

General Dominance Theory Fixes the Navy's Flawed Approach to Information Dominance

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In the U.S. Navy, the concept of achieving “Information Dominance” is very popular. With the advent of computer and communications technology as both a tool and a weapon, we rightly see the Information Domain as the next frontier of military power. Accordingly, we work hard to gather and process information hoping to achieve a strategic advantage over our adversaries.

But the Navy has lost sight of the ultimate goal. Sure, they have amazing capability and proven experience in the Information Domain, but the one idea that ties the many capabilities and [sub-specialties](#) together is flawed. That one idea is the definition of Information Dominance. [The Navy defines Information Dominance](#) as, “... *the operational advantage gained from fully integrating Navy's information capabilities, systems and resources to optimize decision making and maximize warfighting effects in the complex maritime environment of the 21st Century...*” or, in (pessimistic, but respectful) laymen's terms, “*if we take a bunch of expensive high-tech stuff and mash it all together it will help us do stuff faster and more efficiently.*”

Hopefully, the major problem with this definition is apparent: they define dominance as being able to do things faster and more efficiently. But that can't be true. If that were truly dominance, the [Hare would have beaten the Tortoise](#).

So what is dominance? Dominance is not an advantage, dominance is a state. If you are dominant, what you say goes – you are the big kid on the playground. In other words, **Dominance is the state where you can make your *desired* reality the *actual* reality.**

With this definition of Dominance, I began developing a General Dominance Theory (GDT) that attempts to describe what is necessary to achieve Dominance. In order to achieve Dominance, you need two things. 1) A perfect **Perception of Reality (POR)**, and 2)

A perfect **Ability to Affect Reality (ATA)**. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 1. If you know what reality looks like (POR) and you have an ability to change it (ATA), then you can make your *desired* reality the *actual* reality. If you have a perfect POR and ATA, then you are unstoppable. You are dominant.

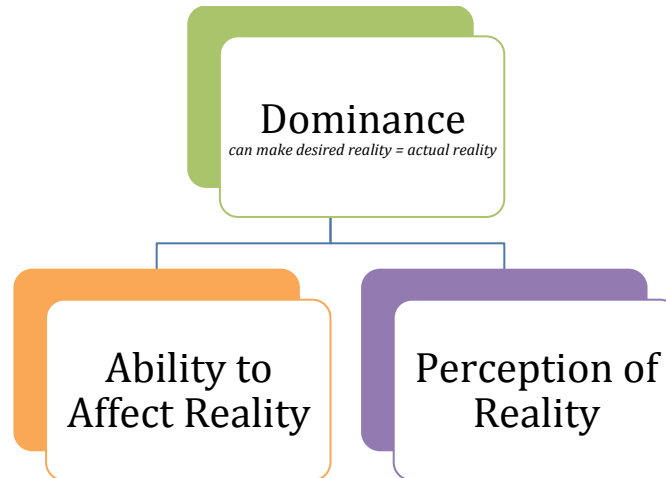


Figure 1: Dominance requires two things: 1) Perception of Reality (POR) and 2) Ability to Affect Reality (ATA).

POR requires two things: 1) you must be able to **collect** applicable information and 2) you must be able to **synthesize** that information into actionable knowledge (intelligence). If you have one but not the other, your perception won't match reality. ATA requires that you can ensure your ability to **use** things in your domain (these things are called **Domain Objects**).

Of course, attaining a perfect POR and ATA isn't really possible, because you can't really do anything perfectly. However, we should and do strive for perfection. We struggle for a perfect POR and ATA every day, and this pursuit is **Warfare**. In Warfare, we vie with our opponents for Dominance. To achieve Dominance, we must deny our opponents' POR and ATA while maintaining our own.

All of this boils down to six critical controls required to achieve and maintain Dominance, enumerated here and illustrated in Figure 2:

1. Control our collection of information
2. Control our synthesis of information
3. Control our ability to use Domain Objects
4. Control the opponent's collection of information
5. Control the opponent's synthesis of information
6. Control the opponent's use of Domain Objects

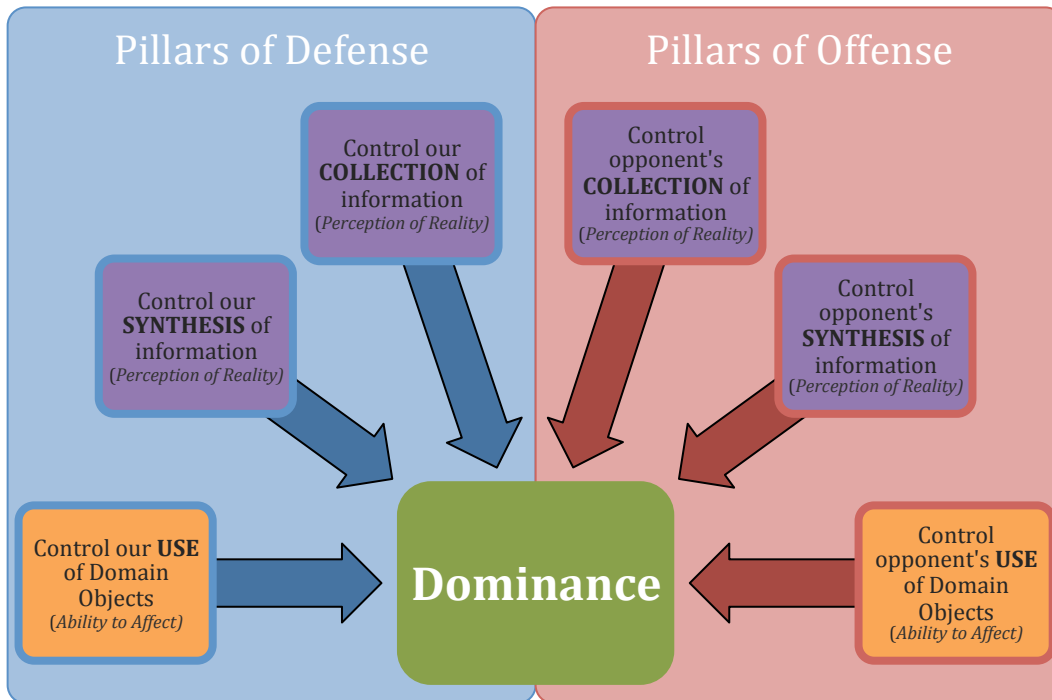


Figure 2: According to General Dominance Theory, achieving these six critical controls will result in the achievement of Dominance.

Simple. If you can achieve these six things, then you will achieve Dominance. Like the Tortoise, General Dominance Theory provides a “slow and steady” (and deliberate) path to your goal.

The Navy is already striving to achieve the six critical controls of Dominance in the Information Domain, but they don't know it. They have not identified that these six things (of the many possible things to do) are the key to success – and this error must quickly be realized and corrected.

The current definition of Information Dominance is nonsensical and has resulted in a [wildly confused Information Dominance Corps](#) on a trajectory to repeat the follies the “fast, high-tech” Hare in Aesop’s fable. To remedy this, the U.S. Navy should emulate the Tortoise by adopting the “steady” definition of Information Dominance presented in GDT: ***Information Dominance*** is the state in the battle space where a desired image of Information reality can be achieved completely despite the will of an opponent. This and other GDT concepts provide a unifying paradigm that will enable us to deliberately pursue Dominance in the Information Domain.

To learn more about applying GDT to the Information Domain (and other Domains) and more of the reasoning behind this approach, read [General Dominance Theory: A Foundation for Information Dominance](#).