



Revolution in Army Doctrine: The 2008 Field Manual 3-0, Operations

One of the principal challenges the Army faces is to regain its traditional edge at fighting conventional wars while retaining what it has learned—and unlearned—about unconventional wars, the ones most likely to be fought in the years ahead.

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Sustaining Members' Luncheon, Association of the United States Army's Annual Meeting, 10 October 2007

Introduction

U.S. Army doctrine is more than just words in a document—it provides substantial guidance to the Army and others for an extended period of time. It influences force structure and organizational design, training, materiel development and acquisition, leadership and education, as well as Soldiers' concerns. During the past several years, the Army has analytically looked into the future and believes America's military forces will continue to be engaged in an era of persistent conflict—protracted confrontation among state, non-state and individual actors using violence to achieve their political and ideological ends.

This era of persistent conflict ultimately means an era of persistent engagement for Army forces. Senior leaders cannot predict with certainty where the next conflict is going to occur, but they do know that Army forces must be prepared for a very complex and volatile environment within which they will be called upon to operate. The nature of this environment demands an ability to operate throughout the entire spectrum of operations—from stable peace to general war—and rapidly move back and forth within that spectrum as part of a joint team, and usually with other elements of national power. The Army's new version of its capstone Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, is the blueprint not only for current operations but also for full-spectrum operations in an uncertain and volatile future of persistent conflict and engagement.

Why Change

The operational environment now and in the future is complex, multidimensional and increasingly



fought in the midst of noncombatant populations. Previously, Army forces sought to separate civilians from the battlefield before engaging and destroying enemies and seizing terrain. While the Army recognizes the enduring requirements to fight and win, it also recognizes that noncombatants are frequently part of the terrain and their support is a principal determinant of success in future conflicts. Soldiers will consistently operate in and among the people, conducting operations in an environment fundamentally human in character. Soldiers' actions exert a most powerful influence on the population, with final success or failure of an operation often



resting on the perceptions of the people. It is imperative, therefore, that the Army provide to its Soldiers and leaders an intellectual understanding of the means by which it will organize, train, equip and conduct operations in this new environment. The new doctrine lays a foundation not only for battlefield success but also for lasting peace.

What's Changed

FM 3-0 captures accelerating efforts to transform the Army from a Cold War force to one adapted to the current environment. The new version reflects more than six years of wartime experience in an increasingly complex and uncertain strategic security environment. The FM reflects an evolving body of national strategy and policy, joint doctrine, and interagency integration and cooperation, and it captures ongoing efforts to transform the Army. Significantly, it represents the first major revision to Army operational doctrine since the tragic events of 11 September 2001. Certain aspects of the doctrine (strategic context, operational environment,

full-spectrum operations, command and control) are evolutionary. However, the new field manual's impact on the force and the application of the doctrine is likely to be **revolutionary**.

Stability operations are a core U.S. military mission that must be given priority comparable to that of combat (offensive and defensive) operations. The FM establishes the military principles for a “whole of government” approach to stability operations; fundamentally links Army operations to broader interagency efforts in stability operations; and emphasizes the legal and moral obligations to ensure the safety, security and well-being of civil populations worldwide.*

“Whole of government” uses all elements of U.S. national power—diplomatic, information, military and economic—where Army forces will combine 1) offensive, defensive and stability operations in joint campaigns and operations conducted overseas, or 2) offensive, defensive and civil-support operations within the United States and its territories as part of homeland security. These combinations—full-spectrum operations—are conducted simultaneously to seize, retain and exploit the initiative using lethal and nonlethal actions. Future success will require application of all the instruments of national power.

Full-spectrum operations are a major shift in Army doctrine. Forces now must address the civil

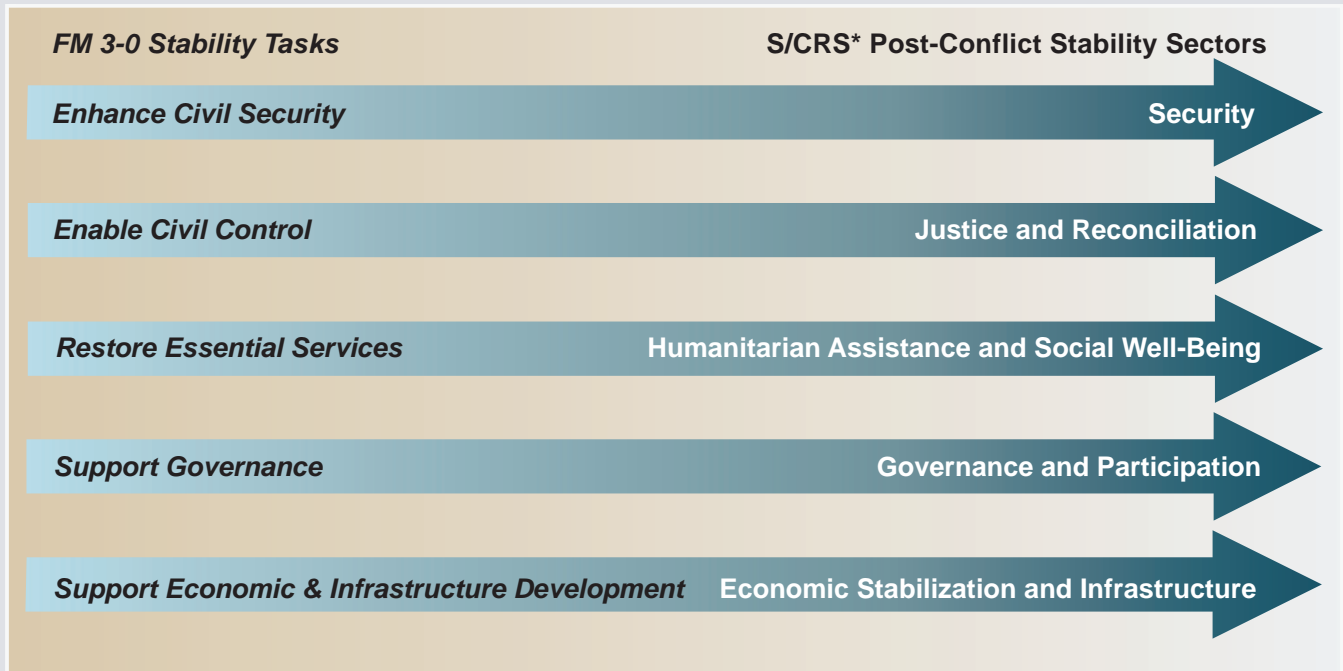


* See AUSA's Torchbearer National Security Report *The U.S. Army's Role in Stability Operations* (October 2006), online at <http://www.ausa.org/PDFdocs/TBSecRpt/TB-StabOps.pdf>.

A "Whole of Government" Approach

Within the context of current operations worldwide, **stability operations are often as important as—or more important than—offensive and defensive operations.**

FM 3-0, Introduction



*Department of State's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization

Source: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command

dimension at all times, combining tactical tasks affecting noncombatants with tactical tasks directed against the enemy. Winning battles and engagements is important but not decisive by itself; shaping the civil situation in concert with other government agencies, international organizations, civil authorities and multinational forces will be just as important to campaign success.

FM 3-0 institutionalizes the need to operate in and among populations, not avoid them, as in the recent past. It institutionalizes the need for cultural awareness, which is critical to understanding populations and their perceptions to reduce friction, preventing misunderstanding and improving a force's ability to accomplish its mission.

The FM acknowledges the unparalleled power of information in modern conflict and the fact that information has become as important as lethal action in determining the outcome of

operations. It restates information as an element of combat power. The FM focuses on information engagement; emphasizes the criticality of information in an Information Age global society; and presses the need to maintain consistency between actions on the ground and the messages that Army forces present.

Information engagement is the integrated employment of the related disciplines of public affairs, psychological operations, combat camera and defense support to public diplomacy to inform U.S. and other friendly audiences and to influence enemy, adversary and neutral audiences. Information engagement includes the interaction of commanders and Soldiers with these audiences.

The FM forges an operational concept that embraces risk, drives initiative and focuses on creating opportunities to achieve decisive results. The operational concept will enable the United States

to prevail in any conflict as part of a joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational team by capitalizing on a traditional American Army strength—adaptive and creative small-unit leadership. The FM provides a broad guideline for employing Army forces in the current operational environment.

Due to the human aspects of persistent conflict, FM 3-0 states that landpower will remain the most important military effort essential to victory, and it establishes fundamental principles for applying landpower as a part of an interdependent joint force. Landpower is the ability—by threat, force or occupation—to promptly gain, sustain and exploit control over land, resources and people. Landpower includes the ability to establish and maintain a stable environment that sets the conditions for a lasting peace.

FM 3-0 places primary emphasis on leaders and Soldiers. The quality of Army leaders and Soldiers is best exploited by allowing subordinates maximum latitude to exercise individual and small-unit initiative. FM 3-0 prescribes tough, realistic training to enable leaders at every level to accomplish the mission, instill a climate of trust in the abilities of superiors and subordinates to think and act flexibly, and constantly adapt to the situation.



The FM emphasizes the central role of the commander in full-spectrum operations, bridging battle command and operational art in leveraging the experience, knowledge and intuition of the commander. The FM focuses on creatively applying battle command and operational art in an increasingly complex security environment and discusses the requirements for leaders to be competent with both lethal and nonlethal (soft power) applications of combat power.

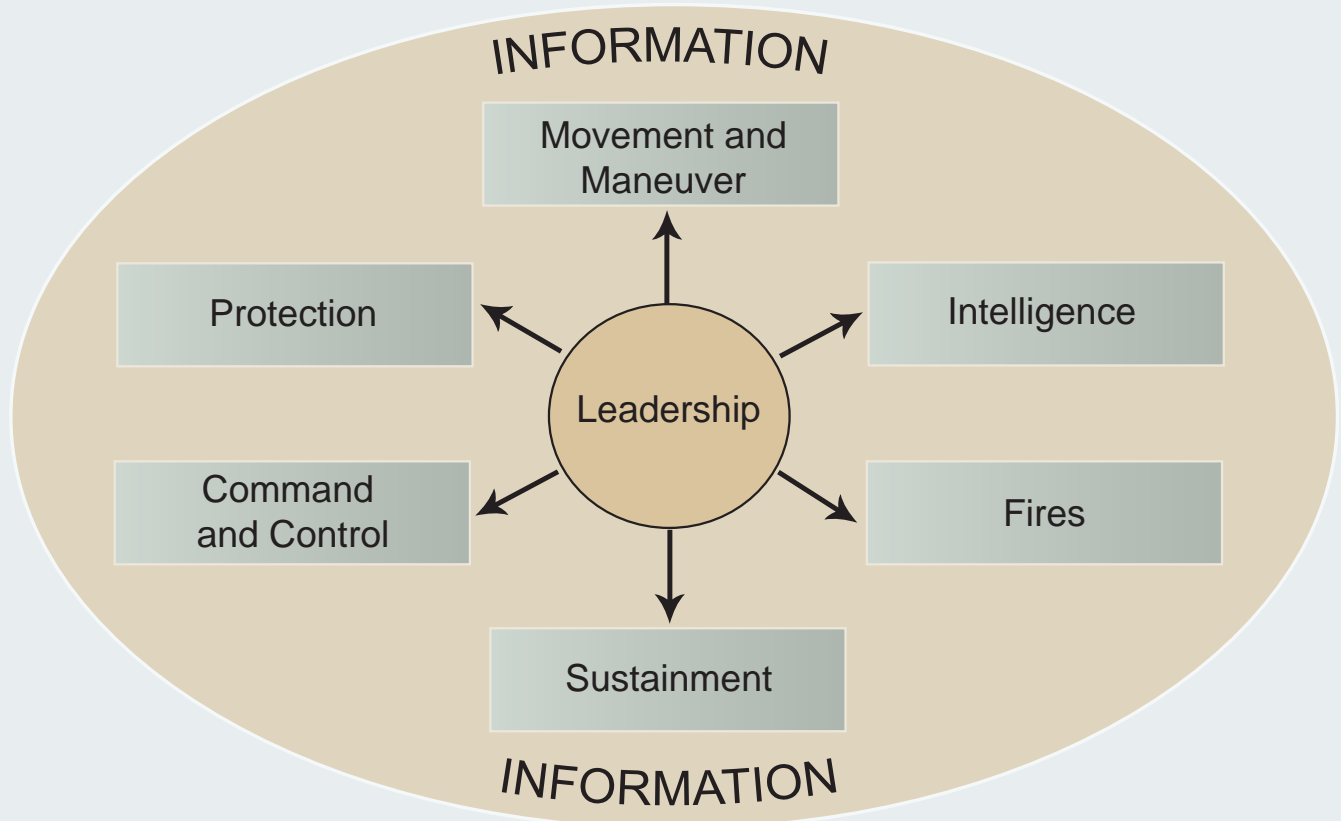
The actions of Soldiers on the ground communicate a most powerful message. The current conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere—and undoubtedly future ones—will be won by Soldiers, usually operating in small units, with leaders who focus on the enemy, keep an offensive mindset and remain opportunistic. This demands well-trained, multiskilled, innovative and adaptive Soldiers steeped in Army Values and the Warrior Ethos.

There is tactical and operational art involved in full-spectrum operations in knowing when and if simultaneous combinations are appropriate and feasible. Not every mission will employ forces in an offensive operation; stability operations or civil-support operations may predominate or be the only component of operations actually conducted. Nonetheless, com-



The Warfighting Functions

The Warfighting Functions replace the Battlefield Operating System, align with the Joint Operational and Tactical Functions, and parallel the U.S. Marine Corps Warfighting Functions.



The eight elements of combat power include the six warfighting functions—movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment, command and control, and protection—*multiplied* by leadership and *complemented* by information.

Source: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command

manders and their staffs must consider the relevance of all available types of operations to every situation.

Leaders must develop an offensive mindset—the predisposition to seize, retain and exploit the initiative to positively change the situation—to make operations decisive. Leadership is the seventh element of combat power as it ties together and multiplies the value of the six warfighting functions (intelligence, movement and

maneuver, fire support, protection, sustainment and command-and-control).

Implications

Today, as with each previous version of *Operations*, FM 3-0 shapes all of Army doctrine. But the document is not truly capstone doctrine until Army forces internalize its principles. This requires education, debate and individual study by all Army leaders, measuring it



against strategic, operational and tactical realities. Leaders must also recognize that while FM 3-0 can inform them on how to think about operations, it cannot provide a recipe for what to do on the battlefield.

Always dynamic, Army doctrine accounts not only for current operations but also for the immediate future in terms of organizational, threat and technological developments. This requirement is particularly challenging for the new edition of FM 3-0. The Army is heavily committed to conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. American strategic requirements remain global in nature and too numerous to count. Therefore, this doctrine also addresses the needs of an Army responsible for deploying rapidly into any operational environment anywhere in the world and promptly conducting operations with modular force (expeditionary capability) *and* operating for extended periods in any environment at any point across the spectrum of conflict, from stable peace through general war (campaign capability). Against these types of demands, the Army's requirement for resources (people, equipment, money) must increase.

Conclusion

FM 3-0 is the Army's capstone doctrinal publication for the conduct of operations. It sets the foundation for developing the other fundamentals and tactics, techniques and procedures detailed in subordinate field manuals. It also provides operational guidance for commanders and trainers at all echelons and forms the foundation for Army Education System curricula. The seven chapters that make up this edition of *Operations* constitute the Army's approach to conducting prompt and sustained operations on land. The Army must train its units in the application of full-spectrum operations to ensure that it will have a balanced, versatile force able to provide expeditionary and campaign capabilities to joint and combined-force commanders. Full-spectrum operations emphasize the importance of adaptive, flexible forces able to fight and win in combat, whether facing an intractable terrorist group or the modern forces of a hostile nation. **It is Soldiers—defined by their valor, devotion to duty and commitment to one another and the United States of America—who execute full-spectrum operations, and it is Soldiers who are the core of FM 3-0.**

