of History at the US Naval Academy (1981-1982), holds degrees from the University of Kansas (BA Political Science and MA in Latin American Studies); from the Georgetown University Law Center (J.D) and from the University of Virginia School of Law (LLM).