

# FM 3-0 OPERATIONS

## The Army's Blueprint

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**T**HE CURRENT LANDSCAPE of persistent global conflict characterized by complex decentralized threats requires flexible and agile U.S. forces capable of deploying on short notice to conduct immediate, effective, and sustained operations anywhere in the world. The Army maintains the enduring role of protecting U.S. interests both at home and abroad while also deterring future threats. The Army, the world's preeminent landpower, guided by creative versatile Soldiers and leaders operating under the umbrella of sound doctrine, boldly accepts this role. Traditionally, Army doctrine endeavored to provide the "how to" approach for conducting operations. Today's conflicts require a more adaptive and progressive approach to operations rather than the highly predictable Cold War scenarios. With that point in mind, current Army operations doctrine discusses guiding principles while emphasizing "how to think" about operations and thus guide our forces.

The 2008 edition of FM 3-0, though shorter in length than its predecessors, presents the fundamental principles and concepts that guide the direction of Army operations rather than a checklist for success. Significant recent operational experience from the War on Terror, specifically the operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines, as well as urgent relief efforts following Hurricane Katrina and Rita, necessitated changes in doctrine. The development of this version of FM 3-0 traces back to 2005 with a series of issue papers covering unified action, the design of the war fighting functions, the continuum of operations, and the Army's operational concept. The collective thoughts poured into and resulting from the issue papers served as a structural foundation for codifying the key concepts of the manual. The FM 3-0 issue papers were staffed to a broad audience of over 200 organizations, media groups, and individual recipients. The major organizations included the Army Staff; Army commands; Army service component commands; Army corps and division headquarters; training divisions; and TRADOC commands and centers, proponents, and staff, as well Air Force, Marine, and Navy doctrine centers. The discussion generated from the issue papers led to a draft of the content summary that served as guide for the overall layout of the themes, concepts, and chapter structure of the field manual.

The Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate hosted three action-officer-level councils of colonels in an effort to synthesize and integrate over 4,000 comments from various entities in the field at large across three drafts of the manual to coalesce as much expert knowledge, thought, and current operational experience as possible. The meetings provided a separate forum for

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fostering debate, gaining consensus, and resolving critical and major comments from respective reviewing agencies prior to a TRADOC commander-hosted doctrine and concepts conference.

The latest iteration of FM 3-0 is evolutionary in nature, incorporating ideas from new joint doctrine while retaining those valued pieces of Army doctrine that have stood the test of time. However, the doctrine is revolutionary with respect to its impetus and momentum to drive change. FM 3-0 provides purpose and direction to Army transformation and the application of force in complex operational environments. The current edition of FM 3-0 reflects Army thinking in a complex era of persistent conflict. The doctrine recognizes that military force alone will not resolve this type of conflict. Dominant landpower, while vital to operations, represents only one element of a broader campaign that requires the application of each element of national power. In line with this realization and reasoning, Army doctrine now elevates stability or civil-support operations to equal importance with offensive and defensive operations.

As learned during operations following the “thunder run” to Baghdad, today’s conflict involves a strong human element with operations conducted in and among the people. Soldiers often face the ethical challenge of engaging the enemy among noncombatants, with little to distinguish one from the other even after combat erupts. The current edition of FM 3-0 describes stability operations in terms of tactical tasks applicable at all echelons of Army forces deployed outside the United States.

**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 DOD activities including doctrine, organizations, training, education, exercises, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities, and planning.**

—DODD 3000.05

Civil-support operations are also defined in terms of tactical-level tasks, similar to stability tasks but conducted in the very different operational environment of the United States and its territories. Army forces have a legal and moral obligation to the populace, underscoring the concept that winning battles and engagements is important but stable peace comes from carefully shaping the resulting civil situation. FM 3-0 emphasizes the importance of interagency collaboration and correlates the Army stability tasks to Department of State post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization technical sectors. (See figure 1.)

The Army’s operational concept—full-spectrum operations—requires continuous simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or civil-support tasks. In the previous version of FM 3-0, *Operations*, the Army’s operational concept was implied or assumed. But enough has changed in our understanding of the operational environment that it is now incumbent upon us to

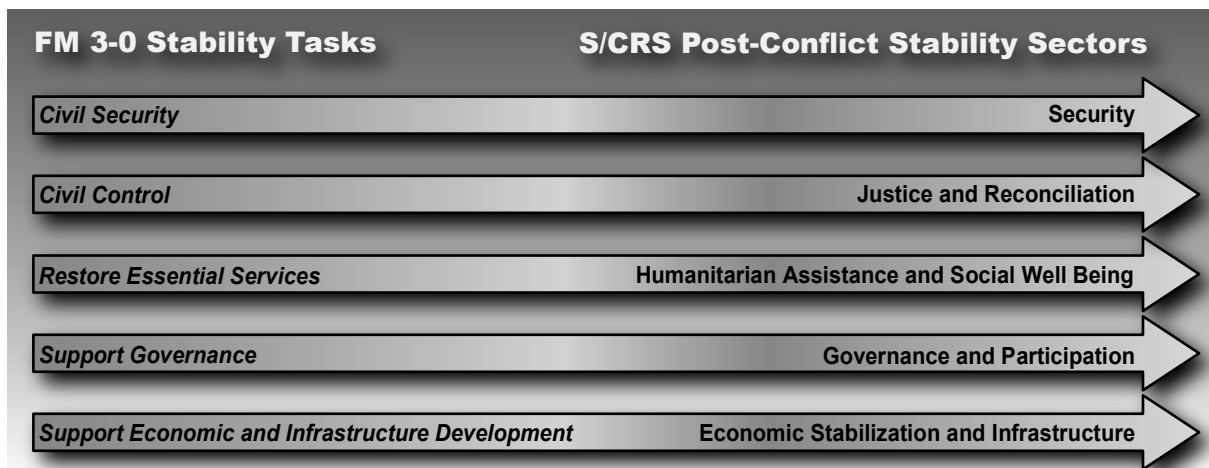


Figure 1. Stability tasks.

explicitly state our operational concept. The operational concept stands at the core of Army doctrine. The operational concept frames how Army forces exercise initiative and embrace prudent risk with a concentrated attention on creating opportunities to achieve decisive results. Commanders achieve decisive results through the effective combination and balance of offensive, defensive, and stability operations across the entire width and depth of their area of operations. The concept further emphasizes the role of the commander in operations, bridging battle command and operational art in leveraging experience, knowledge, and intuition.

### Full-Spectrum Operations— the Army’s Operational Concept

The emergence of full-spectrum operations drives key changes in capstone doctrine. The Army established full-spectrum operations in FM 3-0 (2001), shifting sharply from an “either-or” view of war and operations other than war to an inclusive doctrine that emphasized the congruity of nonlethal actions with combat actions. In FM 3-0 (2001) stability operations were “other” joint missions stated in an Army context. In recognition of this fact, conducting full-spectrum operations—simultaneous offensive, defensive, and stability or civil-support operations—is a primary theme of the 2008 manual. Stability and civil-support operations are more than “military operations other than war” as derived from the joint concept that characterized non-combat operations of the past decade. Army forces must understand the potential for combining offensive and defensive tasks while simultaneously addressing the civil situation. The vein of these tasks, stability and civil-support evolved from specialized ancillary actions into a central element of full-spectrum operations equal in

importance to offense and defense. The nature and complexity of the mission determine the appropriate weighting and combination of tasks. (See figure 2.)

The operational environment is characterized by uncertainty, chaos, and friction. In this environment, an offensive mindset—the predisposition to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative to positively change the situation—makes combat power decisive. The high quality of Army leaders and Soldiers is best exploited by allowing subordinates maximum latitude to exercise individual and small-unit initiative. Tough, realistic training prepares leaders for this, and FM 3-0 prescribes giving them the maximum latitude to successfully accomplish the mission. This effort requires a climate of trust in the abilities of superior and subordinate alike. It also requires leaders at every level to think and act flexibly, constantly adapting to the situation. In this difficult environment, commanders must draw on their education, knowledge, experience, and understanding. This edition of FM 3-0 ties together battle command and operational art, providing an integrated model for the creative application of the experience, knowledge, and intuition of the commander in full-spectrum operations. (See figure 3.)

FM 3-0 acknowledges that the Army’s primary purpose remains deterrence. Should deterrence fail, the Army will fight as part of an interdependent joint team to decisively win the Nation’s wars. America is at war in a persistent conflict against an enemy committed to U.S. defeat and the destruction of its free society. This conflict will be waged in an environment that is complex, multi-dimensional, and firmly rooted in the human dimension. This is a conflict which cannot be won by military forces alone and requires close cooperation and coordination of military, diplomatic, economic, and informational

Army forces combine offensive, defensive, and stability or civil-support operations **simultaneously** as part of an interdependent Joint force to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative, accepting prudent risk to create opportunities to achieve decisive results.

They employ synchronized action—lethal and nonlethal—proportional to the mission, and informed by a thorough understanding of all dimensions of the operational environment.

Mission command that conveys intent and an appreciation of all aspects of the situation guides the adaptive use of Army forces.

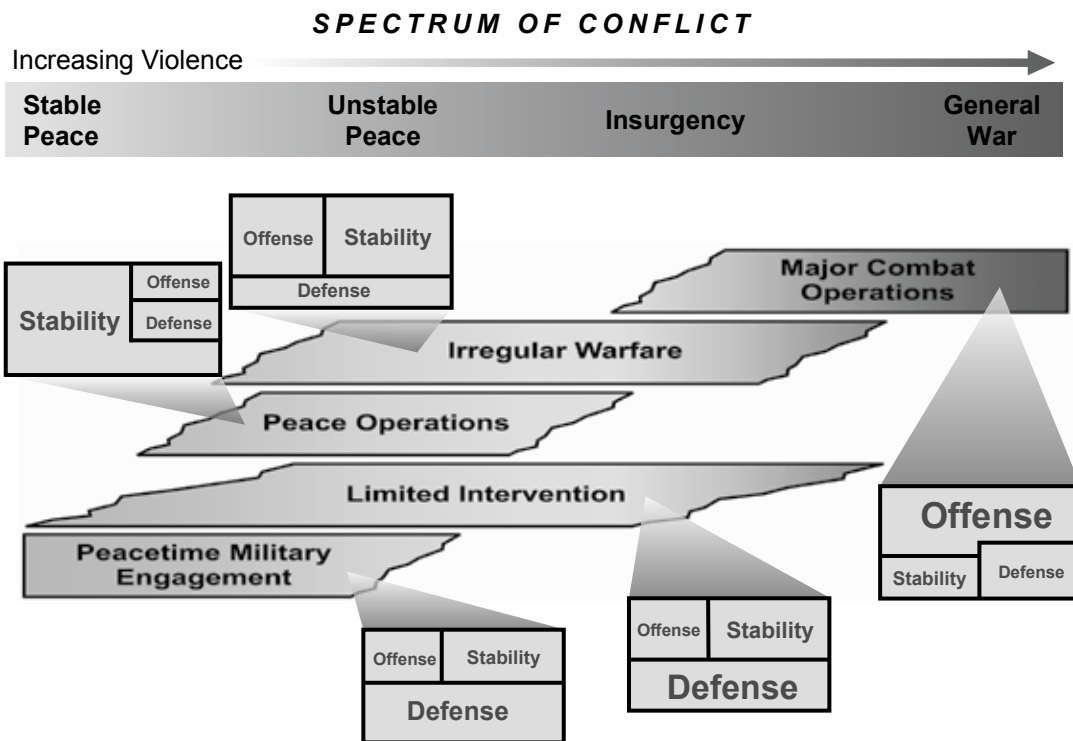


Figure 2. Spectrum of conflict.

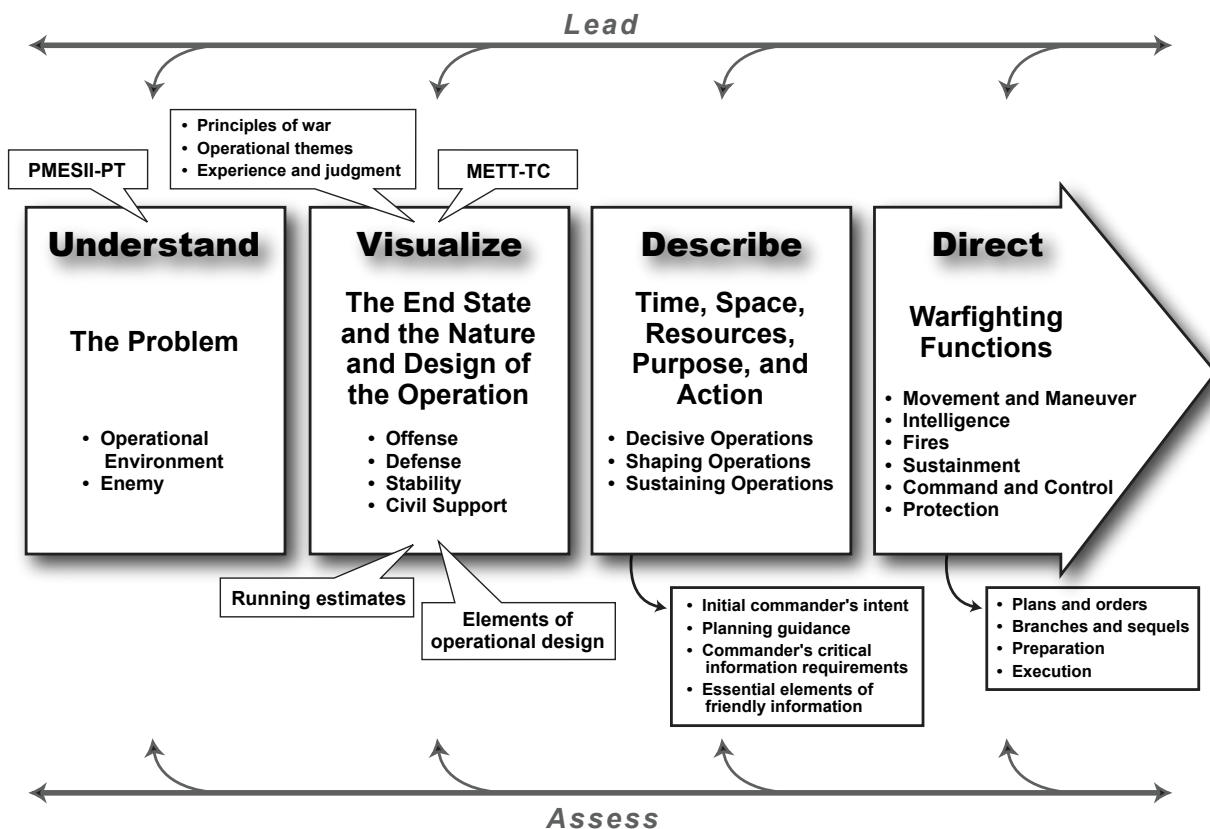


Figure 3. Battle command and operational art.

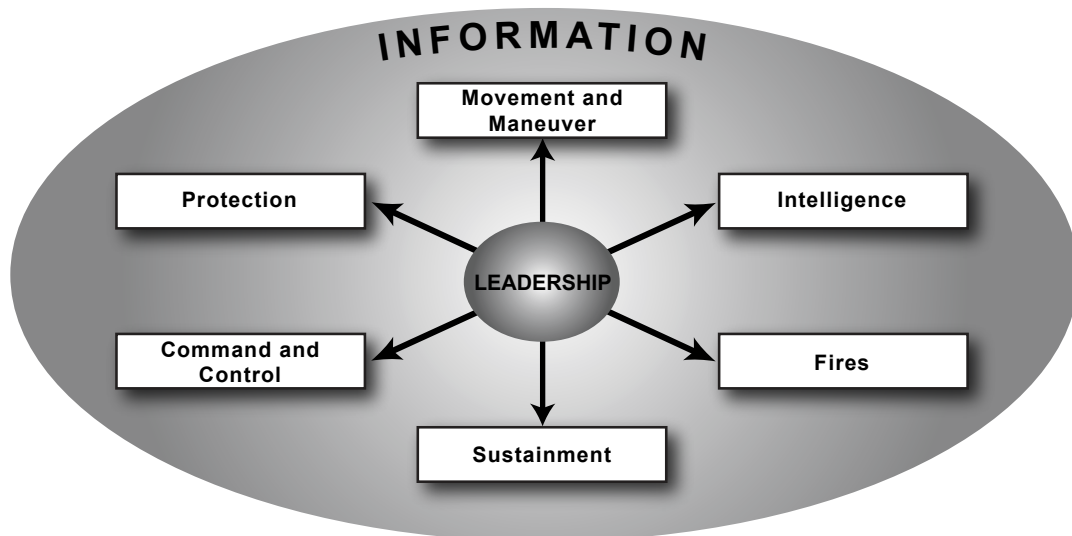
efforts. Due to the human nature of the conflict, however, land power will be the most important element of the military effort and essential to victory. FM 3-0 considers the nature of today's enemies as well as a wide range of other potential threats. It contains doctrine for the entire Army, one that seeks nothing less than victory for the United States and its friends and allies—now and in the future.

The impact of the information environment on operations continues to increase. What Army forces do to achieve advantages across it—information superiority—has a major effect on the outcome of operations. Consequently, FM 3-0 revises how the Army views information operations and the staff responsibility for the tasks associated with them. The current age of increased information technology, interconnected global commerce, and trade exponentially increases the impact of the information environment on operations. The patient, savvy, and confident enemy wages an intense struggle in both the information and physical domains. For U.S. forces, the reality of the messages conveyed on the ground must be consistent with Soldier actions. The concept of information engagement encompasses the vertical and horizontal interaction of commanders and Soldiers operating within and among the populace. Information engagement seeks to link

these messages, presenting an integrated approach to inform U.S. forces and friendly audiences while influencing neutral and enemy audiences. Information engagement is a prominent task in the struggle for information superiority. Synchronizing the components of information engagement with the overall operation ensures consistency. Commanders must use information engagement in their area of operation to build trust, communicate messages, promote support for Army operations, and influence local perceptions.

The “warfighting functions” replace the battle-field operating systems (BOS), align with the joint functions, and parallel the USMC warfighting functions. Leaders at every echelon must embrace an offensive mindset to create opportunities and positively change the situation, thus creating decisive results. Combat power is crucial; however, adaptive and creative commanders fueled by an offensive spirit apply the elements of combat power through the warfighting functions using leadership and information—making combat power decisive. (See figure 4.)

FM 3-0 presents overarching doctrinal guidance and direction for conducting operations. It sets the foundation for developing the other fundamentals and tactics, techniques, and procedures detailed in



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

**Figure 4. Elements of combat power.**



subordinate field manuals. It also provides operational guidance for commanders and trainers at all echelons and forms the foundation for Army education system curricula. The eight chapters that make up this edition of *Operations* constitute the Army's view of how it conducts prompt and sustained operations on land:

- Chapter 1 establishes the context of land operations in terms of a global environment of persistent conflict, the operational environment, and unified action. It discusses the Army's expeditionary and campaign capabilities while emphasizing that it is Soldiers who accomplish missions.

- Chapter 2 describes a spectrum of conflict extending from stable peace to general war. From that spectrum, it establishes five operational themes into which various joint operations fit. Borrowing heavily from emerging NATO doctrine, this chapter helps Army leaders to understand where diverse operations such as peacekeeping and counterinsurgency fit and shape supporting doctrine.

- Chapter 3 is the most important chapter in the book, describing the Army's operational concept—full-spectrum operations. Full-spectrum operations seize, retain, and exploit the initiative through combinations of four elements: offense, defense, and stability or civil-support operations. Mission command is the preferred method of exercising battle command.

- Chapter 4 addresses combat power, the means by which Army forces conduct full-spectrum operations. It replaces the older BOS and elements of combat power with six warfighting functions bound by leadership and employing information. Combined arms and mutual support are the payoff.

- Chapter 5 reviews the principles of command and control and how they affect the operations process—plan, prepare, execute, and assess. The

emphasis is on commanders and the central role that they have in battle command. Commanders understand, visualize, describe, direct, lead, and continually assess.

- Chapter 6 discusses operational art, offering Army commanders a bridge between military theory and practice.

- Chapter 7 addresses information superiority, particularly information operations. Information operations divide into five Army information operations tasks, with the responsibility redistributed into different staff functional cells, yet tied together by the operations process.

- Chapter 8 discusses the aspects of strategic and operational reach and how they affect deploying and employing Army forces. The chapter emphasizes how the Army capitalizes on unique expeditionary and campaign qualities to promptly deploy forces worldwide into any operational environment.

Four appendixes complement the body of the manual. The principles of war and operations are in appendix A, command and support relationships are in appendix B, a brief description of modular force is in appendix C, and a discussion of the purpose of doctrine in the Army is at appendix D. This appendix includes a chapter-by-chapter summary of the important changes made in this edition of FM 3-0. It also includes tables listing new, rescinded, and modified terms in this manual.

This version of FM 3-0 provides a blueprint for the future and fully recognizes that Soldiers are the centerpiece and foundation of the Army. They are the world's preeminent land force. At every echelon, tough, well-trained, and well-equipped Soldiers live the warrior ethos. It is Soldiers—defined by their valor, devotion to duty, and commitment to one another and the United States of America—who execute full-spectrum operations. **MR**