

# **Transitions in Full Spectrum Operations: The Effects of Ethos**

**A Monograph**

**by**

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**AY 06-07**

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

*Form Approved*  
**OMB No. 0704-0188**

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 22-03-2007		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> AMSP Monograph		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b> July 2006 - March 2007	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> Transitions in Full Spectrum Operations: The Effects of Ethos				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> MAJOR Thomas B. Hairgrove, Jr. (U.S. Army)				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Advanced Military Studies Program 250 Gibbon Avenue Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2134				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Command and General Staff College 1 Reynolds Avenue Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b> CGSC	
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> During OIF in 2003, the Army demonstrated its unrivaled ability to overmatch an enemy in a conventional mechanized conflict. By all accounts, the Army's participation in the decisive operation phase of the campaign was a stunning success. Just as in Desert Storm, the Army validated its warfighting ethos built on sound doctrine and years of hard training. How did success in the initial phases of OIF fail to translate into success for the campaign? This monograph contends that the missteps following the initial success can be attributed to the same ethos that provided the tactical victory. In spite of the Army's operational concept of full spectrum operations, the tactical culture blinded the Army leaders to the requirements to transition from offense to stability operations and caused a loss of initiative yet to be regained. To correct the ethos and align it with the full spectrum operations concept, the Army must address the deficiencies in doctrine and develop training scenarios that stress the importance of transitioning between offense, defense, and stability operation.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Ethos, Full Spectrum Operations, Transition, Doctrine, Training					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>  UNLIMITED	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>  48	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b> Kevin C.M. Benson, COL, US Army
<b>a. REPORT</b> UNCLASS	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> UNCLASS	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> UNCLASS			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)</b> 913-758-3302

# SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES

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## Abstract

Transitions in Full Spectrum Operations: The Effects of Ethos by Major Thomas B. Hairgrove, Jr., USA, 45 pages.

During Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, the Army demonstrated its unrivaled ability to overmatch an enemy in a conventional mechanized conflict. In less than six weeks, the Army, as part of the American led coalition, destroyed the Iraqi conventional forces, occupied its capital, and overthrew its regime. By all accounts, the Army's participation in the decisive operation phase of the campaign was a stunning success. Just as it had in Desert Storm, the Army validated its warfighting ethos built on sound doctrine and years of hard training. How did success in the initial phases of OIF fail to translate into success for the campaign?

This monograph contends that the missteps following the initial success can be attributed to the same ethos that provided the tactical victory. This ethos, or tactical culture, holds the view that the Army's sole responsibility is to "fight and win our Nation's wars," and that winning the peace is someone else's responsibility. In spite of the Army's operational concept of full spectrum operations, the tactical culture blinded the Army leaders to the requirements to transition from offense to stability operations and caused a loss of initiative yet to be regained.

To understand how the Army developed this tactical culture, the monograph chronicles the history of current Army doctrine and the concurrent development of the combat training center program. The author then shows how inconsistencies in the Army's capstone doctrine, and disconnects between it and its supporting doctrine contributed to the tactical culture. The author also shows how the combat training centers reinforced the ethos by focusing almost entirely on the tactical necessity to defeat the opposing force.

Since the initial stage of OIF, the Army has continued to update its doctrine and training program to replicate the current operating environment found in Iraq and Afghanistan. These adjustments, such as doctrinal reviews and mission rehearsal exercises, have affected the culture, but the Army must be careful not to over-adjust. To correct the ethos and align it with the full spectrum operations concept, the Army must address the deficiencies in doctrine and develop training scenarios that stress the importance of transitioning between offense, defense, and stability operation.

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## INTRODUCTION

In early 1991, coalition forces led by the United States achieved a resounding victory over the forces of Saddam Hussein. After an overwhelming air campaign, the coalition ground forces liberated Kuwait and effectively destroyed all remaining Iraqi resistance in just over four days. When questioned on this accomplishment, Major General Barry McCaffrey, commander of the U.S. 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, responded, “This war didn’t take 100 hours to win, it took 15 years”.<sup>1</sup> McCaffrey’s comment referenced the dramatic changes that the US military, and Army in particular, had experienced since the end of the Vietnam War. In 1993, the US Army published its official account of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, *Certain Victory*. In this document, the Army identified doctrine and training reform as two of the most notable reasons for the Army’s overwhelming success in the Gulf War.

On 19 March 2003, the coalition forces, once again led by the United States military, initiated Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) to topple the regime of Saddam Hussein. Over the next six weeks, a coalition force defeated Iraq’s conventional warfighting capability, occupied its capital, and successfully overthrew its dictatorial government. By all accounts, the decisive operation phase of the campaign (Phase III) was a resounding success. In the spirit of *Certain Victory*, in 2004 the Army published *On Point*, the official account of the major combat operations portion of OIF. Like its predecessor, *On Point* lists evolving doctrine and training practices as critical factors contributing to the success of OIF.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Scales, *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War*, First Brassey’s ed. (Washington: Brassey’s, 1994; reprint, Washington: Office of the Chief of Staff, United States Army, 1993), 35.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory Fontenot, E.J. Degan, and David Tohn, *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, Center for Army Lessons Learned (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004), Introduction.

When President George W. Bush declared an end to combat operations in May 2003, many believed that the military completed the hard work. They thought that coalition forces would quickly wrap up the loose ends, hand the responsibility for running the country over to a new Iraqi government and begin redeploying from Iraq. The loose ends turned out to be more difficult than almost anyone imagined. In many ways, the transition from combat operations to stability operations turned out to be the decisive point for the campaign in Iraq.<sup>3</sup> According to the Coalition Forces Land Component Commander (CFLCC), Lieutenant General McKiernan, it was during this time that the coalition “failed to seize a window of opportunity to get military, political, economic, and informational effects harmonized to bring order to a chaotic situation.”<sup>4</sup> Numerous authors provide assessments and critiques of the planning and execution of the campaign phase associated with the transition of authority from military to civil control (Phase IV of the campaign plan) at the operational and strategic levels, but few provide insight into the tactical actions that either assisted or hindered the post-combat occupation and stabilization of the country.

Works addressing the difficulties surrounding the strategic and operational level transition to stability operations typically use post-World War II Japan and Germany as successful examples. David Cavaleri and Kendall Gott provide insight into these examples. Cavaleri uses Japan as a case study to show how his nine stability planning themes effectively addressed the issues faced by General of the Army MacArthur and his staff.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Gott focuses on the US Constabulary in post-war Germany to highlight the success of American post-

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<sup>3</sup>David Cavaleri, *Easier Said than Done: Making the Transition Between Combat Operations and Stability Operations*, Global War on Terror Occasional Paper 7 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2005), 1.

<sup>4</sup>Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 493.

<sup>5</sup>Cavaleri, *Easier Said than Done*, vi.

war planning.<sup>6</sup> The primary theme that these works present is that detailed planning for post-war operations is critical for mission success. Regardless of the planning, or lack of planning, at the strategic and operational level, should the tactical commanders have thoroughly planned for the eventual transition from offense and defense to stability operations?

This author contends that the fundamental reason Army tactical units struggled during the transition from combat operations to stability operations, in the opening weeks of OIF, is that they did not adequately plan for the transition. Some senior Army leaders have opined that doctrine did not adequately address the requirements for units to conduct operations following the conventional combat phase. In addition, they hold that since higher operational headquarters provided little post-conflict planning guidance, much less a comprehensive plan, one should not expect the planning to occur at the tactical level. Rather than a lack of sufficient doctrine or even a plan from higher, this monograph seeks to show that the failure to plan for post-combat operations at the tactical level is rooted in the Army's ethos. Here, resides a mentality that regards stability operations as less than comparable to combat operations and assumes that other agencies will perform the majority of post-combat related tasks. In essence, "it's the military's job to win the war, not win the peace."<sup>7</sup> Though this attitude is present throughout the Army, it is most prominent in tactical units, as these forces are not routinely integrated with outside agencies. The Department of Defense (DoD) underscored and attempted to reverse this mindset in 2005 when it implemented DoD Directive 3000.05 stating;

Stability operations are a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct and support. They shall be given priority

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<sup>6</sup>Kendall Gott, *Mobility, Vigilance, and Justice: The US Army Constabulary in Germany, 1946-1953*, Global War on Terror Occasional Paper 11 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2005), v.

<sup>7</sup>Lawrence Yates, *The US Military's Experience in Stability Operations, 1789-2005*, Global War on Terror Occasional Paper 15 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), 21.



comparable to combat operations and be explicitly addressed and integrated across all DoD activities including doctrine, organizations, training, education, exercises, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities, and planning.<sup>8</sup>

There are numerous reasons for this way of thinking; however, the primary grounds lie in the Army's own doctrine and institutional training approaches.

This monograph seeks to identify the tactical problems that Army units face when transitioning from combat to post-combat operations and to determine potential institutional level fixes for those problems. The basic research question that the author seeks to examine is 'Does Army doctrine and training adequately address and inculcate the requirements in full spectrum operations for units transitioning from offense/defense-centric operations to stability-focused operations?' To answer this question, this monograph focuses on Army doctrine and training concerning full spectrum operations and specifically, the transition from offense/defense-focused operations to stability-focused operations at the corps and division level.

The initial section of this work explores the development of current Army capstone doctrine, including the debates surrounding the inclusion of operations outside of the conventional combat paradigm. This section then assesses doctrine's effectiveness at providing a common understanding of Army operations across the force. After reviewing capstone doctrine, this work then examines the subordinate doctrine to determine if it adequately supports the operational concept.

The second section examines the development and use of the Army's combat training centers (CTCs) to inculcate doctrine into the Army. This section explores scenarios used by the CTCs and compares these scenarios with the Army's operational concept of full spectrum operations. The Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) is the centerpiece of this section but

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<sup>8</sup>Department of Defense Directive 3000.05, Military Support to Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations, (2005).

it also examines training at the National Training Center (NTC), Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC), and Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) as well. In similar fashion to the previous section, this examination will seek to determine the effectiveness of institutional training centers at instilling the understanding of the Army's operational concept into the Army's warfighting ethos.

The next section is a case study of V Corps' train-up and execution of OIF I, from mid-2002 through May 2003. This section highlights the focus of V Corps and its subordinate divisions on planning and preparing for the attack into Iraq, destruction of Iraqi conventional combat capability, and the subsequent seizure of Baghdad. During this discussion, this monograph will demonstrate how a lack of tactical planning for simultaneous and sequential stability operations throughout the depth of V Corps battlespace led to significant problems following the successful attack.

Finally, the last section concludes the work and offers recommendations for how the Army may adapt its doctrine and combat training center program to ensure the force has a common framework for how it executes full spectrum operations.

## DOCTRINE

In examining the effectiveness of Army doctrine, one must not only comprehend what doctrine says but also be aware of the context in which the typical Army practitioner understands and internalizes this doctrine. “To be useful, doctrine must be well known and commonly understood.”<sup>9</sup> In order to understand the doctrine and appreciate this context, this section provides background for the development of today’s Army doctrine of full spectrum operations and discusses some of the major debates that surrounded its development, primarily, how doctrine should address operations other than conventional combat. To maintain relevancy, this section only discusses the major points concerning operations not centered on traditional conventional combat and the eventual development and inclusion of stability and support operations in Army doctrine. This section does not include discussions on the other major areas of doctrine development, such as joint integration and information operations. Following the discussion on the Army’s development and acceptance of full spectrum operations doctrine, this section examines the adequacy of this doctrine for executing the seamless transitions that it promotes.

### Developing Full Spectrum Operations

The US Army credited much of its success during Operation Desert Storm to its doctrine of AirLand Battle. Following the Vietnam War, the Army redirected its attention to the Warsaw Pact forces poised to attack Western Europe and found itself unprepared. General William Depuy, the first commander of TRADOC (Training and Doctrine Command), deliberately encouraged this redirection of attention to “break the Army from its Vietnam malaise” and begin

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<sup>9</sup>Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 1-45.

its rebuilding as an all-volunteer force. One of his most important actions was to initiate drastic doctrinal revisions within the Army. These revisions resulted in the doctrine of Active Defense and eventually led to the development and adoption of the AirLand Battle concept.<sup>10</sup> The concept of AirLand Battle provided the Army with a framework for fighting at the operational level of war. The doctrine empowered, as well as demanded, tactical commanders to function within the newly defined tenets of Army operations (initiative, depth, versatility, and agility).<sup>11</sup> AirLand Battle doctrine sought to counter numerical superiority with operational and tactical maneuver overmatch. AirLand Battle stressed the need for “simultaneous operations throughout the depth of the battlefield,”<sup>12</sup> emphasizing rapid transitions between offensive and defensive operations. To achieve this, the doctrine also stressed the requirement for joint interdependence. This doctrine served the Army well in preparing it to conduct conventional, large scale, combat operations but fell short in addressing how the Army should handle smaller scale and less conventional threats.

Along with the strengths of AirLand Battle, Desert Storm also demonstrated weakness in the Army’s doctrine, particularly, the lack of consideration for operations undoubtedly required for conflict termination. Post-war plans for the reconstruction of Kuwait as well as the subsequent humanitarian and security operations in contested areas of Iraq were virtually non-existent. LTG Yeosock, the Third Army Commander, described the situation presented to him following the ground war as being “handed a ‘dripping bag of manure’ that no one else wanted to

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<sup>10</sup> Scales, *Certain Victory*, 12-13.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-26.

<sup>12</sup> Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), vi.

deal with.”<sup>13</sup> If this was the opinion of the Army’s component commander, then one can easily imagine the disdain felt by his subordinate commanders who found themselves executing unusual and ill-defined operations with little guidance.<sup>14</sup>

After Desert Storm, AirLand Battle doctrine continued to evolve based on the changing operational environment precipitated by the end of the Cold War. During this time, the US found itself the sole surviving superpower and forced to contend with unfamiliar threats from non-peer actors operating across a range of conflict. In response, the Army officially added operations other than war (OOTW) to its “range of military options” by including the concept in its 1993 capstone manual FM 100-5; FM 100-5 stated that the Army conducted two types of military operations, war and other than war. This manual stated plainly that the Army should be prepared to fight and win our Nation’s wars and be capable of operating “around the world in an environment that may not involve combat.”<sup>15</sup>

The concept of OOTW and its inclusion in official Army doctrine, led to major debates throughout the Army. The first debate revolved around the question of whether or not the Army should be responsible for OOTW or only to “fight and win our Nation’s Wars.” This question focused primarily on the Army’s role in peace operations and nation building. The second debate, based on the reality of the Army’s participation in OOTW was “should doctrine categorize conflict as war and operations other than war or address all conflict in a comprehensive manner?”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Conrad Crane and W. Andrew Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2003), 2.

<sup>14</sup>Scales, *Certain Victory*, 322-353.

<sup>15</sup>Department of the Army, *FM 100-5*, 13-1.

<sup>16</sup>David Fastabend, “The Categorization of Conflict.” *Parameters* XXVII, no. 2 (Summer 1997):75-87.

The operations that the US Army participated in during the 1990's and early 2000's fueled the debate concerning the Army's responsibility for operations other than war. For many officers, operations in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo, were aberrations. They felt that these operations served only as distractions that impeded the Army's ability to train and prepare for fighting the next big war. To them the doctrine describing OOTW "diluted the warrior ethos" and "reinforced the perception that OOTW was 'other than' what we do as an Army."<sup>17</sup> In his work detailing the US military's historical involvements in stability operations, Lawrence Yates points out that the Army's attitude regarding non-warfighting operations is not new but instead a recurring theme in American history.

Traditionally, the US military has not regarded stability operations as a 'core' mission with a priority approaching that accorded to combat operations. The American military has traditionally focused on conventional warfighting as its most important mission, and while few officers have challenged the Clausewitzian axiom that wars are the 'continuation of policy by other means,' a pervasive belief maintains that, once an enemy's conventional forces have been defeated, the responsibility of the military for helping the policy makers achieve the broader objectives for which the hostilities were conducted has been largely fulfilled... In other words, it's the military's responsibility to win the war, not win the peace.<sup>18</sup>

There are numerous plausible reasons for this attitude. In their 1999 monograph, *Army Professionalism, The Military Ethic, and Officership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Dr. Don Snider, MAJ John Nagl and MAJ Tony Pfaff contend that the reluctance to sign up for these missions is a sign of declining professionalism within the officer corps. In referring to the Balkan peace-enforcement operations, these authors state "The hesitancy of the U.S. Army to accept wholeheartedly the missions it is currently being given strikes the authors of this paper as cause

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Yates, *Experience in Stability Operations*, 21.

for concern in the context of military professionalism.”<sup>19</sup> One could also conclude that the reluctance to accept these missions stems from Dietrich Dörner’s idea, from his book *The Logic of Failure*, that people tend to focus in areas where they feel competent.<sup>20</sup> Since the senior Army leaders, of the time, rose through the ranks during height of the Cold War, their experience and expertise was in the realm of major combat operations, best addressed in AirLand Battle. This debate concerning the acceptance of non-conventional warfighting is insightful into the ethos of the Army, but the leadership realized that regardless of preferences, operations such as peace support and humanitarian assistance needed to be included in doctrine. The Army’s next debate was how to address this responsibility in doctrine.

The argument surrounding the incorporation of operations other than war into doctrine boiled down to an argument about categorization. Some Army leaders contended that doctrine should maintain the distinction between war and operations other than war. This camp held that OOTW served to provide visibility over the different operations that the Army was conducting at the time and allowed Army units to know exactly what tasks to train. For example, in absence of a specific deployment order, units would focus on preparing for their designated wartime mission. Once the unit received another mission, such as a peacekeeping operation, the unit would shift its training focus for that specific event. FMs 25-100 and 25-101, the Army’s training doctrine at the time reinforced this thought. These manuals guided units to train only on its mission essential tasks, those tasks associated with the unit’s wartime mission. Only after receiving a specific mission (Bosnia, Kosovo, etc.) should units train other non-traditional tasks. This idea served as

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<sup>19</sup>Don Snider, John Nagl, and Tony Pfaff, *Army Professionalism, the Military Ethic, and the Officership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1999), 21.

<sup>20</sup>Dietrich Dörner, *The Logic of Failure: Why Things go Wrong and what we can do to Make them Right* 1<sup>st</sup> American ed. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996), 60.

the primary training model in Europe during the late 1990's when US Army Europe and Seventh Army continually rotated units from its central region to the Balkans. Additionally, this group believed that if the label of OOTW category fell from doctrine that the attention and resources for these operations would also be lost.

Other leaders held that categorization was inappropriate. This group recognized that the Army continually conducted tasks associated with war and OOTW throughout its existence. Additionally, these leaders argued that the new operational environment often required units to deploy with little preparation time, and units, therefore, must be capable of operating effectively across the spectrum of conflict without significant post-alert training. As far as these leaders were concerned, operations were operations no matter what level of conflict materialized.<sup>21</sup>

By the end of the decade, the latter argument prevailed. In 2001, with the publication of *FM 3-0 Operations*, the Army minimized the use of the term operations other than war. It no longer used the term to define an operation but instead a level of conflict, and linked all Army tasks to four basic Army operations spanning the spectrum of conflict. *FM 3-0* introduced full spectrum operations into the Army lexicon and sought to solidify the change in the Army's thinking about its future roles and employment. The Army defined full spectrum operations as those military operations (offense, defense, stability, and support) that the Army must be able to conduct across the spectrum of conflict (from peacetime military engagement to small-scale contingency to major theater war).<sup>22</sup> *FM 3-0* defined stability operations as operations that "promote and protect US national interests by influencing the threat, political, and information dimensions of the operational environment through a combination of peacetime developmental,

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<sup>21</sup>Fastabend, "The Categorization of Conflict," 75-87.

<sup>22</sup>Department of the Army, *FM 3-0*, 1-14.



cooperative activities and coercive actions in response to crisis.”<sup>23</sup> Support operations were defined as operations that “employ Army forces to assist civil authorities, foreign or domestic, as they prepare for or respond to crisis and relieve suffering.”<sup>24</sup> Since the adoption of full spectrum operations, the Army has subsequently revised the definitions of stability and support to restrict stability operations to areas outside of the US and limited support operations to areas within US boundaries. For the purposes of this work, this author will use the refined definitions and thereby address only stability operations.

The doctrine of full spectrum operations was a clear departure from the Army’s previous doctrine in that it more sufficiently addressed the complexity of the modern operational environment. It recognized the inter-relationships between offense, defense, stability, and support operations (now defined as offense, defense, and stability operations when outside of the U.S.). It stated that these operations together make up land operations.<sup>25</sup> Of particular importance, full spectrum operations stressed the requirement for tactical units to rapidly transition between all operations. Where the transition between offense and defense, and vice versa, has long been recognized as a critical component of any plan, full spectrum operations also emphasized the need to transition between operations previously considered appropriate to either the conduct of war or military operations other than war.

## **Implementing Full Spectrum Operations**

If the Army’s overarching doctrine sufficiently addressed the four Army operations and the requirements involved in transitioning through the spectrum of operations, why did the

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 1-15—1-16.

<sup>24</sup>Department of the Army, *FM 3-0*, 1-16.

<sup>25</sup>Michael Burke, “Doctrine for a Transforming Force,” *Military Review* LXXII, no. 2 (March-April 2002): 91-97.

tactical units in Operation Iraqi Freedom find the transition between traditional combat operations (offense and defense) and stability operations so difficult to execute? A closer view of doctrine provides two basic explanations. The first is that doctrine subordinate to FM 3-0 does not fully support the concept of full spectrum operations and therefore maintains the previous idea of a separation between war and OOTW. The second is that doctrine does not provide adequate detail for planning transitions, particularly between offense/defense and stability operations.

The first doctrinal explanation for the transition difficulty faced by tactical units is that doctrine has not eliminated, and in some cases exacerbated, the misperception concerning when certain operations are conducted. Here, many leaders still do not appreciate the inter-relationship between the four Army operations and the necessity to transition between them. The following anecdote from BG Fastabend, a member of the post 1993 Operations writing team, demonstrates this confusion.

A General in our Army was quoted right after Iraqi Freedom as saying our doctrine never prepared him for what he was experiencing in Iraq. I had a chance to meet with this gentleman and I said, I don't understand why you said that. Look, in 1993, we introduced military operations other than war, and then we introduced the idea of full-spectrum operations. From '97 to 2001, we introduced the ideas that operations are a seamless combination of offense, defense, stability, and support. How could you say that your doctrine did not prepare you for what you experienced in Baghdad? He said, yeah, Dave, I know. I read all that stuff. Read it many times, and I thought about it. But I can remember quite clearly, I was on a street corner in Baghdad smoking a cigar, watching some guys carry a sofa by and it never occurred to me that I was going to be the guy to go get that sofa back. It just takes time to internalize doctrine.<sup>26</sup>

Why do these senior officers have such differing views when they are both obviously familiar with the appropriate doctrine?

FM 3-0 is the proponent for full spectrum operations, but even it lacks the clarity to overcome the misunderstanding. For example, FM 3-0 clearly describes how commanders must

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<sup>26</sup>David Fastabend, "Future of the United States Army: Panel Discussion," moderated by Robert Killebrew, written transcript, 11 April 2005, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC.

conduct offense, defense, and stability sequentially and/or simultaneously to accomplish their mission in any environment. However, it defines full spectrum operations as “the range of operations Army forces conduct in war and military operations other than war” thus introducing ambiguity.<sup>27</sup> To complicate matters further, FM 3-0 seems to indicate that there is a hierarchy in tasks associated with full spectrum operations. When discussing requirements to train for full spectrum operations, FM 3-0 states, “commanders focus their METL [mission essential task list], training time, and resources on combat tasks unless directed otherwise.”<sup>28</sup> This identification of “combat tasks” is inconsistent with the concept of full spectrum operations, as units must be prepared to execute all tasks, across the entire spectrum of conflict.

Supporting doctrine amplifies these inconsistencies. FM 3-90 *Tactics* and FM 3-07 *Stability Operations and Support Operations* expound on the four Army operations described in FM 3-0. FM 3-90 *Tactics* discusses offense, defense, and other tactical enabling operations in detail but keeps these operations in isolation and does not address how they relate to the other components of full spectrum operations. Likewise, FM 3-07 provides detail about the conduct of stability and support operations but provides little linkage to offense and defense, other than for the requirement of force protection. The most obvious disconnect between the concept of full spectrum operations and published doctrine is the separation of the four components into two separate manuals, thereby continuing the perception of war and operations other than war. If a commander is to fight a conventional conflict, he refers to FM 3-90. If he is to conduct a peace operation, then he must refer to FM 3-07.

The theme of separating operations into combat (offense and defense) and non-combat (stability and support) continues through the remaining subordinate doctrinal manuals used by

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<sup>27</sup>Department of the Army, *FM 3-0*, 1-4.

<sup>28</sup>Department of the Army, *FM 3-0*, 1-52.

large Army tactical units, namely corps and divisions. For example, while Chapter 2 of FM 3-91 Division Operations, shows each of the components of full spectrum operations without regard to the spectrum of conflict, Chapter 6 “Stability Operations” begins with the statement: “Army divisions focus on warfighting, but often organize and deploy forces for stability operations.” This chapter goes on to add, “stability operations are the division’s primary role when participating in a joint force command (JFC) MOOTW.”<sup>29</sup>

In summary, the weakness of FM 3-0 and the inconsistencies in subordinate manuals fed confusion surrounding full spectrum operations and fell short of its goal of providing a common understanding across the force. Adding to the problem is doctrine’s discussion on transition planning. In this area, doctrine is clear, but too narrowly focused.

The doctrine concerning transition planning begins in the forward of FM 3-0. GEN Shinseki, the former Army Chief of Staff, writes, “mastering transitions is the key to maintaining momentum and winning decisively.”<sup>30</sup> FM 3-0 goes on to define transitions as being “sequels that occur between types of operations” and stresses that “commanders anticipate and plan for them as part of any future operation.”<sup>31</sup> Throughout, this document highlights the requirement to identify branches and sequels and to effectively plan for them to ensure flexibility.

The Army’s planning and command and control doctrine, FM 5-0 and FM 6-0 respectively, amplify this requirement. These manuals direct commanders and staffs to identify potential transitions and to plan for them in detail. In particular, the doctrine emphasizes the requirement to establish execution criteria to create advantageous conditions for units to recognize and execute the transitions. Doctrine warns that failure to plan the transitions may

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<sup>29</sup>Department of the Army, *FM 3-07, Stability Operations and Support Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2003), 6-1—6-2.

<sup>30</sup>Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Forward*.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 6-20.

reduce a unit's momentum and leave forces in a poor position to exploit success or respond to setback.

Even though the planning doctrine is very clear about the requirement to plan for transitions, unintentional diversions from full spectrum operations continue to surface. For example, FM 3-90 provides detailed techniques for planning transitions following the execution of both offensive and defensive operations. FM 3-90 begins the discussion on the transition from offensive operations: "The following paragraphs explain why a commander primarily conducting offensive operations would transition to the defense and describe techniques that a commander can use to ease the transition."<sup>32</sup> This chapter continues with recommended actions for commanders to take in conducting transitions to the defense.

As he transitions from the offense to the defense, a commander takes the following actions:

- Maintains contact and surveillance of the enemy, using a combination of reconnaissance units and surveillance assets to develop the information required to plan future actions.
- Establishes a security area and local security measures.
- Redeploys security assets to ensure the support of security forces.
- Redeploys forces based on probable future employment.
- Maintains and regains contact with adjacent units in a contiguous AO and ensures that his units remain capable of mutual support in a noncontiguous AO.
- Transitions the engineer effort by shifting the emphasis from mobility to countermobility and survivability.
- Consolidates and reorganizes.
- Explains the rationale for transitioning from the offense to his soldiers.<sup>33</sup>

Likewise, when describing how to plan for the transition from the defense, FM 3-90 begins: "If a defense is successful, the commander anticipates and seeks the opportunity to transition to the

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<sup>32</sup>Department of the Army, *FM 3-90, Tactics* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 3-50.

<sup>33</sup>Department of the Army, *FM 3-90*, 3-51.

offense.”<sup>34</sup> Just as with the transition from offense to defense, FM 3-90 provides detailed guidance for the transition from the defense to the offense.

As the commander transitions his force from the defense to the offense, he takes the following actions-

- Establishes an LD for his offensive operation. This may require him to conduct local, small scale attacks to secure terrain necessary for the conduct of the offensive operation or destroy enemy forces that could threaten the larger offensive operation.
- Maintains contact with the enemy, using combinations of his available ISR assets to develop the information required to plan future operations and avoid being deceived by enemy information operations.
- Redeploys his combined arms team based on the probable future employment of each element of that team...
- Maintains and regains contact with adjacent units...
- Transitions the engineer effort...to mobility.
- Provides his intent for transitioning from the defense to the offense to his commanders and soldiers.<sup>35</sup>

Unfortunately, FM 3-90 only refers to transitions to and from offense and defense, as it completely ignores stability and support operations.

The discussion of transition planning in FM 3-07 is more inclusive but similarly lacks the emphasis required for conducting full spectrum operations. FM 3-07 adequately addresses the requirements for units conducting stability operations (such as peace enforcement operations) to plan transitions to offense/defense in order to ensure force protection, but it lacks discussion on the need to transition to and from stability operations during more conventional fights.

Additionally, in its discussion of transitioning to stability operations for post-conflict, FM 3-07 seems to undermine rather than support the concept of full spectrum operations. Here, it states, “following hostilities, forces may conduct stability operations to provide a secure environment for civil authorities as they work to achieve reconciliation, rebuild lost infrastructure, and resume

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid.,8-42.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 8-43

vital services.” This statement implies that the Army’s responsibility for post-conflict stability operations is limited and that other civil organizations will assume responsibility for areas such reconstruction and return of “vital services.”

## **Adapting Full Spectrum Operations**

Inconsistencies in the doctrine have hindered the Army’s development of a common understanding of the operational concept of full spectrum operations and foster the continued belief in the inherent separation (or sequential nature) of offense/defense and stability operations. This continued belief clouds leaders’ visualization of how events will unfold in contemporary operations. Without a clear vision of the necessity for stability operations, leaders give little thought to planning transitions to and from those operations. This lack of planning often results in what Dörner refers to a “repair-service behavior” where commanders and their staffs find themselves reacting to events rather than initiating and controlling them.<sup>36</sup>

In recognition of these issues, the Army recently initiated a process to quickly adapt its doctrine to the current conditions faced by soldiers in the field and to “expedite the delivery” of this doctrine. The adapted doctrine is sent to the field in the form of interim field manuals; manuals that remain valid for only two years (unless earlier rescinded). As the force validates these adaptations, the Army then incorporates these changes into the traditional doctrinal update process.<sup>37</sup>

The Army began disseminating the adaptations concerning how it conducts full spectrum operations and the required transition planning in the interim field manual, FMI 5-0.1, *The Operations Process*. This manual seeks to clarify the operational concept by:

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<sup>36</sup>Dörner, *Failure of Logic*, 58-61.

<sup>37</sup>Department of the Army, *FMI 5-0.1, The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), v.

Expanding full spectrum operations doctrine to better describe how to plan, prepare, execute, and assess stability and reconstruction operations simultaneously with offensive and defensive operations.<sup>38</sup>

Of note, the manual emphasizes the simultaneous nature and the complementary effects of the four Army operations and does not use the term OOTW. Additionally, FMI 5-0.1 includes an appendix that highlights stability operations within the context of full spectrum operations. Here the discussion of transitions between all operations is much more detailed than the manuals previously addressed. The doctrinal evolution found in FMI 5-0.1 demonstrates the Army's recognition of the issues and its ability to address those issues in a rapid manner.

## **Doctrine Conclusions**

The bottom line is that the operational concept of full spectrum operations is appropriate for the current operating environment, but the inconsistencies in doctrine hamper its acceptance in the force and do little to change the Army's warfighting ethos. The Army must therefore resolve the inconsistencies in its doctrine. This resolution is underway, as seen with the development of FMI 5-0.1, but the Army still needs to do more.

First, the primary manuals required to implement full spectrum operations (FMs 3-90, and 3-07), should be condensed into a single document. Combining these two manuals will reduce the mental separation of the different operations, and diminish the war versus other than war culture. The combination will also facilitate the expansion of transition discussions, similar to those described in FM 3-90. The considerations provided for transition to/from offense and defense are well thought out and detailed; doctrine needs to provide the same level of detail concerning transitions to/from stability operations. For example, the manual could recommend that the commander:

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<sup>38</sup>Department of the Army, *FMI 5-0.1*, vi.



- Establish security for the population, key infrastructure, and facilities.
- Gain and maintain contact with the population and existing government.
- Transition the engineer effort to general engineering and mobility.
- Explain to his soldiers the reason for the transition to stability operations and the strategic implications of their actions.

In this way, doctrine can assist the commander to consider the range of tasks required to transition to stability operations.

The Army should also refrain from producing new manuals. The concept of speeding the doctrine developmental cycle by publishing interim FMs (FMIs) is good, but publishing interim FM updates will lessen confusion in the force about which publication takes precedence. The 1976 version of FM 100-5 exemplified this idea. General DePuy had the manual published in loose-leaf format to facilitate rapid changes and to show DePuy's intent that the manual was the "first iteration of a continuing doctrinal dialogue."<sup>39</sup>

Getting the doctrine right is a critical step, but as noted by General Depuy, "Doctrine... doesn't work unless it's between the ears of at least 51 percent of the soldiers who are charged to employ it."<sup>40</sup> Doctrine alone is not enough, to get doctrine "between the ears" (to have commanders and staffs understand and internalize its concepts), the Army relies on the combat training centers. The next section examines these training centers and explores their effectiveness in embedding doctrine into the force.

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<sup>39</sup>Scales, *Certain Victory*, 13.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 12.

## TRAINING CENTERS

In 1991, *Certain Victory* listed training reform, and specifically the development of the combat training centers (CTCs), as the second major contributing factor, after AirLand Battle doctrine, to the success of the U.S. Army in Operation Desert Storm. The CTCs were the venue that allowed commanders to practice the tenets of Army operations and perfect the tactics required to implement AirLand Battle doctrine. The CTCs provided the Army's tactical level leadership with critical lessons and experience that undoubtedly resulted in battlefield success. "Each successive iteration or rotation ... increased the unit's ability to survive and win in combat."<sup>41</sup> The focus of the CTCs was clear; prepare units for conventional mid to high-intensity combat.

In 2003, *On Point* again highlighted the contributions of the CTCs to the rapid success of the Army's formations.

After the conclusion of major combat operations, Colonel Will Grimsley wrote to the commanding general of the National Training Center to thank him and his key leaders for the work they did in preparing Grimsley's 1st Brigade, 3rd ID. According to Grimsley, "I told them I could draw a straight line correlation from how we fought in OIF successfully directly back to my National Training Center rotation."<sup>42</sup>

According to FM 7-0, *Training the Force*, the Army's training doctrine, in addition to being the "Army's premier training and leader development experience," the CTCs have the added task of "embedding doctrine throughout the Army."<sup>43</sup> In conjunction with doctrine, General Peter

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<sup>41</sup>Scales, *Certain Victory*, 21-22.

<sup>42</sup>Fontenot, Degan, and Tohn, *On Point*, 7: 392.

<sup>43</sup>Department of the Army, *FM 7-0, Training the Force* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), 1-38.

Schoomaker, the Army Chief of Staff, clarifies that “our Combat Training Centers (CTCs) drive the tactical culture of the Army.”<sup>44</sup>

As shown in the previous section, Army doctrine and its “tactical culture” have not been mutually supporting. Though the Army tasks the CTCs to “provide realistic joint and combined arms training, according to Army and joint doctrine,”<sup>45</sup> the ethos regarding the separation of war and operations other than war has hindered this execution. To appreciate the mixed results regarding implementation of full spectrum operations at the CTCs one should first understand why and how they were developed.

### **Origin and Development of the Combat Training Centers**

The combat training center program began in the early 1980’s as a method to reduce the high number of casualties that Army forces historically suffered during their first exposure to combat. The idea was to establish a training program that allowed units to engage in simulated combat against a live opposing force (OPFOR) and to experience the stress of combat without the loss of life. Additionally, instrumentation and professional observer-controllers (O/Cs) would continuously monitor and record the conduct of the rotation (the plan prepare, execute cycles) and provide the unit leadership with candid post-execution assessments. The O/Cs would then use these assessments to facilitate leader driven after-action reviews, which allowed units to “self-discover” areas in which they should sustain or improve.<sup>46</sup>

The first CTC was the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California. The NTC established the paradigm for the CTC program. Here commanders of brigade size

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<sup>44</sup>Peter Schoomaker, “Serving a Nation at War: A Campaign Quality Army with Joint and Expeditionary Capabilities,” *Parameters* XXXIV, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 4-23.

<sup>45</sup>Department of the Army, *AR 350-50, Combat Training Center Program* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2003), 1.

<sup>46</sup>Scales, *Certain Victory*, 20-22.

mechanized forces could deploy their units to a simulated hostile theater of operation, conduct force-on-force combat against a well-trained, equivalent sized OPFOR, and conduct large-scale live-fire operations at least once during their command.

Soon after the establishment of the NTC, the Army created the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas (later moved to Fort Polk, Louisiana), and the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) at Hohenfels, Germany. The Army designed the JRTC to provide its light forces with a comparable CTC and the CMTC to support Army forces forward deployed in Europe.

In addition to the NTC, JRTC, and CMTC, the so-called “dirt-CTCs” or maneuver combat training centers (MCTCs), the Army saw a need to provide a similar training event for its division and corps commanders and staffs. In response to this requirement, the Army established the Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. By using computer simulations and scripted events, the “BCTP would provide the same realism, stress, and harsh, objective reality for generals and their staffs as the NTC provided for colonels.”<sup>47</sup>

The common denominator in the implementation of the CTC program was the use of the after-action review (AAR) process. According to the *Observer Controller Handbook* used to train and guide O/Cs at the NTC, “AARs are the most important events at the NTC.” The AAR process was seen as a revolutionary characteristic of the CTC program.

There was no precedent for exposing a unit’s chain of command to a no-hold-barred battle against an OPFOR where a leader’s failure was evident in exquisite detail to his subordinates...continuous exposure to NTC and other derivative exercises...infused in field commanders an institutional obsession to train realistically for combat.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 22.

As noted earlier, prior to Operations Desert Storm, these rotations focused solely on the combat tasks associated with executing AirLand Battle doctrine. This focus ensured that the AAR centered on the commanders' abilities to employ and synchronize the elements of combat power and the seven battlefield operating systems. Commanders focused on activities that led to success against the OPFOR, the "institutional obsession" was for the successful conduct of offensive and defensive operations. This warrior ethos, cultivated by the CTCs, served the Army well in Operation Desert Storm but had other implications when the Army found itself conducting operations other than war in the post-Cold War environment.

The focus of this monograph is on corps and division level transition planning; therefore, the BCTP could logically be the focus of this section. However, since much of the Army's warfighting culture and understanding of doctrine stems from its experience at the MCTCs, this section addresses the entire CTC program.

### **CTC Adaptations Post-Operation Desert Storm**

As the doctrinal debate concerning viable Army missions unfolded following the Cold War, the CTCs faced a dilemma. Should they continue to focus on the "core" skills associated with major combat operations or should they help commanders train their units to execute the non-standard tasks required for their changing missions? The answer was clear, but not wholly embraced. In response to the new missions faced by the force and the likelihood of their continued execution, "the Combat Training Centers (NTC, JRTC, CMTC, and BCTP) adjusted their representations of the battlefield to reflect experiences learned on the fields of Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda, and the Balkans."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Fontenot, Degan, and Tohn, *On Point*, 1: 15.

From its inception, JRTC led the CTCs in embracing operations other than the traditional offense and defense. This difference was largely due to JRTC's charter to focus on mid-intensity to low-intensity conflict.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, perhaps since the Army's light forces were some of the first units to execute these missions since Vietnam (Operation Just Cause in Panama, Operation Restore Hope in Somalia and Operation Restore/Uphold Democracy in Haiti), the JRTC incorporated the lessons from these conflicts and subsequently provided units with the closest simulation of full spectrum operations of all the CTCs.

In the mid-1990s, with the reality of U.S. forces in Germany deploying to the Balkans, the CMTC also widened its training focus. Here, the CMTC began conducting mission rehearsal exercises (MRXs) to prepare units for the specific stability tasks required to enforce the negotiated peace. The basic model used by U.S. Army forces in Europe was to conduct a "traditional rotation" to train for high-intensity warfare, the standard offense/defense focus of AirLand Battle, in expectation of an upcoming deployment order. Once the unit received the order, it then conducted a MRX based on its expected mission. For the MRXs, the CMTC reconfigured its OPFOR to represent opposing factions, designed scenarios to represent real-world events, and began large-scale use of civilians on the battlefield to add needed complexity. Leaders welcomed changes for the MRXs, but the overall focus remained on the traditional rotation. The idea was that training for war was more difficult than peace support. If units could maintain their warfighting capability, then the transition to peace support operations would be much easier. This thought process was in line with the 1993 version of FM 100-5's delineation of operations in war and OOTW.

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<sup>50</sup>Department of the Army, *AR 350-50*, 2.

When units based in the U.S. began to prepare for deployment to the Balkans, the JRTC began conducting MRXs similar to those at the CMTC. Just as in Germany, leaders treated these events as separate events from traditional force-on-force rotations.

Soon after the CMTC began implementing changes to support MRXs, the BCTP “made similar adjustments, including civilians on the battlefield, more complex scenarios, and greater emphasis on SOF [special operations forces] within the limitations of the simulations.”<sup>51</sup> Like the previously mentioned CTCs, BCTP developed the capability to conduct pre-deployment MRXs for large tactical units, but the primary focus remained on high to mid-intensity warfighting exercises.

The standard rotation for a warfighter exercise is a two-day deployment exercise, two days of back-briefs and seven days of “decisive combat operations” for a corps, five days for a division.<sup>52</sup> The exercise usually consists of an attack or defense for the first 48-72 hours followed by an AAR, and a 24-hour change of mission. The rotational unit then conducts another attack or defense and concludes with a final AAR.<sup>53</sup>

By 2000, the NTC had also incorporated some of the facets of OOTW into its rotations but retained its traditional combat focus without the requirement to conduct MRXs. The standard model for a NTC rotation, used by all active component rotational brigades, was 19 days. A unit deployed and conducted reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) for the first five days, conducted force-on-force high-intensity combat for the next nine days, and then culminated the rotation with two live-fire exercises for the final five days. Units conducted

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<sup>51</sup>Fontenot, Degan, and Tohn, *On Point*, 1: 15.

<sup>52</sup>Department of the Army Training and Doctrine Command, TRADOC REG 350-50-3, Battle Command Training Program (Fort Monroe, VA: 2002), E-1.

<sup>53</sup>Combat Training Center Directorate, *Combat Training Center (CTC) Program Handbook* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 2003), 7.

limited stability tasks primarily during RSOI, but once the force-on-force phase of the rotation began, offense and defense were the units' focus. With minor modifications, the model remained virtually unchanged until late summer 2003. This was well after the adoption of FM 3-0 and its operational concept of full spectrum operations in 2001. For U.S. based heavy units, the NTC reinforced the culture that largely ignored or downplayed OOTW and stability operations on a regular basis.

The Army regulations covering the CTC Program, such as AR 350-50 (January 2003), also contributed to the culture. Here, the Army officially downplays the importance of MRXs (and their associated tasks) compared to standard rotations. "The CTC Program does not fund mission rehearsal exercises, and they are not a substitute for a CTC rotation."<sup>54</sup> This document goes on to state that the Army will "explore" strategies and scenarios "which support full-spectrum operations." Operations occurring in Afghanistan and Iraq have provided the Army's CTCs with ample research material to "explore" those scenarios.

## **Current CTC Focus**

Just as the Army identified shortfalls with its doctrine and implemented immediate corrections, the CTC Program has implemented numerous changes since the opening stages of OIF. The changes incorporated by the CTCs in recent years have been dramatic and occurring at a faster rate than ever before. Perhaps the greatest change made by the CTC Program was to shift its focus to the mission rehearsal exercise.

The MCTCs have made the most obvious changes. Since the U.S.'s involvement in OEF and OIF, the MCTCs have incorporated major modifications in their scenarios and training environment. The first change is that the majority of the rotations at the MCTCs are now MRXs;

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<sup>54</sup>Department of the Army, *AR 350-50*, 2.



therefore, the scenarios reflect events that units are likely to see during their deployments. As a result, units now experience the simultaneous nature of Army operations; the rotations are more adequately reflecting the concept of full spectrum operations. According to General William Wallace, the former commander of V Corps during OIF 1 and current commander of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC),

One day you'll be kicking down doors and the next handing out Band-Aids. And some days you'll be kicking down doors and handing out Band-Aids on the other side.<sup>55</sup>

Similarly, emphasis has shifted away from the use of kinetic options, just as units find during their "real-world" deployments. To facilitate these scenarios, the MCTCs have adjusted the training environment to mimic those conditions as much as possible. The centers have added complexity to the training terrain by adding numerous "villages" and urban areas and tunnel/cave complexes. Likewise, the MCTCs stress the human dimension, associated with cultural awareness and the use of interpreters, by using hundreds of Arab and Farsi speaking role players to replicate media, locals, insurgents, and host nation security forces.<sup>56</sup>

In addition to the focus on MRXs, the NTC modified its standard rotation to reflect full spectrum operations more provide ne adequately. In the summer 2005, the NTC conducted a rotation that began with brigade level offensive operations against a convention mechanized threat force and then transitioned to stability operations to maintain the regional peace just won.<sup>57</sup>

The BCTP has made similar changes as the MCTCs. Here, the number one priority has changed to providing mission rehearsal exercises for units preparing for deployment to OIF and

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<sup>55</sup>Donna Miles, "Wartime Footing Shapes Army Training" American Forces Press Service (2004).

<sup>56</sup>Gary Sheftick, "CTC Innovations Prep Units for Iraq, Afghanistan," Army News Service (2005).

<sup>57</sup>Doug Guttormsen, interview by author, Fort Leavenworth, KS., 11 November 2006.

OEF.<sup>58</sup> Just as for its Warfighting Exercises, MRXs are “principally a simulation driven exercise,” but here, the BCTP relies more on a Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) and experts in the associated region to cessary training challenges.<sup>59</sup>

## **CTC Conclusions**

The CTC Program plays a major role in embedding the Army’s doctrine into the force, as well as molding its ethos. During the 1980s and 90s, the CTCs trained units to fight the doctrine of AirLand Battle. The emphasis of the program was on the proper application of combat power and the synchronization of battlefield operating systems to defeat the opposing force. As the Army experienced new challenges in the 1990s, (i.e. the Balkans) the CTCs adjusted to prepare units for the different environment, but all the while, they maintained their focus on warfighting. Since the beginning of the Global War on Terror, most notably after OIF 1, the centers have made numerous changes to replicate the contemporary environment. Rotations provide units with scenarios that reinforce the stability aspects within the full spectrum operations concept. MRXs have allowed units to train current doctrine, as well as new techniques and procedure, and greatly facilitated a shared vision of how the Army fights. These CTC changes coupled with the doctrinal changes detailed in the previous section, demonstrate how the Army is assessing its shortfalls and adapting to realign its doctrine and “tactical culture.”

Although the latest changes made by the CTCs, along with experiences in OIF and OEF, have undoubtedly changed the Army’s perspective on full spectrum operations, the Army must also be wary of overcorrecting. Going back to Dörner’s concept of “repair service behavior,” the Army must not shift its training focus so much that it loses its ability to dominate rivals at the

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<sup>58</sup>Deputy Commanding General for Combined Arms, *BCTP EXDIR Guidance* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 2005), 2.

<sup>59</sup>Deputy Commanding General for Combined Arms, *BCTP EXDIR Guidance*, 3.

high end of the spectrum of conflict. The ethos of the Army required adjustment to prosecute current operations, but the need to train stability tasks must not overshadow the other two Army operations. MRXs are appropriate for units preparing to deploy into a known operating environment (i.e. Iraq or Afghanistan), but the CTCs should implement rotations that stress the full spectrum of operations (similar to the one executed in 2005). Division commanders' training objectives, as always, will drive this new rotation model. However, the new paradigm will reinforce the doctrine and ethos required to implement the hard fought lessons concerning the requirement to rapidly transition between each of the three Army operations of offense, defense, and stability.

Unfortunately, V Corps did not benefit from these lessons in its planning and execution of OIF I. The corps leadership approached OIF with the cultural bias propagated by AirLand Battle and their previous CTC experiences. A case study of V Corps, and its subordinate divisions, OIF train-up and execution demonstrates the problems caused by unclear and misaligned doctrine, training, and culture.

## V CORPS (2003) CASE STUDY

This case study focuses on aspects of the planning, training, and execution of V Corps and its subordinate divisions leading up to the initiation of OIF and through the decisive operations ending 1 May 2003. In each area (planning, training, and execution), this case study examines how effectively the concept of full spectrum operations was incorporated, and how units dealt with the transitions between offense/defense and stability operations.

### Planning and Preparing for OIF

Beginning soon after 9/11, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) and Third Army, serving as the combined forces land component command (CFLCC) in the CENTCOM area of responsibility (AOR), identified V Corps as the Army's major unit responsible for planning and executing the Army operations in Iraq, if the need arose. V Corps, stationed at Heidelberg, Germany, immediately began planning for possible combat operations. As early as October 2001, V Corps worked in parallel with Third Army to develop plans based on a range of military requirements that they expected to encounter in the region. "These plans, VIGILANT GUARDIAN and CONPLAN WOOD, were designed to thwart any Iraqi offensive action toward Kuwait or the Shiite population of southern Iraq."<sup>60</sup> Both plans were offensive in nature and included seizing terrain inside Iraq, but neither plan incorporated a ground attack on Baghdad or the overthrow of the Iraqi regime.<sup>61</sup>

During this timeframe, V Corps continued to participate in its scheduled BCTP training events, known as Exercise Urgent Victory 2002. This exercise began with the traditional

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<sup>60</sup>Fontenot, Degan, and Tohn, *On Point*, 2: 45.

<sup>61</sup>Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 20.

planning seminars and was executed in Germany in March 2002. V Corps' permanently assigned units, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division and 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division, were the only major subordinate maneuver units to participate. The exercise was a standard BCTP rotation focused on decisive ground operations in the Persian Gulf region and using the fictional countries of Blueland, Greenland, Orangeland, and Redland.<sup>62</sup>

Along with regularly scheduled training, V Corps also participated in exercises with Third Army. During Exercise Lucky Warrior, the V Corps commander and staff worked with their Marine counterparts in the First Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) under the command and control of Third Army. This exercise focused primarily on building teamwork and acquainting each unit with the others doctrine, capabilities, and procedures.<sup>63</sup>

As the political events in 2002 developed, V Corps' planning reflected the reality that the U.S. objective would likely be the overthrow of the regime in Baghdad. As with previous planning, the commander and planners worked closely with Third Army. By late 2002, V Corps was working on the various iterations of CFLCC's Operation Plan (OPLAN) COBRA II, the campaign plan to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein. The different versions of COBRA II varied primarily on the sequencing and the overall allocation of units.

The number of forces required to conduct the operation was the single most important variable around which all of the variants revolved. The end was never in question - remove the regime; but the specific method, or way, required to achieve this strategic goal was the subject of contentious debate. Without agreement on the way - simultaneous or sequential - there rarely was agreement on the amount of force or means required. Yet, correctly balancing mass, surprise, and sustained operations kept the two (way and means) entirely interrelated. The amount of available force affected the proposed course of action, which invited reevaluations of force requirements... In the end,

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<sup>62</sup>Global Securities, *Urgent Victory*, on line at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/urgent-victory.htm>; accessed 03 January 2007.

<sup>63</sup>Fontenot, Degan, and Tohn, *On Point*, 2: 53-56.

CENTCOM and CFLCC successfully concluded *major combat operations* with the forces allocated (emphasis mine).<sup>64</sup>

In the end, the division-sized units assigned to V Corps for the decisive combat phase of the campaign were: 1) 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized) from Fort Stewart, Georgia 2) 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault) from Fort Campbell, Kentucky 3) 82d Airborne Division (-) from Fort Bragg, North Carolina and 4) 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (Mechanized) from Fort Hood, Texas. As shown above, units' capability to conduct offense and defensive operations as part of decisive operations drove the force allocation; planners gave little consideration to the requirement for stability operations during and after major combat operations.

Once the Army identified the participating units, they each took part in V Corps' next major training events in preparation for the execution of OIF. The first major event was another BCTP driven exercise called Victory Scrimmage. During this exercise, V Corps used its actual task organization to "plan and execute *combat operations* (emphasis mine) using a corps battle simulation in computers against the Army's World-Class Opposing Force."<sup>65</sup> Through its facilitation of Victory Scrimmage, BCTP contributed to the units' teambuilding and understanding of certain aspects of the offensive maneuver plan, but did little to raise V Corps' awareness of the need for simultaneous and sequential stability operations.

As the campaign and subordinate plans developed, commanders at all levels began focusing on planning the difficult operations associated with the expected combat in urban areas, particularly Baghdad. In conducting this planning, they and their staffs used recent U.S. experiences in urban operations (Mogadishu, Brcko, and Port-au-Prince), and other historical examples (Grozny, Hue, and Stalingrad) to provide insights on the tactics, techniques, and procedures that worked and those that did not. The recent U.S. examples provided ample stability

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<sup>64</sup>Fontenot, Degan, and Tohn, *On Point*, 2: 46.

<sup>65</sup>Fontenot, Degan, and Tohn, *On Point*, 2: 55.

considerations, while the others demonstrated the magnitude of combat and destruction to be expected. From these examples,

Army leaders and units anticipated that urban combat would be characterized by a series of transitions: battles and engagements followed by security operations and humanitarian assistance. They realized that a successful engagement in a city or town had to be followed by successful transition to postcombat operations...Few anticipated the frequent transitions from major combat to support operations and back again.<sup>66</sup>

The lack of anticipation of “frequent transitions” demonstrates how the Army understood, but did not fully internalize the concept of full spectrum operations. The resulting V Corps plan attempted to mitigate the carnage expected in the urban areas on the route to Baghdad by invoking plans reminiscent of those associated with the European fights anticipated by AirLand Battle in the Cold War. During the attack to Baghdad, V Corps would bypass and isolate the major urban areas and only enter them once the Iraqi Regime had fallen. In this way, the plan basically ignored the stability issues identified.

In response to the Army’s concern surrounding the expected “combat in the complex and urban terrain of Iraq,” BCTP adapted.<sup>67</sup> In addition to the simulation-based exercises, BCTP added an additional operations group within its structure. BCTP then directed two of its operations groups to develop classes and conduct seminars in urban operations for V Corps. Here again, stability requirements were identified, but the focus stayed on the offense and defense oriented issues.

Just as V Corps continually planned and trained for combat, so did its subordinate divisions. While the divisions’ headquarters planned in parallel with V Corps and trained with the BCTP in V Corps exercises, their brigades continued to rotate through the MCTCs. Moreover, just like BCTP, the MCTCs adapted their training to support the units.

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 7: .

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 2: .

From April 2002 until the start of OIF, four of the six heavy brigades (two from each heavy division) allocated to V Corps completed rotations at the National Training Center. Three of the four iterations were standard rotations described in the previous section. In October 2002, NTC slightly modified the rotation for 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>d</sup> IN DIV to prepare it for its expected participation in OIF. The changes included a gap-crossing scenario, an attack to seize a causeway and an offense exclusive live-fire exercise. In addition, the NTC also increased its use of guerrilla forces (the Sonoman-Coronan Revolutionary Front Forces known as “scruffs”) throughout the force-on-force portion of the rotation. As highlighted by Colonel Grimsley, these changes proved beneficial for preparing the unit for actions against conventional and unconventional forces. However, they focused entirely on the execution of offensive operations. The NTC failed to train the transition between offense and stability operations that the units would soon experience.

In 2002, while the brigades from the 101<sup>st</sup> and 82<sup>d</sup> Airborne Divisions focused on Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan they received word to prepare for OIF. Of the four light brigades dedicated to V Corps, only the 3<sup>d</sup> Brigade of the 101<sup>st</sup> conducted a MCTC rotation between April 2002 until the start of OIF. In similar fashion to the modifications made at NTC, JRTC changed aspects of this rotation to prepare the unit for expected operations.

The first change was that the battalions of the 3<sup>d</sup> Brigade each cycled through JRTC sequentially rather than together. This adaptation facilitated division’s deployment preparations at Fort Campbell. The battalions felt little effects of this adaptation, but the brigade commander and staff, in place during each of the three rotations, received three times the training time to improve their command and control systems and procedures. Another significant change for this brigade’s training event was the elimination of defensive operations from the scenario. More importantly, the training scenario reduced JRTC’s traditional focus on security and stability tasks. Instead, the focus for the brigade was on forced-entry, search and attack, and deliberate attack missions to prepare the brigade for high-intensity offensive operations. As with NTC, the



training at JRTC effectively prepared Soldiers for the offensive operations seen in Phase III of OIF, but did little to prepare them for the requirement to stabilize areas during and after these offensive operations.

The CTCs did not reinforce the concept of full spectrum operations. The requirement to conduct stability operations was all but ignored; therefore, the need for transition planning was not demonstrated. Instead, the CTCs reinforced the warfighting ethos that would continually blind unit leaders to the realities of their environment throughout the operation.

As OIF drew near, and units deployed, training continued. The training done in theater had much more immediacy than that conducted at the CTCs. Units were now focused exclusively on the task at hand, attacking into Iraq and closing with and destroying the enemy.

### **Execution (20 March through 1 May 2003)**

On 20 March 2001, V Corps began its attack into Iraq. According to the plan, 3<sup>d</sup> IN DIV led V Corps' attack up Highway 1 then onto Highway 8 and eventually through the Karbala Gap to the southern approach of Baghdad. During this attack, the plan called for 3<sup>d</sup> IN DIV to bypass the major urban areas of An Nasiriyah, As Samawah, An Najaf, and Karbala as they made their attack north. At the same time, the 101<sup>st</sup> ABN DIV was to use its aviation capability to position itself south of Baghdad in preparation for the eventual urban fight. The 4<sup>th</sup> IN DIV, originally planned to attack from the north through Turkey, was moving towards Kuwait, but not yet available. Additionally, the 82<sup>nd</sup> ABN DIV with its 2<sup>nd</sup> BDE was retained by CFLCC as the operational reserve.

The V Corps commander recognized that his lines of communication (LOCs) were exposed and that the cities along his route would eventually need to be stabilized. However, the assessment of the expected Iraqi response to the invasion (the U.S. seen as liberators) led him to conclude that his limited assets should be preserved for the expected fight in the vicinity of Baghdad.

Events on the ground quickly forced V Corps to modify its plan. First at An Nasiriyah and then at As Samawah, 3<sup>d</sup> IN DIV realized that the initial assessments about the Iraqis were off the mark. The division was facing less of a threat from conventional Iraqi forces and instead found itself dealing with significant irregular forces operating from within the bypassed cities. In As Samawah in particular, where U.S. units inadvertently entered the city, the irregular resistance was especially fierce. As the 3<sup>d</sup> IN DIV continued north, similar experiences around An Najaf caused V Corps to request the release of the 82<sup>nd</sup> ABN DIV from CFLCC and to redirect the 101<sup>st</sup> ABN DIV to secure the lines of communication and begin clearing the cities.

Upon entering the cities, the divisions experienced many of the previous concerns identified surrounding urban warfare. Combat, of course, was brutal, but since the urban fight occurred amidst the population, the need for transitions described in the full spectrum operations concept were experienced first hand.

Forces had to seamlessly transition to stability operations and support operations for the areas already under control...virtually every element of Iraqi civil society--from police to fire to basic utilities and food distribution--dissolved with the defeat of the Iraqi army and paramilitary forces...The populace also drove the requirement for rolling transition because their needs could not wait for a tidy resolution of combat operations...At the risk of winning the battle but losing the campaign to liberate Iraqi civilians, the local commanders were torn between their fights and providing resources--soldiers, time, and logistics--to meet the civilian needs.<sup>68</sup>

The lack of preparation, planning, and training for the “rolling transition” complicated matters further. Units were inconsistent in their approaches and confusion inevitably ensued.

By 4 April 2001, V Corps had fought its way from Kuwait and was now positioned to begin isolating Baghdad in coordination with the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Force (1 MEF). The corps’ commitment of the two light divisions had greatly improved the LOC security, but had also seriously limited the forces immediately available for the attack on Baghdad.

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<sup>68</sup>Fontenot, Degan, and Tohn, *On Point*, 5: 254.

The plan originally called for the encirclement of Baghdad followed by limited attacks into the city to seize key objectives to facilitate the fall of Saddam's regime. Commanders and planners recognized the possibility of the need to conduct large-scale attacks involving house-by-house, block-by-block clearing of the enemy, but this type of operation was to be only a last resort. As with previous aspects of V Corps' plan, events on the ground facilitated changes.

On 7 April, the 2<sup>d</sup> BDE of 3<sup>d</sup> IN DIV conducted the second of two raids into the heart of Baghdad. Initially designed to test Iraqi defenses and determine how enemy forces would defend the city, the brigade's final raid morphed into an attack to seize symbolic government facilities and demonstrate U.S. capabilities. The operation resulted in an unexpected crumbling of significant resistance and caused the immediate downfall of the regime. By 10 April, Baghdad was under U.S. control.

Up until this point, V Corps had focused almost exclusively on offensive operations. This focus had achieved stunning successes, but the corps' lack of consideration for combining and sequencing "offense, defense, stability, and support operations to accomplish the mission" caused it to lose momentum and surrender the initiative to the budding insurgent forces.<sup>69</sup>

V Corps' lack of consideration for the operational concept of full spectrum operations directly contributed to its lack of security for its LOCs in the initial days for the operation. The plan to bypass An Nasiriyah, As Samawah, An Najaf, and Karbala instead of securing and stabilizing them sequentially resulted in V Corps redirecting the 101<sup>st</sup> and 82<sup>d</sup> divisions and committing them to unplanned operations, thus taking them out of the force pool required to secure Baghdad.

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<sup>69</sup>Department of the Army, *FM 3-0*, 1-16.

In addition to troop shortages, the lack of planning and training for stability operations hindered 3<sup>rd</sup> IN DIV as it attempted to secure Baghdad following the fall of the regime and set the conditions for future unrest. Here, guidance for securing critical infrastructure was vague and the rules of engagement (ROE) placed on the soldiers did not adequately address the new situation. As authors such as David Phillips and Aaron Glantz chronicle in their books, *Losing Iraq* and *How America Lost Iraq*, Iraqi civilians based their opinions of the U.S. on the actions observed in the opening days of the occupation. Phillips describes the events following the fall of Baghdad as chaotic and detrimental to the overall U.S. mission.

Lacking instructions with no one in charge, U.S. troops simply stepped aside when the looting began. Among all of Iraq's facilities, field commanders protected the oil ministry only, an action which, of course, reinforced perceptions that the United States was after Iraq's oil.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to the looting and violence, the inability to restore essential services led many Iraqis to further question U.S. motives.

The 4<sup>th</sup> IN DIV's arrival is another demonstration of the lack of stability planning, as well as the cultural propensity to focus on combat operations. Here, V Corps gave 4<sup>th</sup> IN DIV the mission to "attack north, seize the Iraqi military complex at Taji airfield at Balad, and then advance to Tikrit as quickly as possible."<sup>71</sup> The division retained this mission even though it did not begin movement from Kuwait until 13 April (three days after the fall of Baghdad). The mission to "attack north" was a contradiction to the Marine perception, preparing to transfer Tikrit to the 4<sup>th</sup> IN DIV, that the post-conflict phase of OIF had already started.<sup>72</sup> As a result, the security situation obtained by the Marines in Tikrit deteriorated soon after the 4<sup>th</sup> IN DIV assumed control.

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<sup>70</sup>David Phillips, *Losing Iraq: Inside the Postwar Reconstruction Fiasco*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 134.

<sup>71</sup>Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 447

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

Not all units suffered from a lack of full spectrum internalization. As previously noted, during the urban operations in An Najaf and Karbala, the 101<sup>st</sup> ABN DIV effectively employed the concept of full spectrum operations and made notable initial successes. Of particular note, by recognizing the need to transition from offense to stability operations, a battalion commander peacefully diffused a crisis with Shia civilians protecting a mosque. The resolution eventually led to an end in the fighting in An Najaf when “the Grand Ayatollah Sistani issued a decree (fatwa) calling on the people of Najaf to welcome Hughes' soldiers.”<sup>73</sup> Similarly, when V Corps directed the 101<sup>st</sup> ABN DIV to secure and oversee Mosul, the division immediately recognized the need to transition and within a short time stabilized the city and surrounding area.<sup>74</sup>

## **Case Study Conclusions**

With few exceptions, V Corps' efforts in the opening months of OIF demonstrated the Army's propensity to focus on combat and to selectively ignore or marginalize stability requirements. Here, execution reflected preparation. The training scenarios presented by the CTCs all focused on the skills required for conducting offense and defense in major combat operations. Even though BCTP, NTC, and JRTC all adjusted their scenarios specifically for V Corps, none focused on the requirement to transition to stability operations. Likewise, the corps and division plans were reminiscent of those associated with AirLand Battle; they focused on achieving a decisive engagement against a mechanized threat by exploiting mobility and avoiding the urban areas. The plans did not reflect the Army's concept of full spectrum operations.

As conditions changed, the units adapted to the tactical requirements, but the incomplete planning and training caused Soldiers to stand by as civil order evaporated. Consequently, V

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<sup>73</sup>Fontenot, Degan, and Tohn, *On Point*, 5: 271.

<sup>74</sup>Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 453.

Corps potentially missed a window of opportunity to ‘finish decisively’ as it haphazardly transitioned to post-‘offensive’ operations.

The Army published FM 3-0 and its operational concept of full spectrum operations two years prior to the start of OIF. However, by reviewing the planning, training and execution of V Corps and its units, one can easily see that the Army’s practitioners had not internalized the full spectrum doctrine.

## CONCLUSION

The Army must embrace the operational concept of full spectrum operations if it is to remain an effective tool for the U.S. to use in the Global War on Terror. The ethos that encouraged the single-minded focus on warfighting served the Army well during the Cold War, but the days of preparing and training the Army to fight a known enemy with a known doctrinal pattern are gone. The Soldiers of today's Army must be prepared to conduct a wide variety of tasks to allow units to quickly transition between the three principle operations of offense, defense, and stability across the entire spectrum of conflict. Just as importantly, today's leaders must understand difficulty associated with conducting these varied tasks and be able to plan the required transitions effectively.

Following the Cold War, the Army struggled to define its role in the new operating environment. Many leaders blindly held to the concepts put forth in the doctrine of AirLand Battle and wrongly believed the Army's sole responsibility was to "fight and win our Nation's wars." AirLand Battle Doctrine did much to improve the capability of the U.S. Army, but it was narrowly focused on defeating a peer competitor, and did little to address the realities confronting the U.S. in the 1990s. To address the inevitable requirements, but to maintain the warfighting focus, in 1993, the Army added a new category to its range of military options. The result was operations other than war. The addition did little to change the cultural mindset. Additionally, the combat training centers, with the possible exception of JRTC, reinforced the primacy of warfighting and avoided the "other than" possibilities.

In response to the doctrinal void highlighted by operations in Somalia, Haiti, and the Balkans, the Army introduced the radically new concept of full spectrum operations in 2001. The goal was to solidify the Army's thinking about its future roles and employment. Even though leaders throughout the force understood that the Army would be called upon to conduct

operations across the spectrum of conflict, many maintained the tactical culture that highlighted offense and defense but downplayed stability operations.

This mindset, the warfighting ethos, was the predominant reason for V Corps' inadequate planning for Operation Iraqi Freedom. The events surrounding V Corps' attack and subsequent occupation of Iraq demonstrated the validity of the full spectrum operations concept and the consequences facing those who chose to marginalize it. In order to learn from V Corps' experience, the Army should take steps to strengthen the Army ethos by correcting inconsistencies in doctrine and adjusting the CTC Program.

### **Correct Inconsistencies in Doctrine**

Current doctrine, even with the updates, is not perfect; fortunately, it does not have to be. As stated by Brigadier General (Retired) Huba Wass de Czege: "No doctrine is perfect, but getting it 'right enough' is strategically important."<sup>75</sup> FM 3-0 and its supporting doctrine provide a valuable framework for understanding the operational environment and provide operational and tactical guidance for how commanders employ Army forces. A rapid doctrinal review process to clarify disconnects will assist in getting doctrine "right enough." The Army must maintain this focus and strive to keep its doctrine relevant and balanced to deal with the operating environment it is in as well as one it anticipates for the future.

In the process of improving doctrine, the Army should refrain from creating new manuals and instead look at condensing key documents. Most notably, to eliminate the separation between tactical and stability operations, the Army should combine FM 3-90 and FM 3-07. In addition, doctrine should expand FM 3-90's model for describing transitions to cover the key

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<sup>75</sup>Huba Wass de Czege, *Lessons from the Past: Making the Army's Doctrine "Right Enough"* Today Landpower Essay no.06-2. (Arlington, VA: AUSA Institute of Land Warfare, 2006), 1.



considerations commanders face when transitioning to/from stability operations. These actions will correct inconsistencies in doctrine and lead to common understanding of how the Army conducts operations across the spectrum of conflict.

### **Adjust CTC Paradigm to Align with Full Spectrum Operations**

Along with doctrine, the Combat Training Center Program also needs to continue to adapt. Mission rehearsal exercises have allowed units to train current stability doctrine, as well as newly identified techniques and procedures, and greatly facilitated a shared vision of how the Army fights. CTCs should continue using MRXs to ensure units' preparation for specific operations, but the CTCs must not lose the capability to address other anticipated conflicts. The skills required to synchronize the combined arms fight while operating in the high end of the conflict spectrum are difficult to obtain and are extremely perishable. The 2005 NTC scenario offers a model for the future. Current operational tempo dictates mission focused training, but tough calls must be made to ensure that the Army is ready to "attack or defend" when called to do so. In the new rotational model, the CTCs must reinforce the requirement to rapidly transition between operations as the tactical conditions change. This will shape the Army ethos in a direction consistent with the operational concept of full spectrum operations.

In closing, the Army's doctrine and combat training centers have not always achieved their intended goal of providing the Army a common understanding of the operational environment and a shared vision of how the Army operates in that environment. The good news is that the Army continues to adapt. The Army's ethos led to its success in Desert Storm and the initial phases of OIF. The Army built this ethos with sound doctrine and years of training. The recommendations provided will establish conditions in doctrine and training to instill an Army ethos fully compatible with the proven concept of full spectrum operations.

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