

PRISM Perspectives

The Agentic Olympus: The “Gods” of AI in Irregular Cognitive Warfare

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16 August 2026

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The decisive battlespace of the twenty-first century will ever more entail the [cognitive domain](#), wherein strategic advantage is achieved through the shaping of perception, informing judgment, influencing decisions, and governing the informational architectures that define operational understanding, emotion and [actions](#). In this milieu, artificial intelligence (AI) will increasingly function as an active participant to identify patterns beyond human perception, illuminate adversary behavior before it unfolds, synthesize operational knowledge, defend and contest digital terrain, and generate recommendations at operational tempos that exceed, and thus expand human capacity. The battlespace will evolve into an ecosystem of distributed cognition wherein military advantage reflects and relies upon the organization, synchronization, and governance of cognitive [capability](#). Russia’s use of [cognitive operations](#), reflexive control, and narrative campaigns in [Ukraine](#) exemplifies how the battlespace already functions as an ecosystem of distributed cognition in practice. For example, the [cognitive](#)

[warfare tools demonstrated in Ukraine and Iran](#), i.e. -- AIgenerated disinformation, fabricated imagery, deepfakes, and rapid narrative distribution, -- are already reshaping the gray-zone below the [threshold](#) of kinetic engagement, targeting alliance cohesion, political will, and the information environments in which democratic governments make decisions.

Thus, as cognition becomes an essential medium through which military advantage is gained, [command](#) will assume a fundamentally different role. To wit, AI will amplify capacity to perceive, interpret, anticipate, and coordinate complexity in and across widely distributed operational environments. [Decision advantage](#) will be a function of cognitive coherence, temporal synchronization, adaptive reasoning, and strategic alignment among specialized intelligences operating across warfighting functions. Cognitive coherence is more than a technical property; it is in fact a governance problem. Commanders, policymakers, and strategic

communicators must therefore design decision architectures, information flows, and narrative [strategies](#) to instantiate and sustain cognitive coherence under [adversarial cognitive pressure](#).

In this new ecosystem, command will involve [governance](#) of distributed cognition, whereby human judgment, machine intelligence, institutional intent, and operational purpose converge within an integrative decision architecture. We believe that understanding this transformation is vital to the future of command and control (C2) and requires a conceptual framework to elucidate how multiple forms of intelligence can (and arguably should) interact to shape operational awareness, influence command, and generate decision advantage. We propose that Homer's *Odyssey* can afford such a conceptual framework by illustrating how command is exercised through the integration and governance of specialized forces whose interactions shape the operational environment. [Governance of cognition](#) also involves narrative strategy, information policy, and alliance communications, particularly in irregular warfare and contests of will (such as that evidence in the Russia-Ukraine conflict).

In Homer's work, the journeying Odysseus achieves success through wisdom, discernment, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to purpose while navigating an environment influenced by multiple powerful forces, each possessing distinct capabilities and domains of effect. Athena cultivates strategic judgment and prudent counsel; Hermes enables communication and coordination across dispersed actors; Poseidon imposes persistent friction and uncertainty; Aeolus governs the environmental conditions that influence the tempo and trajectory of the voyage; Circe transforms perception and understanding; and the Sirens weaponize attention through compelling narratives that captivate, distract, and redirect [behavior](#). In contemporary cognitive warfare, adversaries employ synthetic media, disinformation, and interactive content that operate as "sirens": weaponizing attention in ways that mirror Russia's campaigns to exhaust and confuse publics in Ukraine and across NATO. These operations seek to draw audiences off course, divert attention from critical signals, and erode confidence in institutions responsible for

security and governance. Individually, each influences a particular dimension of Odysseus' journey; collectively, they form an interconnected ecosystem in which each interaction affects the conditions of the next decision. Odysseus preserves agency, judgment, and responsibility precisely because he is aware of, and understands these relationships, anticipates their effects, and enjoins their influence in coherent action while all the while maintaining fidelity to his strategic goal.

Analogously, today's military commander increasingly embodies a comparable role, operating within an [ecosystem of specialized machine intelligences](#), wherein continuous interactions of humans and external forces shape operational understanding, influence exercise of command, and create cognitive conditions in which various strategic opportunities can be perceived and actionably pursued. This literary analogy establishes a conceptual foundation for understanding how near-future commanders may engage and increasingly complex ecosystems of distributed intelligence while preserving human authority, [ethical](#) responsibility, and mission coherence. [Recent experience](#) in Ukraine underscores this reality: commanders operate within a network of ISR platforms, autonomous strike systems, volunteer cyber networks, and [AI-mediated](#) information feeds, all while Russia prosecutes [cognitive](#) operations designed to fracture operational and societal coherence and erode the will to fight.

Building upon this conceptual foundation, we introduce the "Agentic Olympus Hypothesis," which advances a theory of AI-enabled command by conceptualizing future military AI ecosystems as a digital pantheon of specialized cognitive agents in which continuous interactions shape the character, tempo, and conduct of military operations. Each agentic system fulfills a distinct cognitive function within the broader command enterprise. The significance of this ecosystem resides in the relationships among its constituent entities. The intelligent agent contributes to an evolving network of computational reasoning in which information, analysis, prediction, and operational feedback circulate across interconnected systems. Intelligence informs logistics. The logistics agent shapes operational tempo. [Cyber-environmental and AI agents' condi-](#)

[tions influence information integrity](#). A discriminative agent combs, assesses, and parses information for veridicality. Information environments affect operational understanding. Decision-support agents integrate these evolving relationships, generating recommendations that reflect the condition of the entire cognitive enterprise rather than isolated technical functions. Thus, operational understanding occurs through the synchronization of distributed intelligent agents operating in and across interconnected domains, enabling commanders to integrate observations, anticipate emerging conditions, and coordinate action throughout the battlespace with unprecedented speed and precision.

[Recent operations](#) in Ukraine illustrate how a de facto Agentic Olympus emerges: Ukrainian forces rely on interconnected ISR, targeting, logistics, and cyber defense systems assisted by AI tools, while Russia fields a cognitive warfare ecosystem designed to disrupt information integrity, saturate narratives, and exhaust public trust. In this contest, intelligence agents inform logistics and tempo; cyber agents defend digital terrain; narrative monitoring agents track Russian disinformation flows; and decision-support agents help synthesize this distributed [cognition](#) for commanders under extreme time pressure.

The “Agentic Olympus” is a conceptual framework for regarding command as an orchestration of specialized cognitive capabilities. Like the Olympian gods of Greek mythology, each intelligent agent possesses specialized capabilities, distinct domains of influence, and unique contributions to the broader [operational environment](#). Strategic outcomes are achieved through the dynamic interaction of these specialized agents as they collectively shape perception, reasoning, planning, adaptation, and execution. [Human authority](#) contributes strategic intent, contextual understanding, ethical judgment, institutional legitimacy, and command responsibility. Artificial intelligence (AI) [contributes](#) computational scale, pace, persistent observation, predictive reasoning, adaptive learning, analytical precision, and continuous information [synthesizes](#). The integration of these agents and functions establishes a synthesized C2 enterprise capable of generating sustained decision advantage across the

full spectrum of military operations. For irregular warfare practitioners, this orchestration extends beyond kinetic operations to encompass information architectures, narrative strategies, and strategic communications that sustain cognitive coherence across allies and publics under sustained adversarial cognitive attack.

This theoretical framework culminates in a central proposition. The “Agentic Olympus” model posits that military advantage increasingly will be derived from governing the interactions among specialized intelligent agents that collectively generate operational understanding to inform decisional action(s). Command evolves into a governance of cognition, where cognitive coherence becomes the decisive operational variable. In this context, we define cognitive coherence as the sustained alignment of distributed human and machine cognition based and focused upon and shared situational awareness, commander intent, strategic purpose, and mission objectives despite uncertainty, deception, friction, and accelerating operational tempo. In this ecosystem, operational effectiveness increasingly will depend upon cultivating, adapting and sustaining such coherent cognition in order to enable commanders to transform distributed intelligence into unified operational judgment, synchronized action, and enduring strategic advantage.

In irregular cognitive warfare, adversaries explicitly target this coherence by designing campaigns that overload, distort, and steer perception rather than simply conceal facts. They use reflexive control, information exhaustion, and narrative saturation to fragment shared situational awareness and erode institutional trust. Reflexive control aims to shape an opponent’s decision calculus in advance by feeding tailored signals and narratives that make destructive choices appear rational or inevitable. Information exhaustion floods commanders, institutions, and publics with a constant stream of competing claims, data, and commentary so that it becomes harder to distinguish signal from noise, increasing reliance on heuristics and eroding confidence in any single source. Narrative saturation layers these efforts with emotionally charged, repetitive storylines that frame events in ways that fragment shared situational awareness, polarize

audiences, and gradually undermine trust in institutions responsible for security and governance. In the Iran and Russia campaigns described in recent [analyses](#), AI-generated disinformation, fabricated imagery of damage to U.S. platforms, and deep-fake videos of strikes on civilian infrastructure are deployed at high speed to achieve mass distribution before fact-based counternarratives can catch up, demonstrating how the first narrative that achieves mass distribution often wins the engagement regardless of factual accuracy.

These dynamics become particularly pronounced in irregular cognitive warfare, where strategic competition revolves around contests of perception, trust, narrative, institutional confidence, and collective understanding. In this environment, information functions as maneuver space; narratives shape operational terrain. The [Iran and Russia cases](#) illustrate this directly: cognitive domain operations are aimed less at winning specific battles than at shaping the political environment in which battles are politically sustainable, eroding alliance cohesion and will to fight in ways that complement kinetic operations. AI. Taken together, cognition thus becomes the decisive objective and principal instrument of tactical influence and strategic leverage, increasingly mediating each of these dimensions by generating persuasive narratives, identifying cognitive vulnerabilities, optimizing influence campaigns, and continuously adapting informational effects across contested environments. In sum, strategic success can thus be seen as the preservation of cognitive coherence while influencing the cognitive architectures upon which adversarial decision-making depends.

Governance of cognition in irregular warfare is not an abstract aspiration; it is exercised through concrete levers of doctrine, acquisition, education, narrative design, and alliance coordination. Doctrine can codify the requirement to treat cognitive coherence as a mission-critical asset, while acquisition standards and training/education ensure that AI systems, operators, and commanders are prepared to manage information flows and human-machine teaming in ways that reinforce trust and accountability. Narrative design and alliance coordination then translate those principles into strategic

communications and multinational messaging that maintain a shared picture of reality across institutions and publics.

Operational models such as the [“Praxis AI Doctrine’s Cognitive Warfare Operationalization Model”](#) ([sense, focus, act, adapt](#)) apply these governance levers to the competition phase information environment, asking which information domains adversaries operate in, how campaigns scale across echelons, how cognitive campaigns align with kinetic objectives, and which specific information tasks can be contested, disrupted, or preempted.

In the Russia-Ukraine war, governance of cognition has meant protecting allied publics from sustained cognitive warfare campaigns, aligning diplomatic messaging across capitals, and deliberately integrating private sector information platforms and media ecosystems into resilience planning. By treating social media, data platforms, and news outlets as key terrain in the cognitive domain, policymakers and practitioners can better anticipate adversary influence operations, reinforce credible narratives, and preserve institutional legitimacy under prolonged psychological and informational pressure. Recent [analyses](#) of Russia’s AI-enabled unmanned and cognitive warfare ecosystems underscore that success depends on coherence across volunteer networks, institutional training, and youth pipelines, not isolated programs. This conclusion applies equally to the cognitive domain and reinforces the “Agentic Olympus” emphasis on governing relationships among agents rather than tools in isolation.

In this light, “Agentic Olympus” establishes a strategic theory of AI-enabled command. It conceptualizes military AI as an evolving ecology of specialized intelligent agents whose relationships determine the quality, resilience, and adaptability of operational decision-making. In this ecology, commanders will exercise authority by governing interactions among humans, algorithms, institutions, and operational objectives to preserve (human) accountability, ethical responsibility and institutional legitimacy throughout every phase of military operations.