



Field Manual 3-07, Stability Operations: UPSHIFTING THE ENGINE OF CHANGE

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PHOTO: SGT Matt Radcliffe, 3d Special Troops Battalion, 3d Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, and an Iraqi Army soldier from the 42d Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, provide security at an Iraqi army patrol base in the Sadr City District of Baghdad, Iraq, 19 April 2008. (U.S. Air Force, TSGT Adrian Cadiz)

THE RELEASE OF Field Manual (FM) 3-07, *Stability Operations*, in the coming months will acknowledge and stress the criticality of the “whole-of-government” approach essential to achieving sustainable success in an era of persistent conflict. This approach is the key to operating in the uncertain future before us. The new doctrine will also represent a number of important firsts. It will be the first stability doctrine—service or joint—to answer the immediate needs of the force already actively engaged in ongoing operations. It will be the first doctrine of any type to undergo a comprehensive joint, service, interagency, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental review. It will also mark the first time any service has attempted to capture and define a national approach to conflict transformation in doctrine, and to do so with the broad support of the agencies, organizations, and institutions that share in that approach.

The publication of FM 3-07 will fill a critical void in our knowledge base at a key moment in the history of our Army and our Nation. At a time when we find ourselves engaged simultaneously in the Middle East, the Far East, and Latin America, the new manual will provide the intellectual underpinnings needed to deal comprehensively with the uncertainty, chance, and friction so common to operations conducted among the people.

A Brave New World

The forces of globalization and the emergence of regional economic and political powers are fundamentally reshaping the world we thought we understood. Future cultural and ethnocentric conflicts are likely to be exacerbated by increased global competition for shrinking natural resources, teeming urban populations with rising expectations, unrestrained technological diffusion, and rapidly accelerating climate change. The future is not one of major battles and engagements fought by armies on battlefields devoid of population; instead, the course of conflict will be decided by forces operating among the people of the world. Here, the margin of victory will be measured in far different terms than the wars of our past. The allegiance, trust, and confidence of populations will be the final arbiters of success.

America actually possesses a rich and proud history of success and learning in wars among the people—what we recognize today as stability operations.

However, from our colonial roots, when Congress appointed military commissioners to negotiate peace treaties and land purchases with Native American tribes, to our contemporary experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, our most enduring tradition has been an inability or unwillingness to institutionalize the lessons of those experiences. In a cruel twist of fate, the answers we so desperately sought in recent years were collecting dust on bookshelves half a world away; the distant lessons of a remarkably successful Vietnam-era civil-military program sat largely forgotten, save by those few who had lived those experiences.

CORDS: A Classic Approach to a Modern Challenge

At the height of the Vietnam War, we faced an enemy who hid among the people. That enemy had evolved from the one first confronted by American ground forces in 1965 to become a complex mix of guerrilla forces, political cadre, and conventional regulars. In a few short years, the enemy had adapted, changing from a strategy focused on main-force engagement to one that stressed insurgency, guerrilla tactics, and, most important, patience. The enemy had learned the hard-fought lessons of jungle warfare against a better equipped, technologically advanced opponent. By the time General Creighton W. Abrams assumed command of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) in the summer of 1968, the enemy had evolved, and so had the war.

Two years earlier, General William C. Westmoreland, Abrams's predecessor as MACV commander, had recognized that a fundamental shift in effort would be necessary to achieve any lasting degree of success. Ultimately, that success could only be attained through deliberate integration of the various political, military, security, and economic programs ongoing in South Vietnam. To that end, President Johnson signed National Security Action Memorandum 362, *Responsibility for U.S. Role in Pacification (Revolutionary Development)*, on 9 May 1967, thus establishing the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program. Through CORDS, the efforts of the Departments of State and Defense were integrated under a "single manager concept" that empowered Ambassador Robert W. Komer as the

deputy for pacification within MACV. Komer's appointment effectively unified the civil-military effort in South Vietnam.

The CORDS program leveraged an unprecedented ability to project significant manpower and resources into the Vietnamese countryside. It targeted the growing insurgency at the local level while focusing on the security and well-being of the people themselves. By 1969, with over 7,600 advisors assigned to pacification teams and economic assistance flowing into key programs and the provinces, CORDS began to hit its stride. The program's advisory effort was instrumental in fielding significant numbers of trained Regional and Popular Forces, which maintained security in villages and hamlets. USAID land reforms orchestrated through CORDS were accompanied by an economic revival spurred by the reestablishment of effective rural administration.

But for all its success, CORDS was too little, too late. Limited in scope, it was not engineered to bolster the legitimacy and effectiveness of the central government, a need critical to consolidating and sustaining the transitory effects of programs at the local level. Moreover, even as the pacification effort achieved broad success across South Vietnam and, by all indications, brought the Viet Cong insurgency to its knees, American popular support for the war had evaporated. The national will necessary to maintain the momentum gained through CORDS could not be regained; the initiative was lost and so, eventually, was the war.

In the aftermath of Vietnam, we failed to capture and integrate the most important lessons of the war into our training and education. We turned away from the bitter experiences of that time and left behind a rich body of lessons learned, especially the tactics, techniques, and procedures necessary to conduct successful counterinsurgency. The remarkable insights concerning the necessity and efficacy of unity of effort would never be institutionalized in doctrine or law, and the lessons of that experience would soon be lost to time and a far more insidious threat to national security, the Soviet Union.

Afghanistan and Iraq: New Versions of an Old Song

Winning wars is easier than winning the peace. This became abundantly clear following combat

operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, where initial, overwhelming victories against organized enemy forces were not consolidated in the immediate aftermath of conflict. In Afghanistan, remnants of the decimated Taliban and Al-Qaeda were able to withdraw across the porous border with Pakistan, from where they vowed to continue the fight. A seemingly glacial coalition response to the needs of the Afghan people allowed the Taliban to reconstitute and reemerge as active, aggressive opponents of the government. In Iraq, de-Ba'athification policy and demobilization of the national army sowed the seeds of a popular insurgency more complex than any in our history. The coalition failure to quickly contain rampant looting became symptomatic of a lethargic and disorganized approach to civil administration, an approach that left vast swaths of the population without dependable power, health care, and basic civic services. Unemployment, black marketing, and corruption soared while the economies collapsed.

In the wake of *shock and awe*, we faced disenfranchised populations neither shocked by our victory nor awed by our presence. We failed them in many ways, and much of our focus remained on applying the lethal and destructive aspects of our military might rather than the nonlethal, constructive capabilities so vital to success in operations conducted among the people. Our inability to exploit time effectively ceded the initiative to a course of events already spinning out of control. We won the war, but were quickly losing the peace.

As the Iraq insurgency continued to evolve, haunting parallels from South Vietnam grew difficult to ignore. Then, the threat came from a dangerous combination of guerrillas, political cadre, and North Vietnamese regulars. Now, the threat reflects a complex mix of outside foreign influences epitomized by Al-Qaeda irregular forces, sectarian militias, and terrorist extremists supported by a “third wave” of self-recruited fundamentalists who exploit the information domain to garner additional support and sympathy for their adopted cause.¹ However, in sharp contrast to the jungles of Southeast Asia, this insurgency was spawned in one of the world’s most volatile cultural fault zones.

Doctrine: The Engine of Change

As the insurgency in Iraq began to gain momentum in 2004, the Army’s leadership recognized the need for a different approach. But without a shared recognition of this need by the various agencies of the U.S. government, devising that approach would prove challenging. An important step in the process of building that interagency understanding came when Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England signed Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 3000.05 in November 2005, fundamentally changing the military’s concept of, and approach to, stability operations. No longer secondary to combat operations, stability operations were recognized as an essential capability on par with the traditional destructive cornerstones of military strength, offense and defense. The directive emphasized that stability operations were no longer secondary to combat operations:

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 comparable to combat operations and be explicitly addressed and integrated across all Department of Defense (DOD) activities including doctrine, organizations, training, education, exercises, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities, and planning.²

As stability operations gained in emphasis and focus over the next two years, the Army became the first of the services to institutionalize the tenets of DODD 3000.05 in doctrine.

A new generation far removed from the Vietnam experience understood that war’s lessons and the need for change, and it initiated efforts to resuscitate a counterinsurgency doctrine relegated to obscurity for more than three decades. The publication of FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, in 2006 launched a doctrinal revival that resounded across the force.³ Counterinsurgency became the coin of the realm, and the hard-won lessons of the Vietnam War gained a new foothold in the twenty-first century. Even as the Army’s new counterinsurgency manual gained popularity with the military forces of other nations, a single vignette on the CORDS program from that manual revived a memory of another time and another place, where effective interagency integration—

a true whole-of-government approach—offered the best solution to insurgency and best hope for lasting success.

While FM 3-24 drove changes that proved critical in stemming the tide of the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, we have learned since that any doctrine focused solely on a narrow band of activities cannot begin to address the seemingly insurmountable challenge of rebuilding a fragile state. Stability operations are lengthy endeavors, and they must be approached with a focus toward long-term sustainment rather than short-term gains. They aim not necessarily to reduce the military presence quickly, but to achieve broader national policy goals that extend beyond the objectives of military operations. The more effective those military efforts are at setting the conditions that facilitate the efforts of the other instruments of national power, the more likely it is that a long-term commitment of the military will not be required.

With the February 2008 publication of FM 3-0, the Army formally elevated stability operations to coequal status with offensive and defensive operations, thus acknowledging that the effects attained through stability tasks are just as important, if not more so, to securing enduring peace and stability in areas torn by conflict. In effect, the Army recognized that shaping the civil situation through stability operations is often more important to lasting success than winning battles and engagements.⁴

In many ways, this recognition reflected similar observations made by General Westmoreland years earlier, when he noted that offensive actions alone could not secure the future of South Vietnam. Nevertheless, Westmoreland chose to pursue a strategy of attrition rather than leverage the constructive capabilities of his forces to launch a pacification campaign like the one that would prove so successful under General Creighton Abrams.⁵ Four decades after Westmoreland's departure from MACV, military and civilian leaders were relearning the same lesson he had ignored at the height of the Vietnam War.

This lesson—that forces “must address the civil situation directly and continuously” while simultaneously conducting combat operations against enemy forces—now forms the core of Army doctrine, the operational concept posited by FM 3-0.⁶ It is fundamental to full-spectrum operations.

FM 3-0 is our Army's “blueprint for an uncertain future.” It focuses on human solutions to the challenges of tomorrow, emphasizing that “Soldiers will consistently operate in and among the people of the world, conducting operations in an environment fundamentally human in character.”⁷ In this environment, the military must focus its efforts primarily on the local populace. These efforts—stability tasks—improve the people's safety, security, social well-being, and livelihoods. In a contemporary parallel to the CORDS program, they shape a whole-of-government approach that integrates interagency efforts toward a common goal.

The manual also sets the context for the broad definition of stability operations set forth by DOD:

Stability operations encompass various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, [and] provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief effort.⁸

Just as CORDS realized unity of effort through interagency integration, FM 3-0 forges unity of effort by directly linking the Army's primary stability tasks (establish civil security, establish civil control, restore essential services, support governance, and support economic and infrastructure development) with their complementary U.S. government stability sectors as set forth in the State Department's *Post-Conflict Reconstruction Essential Tasks* (see figure 1).⁹ This ensures that the execution of stability tasks is fundamentally linked to a broader interagency effort, fulfilling the spirit—if not the letter—of DODD 3000.05. FM 3-0 recognizes the effort required to fully implement the broad goals of the directive; it paves the way for further development of stability operations in doctrine and concepts.

Forging a Whole-of-Government Approach

FM 3-0, *Operations*, continued a doctrinal renaissance that is reverberating across the Army and setting in motion forces that will fundamentally alter our concept of stability operations. In turn, FM 3-07 will effect sweeping change in approach, knowledge, and

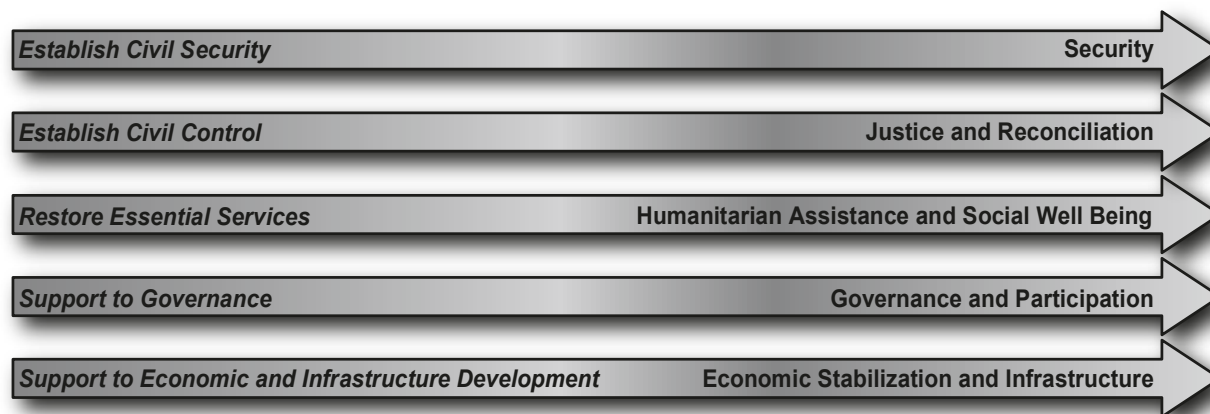


Figure 1. Linkage between Army Stability Tasks (left) and U.S. Government Stability Sectors (right).

understanding; when implemented, it will achieve the broad changes in doctrine so essential to establishing the cooperative, collaborative environment that enables the success of the other instruments of national power. Ultimately, FM 3-07 will be the driving force behind our ability to forge a whole-of-government approach to stability operations.

Today, the Army is undertaking the most comprehensive revision of stability operations doctrine it has ever attempted. Ultimately, it will publish not just a typical Army field manual, but a single-source, “how-to” guide for stability operations. FM 3-07, *Stability Operations*, will contain information that the joint force, sister services, interagency and intergovernmental partners, non-governmental community, and even the private sector can refer to and put to use. It will be the first such publication to thoroughly address the broad spectrum of activities required to conduct successful stability operations.

In the current conflicts, our inability to achieve interagency unity of effort, to forge a whole-of-government approach founded on shared understanding of a common goal, is the single most significant obstacle to our attaining sustainable, enduring success. *Unity of command* has long been central to exercising the military instrument of national power. More than just a principle of war, it is fundamental to coordinating the actions of all military forces, regardless of service, toward a single objective. In the absence of such command authority, leaders strive for *unity of effort* through coordination, negotiation, and consensus building. Appropriately resourcing and integrating the

diverse activities of all the instruments of national power—diplomatic, information, military, and economic—requires a collaborative environment in which individual agendas are subordinated to a common goal. Such is the challenge of achieving unity of effort.

We began writing FM 3-07 with the ambitious aim of developing doctrine that not only provides the intellectual underpinnings needed to leverage the constructive capabilities of the force, but also sets the foundation for unity of effort across all forces, agencies, and organizations involved. Such a goal is only attainable with the consent and support of those stakeholders, and gaining both requires investing time and patience to build trust and confidence among diverse and often divergent personalities. We began with just 12 months to achieve this goal. Time was a resource in short supply.

Writing and coordination proceeded along parallel lines of effort. The endeavor began in earnest in October 2007, after an agreement brought together the other government agencies and several nongovernmental organizations. This collaborative network facilitated the sharing of concepts, products, and lessons from a broad community of practice with a range of experience that spanned the spectrum of conflict. Although Army doctrine authors would serve as the lead writers, they worked with fundamentals and principles representing a substantial body of people and knowledge.

The new FM 3-07 places engagement and intervention activities on a spectrum (figure 2) adapted from the precepts presented in *Fragile States Strategy*, published by USAID in 2005. In



Figure 2. The Fragile-States Spectrum.

doing so, FM 3-07 aligns Army doctrine with the National Security Strategy, which addresses the threat to national interests posed by failed and failing states. The spectrum defines a state according to two quantifiable, related factors: the amount of violence within its borders, and the degree of normalcy otherwise apparent in the country and its government.

Intervention can occur at any point along the spectrum, regardless of the conditions of the operational environment. The state of conflict within the country may be irrelevant; what we are now concerned with primarily is the viability of the host-nation, i.e., Is this state on the verge of falling apart and falling prey to actors hostile to the United States? If it is, then our intervention is warranted.

As a heuristic, the fragile-states graphic is simple, but it provides leaders and planners a way to think about what an intervention in a particular state ought to look like. After gauging the conditions of an operational environment, planners can formulate an engagement methodology and then begin to consider what progress toward success might look like.

The graphic also underscores the importance of security. In his book, *Losing the Golden Hour*, former USAID Mission Director James Stephenson notes, “Security trumps everything. It does little good to build a school if parents are afraid to send their children to that school because they may not come home.”¹⁰

Stephenson further emphasizes the need to make quantifiable improvements in the security situation within the “golden hour”—that limited amount of time in which we enjoy the forbearance of the host-nation populace. Thus, we must plant the seeds for effective civil security and civil order *during*, not after, a conflict. The military instrument, with its unique expeditionary capabilities, is the sole U.S. agency with the ability to affect the golden hour *before* the hourglass tips.

In other words, the military can take decisive action before security collapses altogether and the civil situation completely deteriorates. The military can leverage both its coercive and its constructive capabilities to establish a safe and secure environment; promote reconciliation among local or regional adversaries; reestablish political, legal, social, and economic institutions; and facilitate the transition of responsibility to legitimate civilian authority. Military forces perform stability operations to establish the conditions that enable all the instruments of national power to succeed. By providing security and control to stabilize the situation and restore civil order, military forces provide a foundation for transitioning control to interagency civilians and eventually to the host nation.

In *Post-Conflict Essential Tasks*, the State Department breaks down post-conflict stability operations tasks into three categories: initial response, transformation, and fostering sustainability. These categories encompass the full range of military missions, tasks, and activities conducted in conjunction with the other instruments of national power during stability operations. However, while adopting the same task framework, FM 3-07 redefines initial response tasks as actions taken during conflict to influence conditions before hostilities end. Such anticipatory actions are essential to enable the success of the other instruments of national power and to secure space and access for nongovernmental organizations already operating in the area. These actions enable military forces to focus on maintaining security and civil order and facilitate the ability of civilian agencies and organizations to reduce the force’s humanitarian issues burden.

FM 3-07 lists essential stability tasks that the force must execute to accomplish the mission. Conducting such operations requires a combination of knowledge and understanding, the ability to achieve unity of effort, and cultural acumen. A finite amount of combat power is available to apply to essential stability operations tasks. Essential stability tasks



U.S. Marine Corps, LCPL Peter J. Thibodeau

Iraqi construction workers build a new police station in Zaidon, Iraq, 19 November 2007.

lay a foundation of security and civil order so that the other instruments of national power can come in and do their work. This foundation must also support the burdens of governance, rule of law, and economic development that represent the sustained future viability of the host nation.

Security Sector Reform: First Among Equals

According to James Stephenson, “Establishing security involves domestic security, secure borders, and relatively accommodating neighbors... Domestic security is the most important and often the most difficult to achieve.”¹¹ A decorated Vietnam veteran well acquainted with the challenges of stability operations, Stephenson often highlights the necessity of security for lasting success. But even the largest occupation force cannot provide sustained security across nations as vast as Afghanistan and Iraq; in such situations, establishing domestic security depends on the early, continual involvement of the host-nation’s security forces. Just as in Southeast Asia, developing

host-nation capacity for civil security and control requires a dedicated advisory effort focused on organizing, training, and equipping indigenous security forces.

This is the essence of “security force assistance,” a relatively new term for a concept that pre-dates even the CORDS effort. FM 3-07 introduces security force assistance into Army doctrine under the umbrella of security sector reform, which is the reestablishment or reform of the institutions and key ministerial positions that provide oversight for the safety and security of the host nation and its people. The advisory effort central to security sector reform extends beyond the military training teams that conduct security force assistance. It encompasses police training teams, provincial reconstruction teams, and civil affairs functional area specialists, all engaged in a broad effort to reform the entire security sector.

Of the myriad activities conducted in a stability operation, security sector reform requires the sustained integration of the instruments of national power, and it depends wholly on unity of effort for success. Because the security sector is closely tied

to each of the other sectors, efforts to reform it create ripples that affect the entire stability operation; typically, activities that reinforce progress in security contribute to success in the others. While sustaining successful development in the other sectors is not possible without an established foundation of security, persistent security is not possible without effective rule of law, a transparent judiciary, legitimate governance, economic prosperity, and a contented host-nation populace whose essential needs have been satisfied.

Ultimately, successful security sector reform is the proving ground for an effective whole-of-government approach. It requires the active, dedicated participation of all U.S. agencies to achieve success. Such success is not attainable without unity of effort across multiple lines of operations. It requires a willingness and ability to share limited resources—financial, military, intelligence, law enforcement, diplomatic, developmental, and strategic communications—while working toward a common goal that supports U.S. interests.

Institutionalizing Hard Lessons

In the years after the fall of South Vietnam, we failed to institutionalize perhaps the most important lesson learned: the need for broad unity of effort among all agencies of government in operations conducted among the people of a foreign nation. Instead, we turned away from the bitter experiences of that time, and in many respects abandoned the rich body of lessons learned and tactics, techniques, and procedures that we assumed we would never need again.

To that end, the new FM 3-07 institutionalizes the enduring successes of our past and embraces the hard-won lessons of our contemporary operations. It recognizes that military force alone can never win the peace, even if we win every battle and engagement. The new doctrine aims to bring the efforts of military forces together with the other instruments of national power to form a whole-of-government approach to engagement in an era of persistent conflict. In doing so, it holds the key to operating in the uncertain future before us. **MR**

NOTES

1. Marc Sageman, "The Next Generation of Terror," *Foreign Policy* (March/April 2008): 37.

2. Department of Defense Directive 3000.05, "Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations," 28 November 2005.

3. Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, was developed under the direct guidance of then-LTG David H. Petraeus, who commanded the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, KS. In a unique approach to doctrine development, Petraeus assembled a select group of writers from the Army, the Marine Corps, academia, and the civilian sector. The development of FM 3-0 followed in an even more robust fashion, with the writing team assembled from among recent combat veterans educated through the School of Advanced Military Studies, with very thorough vetting done within the interagency, media, and think tanks. The writing of FM 3-07 has been shaped by even more extensive interagency, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental organizational involvement, and it will undergo the most thorough vetting of any Army field manual.

4. FM 3-0, *Operations*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office [GPO], 28 February 2008), vii.

5. Dale Andrade and Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) James H. Willbanks, "CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam for the Future," *Military Review* (March-April 2006).

6. FM 3-0, vii.

7. General William S. Wallace, "FM 3-0: Resetting the Capstone of Army Doctrine," *Army Magazine*, March 2008, 37.

8. Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: GPO, 4 March 2008).

9. Department of State Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, "Post-Conflict Reconstruction Essential Tasks" (Washington, DC: GPO, April 2005).

10. James Stephenson, *Losing the Golden Hour: An Insider's View of Iraq's Reconstruction* (Washington, DC: Potomac Press, 2007), 98.

11. *Ibid.*, 21.