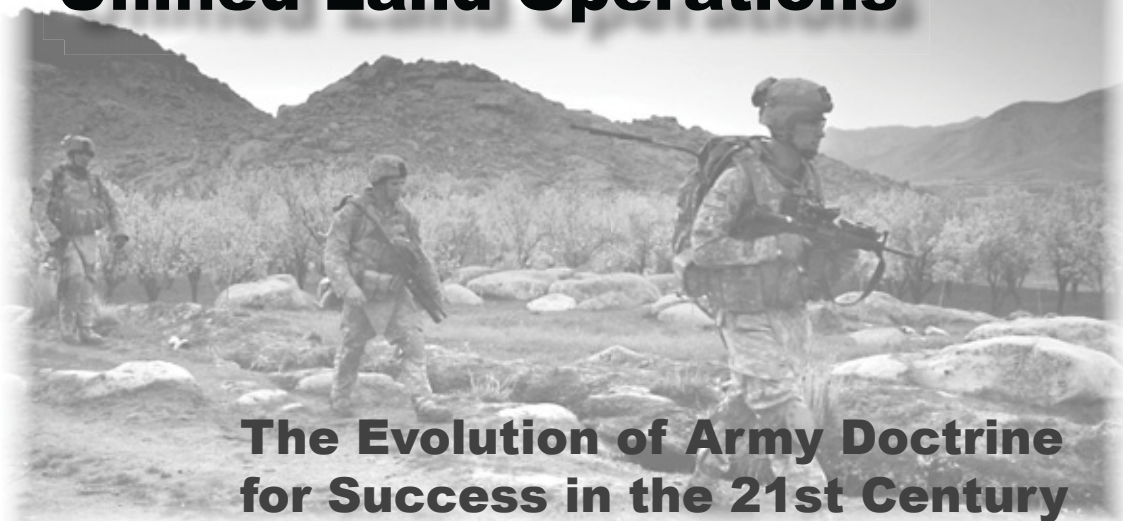


Unified Land Operations



The Evolution of Army Doctrine for Success in the 21st Century

Colonel Bill Benson, U.S. Army

UNITED STATES MILITARY FORCES began the second decade of the 21st century decisively engaged in operations around the world, continuing a trend of prolonged military operations other than war that began in the 1990s in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo and continued during the first decade of the 21st century in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. Army faces the challenge of long, repeated deployments against enemy formations that do not lend themselves to straightforward doctrinal definitions and constructs.

Army doctrine has evolved to meet the challenges. Doctrine writers have struggled to use clear, concise language that accurately depicts operating concepts. A significant part of this struggle arose after the conflation of doctrinal terms and operational priorities that occurred when the Army made stability operations of equal importance with offensive and defensive operations within *full spectrum operations*. Despite the Army's long history of fighting small wars against irregular forces, the ascendance of stability operations in the late 1990s and early 2000s ran counter to existing Army beliefs about the appropriate roles and missions of the U.S. Army.

The central idea of Army doctrine is to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative to gain and maintain a position of advantage in sustained land operations. A new operating concept, *unified land operations*, returns this central idea to its proper place, applicable to all Army operations. Seizing, retaining, and exploiting the initiative to gain and maintain a position of advantage provides a battlefield framework and logic that nests unified land operations within the joint operational construct of unified action and provides a structure that allows commanders to effectively and accurately describe their intent in time, space, purpose, and priority. The doctrine allows leaders to integrate diverse tactical tasks, battles, and engagements, over time, to achieve strategic objectives.¹

This article introduces the logic behind the new operating concept by presenting a short history of the evolution of Army doctrine from the advent of *AirLand Battle* in 1982 to the introduction of *Unified Land Operations* in 2011. The central idea of unified land operations is rooted in *AirLand Battle* doctrine and retains many of the key full spectrum operations ideas within an overarching concept that emphasizes lethal capabilities as fundamental to successful Army operations.

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Colonel Bill Benson commands the 4th Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, TX. He completed the Advanced Operational Arts Studies Fellowship at the School for Advanced Military Studies and helped write Army Doctrinal Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*. He deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom three times, serving as a battalion operations officer, police transition team leader, and the commander of 1-10 Cavalry.

PHOTO: U.S. Army SGT Robert Newman, right, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, U.S. Army Europe, leads his fire team on an early-morning dismounted patrol mission near Forward Operating Base Baylough, Zabul, Afghanistan, 19 March 2009. (U.S. Army, SSG Adam Mancini)

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AirLand Battle (1982-1993)

The Army introduced *AirLand Battle* as its operating concept in 1982 partly as a reaction to the inadequacies of the Army's previous operating concept, *Active Defense*, which had focused on winning a defensive first battle in central Europe against numerically superior forces from the Soviet Union.² More offensively oriented, AirLand Battle introduced the term *operational level of war* to the Army lexicon and made campaign planning—the integration of joint forces in a series of battles and engagements to achieve a strategic purpose—a fundamental requirement.³

When the Army published the 1986 version of FM 100-5, it preserved and strengthened AirLand Battle's central ideas—the importance of the operational level of warfare, its focus on the seizing and retaining the initiative, and its insistence on the requirement for multi-service cooperation.⁴ The lead paragraphs describing AirLand Battle capture these themes explicitly:

AirLand Battle doctrine describes the Army's approach to generating and applying combat power at the operational and tactical levels, securing or retaining the initiative

and exercising it aggressively to accomplish the mission. The object of all operations is to impose our will upon the enemy—to achieve our purposes. To do this we must throw the enemy off balance with a powerful blow from an unexpected direction, follow up rapidly to prevent his recovery, and continue operations aggressively to achieve the higher commander's goals. From the enemy's point of view, these operations must be rapid, unpredictable, violent, and disorienting. The pace must be fast enough to prevent him from taking effective counteraction.

Our operational planning must orient on decisive objectives. It must stress flexibility, the creation of opportunities to fight on favorable terms by capitalizing on enemy vulnerabilities, concentration against enemy centers of gravity, synchronized joint operations, and aggressive exploitation of tactical gains to achieve operational results.⁵

The deserts of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq were the Army's proving grounds for AirLand Battle during Operation Desert Storm in 1991. As part of a joint and coalition force, Army



M60 tanks and M113 personnel carriers, the backbone weapons platforms of AirLand Battle, being washed after field exercises.

forces completely overwhelmed and destroyed an overmatched enemy. Operation Desert Storm provided a rare opportunity to test Army doctrine and force structure against a threat they were optimized to meet.⁶

However, AirLand Battle doctrine was not a rigid, dogmatic concept suitable to only one kind of fight. Chapter 1 of FM 100-5 clearly identified challenges and threats across a wide spectrum of conflict, from conventional fights against the Warsaw Pact, to mid-intensity fights against Soviet surrogates, and even nonlinear and low-intensity fights against insurgent and terrorist groups:

The Army must be ready to fight enemies whose capabilities vary widely. In high- or mid-intensity conflict, these may be modern tank, motorize, and airborne forces like the Warsaw Pact armies or other similarly organized forces, including Soviet surrogates. Less mechanized but otherwise well-equipped regular and irregular forces and terrorist groups can be expected to operate against Army forces in most parts of the world. In low-intensity conflicts, light forces, insurgent, and terrorists may be the only military threat present.⁷

In discussing how the Army operates in a low intensity conflict (LIC) environment, FM 100-5 describes a “counterinsurgency campaign made in concert with the initiatives of other government agencies involved to ensure a synchronized national effort.” This language intimates a “whole-of-government approach” familiar to contemporary readers of doctrine. Other operations referenced are “Foreign Internal Defense,” “peacetime contingency,” and “peacekeeping” operations. Two paragraphs dedicated to the discussion of terrorism warn that “terrorists pursue strategic objectives through LIC,” and that “terrorism constitutes a threat which must be dealt with within the Army’s daily operations and which will continue to be of concern in high- and mid-intensity conflicts.”⁸

The language describing the threat and operating environment in the 1986 version of FM 100-5 demonstrates a nuanced appreciation of the enemy and of battlefield conditions. The Army successfully applied AirLand Battle’s emphasis on gaining the initiative, on operational art, and on operating as part of a joint environment in combat in 1991.

...AirLand Battle doctrine was not a rigid, dogmatic concept suitable to only one kind of fight.

Unfortunately, while the 1993 edition of FM 100-5 added some important ideas for future doctrine, it diluted the central aspects of AirLand Battle because a changing environment and domestic expectations increased competition for resources among the services.

Doctrine in Transition (1993-2001)

The evaporation of the threat presented by the former Soviet Union and the U.S. Army’s overwhelming success in Operation Desert Storm led to the expectation of a “peace dividend” of decreased military budgets in the early 1990s.⁹ This, in turn, led the Army to embark on a search for new capstone doctrine to describe its role in a new strategic context—one in which that the United States had emerged as the world’s sole remaining superpower.¹⁰ The 1993 version of FM 100-5 reflects this sentiment:

The 1993 doctrine reflects Army thinking in a new, strategic era . . . It causes AirLand Battle to evolve into a variety of choices for a battle-field framework and a wider interservice arena, allows for the increasing incidence of combined operations, and recognizes that Army forces operate across the range of military operations. It is truly doctrine for the full dimensions of the battlefield in a force-projection environment . . . It reflects the lessons learned from recent experiences and the setting of today’s strategic and technological realities.¹¹

AirLand Battle is not referred to again anywhere within the body of the FM. More perplexing, the doctrine writers did not replace AirLand Battle with another operating concept to delineate the central idea or ideas of Army doctrine. The manual still discusses operational art, retaining much of the language from the 1986 version, but subordinates it within the section describing the operational level of war. Initiative remains a tenet of Army operations, and the manual frequently discusses its significance,

but leaves readers to infer its relative importance as opposed to explicitly stating it. Other terms and constructs, like the Army's capacity for force projection and its capability to operate as part of a joint or combined team, appear to take on increased importance through the addition of new chapters or sections. While the 1993 version of FM 100-5 retains much of the verbiage from AirLand Battle describing these terms, it broadens the discussion to include topics such as cultural and language considerations in operations other than war. While these discussions described conditions found in the operating environment at the time, they failed to improve or focus understanding about *how* the Army conducts operations or to what purpose.

The 1993 FM failed to provide the Army with a new operating concept, or perhaps better said, left the operating concept ambiguous. It did, however, sow the seeds of ideas that emerged as central aspects of Army doctrine in the 21st century. These new ideas include the terms *full-dimension operations*, and *combat functions* (including *battle command*) intended to assist commanders in the synchronization of battlefield effects. The 1993 FM also added a section on conflict resolution and replaced the term *low intensity conflict* with *operations other than war (OOTW)*.

The term *full-dimension operations* was the closest the 1993 version of FM 100-5 came to providing the Army with a new operating concept. However, the term appears in the body of the manual only twice: first in the section on strategic context, where it states, "The Army must be capable of full-dimension operations"; and later in the introduction to Chapter 6, "Planning." The Glossary eventually defines full-dimension operations as "the application of all capabilities available to an Army commander to accomplish his mission decisively and at the least cost across the full range of possible operations."¹²

The influence of full-dimension operations on future doctrine is evident in the appearance of a similar term—*full spectrum operations*—as the Army's next explicit operating concept. Full spectrum operations were defined in 2001 as "the range of operations Army forces conduct in war and military operations other than war."¹³ Although the definition has since changed, the operating concept was still in use as of the writing of this article and the components of full spectrum operations—offense, defense, stability, and defense support of civilian authorities—are fully retained within the emerging doctrine of unified land operations.¹⁴

Just as the thinking behind the development of the term full dimension operations influenced the eventual development of the Army's next operating concept—full spectrum operations—the introduction of *combat functions* resonates in the Army today. The combat functions introduced in 1993—intelligence, maneuver, fire support, air defense, mobility and survivability, logistics, and battle command—were the operational level version of the *battlefield operating systems*. The 2001 and later versions of FM 100-5 combine the combat functions and battlefield operating systems, and they later evolve into the Army's *warfighting functions*. The arrangement and grouping of similar battlefield activities into systems or functions to assist commanders and staffs in the "integration, coordination, preparation, and execution of successful combined-arms operations" appears self evident now, but was a significant



A flight deck crewmember on the Iwo Jima class amphibious assault ship, USS *New Orleans* LPH 11, marshals in a U.S. Army UH-1N Huey MEDEVAC helicopter during a joint service mass casualty exercise, 18 November 1993.

contribution to doctrinal thought at the time.¹⁵ The introduction of *battle command* within the combat functions was a powerful addition to the Army's lexicon. The term would later become synonymous with a commander's role in combat.

The Army devoted a section of FM 100-5 to conflict resolution in 1993, reflecting its struggles, including its experiences in Operation Desert Storm, to define when the fighting should end and what the subsequent peace might look like. The section emphasized the commander's need to understand the conditions required to end a conflict and how to best combine military operations to bring about its most favorable resolution.¹⁶ Addressing conflict resolution in Army capstone doctrine represented a significant addition which a future version of FM 3-0 expanded on and captured within unified land operations.

Changing the term *low intensity conflict to operations other than war* was the final significant change in the 1993 version of FM 3-0. At first glance, this may seem like mere wordsmithing, but explicitly delineating the Army's role in combat operations as different from its role in what the 1993 version of FM 3-0 described as "conflict" and "peacetime" proved the harbinger of future debates about Army priorities in *stability operations* (SO) and *major combat operations* (MCO). The 1993 manual failed to articulate an operating concept applicable to all Army operations, reinforcing the idea of separate and competing priorities.

Chapter 13, "Operations Other than War," of the FM even offers separate principles and tenets that apply exclusively in an OOTW environment. The 1993 version of FM 3-0 was a step backwards with respect to providing a unifying operating concept for all Army operations, but it did articulate several new ideas that continue to resonate today, and it proved to be the longest lasting version of the manual until 2001.

Full Spectrum Operations (2001-2011)

The 2001 version of FM 3-0 defines full spectrum operations as "the range of operations Army forces conduct in war and military operations other than war." While not an operating concept, the term described what the Army did and entire chapters were devoted to articulating how to use

full spectrum operations to accomplish Army missions. Indeed, the very purpose of the 2001 version of FM 3-0 was to establish "keystone doctrine for full spectrum operations," making it the *de facto* operational concept.¹⁷ The 2008 version of FM 3-0 then explicitly designated full spectrum operations as the Army's operational concept and expanded its definition to read,

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 variables 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.¹⁸

This definition reflected the realities of seven years of combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. Terms like "prudent risk," "proportional," and "understanding of all variables" acknowledged the complex nature of the operational environment and threat the Army was likely to face.

During the decade that full spectrum operations was the Army's exclusive operating concept, the Army introduced, improved, or expanded several important ideas and changed or discarded others. It retained the importance of initiative in Army operations. It expanded and improved the definition of battle command, eventually discarding the term in 2011—although retaining its essential elements. The Army also discarded the terms *deep*, *close*, and *rear* as part of the battlefield framework, as well as the term *supporting effort* to delineate priorities. It elevated *stability operations* to an importance equal to *combat operations*, touching off an extended Army debate about balance and priorities. Finally, the Army expanded and changed the definition of *operational art*.

In 2001, FM 3-0 introduced a chapter on the foundations of full spectrum operations by describing the essence of warfighting as inherently simple, distilling it into five general rules. This same language appears in the introduction to the FM.



Members of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team train for their Full Spectrum Training Event held at Hohenfels, Germany.

The doctrine states Army forces—

- Win on the offense.
- Initiate combat on their terms—not their adversaries.
- Gain and maintain the initiative.
- Build momentum quickly.
- Win decisively.¹⁹

The first four of these rules amplify the importance of initiative to successful Army operations. While long held as an important tenet, the codification of initiative within the definition of the Army's operating concept in 2008 returned initiative to its central place of importance. That fundamental precept remains almost unchanged in *Unified Land Operations*.

In 2001, *battle command* was defined as “the exercise of command in operations against a hostile, thinking enemy.” The chapter dedicated to battle command relies on the terms “visualize, describe, direct, and lead” to describe battle command.²⁰ In 2001, command and control was subordinate to battle command, but the 2008 version of FM 3-0 reversed the subordination.

Command and control ascended to preeminence with battle command becoming subordinate to it. The 2008 FM added the term *understand* before *visualize*, and introduced *mission command* as a term to describe the “preferred means of battle command.”²¹ By 2011, mission command had subsumed battle command and replaced command and control as a warfighting function. In this new role, mission command is both a warfighting function and the preferred method of command. The FM stresses using “mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent.”²² It explains this change as a philosophical shift, necessary to place emphasis on the *commander* instead of the systems employed.

The terms battle command, command and control, and mission command evolved during the ten years full spectrum operations were the Army's operating concept, but those terms' most useful elements—the essence of battle command (i.e. understand, visualize, describe, direct, lead, assess) and the emphasis of the commander's role in operations—were retained. The construct

of unified land operations reflects the evolution completely and retains mission command among its foundations.

The terms describing the *battlefield framework* (later the *operational framework*) also evolved.²³ The 2001 version of the manual introduced *decisive*, *shaping*, and *sustaining* operations as a way to describe the “allocation of forces by purpose,” while it retained *close*, *deep*, and *rear* to describe operations in “spatial terms.” The FM retained the term *main effort* as the “activity, unit, or area that constitutes the most important task at the time,” but dropped the term *supporting effort*.²⁴ By 2008, the term *operational framework*—which included the terms *deep*, *close*, and *rear*, *battlespace*, *battlefield organization*, and *area of interest*—was completely rescinded, leaving *decisive*, *shaping*, *sustaining*, and *main effort* as descriptors within the chapter on *command and control*.

The authors of *Unified Land Operations* considered the history and evolution of the operational framework in Army doctrine as they developed the new operating concept. As a result, *Unified Land Operations* reintroduces many terms rescinded in 2008 and returns the AirLand Battle term *supporting effort* to the lexicon.²⁵

The intent is to provide Army leaders with the broadest menu of terms for “clearly articulating their concept of operations in time, space, purpose, and resources,” while acknowledging that leaders “are not bound by any specific framework” and that leaders should use the frameworks “in combination.”²⁶ It is important to emphasize that none of these terms or concepts are new; rather, they have each proved their utility in some cases for 30 years.

Making stability operations equal to offensive and defensive operations represents the most significant and controversial doctrinal evolution of the past 30 years. The 2008 change represented a change in culture and philosophy that portends adjustments in Army priorities across all the domains of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF). General William Wallace, the commander of Training and Doctrine Command at the time, explicitly referred to the 2008 version of FM 3-0 as a “*revolutionary departure from past doctrine*” that recognized the Army’s need to operate among populations and

the fact that battlefield success was “no longer enough.”²⁷ Similarly, the 2008 version of FM 7-0, *Training for Full Spectrum Operations*, invalidated the practice of assuming that success in stability operations flowed from the Army’s ability to prosecute major combat operations:

During the Cold War, Army forces prepared to fight and win against a near-peer competitor. The Army’s training focus was on offensive and defensive operations in major combat operations. As recently as 2001, the Army believed that forces trained to conduct the offense and defense in major combat operations could conduct stability and civil support operations effectively... However, the complexity of today’s operational environments and commander’s legal and moral obligations to the population of an area of operations has shown that approach to be incorrect.²⁸

More than a reflection of Army experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, this change had been Department of Defense policy since 2005.²⁹ By 2008, Army doctrine emphasized the “essentiality of nonlethal actions with combat actions” and promoted stability operations tasks as “a central element of operations equal in importance to the offense and defense.”³⁰ The tasks associated with stability operations were not new to the Army, but the belief that stability operations could be “as important as—or more important than—offensive and defensive operations” was. The belief that these operations were not only the responsibility of specialized forces but also of general-purpose forces at every echelon was also new.³¹

At the same time, descriptors used to explain the application of full spectrum operations, such as “equal weight,” “parity,” and “balance,” subtly shifted the utility of the operating concept. For example, the section of FM 3-0 (2011) titled *Combining the Elements of Full Spectrum Operations* reads, “Commanders consider their missions, decide which tactics to use, and balance

...none of these terms or concepts are new...

the elements of full spectrum operations while preparing their concept of operations.” The chapter also discusses how “commanders analyze the situation carefully to *achieve a balance* between lethal and nonlethal actions.” While the presence of the word “balance” does not discredit the usefulness of an operating concept like full spectrum operations, it is important to acknowledge that “achieving balance” or using a “balanced approach” to operations does not produce any effect on an enemy or equate to winning.

It is also important to recognize how pervasive the use of the term “balance” has become in Army and national security parlance. The 2010 *National Security Strategy*, for example, discusses *rebalancing* military capabilities “to excel at counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and stability operations.”³² The *U.S. Army Forces Command Campaign Plan* acknowledges that the current operational tempo has left an Army *out of balance* to meet its full spectrum operations obligations.³³ The *2009 Army Posture Statement* notes, “After seven years of continuous combat, our Army remains *out of balance*, straining our ability to . . . maintain strategic depth.” In fact, *restoring balance* is referred to 16 times in the statement.³⁴ While “balance” in this context refers to many of the DOTMLPF domains, it also clearly refers to the loss of the Army’s capability to conduct major combat operations because of its almost exclusive focus on stability operations.

The new operational concept, *unified land operations*, seeks to refocus leaders on arranging activities and forces to achieve a position of relative advantage over the enemy by seizing, exploiting, and retaining the initiative—a marked difference from language calling for achieving “balance” between combat and stability tasks or lethal and nonlethal tasks.

Operational art is the final significant topic of evolutionary doctrinal change that influenced the development of *Unified Land Operations*. AirLand Battle doctrine introduced the term in 1986, but did not associate it with any particular Army echelon or level of war. The doctrine stated, “No particular echelon of command is solely or uniquely concerned with operational art.”³⁵ The implication was that *every* Army echelon had a stake in sequencing actions contributing to the

accomplishment of strategic goals. The 1993 version of FM 100-5 retained this language, although it embedded operational art within the chapter on the operational level of war. By 2008, the importance of operational art as a concept gave rise to a chapter on it, but its applicability across echelons had changed. Doctrine restricted the use of operational art to the operational level of war by stating explicitly that operational art was “applied only at the operational level.”³⁶ By 2011, this caveat had been removed, leaving it once again less restrictive: “Operational art integrates ends, ways, and means across the levels of war.”³⁷

The Army’s latest operating concept, *unified land operations*, embraces the joint definition of operational art, but decouples it from the levels of war and from echelons. It states: “Operational art is not associated with a specific echelon or formation, and . . . applies to any formation that must effectively arrange multiple tactical actions in time, space, and purpose to achieve a strategic objective, in whole or in part.”³⁸

Many authors have examined applying operational art across echelons and levels of war, and we will not perform another such examination here. This article discusses operational art only to demonstrate its connections with earlier Army operating concepts like full spectrum operations and to highlight its importance for how the Army intends to fight in the future.

Unified Land Operations

The foundations of current Army doctrine have links to key ideas articulated in AirLand Battle in the 1993 version of FM 100-5 and in the Army’s most recent operating concept—full spectrum operations. AirLand Battle emphasized initiative, operational art, and operations as part of a joint force. The 1993 version of FM 100-5 introduced battle command and full-dimension operations, initiated a discussion of conditions for conflict resolution, and raised operations other than war to the level of combat operations. In the decade that full spectrum operations served as the Army’s operating concept, the Army expanded the meaning of battle command, incorporated it within mission command. It discarded or changed the terms *operational framework* and *operational art*. Operations other than war became stability



Republic of Korea Army soldiers with U.S. soldiers from the 75th Mechanized Infantry Brigade and 2-9th Infantry, 1st HBCT, dismount their armored personnel carriers during a combined arms live fire exercise, 15 April 2010.

operations—and equal in importance to major combat operations.

To a great extent, the Army carried forward the most useful aspects of each of these ideas into the new operating concept of unified land operations. The definition of unified land operations is “to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative to gain and maintain a position of relative advantage in sustained land operations through simultaneous offensive, defensive, and stability operations in order to prevent or deter conflict, prevail in war, and create the conditions for favorable conflict resolution.” The definition cements the best ideas of past doctrine into one statement that reaffirms the intent of all Army operations, regardless of conditions, environment, or operational context.

In addition, *Unified Land Operations* stresses the importance of mission command and operational art and returns to doctrine many of the terms used in the past to describe the battlefield and operational frameworks. The title, *Unified Land Operations*, implies that the Army operates as part of a joint, interagency, or international coalition, and the FM explicitly states that the Army’s contribution to unified action requires the “full integration of U.S. military operations with the efforts of

coalition partners and other government agencies.”³⁹ The evolution of these ideas and constructs as well as the reasons for their inclusion within *Unified Land Operations* have already been described.

The 2011 version of ADP 3-0 offers two additional ideas that demand introduction. One, lethality, is certainly not a new idea, but its articulation as “the most basic building block for military operations” is. The second, the introduction of *combined arms maneuver* and *wide area security* as the Army’s two core competencies, represents an important addition whose utility and meaning require further discussion.

Previous versions of FM 3-0 described lethal actions as “critical to accomplishing offensive and defensive missions,” and stated, “Offensive and defensive operations place a premium on employing the lethal effects of combat power against the enemy.” On the other hand, stability and civil support operations emphasize *nonlethal* actions: “Army forces employ a variety of nonlethal means in stability and civil support operations. . . Stability and civil support operations emphasize nonlethal, constructive actions by Soldiers.”⁴⁰

Army Doctrinal Publication 3-0 departs from this philosophy, stating that “lethality is the foundation for effective offensive, defensive, and stability operations,” and that “lethality is a persistent requirement for Army organizations, even in conditions where only the implicit threat of violence is sufficient to accomplish the mission through non-lethal engagements and activities.”⁴¹

These statements reflect a sentiment that an increasing number of Army practitioners express, that the U.S. Army’s capability and capacity to apply lethal force provide it with the credibility and skills for success in all types of operations and distinguish it from other government institutions and even from other armies of the world.⁴² Recognition of *lethality as the foundation of all other military capabilities* is sure to be controversial, but that should not detract from the statement the doctrine makes about the underlying purpose of the U.S. Army, nor from the focus it provides to Army units and leaders for training and operations in the future.

The introduction of *combined arms maneuver* and *wide area security* as core competencies is the second significant addition ADP 3-0 offers. Combined arms maneuver is the means by which units gain and maintain the initiative within an operation, while wide area security is the means by which units deny the initiative to the enemy. These two core competencies help Army forces defeat or destroy an enemy, seize or occupy key terrain, protect or secure critical assets and populations, and prevent the enemy from gaining a position of advantage. Army forces use them in combination and execute them through a combination of offense, defense, and stability operations. For example, in a counterinsurgency operation against a substantial internal or external threat, one set of units or Army systems may focus on exploiting the initiative through offensive operations—i.e., is enemy focused; and another, collaboratively and correspondingly, may focus on retaining the initiative through stability operations—i.e., is population focused. This does not imply that the units perform these missions exclusively; different units have different priorities that support the larger operation's broader goals, end states, and strategies, regardless of echelon.

ADP 3-0 defines *combined arms maneuver* as “the application of the elements of combat power in unified action to defeat enemy ground forces, seize, occupy, and defend land areas, to achieve physical, temporal, and psychological advantages over the enemy in order to seize and exploit the initiative.” *Wide area security* is “the application of the elements of combat power in unified action to protect population, forces, infrastructure, and activities, deny the enemy positions of advantage, and consolidate gains in order to retain the initiative.”⁴³ Together they provide a cognitive tool for orienting combat power through offense, defense, and stability operations toward two related purposes: namely, gaining and exploiting the initiative and preventing the enemy from obtaining it.

It is important to note that wide area security and combined arms maneuver do not supplant offense, defense, and stability operations, nor are they intended for use as tactical tasks. Instead, they provide commanders a means to describe the arrangement of tactical actions and/or the

application of combat power to achieve a position of advantage over an enemy. The core competencies are applicable in all Army operations, at all echelons. Used properly they provide a cognitive tool to assist commanders in describing their vision and orienting forces to purpose.

Conclusion

This article has explored the logic behind the adaptation and adoption of the Army's new operating concept, unified land operations. As noted by General Martin Dempsey, select, unified land operations were a “natural intellectual outgrowth” of AirLand Battle and full spectrum operations.⁴⁴ Unified land operations embrace past concepts that have the most utility for success today and in the future, concepts that proved their utility during 30 years of application in places like Panama, Kuwait, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

The article also introduces concepts that are new or unique to unified land operations. While discussions of lethality are certainly not new, championing lethality as the “foundation for all other military capabilities” by acknowledging a lethal capability as necessary, *a priori*, to accomplishing all Army missions—combat and otherwise—is a sharp departure from earlier Army doctrine. This emphasis communicates that the Army's unique, core capability—its expert application of lethal force during sustained land operations—is what sets the Army apart from every other government, military, and international institution.

The core competencies of combined arms maneuver and wide area security are the only truly new constructs within unified land operations. They will assist commanders in describing the arrangement of tactical actions with the elements of combat power to achieve a position of advantage *vis-à-vis* the enemy. They do not represent radical departures from earlier doctrine, but rather new cognitive tools that bind existing Army operations—offense, defense, and stability—to the purpose of gaining or retaining the initiative. In other words, *they link the emphasis on initiative found in AirLand Battle with the operating concept described by full spectrum operations.*⁴⁵

The adoption of unified land operations continues the long tradition of meaningful

doctrinal evolution within the Army. Certainly, future additions of ADP 3-0 and related doctrinal manuals will address important elements of doctrine not fully developed within the 2011 versions, such as a definition of *combat power*, to include the role of the leader and leadership in successful Army operations. This enduring construct has been central to Army doctrine for years, but the current version of ADP 3-0 does not fully discuss it. Another area needing more discussion is how the practitioners of operational art are influenced by and account for tactical, operational, and strategic risks. Other themes and ideas may require more discussion as well.

Unified land operations amplify the utility of initiative, full spectrum operations, and mission command. Army doctrine recognizes lethality's importance in all operations and introduces combined arms maneuver and wide area security as means to link offense, defense, and stability operations to the purpose of gaining and maintaining the initiative.

The Army's contribution to unified action—unified land operations—are how the Army will succeed in sustained land operations as part of a joint or combined force. They are also the foundation for future doctrinal development to carry the Army through the many emerging challenges it will face in the coming decades. **MR**

NOTES

1. For consistency, this article uses the term *operating concept* to describe the Army's central doctrinal themes or constructs. Operating concept is used because of existing connotations attached to the other terms as well as their association with specific time periods or previous version of FM 100-5 and FM 3-0. For example, the 1986 version of FM 100-5 refers to AirLand Battle as the Army's *warfighting doctrine*. The 2008 version of FM 3-0 refers to *full spectrum operations* as the Army's *operational concept*. Other editions of FM 3-0 are without a clearly articulated central theme altogether.
2. Clayton R. Newell, *On Operational Art* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1994): 13-14.
3. Bruce W. Menning, "Operational Art's Origins," *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2007): 15.
4. FM 100-5, *Operations*, is the predecessor to FM 3-0, *Operations*. Under the new initiative known as Army Doctrine 2015, the Army's capstone manuals are now Army Doctrinal Publications (ADPs). Army Doctrinal Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, is the first manual published under this construct.
5. FM 100-5, *Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 1986), 14-15.
6. John S. Brown, "The Maturation of Operational Art," *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2007), 459-73.
7. FM 100-5 (1986), 2.
8. *Ibid.*, 5.
9. Robert T. Davis II, *The Challenge of Adaptation: The U.S. Army in the Aftermath of Conflict, 1953-2000*, *Long War Occasional Paper 27* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 1.
10. *Ibid.*, 84-100. Also see Geoffrey R. Gerlach, "Pentagon Myths and Global Realities: the 1993 Military Budget," CATO Policy Analysis No. 171. CATO Institute, 24 May 1973. <<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-171.html>> (22 July 2011).
11. FM 100-5 (1993), iv.
12. *Ibid.*, 1-4 and Glossary-4.
13. FM 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2001), 1-4.
14. The September 2011 publication of ADP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, replaces the term *full spectrum operations* with the term *decisive action* to describe the simultaneous execution of offense, defense, stability, and defense support of civilian authorities. This change was made because of the tendency within the Army to equate full spectrum operations with major combat operations. None of the descriptive or qualifying language used to describe the construct was changed.
15. FM 100-5 (1993), 2-12.
16. *Ibid.*, 6-23.
17. FM 3-0 (2001), viii.
18. FM 3-0 (2008), 3-1.
19. FM 3-0 (2001), 4-1.
20. *Ibid.*, 5-3.
21. FM 3-0 (2008), 5-19.

22. FM 3-0 (2011), 4-5.
23. The 1986 and 1993 versions of FM 100-5 used the term *battlefield framework*. This was changed with the publication of the 2001 version of FM 3-0 to *operational framework*, which included a section titled *battlefield organization*. The 2008 version of FM 3-0 uses neither term.
24. FM 3-0 (2001), 4-18 to 4-25.
25. In unified land operations, *deep-close-security* replaces *deep-close-rear*. This change reflects the reality and importance of the domains of cyber/electronic warfare, space, and other threats not confined to a rear area. The term "rear area" may still have utility when describing the arrangement of friendly forces but is not included as part of the operational framework.
26. Draft Army Doctrinal Publication 3-0, *Operations* v9.5 (July 2011), 10.
27. FM 3-0 (2008), Foreword.
28. FM 7-0, *Training for Full Spectrum Operations* (Washington DC: GPO, 2008), 1-6.
29. U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 3000.05 (Washington, DC: 2005). DODD 3000.05 states, "Stability operations are a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct with proficiency equivalent to combat operations." This policy was renewed in 2009.
30. FM 3-0 (2008), vii-viii.
31. FM 3-0 (2011), x.
32. *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2010), 14.
33. United States Army Forces Command, *U.S. Army Forces Command Campaign Plan 2011-2015* (Atlanta, GA: October 2010).
34. U.S. Army, *Army Posture Statement* (May 2009).
35. FM 100-5 (1986), 10.
36. FM 3-0 (2008), 6-1.
37. JP 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 13 February 2008), GL-21.
38. Draft Army Doctrinal Publication 3-0, 9.
39. Draft Army Doctrinal Publication 3-0. The principle of *integration* on page 7 of ADP 3-0 captures the necessity of operating as part of a joint, interagency, or multinational coalition.
40. FM 3-0 (2011), 3-4, 3-5.
41. Draft Army Doctrinal Publication 3-0, 7.
42. COL Craig A. Collier, "Now That We're Leaving What Did We Learn?" *Military Review* (September-October 2010): 89. For more on the relative importance of lethality in stability operations see also MAJ Kenneth Burgess, "Transformation and the Irregular Gap," *Military Review* (November-December 2009): 29; and LTC William E. Benson, "Major Combat Operations v. Stability Operations: Getting Army Priorities Correct," *Advanced Operational Arts Studies Fellowship Monograph*, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2011.
43. Draft Army Doctrinal Publication 3-0, 6.
44. *Ibid.*, Foreword.
45. Now referred to as *Decisive Action* with the adoption of ADP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*.