

THE BRAVE NEW WORLD

THE CHANGING SHAPE OF THE FIFTH GENERATION MISSION SPACE

War is undertaken to maintain a position of advantage, establish a more advantageous situation, or influence the attitudes or behaviour of another party.

Defence Capstone Doctrine

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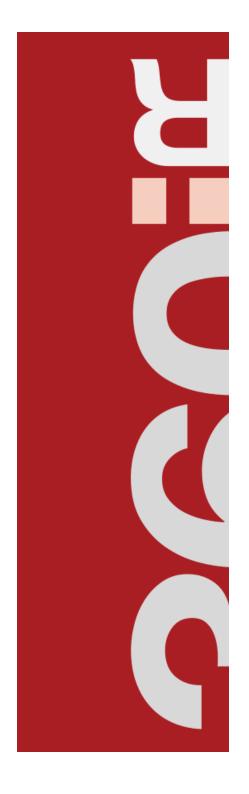
INTRODUCTION

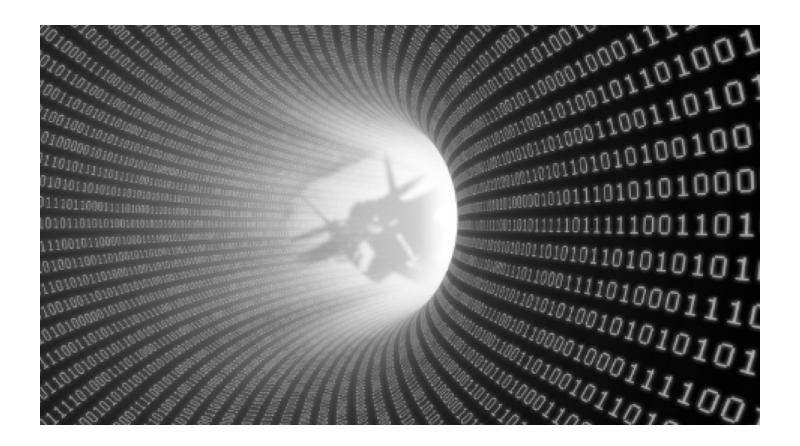
The evolution of warfare has been mapped from the Neo Classical Warfare with massed armies organised in lines and columns on the battlefield of first generation warfare through technological advances and stagnation of tactics of second generation warfare and to the manoeuvrist approach of the third generation warfare landscape. The last evolution was seen with the adaptation of 3rd generation warfare to meet the modern asymmetric threats and the realisation that civilians are often the 'centre of gravity'. Other terms that are synonymous with 4th generation warfare are COIN, the 3 Block war and 'war amongst the people'.

The 'Fifth Generation' strapline was borrowed from this history by marketing chiefs looking to describe the capabilities of fast jets in the western military. In the air domain, the name comes from the fact that since the invention of the military jet aircraft there have been four evolutions to date, with the F35 heralding in the Fifth Generation. Because of this recent association, fifth gen warfare is often considered as hardware and software: it is in 'things' not concepts, this is evident now; many academics and military commentators talk of the Fifth Generation Air Force as one that has Sensor grids, Command grids, Information grids and Effects grids, all overlaid and integrated to create a system of systems that will enable a fifth generation capability.

We at 360iSR consider Fifth Generation Warfare as something more than a technology revolution; we look further afield and consider how the changing mission space will affect the required tools and skills. Therefore, in this first section, we will define the 5GW mission space. After all, it is only from "knowing thy enemy" can one "know oneself".

In short, 5GW is so much more than a 5G aircraft. It is the generation of a cognitive mission space which will include actors and audiences that have not been previously considered. 5GW will demand of us that we use the cognitive mission space to enable rapid, accurate decision making, the affects of which can be measured throughout the complexity of the environment. Finally 5GW will force us to consider the critical importance of the narrative and force us to accept the interdepenancy of physical action.





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"We are no longer fighting a defined adversary in a defined battlespace for a defined period of time. Instead the 5th generation mission space is a continuous global battle of narratives that will play out over both virtual and physical space and encompass a range of violent and non-violent actions and effects."



THE CENTRALITY OF INFLUENCE

In the Future Character of Conflict study conducted by the UK DCDC in 2010 they stated that the "centrality of influence" will be the defining element of the 5th Generation mission space. This will require a dynamic balancing between the use of manoeuvre, fires, information a ctivities and out reach. Further it will require linkages between the operational and tactical commands that have been desired for many years, but never achieved. Influencing adversaries with a combination of both lethal and nonlethal effects is not new, adversaries have been influenced in this way as long as warfare has been in existence. However, the amount of information available, the channels for delivering effect and the tempo of chance have all increased exponentially.

With the advent of the Internet, information is now being weaponised more than ever as a means to create and further conflict and instability. Moreover, the lines between 'hard' and 'soft' power are blurring and military forces are no longer the leaders in fighting back.

importantly, influence can More exhorted be by agencies, often commercial in nature. beyond the control of the traditional military. The birth of the influencer has heralded a new era in global communication and global manipulation. The viral thread is well named.



The Invisible Touch

The second element of the fifth generation mission space is the ability to have influence and effect without physical presence in the mission space. Using unmanned or cyber capabilities and through global communication networks we are able to reach out and touch without leaving our borders. However, in the era of 24hr news and as society applies more constraints on western governments to be a force for good, the risks and political fall-out from a military error will be catastrophic. Politicians, the owners of warfare, are likely to become more risk averse and thus more reliant on low attributable and/or stand-off capabilities. Evidence of this can be seen in the increasing reliance on unmanned capability. This dynamic between society and the decision makers is yet more evidence of the centrality of influence in contemporary warfare as leaders crave 'likes' and trends on twitter.

The End of 'War' and the Beginning of the Constant Conflict

The death of the adversary and the birth of the opponent.

The third element is the adversary themselves. The classical view of warfare was characterised as one State battling another; the advent of the 4th generation warfare concept saw acknowledgment of asymmetric threats posed by non-state entities. In 5GW, the two entities of state and non-state actors remain, however, it is the concept of warfare itself that becomes indistinct.

Contemporary adversaries' will seek to operate in the 'grey zone', an indistinguishable space between peacetime and conflict. The boundaries between democratic debate, activism and terrorism, criminality and warfare will themselves become contested. The use of military action will not just need to be considered for its direct effect towards the mission, but also on its secondary and tertiary effects. These will include the reputational, legal, economic and social effects.

The Contested Mission-space

The final element of the 5G mission space is one of the contested nature that we will find. We have already spoken of the contest over influence but there will remain a traditional military contest.

Nations will seek to defend their borders though the extension of military influence: Examples include the deployment of double digit SAMs and Iskandar missiles in Kaliningrad or the build up of defences on hitherto uninhabited islands in the South China Sea. Therefore, the experiences and lessons of third and fourth generation warfare still have great utility. Militaries still need to maintain and develop the capability to defeat a more traditional adversary in a technologically complex environment. This is the driver for the development and acquisition of the 5G weapons systems such as the F35. Only now, in addition to conventional mission planning, they will also have to consider the complexities and constraints that 5GW brings.



Summary

"Decision Dominance is the ability to create and use intelligence in order to command the cognitive mission space"

The Fifth Generation Mission-space represents a new environment in which future operations will take place. The complexity of the domain is exacerbated by uncontrolled and undefined actors directing or influencing the narrative. The greatest challenge of the mew mission space is the total erosion of the concepts of the enemy and of war itself. The opponent will be much more ambiguous and warfare will become an insidious creep designed to degrade from within rather than attack from without.

The challenge in this environment is to understand progress toward the end state: to link the tactical actions in the mission space to the operational direction. This is no longer a just a requirement to conduct an assessment of weapons effect, it is a requirement to understand the changing desires, opinions, attitudes and driving factors of the population; and how to influence them. Enemies will no longer wear black. Linked to this requirement to understand the mission space is the need to understand, direct and fight the narrative.

In the next section of this series on fifth generation warfare, we look at the art of war itself.



