



# PLANNING FULL SPECTRUM OPERATIONS

## Implications of FM 3-0 on Planning Doctrine

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*Since war contains a host of interactions, since the whole series of engagements is, strictly speaking, linked together, since in every victory there is a culminating point beyond which lies the reality of losses and defeats—in view of all these intrinsic characteristics of war, we say there is only one result that counts: final victory. Until then, nothing is decided, nothing won, and nothing lost.<sup>1</sup>*

—Carl von Clausewitz

**D**URING THE PERIOD between the World Wars, the German army experimented with armored formations and ultimately invented a new kind of warfare based on closely integrating combined arms to a degree scarcely imaginable in 1918. While the British army also experimented with this new form of warfare, it was unable to achieve the same level of effectiveness and integration as the German army. There are many reasons for this disparity in results, but one key factor was that the Germans were more unsentimental about preserving existing ways of fighting than the British, due in large part to the outcome of World War I. By ignoring existing mind-sets and paradigms such as regiments and horse cavalry, Germany discarded both the institutions and organizations that did not suit the new combined arms form of warfare. This unsentimental mind-set also extended to doctrine, which the Germans modified after examining the evidence provided by battlefield performance and experimentation.

Today the U.S. Army stands at a similar crossroads with the recent publication of Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*. Like Germany during the interwar period, current operations have driven America's Army to overhaul doctrine, tactics, and organizations, leaving no "sacred cows" untouched, including the primacy of divisions or command-centric officer career paths. The Army's concept of full spectrum operations as outlined in the latest version of FM 3-0 is partially intended to advance Army doctrine beyond thinking primarily in terms of force-on-force engagements, so we must ensure that our planning paradigms are truly in line with full spectrum operations. While it is one thing to understand the complexities involved with planning and integrating offense, defense, and stability missions in a specific point in time, it is another thing entirely to understand how this integration spans the entire operation from Phase I (deter) to Phase V (enable civil authority).<sup>2</sup> As a result, current doctrinal planning processes focus primarily on tactical engagements or a single phase with minimal integration between phases. Campaign planning can address this, but the process is not as systematic as the current Military Decision Making Process (MDMP). Therefore, in order to meet the full intent of FM

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PHOTO: LTC Drew Meyerowich, center, commander, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, speaks to his Soldiers during an operation in Zanjaliah, Iraq, 1 February 2007. (U.S. Air Force, MSGT Andy Dunaway)

3-0, we must assess planning doctrine to ensure it is consistent with operations doctrine.

The question is not whether the MDMP is flawed but whether the current thought process adequately addresses the entire spectrum of operations. We could modify the existing process by reformulating step III (course of action development) to look beyond simple ratios of relative combat power to generate options. However, this still fails to capture the dynamic interplay between different stages of an operation. Is the concept of phase-based planning (as opposed to execution) sufficient for full spectrum operations? During the after-action review for a recent Command and General Staff College (CGSC) division-level exercise, a student commented that Phase IV (stability) actually begins in Phase I (deter). While units fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan clearly understand this, we have not yet corrected one of the root causes of the confusion that reigned during April 2003 in the transition to Phase IV. Since we do not have the opportunity to “reboot” these operations and start from scratch, we must transition into the next phase of operations immediately after we obtain our final objective in decisive combat operations. The transitions between phases are the most complicated part of any operation. How do we plan so as to make these transitions seamlessly?<sup>3</sup>

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### **The Current Paradigm**

Before proceeding, we should analyze the current MDMP to see if the problem is one of process as opposed to paradigm. The Army designed the current MDMP for planning force-on-force operations, which typically occur in Phase II (seize the initiative) and Phase III (dominate). During course of action development, we analyze our combat power in relation to the enemy’s, generate options, array our forces, develop a concept of operations, and assign headquarters for task forces.<sup>4</sup> The bias toward force-on-force operations is apparent. While

the MDMP is a useful tool in Phases II-III, solutions for Phase IV and V tend to be ad hoc, and other than their anticipated end states, little in the existing process links the phases together. If Phase IV truly begins in Phase I, what tools synchronize effects across the full spectrum of an operation?

In addition to the concept of full spectrum operations, the new FM 3-0 introduces lines of effort (LOE), previously known as logical lines of operation.<sup>5</sup> Most planners familiar with campaign planning are well versed in the idea of multiple lines of operation. General Tommy Franks’s “lines and slices” diagram is a famous example; the lines of operation detailed by Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli while commanding the 1st Cavalry Division during OIF II is another. According to FM 3-0, lines of effort “typically focus on integrating the effects of military operations with those of other instruments of national power to support the broader effort.”<sup>6</sup>

Commanders and planners can combine lines of effort with LLOs, since LLOs should not extend the operational design beyond decisive combat operations, which usually culminate in Phase III.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, FM 3-0 does not provide an example of this approach. The closest example in current doctrine is in Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, which also includes some linkages between lines of operation.

### **Courses of Action**

Based on this knowledge of both MDMP and campaign design, we can conclude that while the current planning paradigm embodied in MDMP is well-suited for planning individual phases or specific actions, it is not suited for planning across the full spectrum of an operation. Systematic and doctrinal campaign planning tools have not achieved the same level of maturity, refinement, and ubiquity as the traditional military decision making process. This leads us to our own courses of action regarding the current paradigm.

The first course of action (COA) is “no change,” which is to leave the current system as is. While this is admittedly the “throwaway” COA for the purposes of this article, one can reasonably argue that the current process has been successful in the past and that changing it is both complicated and could require a complete overhaul of Joint doctrine and existing OPLANs. This paper does not address

these considerations but acknowledges the likelihood of second- and third-order effects on Joint operations stemming from substantive changes in Army doctrine, especially for a Joint headquarters built around a standing Army headquarters.

The second course of action is to: 1) modify the current MDMP process to develop courses of action by phase, and 2) develop a systemic process to link phases. This COA might be called a “modified MDMP.” Critics of this COA could reasonably argue that this should already be done under the current system. However, the turbulent transition into Phase IV of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) leads one to the conclusion this process was either not followed or executed incorrectly. Even if the planners developed a perfect plan for Phase IV, the fact remains that this detailed planning would probably not have begun until sometime during Phase II or III, after which it would have been too late to shape the battlefield to support Phase IV. This tardiness is especially important with regard to targeting, since targeting boards need to know whether the intended target, such as a bridge or power station, will be needed in the future. While it is tempting to think that we have learned our lesson and rely on experience and tactics, techniques, and procedures, this is not the basis for sound doctrine, which needs the ability to survive outside a specific time and context. Additionally, this COA does not address the fact that while the current MDMP can successfully plan Phase II and III operations, we still lack systemic tools for planning Phase IV and V operations.

This leads us to the third and recommended course of action. This COA is “abandon phase-based planning,” that is, we cease planning operations by sequential phases (with some overlap during the transitions) and instead plan by LLO and LOE that run simultaneously.

## Abandoning the Phasing Construct

Since most commanders and planners know that several phases of an operation may be executed simultaneously, changing the existing planning paradigm to a LLO/LOE-based para-

digim is more of an evolutionary than revolutionary change. To extend our new operations doctrine into our planning doctrine and meet the full meaning of FM 3-0, we must develop planning doctrine that identifies the linkages between phases and actions. We are already familiar with this idea when we consider the concepts of “shaping” and “decisive” operations. For instance, in a brigade attack, there are shaping operations, such as a spoiling attack, that are linked to a decisive operation, and the decisive operation cannot occur until those shaping operations are successful. This linked concept is also used in decision support templates, since certain information must be known and certain events must transpire in order to make the appropriate decision. Planning based on lines of operation and effort uses a similar model.

The interaction between lines and events is the key distinguishing feature for LLO/LOE-based planning. If planners do not address this interaction, we have not resolved the core problem we set out to remedy. Since any given event or task may be shaped by some other event or task (just as a shaping operation links to a decisive operation), it is reasonable to assume that these tasks may exist in different lines of operation or effort. This is where a phase-based paradigm fails us, since it looks at sequences of operations instead of across the full spectrum of an operation in space and time.

Thinking of events as arranged in time with actions that support each LOE must account for the linkages between each action. For instance, what

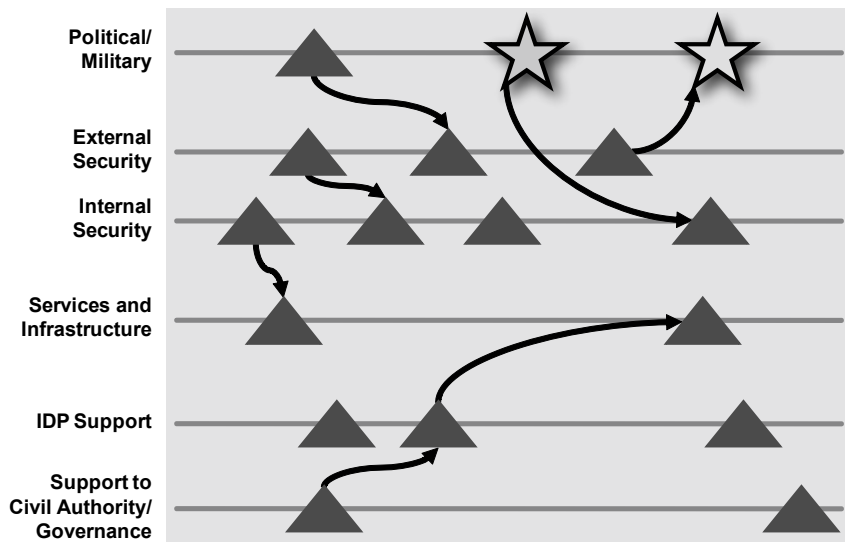


Figure 1. Linked LLO/LOE.

external and internal security, service, infrastructure, and support to civil authority and governance actions are linked to tasks such as “support formal internally displaced person (IDP) resettlement?” Linkages among all these actions will impinge on timing for the best outcomes.

With this complexity in mind, we can develop a concept for LLO/LOE-based planning. Instead of breaking the operation into phases, we visualize the entire operation along lines. The first step is to view the entire operation from start to finish and not by phase. The next step is to identify the actual lines of operation and effort, even if most actions in a given line occur at a specific point in time. Using a generic scenario similar to OIF or Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) as a prototype, we can envision nine lines of effort and operation. The first is called “shaping,” Phase 0 in the Joint doctrine, followed by an LOE called “deterrence.” The next LOE is “project force.” This LOE extends through the entire operation and encompasses reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) and subsequent deployment and redeployment operations (such as OIF/OEF rotations).

We now begin to use lines of operation (as opposed to lines of effort). Phase II and III are “dominate” and “internal security.” At this point, we return to the term “lines of effort” and use some FM 3-24 terms, such as “essential services,” “governance,” and “economic/infrastructure development.” However, this does not address the actions and interactions at the strategic and national levels, which necessitates a political/military (POL/MIL)

LOE: POL/MIL
LOE: Shaping
LOE: Deterrence
LOE: Project Force
LOE: Dominate
LOE: Internal Security
LOE: Essential Services
LOE: Governance
LOE: Economic/Infrastructure Development

Figure 2. Lines of effort.

line. This line includes policy decisions and anticipated (or essential) strategic guidance and policy enabled by actions in other lines.

Once we have identified the lines, we must identify the tasks. During the planning for Phase IV IDP resettlement in the CGSC division exercise, the planning staff used an ad hoc process, brainstorming the tasks for each line and then working backward through time to determine which events linked to other events. The staff repeated the process on each line, working forward through time. By conducting this “dual pass” approach, the planners could determine when they needed guidance from the POL/MIL line to identify decisions at this level.

While the example mentioned above only focused on one phase, one can extend this process to an entire operation by starting with the end state and working backwards to the beginning of the operation. By extending this paradigm to encompass the full spectrum of an operation, commanders and planners can identify linkages between different points in the operation and allow targeting processes to support the ultimate end state. Since everything in a military operation should work toward the end state, we must be cognizant of this at every phase of the operation.

## Conclusion and Implications

Critics of this approach might say that plans based on LLO and LOE are more appropriate for operational or campaign planning, which are inherently joint and not subject to Army doctrine. While this may be true, it is important to keep in mind that we are looking to solve a problem based on the implications of full spectrum operations. To synchronize offense, defense, and stability effectively throughout the entire operation, we must envision the entire operation. We should use this type of planning model for all operations, not just campaigns. We must develop tools for commanders to predict and manage second- and third-order effects.

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The use of LLO/LOE-based planning requires a wholesale reevaluation of the current MDMP. However, developing the specific processes to plan is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, like Germany during the interwar period, we must first determine what aspects of our doctrine are no longer suitable. This aspect of German innovation was probably the most important factor to their early World War II battlefield successes. They based their doctrine on experimentation, battlefield performance, and a comprehensive understanding of the results from the past war.<sup>8</sup> Our current planning doctrine no longer supports the reality of full spectrum operations because it does not allow us to plan across the full spectrum of an operation. The only way to do so is to envision the plan from its conception to the commander's end state. By basing our plans on the phases of execution, we can desynchronize subsequent phases from future requirements. Moreover, this paradigm does not take into account that actions in earlier phases may be crucial for ultimate success. By abandoning phase-based planning in favor of an approach based on lines of effort and operation, we can address an entire operation and minimize the difficulty in transitioning between its phases.

I do not recommend that we abandon phases as a method of synchronizing execution. There is clearly a place for delineating stages of an operation, if the phases are built around key events or logical points of transition from one stage to another. Every opera-

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tion must react to events on the ground caused by enemy and friendly forces, and every plan should be flexible enough to deal with unforeseen events. However, FM 3-0 "reflects Army thinking in a complex period of prolonged conflicts and opportunities." Our planning processes must move forward to meet this challenge.<sup>9</sup> **MR**

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#### NOTES

1. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Peter Paret (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), book 8, ch. 3, 704.
2. Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operations Planning*, 26 December 2006, IV-35. This article uses the Joint Operations Phasing Model as a point of departure. While not prescriptive, it provides a framework for operational design and is commonly understood.
3. This phrase was often repeated by General Bantz Craddock when he commanded 1st Infantry Division.
4. U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 5-0, *Army Plans and Orders Production*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, January 2005), figure 3-8, 3-28.
5. FM 3-0, *Operations*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, February 2008), 6-12.
6. *Ibid.*, 6-13.
7. *Ibid.*, 6-14.
8. Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millet, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 41.
9. FM 3-0, viii.

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