

FM 3-90.6

Brigade Combat Team

September 2010

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Brigade Combat Team

Contents

	Page
PREFACE	vii
SUMMARY of CHANGES	viii
Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION	1-1
Section I – Role of the Brigade Combat Team	1-1
Operational Environment.....	1-1
Full spectrum Operations.....	1-4
Tactical Enabling Operations.....	1-6
Section II – Organization and Capabilities	1-6
Heavy Brigade Combat Team.....	1-7
Infantry Brigade Combat Team.....	1-10
Stryker Brigade Combat Team	1-12
Section III – Brigade Combat Team Command and Control	1-15
Brigade Combat Team Mission Command.....	1-15
Command and Control Organizations	1-18
Staff	1-20
Centers	1-21
Command Post Cells and Elements	1-22
Meetings, Working Groups, and Boards.....	1-24
Information Systems.....	1-25
Chapter 2 OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS	2-1
Section I – Fundamentals of a Brigade Combat Team Offense	2-1
Characteristics of the Offense.....	2-1
Sequence of Offensive Operations	2-2
Section II – Common Offensive Planning Considerations	2-3
Movement and Maneuver.....	2-3
Intelligence.....	2-3
Fires.....	2-4
Sustainment.....	2-4
Command and Control	2-4

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	Protection.....	2-5
	Section III – Forms of Maneuver	2-5
	Envelopment.....	2-5
	Turning Movement	2-5
	Infiltration	2-6
	Penetration.....	2-6
	Frontal Attack.....	2-7
	Section IV – Primary Offensive Tasks	2-8
	Movement to Contact	2-8
	Hasty and Deliberate Attacks.....	2-12
	Exploitation and Pursuits.....	2-13
	Special Purpose Attacks.....	2-14
	Section V – Transitions.....	2-16
	Section VI – Combat Formations.....	2-17
	Column	2-17
	Line.....	2-17
	Echelon.....	2-17
	Box	2-18
	Wedge	2-18
	Vee	2-18
Chapter 3	DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS.....	3-1
	Section I – Fundamentals of a Brigade Combat Team Defense	3-1
	Characteristics of the Defense.....	3-1
	Common Planning Considerations.....	3-3
	Common Control Measures.....	3-6
	Section II – Primary Defensive Tasks.....	3-11
	Area Defense	3-12
	Mobile Defense	3-20
	Retrograde Operations.....	3-21
	Section III – Transitions	3-28
	Consolidation	3-28
	Reorganization.....	3-28
	Continuing Operations.....	3-29
Chapter 4	STABILITY OPERATIONS	4-1
	Section I – Overview.....	4-1
	Responsibilities	4-1
	Tasks	4-1
	Section II – Brigade Combat Team Stability Tasks	4-2
	Establish Civil Security	4-2
	Establish Civil Control.....	4-3
	Restore Essential Services.....	4-5
	Support to Governance	4-5
	Support to Economic and Infrastructure Development	4-6
	Section III – Considerations for Stability Operations	4-6
	Lethal and Nonlethal Actions	4-7
	Warfighting Function Considerations	4-7

	Assessment of Stability Operations	4-13
	Section IV – Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Nongovernmental Organizations	4-13
	Section V – Transitions.....	4-14
	Preparing for Handover	4-15
	Ending the Mission	4-15
	Section VI – Security Force Assistance	4-15
	Security Force Assistance Framework	4-15
	Augmentation.....	4-16
Chapter 5	SECURITY OPERATIONS.....	5-1
	Section I – Overview.....	5-1
	Purpose	5-1
	Reconnaissance.....	5-1
	Counterreconnaissance.....	5-2
	Section II – Fundamentals and Planning Considerations	5-2
	Fundamentals of Security.....	5-2
	Planning Considerations.....	5-2
	Section III – Screen	5-3
	Critical Tasks	5-3
	Stationary Screen.....	5-3
	Moving Screen	5-7
	Section IV – Guard	5-7
	Advance Guard	5-8
	Flank Guard	5-8
	Rear Guard	5-9
	Section V – Cover.....	5-9
	Covering Force.....	5-9
	Section VI – Security.....	5-10
	Area Security	5-10
	Base Security.....	5-13
Chapter 6	RECONNAISSANCE OPERATIONS	6-1
	Section I – OVERVIEW	6-1
	Purpose of Reconnaissance Operations in the Brigade Combat Team.....	6-1
	Reconnaissance Squadron.....	6-2
	Section II – Intelligence.....	6-2
	Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield.....	6-3
	Intelligence Running Estimate	6-3
	Section III – Support to Reconnaissance Operations	6-4
	Synchronization.....	6-4
	Integration.....	6-4
	Section IV – Reconnaissance Considerations	6-5
	Commander’s Reconnaissance Decisions	6-5
	Commander’s Reconnaissance Guidance	6-6
	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Working Group	6-6
	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Plan Attachments	6-7

	Reconnaissance in Stability Operations.....	6-8
	Surveillance	6-9
	Section V – Forms of Reconnaissance	6-9
Chapter 7	FIRE SUPPORT IN THE BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM	7-1
	Section I – Brigade Combat Team Fire Support Organization	7-1
	Fires Cell.....	7-1
	Information Operations Cell	7-3
	Tactical Air Control Party.....	7-3
	Joint Fires Staff Augmentation.....	7-4
	Combat Observation and Lasing Teams.....	7-4
	Fires Battalion	7-4
	Section II – Fire Support Planning.....	7-4
	Decide, Detect, Deliver, and Assess Process	7-5
	Find, Fix, Finish, Exploit, Analyze, and Disseminate	7-10
	Targeting Meetings.....	7-11
	Section III – Fire Support Coordination.....	7-17
	Clearance of Fires and Information Tasks.....	7-18
	Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses.....	7-18
Chapter 8	AUGMENTING COMBAT POWER	8-1
	Section I – Engineering Operations.....	8-1
	Engineer Staff	8-1
	Engineer Companies.....	8-2
	Section II – Military Police Operations	8-2
	Military Police Platoon Capabilities	8-3
	Additional Military Police Support to the BCT.....	8-4
	Section III – Air and Missile Defense Operations.....	8-4
	ADAM/BAE Capabilities and Functions.....	8-4
	Airspace Management and Control.....	8-5
	Section IV – Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Operations	8-7
	CBRN Staff Section.....	8-7
	CBRN Reconnaissance.....	8-7
	Section V – Military Intelligence Company Support	8-8
	Employment and Planning Considerations.....	8-8
	Personnel and Equipment	8-9
	Section VI – Information Engagement.....	8-11
	Organization.....	8-11
	Planning.....	8-12
	Section VII – Civil Affairs Activities	8-14
	Civil Affairs Integration into the Brigade Combat Team	8-14
	Civil Affairs Units	8-14
	Civil-Military Operations Center	8-15
	Section VIII – Command and Control Information Systems	8-16
	Brigade Signal Company.....	8-16
	Network Systems Planning.....	8-17
	Section IX – External Augmentation to the Brigade Combat Team	8-18

	Support and Functional Brigades.....	8-18
	Other Brigades and Units	8-21
	Section X – Key Joint Assets, Forces, and Considerations	8-22
	Special Operations Forces	8-22
	Air Force Support	8-23
	Navy and Marine Forces	8-24
	Section XI – Multinational Considerations	8-25
Chapter 9	SUSTAINMENT OPERATIONS	9-1
	Section I – Brigade Combat Team Sustainment	9-1
	Sustainment Brigades	9-1
	Sustainment Functions	9-2
	Sustainment Staff and Organizations.....	9-3
	Sustainment Support Areas.....	9-4
	Mission Tailoring of Sustainment Assets.....	9-8
	Synchronization of Battle Rhythm and Sustainment Operations	9-8
	Sustainment Reach Operations	9-10
	Section II – Sustainment Planning.....	9-12
	Operational Contract Support	9-12
	Concept of Support	9-13
	Supporting Offensive Operations	9-13
	Supporting Defensive Operations	9-14
	Supporting Stability Operations in a Hostile Environment.....	9-14
GLOSSARY	Glossary-1
REFERENCES	References-1
INDEX	Index-1

Figures

Figure 1-1. Heavy, Infantry, and Stryker BCT organizations.....	1-7
Figure 1-2. Heavy Brigade Combat Team	1-7
Figure 1-3. Infantry Brigade Combat Team.....	1-10
Figure 1-4. Stryker Brigade Combat Team	1-13
Figure 1-5. BCT staff organization.....	1-21
Figure 1-6. Army Battle Command System.....	1-26
Figure 2-1. Example of a division conducting a turning movement.....	2-6
Figure 2-2. Example of two BCTs conducting a penetration.....	2-7
Figure 2-3. Example of a BCT frontal attack against a stationary enemy force	2-8
Figure 2-4. HBCT exploitation	2-13
Figure 2-5. SBCT conducting pursuit.....	2-14
Figure 2-6. Example of a raid	2-15
Figure 2-7. Example of an IBCT counterattack	2-16
Figure 3-1. Options for organizing the security area in a contiguous battlefield	3-7

Figure 3-2. Example of control measures used to coordinate defense by area of operation..... 3-8

Figure 3-3. BCT security areas in a noncontiguous battlefield..... 3-10

Figure 3-4. Typical HBCT organization of a contiguous area defense 3-12

Figure 3-5. Example of an IBCT forward defense 3-14

Figure 3-6. Delay by alternate positions 3-23

Figure 3-7. Delay by subsequent positions 3-24

Figure 3-8. Types of withdrawals..... 3-26

Figure 3-9. Method for organizing the detachment left in contact 3-27

Figure 5-1. HBCT as a division advance guard..... 5-8

Figure 5-2. Example of covering force plan 5-10

Figure 5-3. HBCT conducting area security 5-12

Figure 7-1. BCT fires cell 7-2

Figure 7-2. Fires battalions 7-4

Figure 8-1. BCT engineer companies..... 8-2

Figure 8-2. Heavy and Infantry BCT military intelligence company..... 8-9

Figure 8-3. Civil affairs company 8-15

Figure 8-4. Basic civil-military operations center structure 8-15

Figure 8-5. Support brigades..... 8-18

Figure 9-1. Sustainment organizations supporting the BCT 9-2

Figure 9-2. Support unit locations..... 9-6

Figure 9-3. Digital sustainment reporting 9-10

Tables

Table 1-1. Operational variables 1-2

Table 3-1. Forms of retrograde operations 3-21

Table 3-2. Comparison of methods of delay 3-24

Table 4-1. Organizations a BCT may work within an AO..... 4-14

Table 7-1. Example of high payoff target list..... 7-6

Table 7-2. Example of target selection standards 7-6

Table 7-3. Example of attack guidance matrix 7-6

Table 7-4. Examples of fire effects 7-7

Table 9-1. BCT sustainment categories and elements..... 9-3

Preface

Field manual 3-90.6 provides the commander and staff of the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) and subordinate units with doctrine relevant to Army and joint operations. It applies to the Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT), the Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), and the Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT). The doctrine described in this manual applies across the full spectrum of military operations – offense, defense, stability or civil support.

This publication:

- Provides BCTs with a framework in which they can operate as part of a division or independently as part of a joint task force.
- Provides doctrine for BCT commanders, staffs, and their subordinate commanders and leaders responsible for conducting major activities performed during operations.
- Serves as an authoritative reference for personnel who –
 - Develop doctrine (fundamental principles and tactics, techniques, and procedures), materiel, and force structure.
 - Develop institution and unit training.
 - Develop unit tactical standard operating procedures for BCT operations.
- Reflects and supports the Army operations doctrine found in FM 3-0, FM 5-0, and FM 6-0.

The proponent of this publication is the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. The preparing agency is the U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE), Fort Benning, Georgia. You may submit comments and recommended changes in any of several ways—U.S. mail, e-mail, fax, or telephone—as long as you use or follow the format of DA Form 2028, *Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms*. Contact information is as following:

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This publication applies to the Active Army, the Army National Guard (ARNG)/Army National Guard of the United States (ARNGUS), and the United States Army Reserve (USAR), unless otherwise stated.

Unless otherwise stated in this publication, masculine nouns and pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.

Summary of Changes

FM 3-90.6 has been revised based on doctrine and terminology changes in FM 3-0. In addition to doctrine changes, technology and organizational revisions have been included.

Another major influence on the development of this manual is an effort by the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, to reengineer doctrine by:

- Managing doctrine more effectively.
- Reducing the number of field manuals in order to focus on critical combined arms publications.
- Reducing the size of field manuals to facilitate ease of use, ease of maintenance, and clarity.

As a result, this field manual is considerably shorter than the previous edition. Information found in other doctrinal publications is not repeated but appropriate references are included. Consequently, readers should be familiar with the key field manuals that establish the foundation for the Army's doctrine. These key field manuals are:

- FM 1-02.
- FM 2-0.
- FM 3-0.
- FM 3-07.
- FM 3-13.
- FM 3-28.1.
- FM 3-90.
- FM 5-0.
- FM 6-0.
- FM 6-20.
- FM 6-22.
- FM 7-0.
- FM 7-15.

The significant changes and updates in this new manual include:

- Chapter 1 provides an overview of the role of the BCT, its organization and capabilities, and command and control.
- Chapter 2 describes the types of offensive operations the BCT conducts.
- Chapter 3 includes some changes to terminology and focuses on how a BCT performs defensive tasks.
- Chapter 4 is devoted to stability operations emphasizing its comparable status to offensive and defensive operations. It was restructured to comply with FM 3-0 and FM 3-07 doctrinal changes, counterinsurgency doctrine in FM 3-24, and to include contemporary concepts based on recent Southwest Asia experience.
- Chapter 5 includes minor changes emphasizing a brigade viewpoint of security operations to include an expanded section on area security.
- Chapter 6 includes reconnaissance and surveillance considerations for the BCT. It focuses on intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) synchronization and integration within the BCT.
- Chapter 7 has been reorganized to conform to doctrinal changes in an upcoming FM that will supersede FM 6-20.

- Chapter 8 covers organizations and activities formerly considered to be combat support, a construct deleted by FM 3-0. It also includes how the BCT uses information engagement and civil-military operations to shape the operational environment. It describes external elements that typically support BCT operations. It also describes doctrinal changes to engineer and site exploitation operations.
- Chapter 9 focuses on the sustainment missions of internal BCT assets, as well as potential augmentation. It also addresses sustainment planning considerations for offensive, defensive and stability operations.

Appendixes, which the previous manual contained, have been deleted.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Brigade Combat Team (BCT) is a modular organization that provides the division, land component commander (LCC), or joint task force (JTF) commander with close combat capabilities. BCTs are designed for operations encompassing the entire spectrum of conflict. They fight battles and engagements by employing the tactical advantages of a combined arms force structure. BCTs accomplish their missions by integrating the actions of maneuver battalions, field artillery, aviation, engineer, air and missile defense, close air support, and naval gunfire. The BCT's reconnaissance squadron and automated information systems give it information superiority over threat forces. These assets enable the BCT to gather large amounts of information, process it rapidly into intelligence, and disseminate it to decision-makers quickly. This chapter describes the role of the BCT, and how it is organized.

SECTION I – ROLE OF THE BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

1-1. Heavy, Infantry, and Stryker Brigade Combat Teams are the Army's combat power building blocks for maneuver, and the smallest combined arms units that can be committed independently. BCTs conduct offensive, defensive, stability and civil support operations. Their core mission is to close with the enemy by means of fire and maneuver to destroy or capture enemy forces, or to repel enemy attacks by fire, close combat, and counterattack. The BCT can fight without augmentation, but it also can be tailored to meet the precise needs of its missions. BCTs conduct expeditionary deployment and integrate the efforts of the Army with military and civilian, joint and multinational partners.

1-2. BCTs often operate as part of a division. The division acts as a tactical headquarters that can control up to six BCTs in high- or mid-intensity combat operations, plus a number of supporting functional brigades. The division assigns the BCT its mission, area of operations, and supporting elements, and coordinates its actions with other BCTs of the formation. The BCT might be required to detach subordinate elements to other brigades attached or assigned to the division. Usually the division assigns augmentation elements to the BCT. Fires brigades, battlefield surveillance brigades, maneuver enhancement brigades, sustainment brigades, and aviation brigades can all support BCT operations.

OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

1-3. The BCT's unique capabilities (discussed in Section II below) enable strategic and operational military planners to employ the BCT in a variety of conditions, circumstances, and influences. This composite is the operational environment (OE) (FM 1-02). The OE includes all enemy, friendly, and neutral systems across the spectrum of conflict. It also includes an understanding of the physical environment, the state of governance, technology, local resources, and the culture of the local population (FM 3-0).

1-4. The OE is fluid with continually changing coalitions, alliances, partnerships, and actors. Interagency and joint operations will be required to deal with a wide and intricate range of players occupying the environment. Science and technology, especially information technology, transportation technology, and global economic activity influence the OE. Other trends affect the environment in which the BCT operates. These include demographic changes, movement of populations to urban centers, the global proliferation of electronics and wireless transmissions, climate change, natural disasters, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their effects (FM 3-0).

OPERATIONAL VARIABLES

1-5. When the BCT is alerted for deployment, redeployment within a theater of operations, or assigned a mission, its higher headquarters provides an analysis of the OE. That analysis includes the operational variables defined in Table 1-1. As a set, these operational variables form the memory aid PMESII-PT. FM 3-0 provides a more detailed description of these operational variables.

Table 1-1. Operational variables

	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>P</i>	Political	The distribution of responsibility and power at all levels of governance.
<i>M</i>	Military	The military capabilities of all armed forces in a given operational environment.
<i>E</i>	Economic	Individual and group behaviors related to producing, distributing, and consuming resources.
<i>S</i>	Social	Societies within the environment. A society is a population whose members are subject to the same political authority, occupy a common territory, have a common culture, and share a sense of identity.
<i>I</i>	Information	The aggregate of individuals, organizations and systems that collect, process, disseminate, or act on information.
<i>I</i>	Infrastructure	The basic facilities, services, and installations needed to support the local population.
<i>P</i>	Physical Environment	Geography and manmade structures.
<i>T</i>	Time	Duration of an operation.

Source: FM 3-0

1-6. The operational variables describe aspects of the environment that are too broad for BCT tactical mission tasks. The BCT commander and staff refine the information about the operational variables and develop mission variables, focusing on those that provide mission-relevant information. Incorporating the operational variables into the mission analysis enhances the BCT commander's and the staff's understanding of the human aspects of the situation (e.g., language, culture, history, education, beliefs) that a mission analysis might otherwise not fully consider. Mission variables are mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, time available, and civil considerations (METT-TC) (FM 3-0).

THREAT IN THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

1-7. The BCT must be prepared to deploy anywhere in the world, and to operate against a wide range of threats anywhere within the spectrum of conflict. Some threats come in the form of nation-states. This could be a country or a coalition of countries. Threats can also come from entities that are not states, including insurgents, terrorists, drug traffickers, and other criminal organizations. These non-state actors may use force to further their own interests and threaten the interests of the U.S. or other nation-states. Non-state threats can exist in isolation or in combination with other non-state or nation-state threats.

Enemy Forces

1-8. The dynamics of warfare between open and complex terrain tactical environments have changed. Recent military operations emphatically demonstrate the value of integrated joint operations. Joint attributes, such as superiority and naval supremacy, enable the BCT to deploy and maneuver freely. To mass combat power, the enemy force needs to maneuver, and when it maneuvers, the enemy force exposes itself to concentrated firepower delivered by joint fires. To avoid exposing his forces, the enemy commander must move his mounted forces with far greater care, seeking cover in towns, villages, and

broken ground. Generally, the difficulty of operating mechanized forces without air superiority limits the enemy to dispersed, positional operations, and to limited, local counter attacks along concealed routes.

1-9. The US military operational concept features close cooperation between highly mobile forces on the ground and air component elements. Because the enemy knows that Army and other air elements have devastating effects against moving mechanized forces in open terrain, he prefers to operate in complex terrain. He makes the best possible use of concealing and covering terrain to avoid exposure to air attack and direct fire engagements. Thus, the BCT must optimize ground tactical formations for operations in complex, rather than open, terrain.

1-10. In this century, the likelihood of having U.S. forces fighting in urban areas has increased. This is partly because the enemy seeks asymmetric advantages, and partly because the rapid worldwide growth of urbanization makes it difficult to avoid. It is also because of the strategic and operational value of urbanized centers. Cities are vital national resources, and their prompt liberation or seizure can become a political imperative. Moreover, clearing them might become a military, as well as a political, necessity because cities provide sanctuary for vital war-supporting systems, from long-range missiles to command and control (C2). Finally, adversary states or failed states might not choose to, or be able to, oppose U.S. intervention with conventional forces and capabilities but might pursue their strategic aims unconventionally in the challenging terrain of major urban centers. Although the conventional wisdom still might be to defer clearing large urban complexes, strategic necessity often requires land combat forces to enter and control cities.

Conventional Military Forces

1-11. Most of today's conventional military forces have been equipped and organized to meet national needs in regional settings against neighboring states. The U.S. military, with its superior technological, organizational, and strategic capabilities, usually can dominate these regionally focused militaries. However, an alliance of several of these smaller nations could produce a military force capable of challenging the U.S. Army.

Unconventional Military Forces

1-12. Enemies of U.S. policy that do not have capabilities to match the U.S. military must use adaptive methods to achieve their goals. These nations use creative tactics and new technologies to enable them to challenge U.S. forces. Extra-national groups such as insurgents, terrorists, drug traffickers, and other criminal organizations also use unconventional means to oppose U.S. efforts to constrain them.

Enemy Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

1-13. Our enemy's goal is to defeat the BCT's ability to achieve and maintain situational awareness. Towards this goal the enemy employs deception activities and electronic warfare to include:

- Modifying their operations to create false battlefield presentations and reduce signatures through deliberate and expedient means to frustrate intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). The enemy attempts to deceive the BCT by showing it exactly what it expects to see which complicates the process of detecting and assessing threats.
- Positioning decoys and deception minefields in locations where the BCT expects to see them and emplacing real mines where the BCT does not anticipate them.
- Masking the signatures of high-value systems. Differentiating between valid and invalid targets consumes time and affects reconnaissance and surveillance capabilities through deception and dispersion.
- Masking the impact of effects by deception, tampering with indicators, or propaganda to degrade our ability to properly assess the results of operations.
- Exploiting our dependence on wireless networks, electronics, and computer networks by launching electronic warfare attacks.

1-14. In complex terrain, opponents attempt to deploy undetected by BCT forces. They employ low-signature weapons that are difficult to detect, making protection difficult. This raises the level of

uncertainty for moving forces, slowing the pace of BCT maneuver, and thereby making the BCT more vulnerable.

1-15. Enemies seek to complicate BCT targeting by deploying in close proximity to BCT forces, or through shielding forces in cities, among civilian populations, or within landmarks and social or religious structures.

1-16. Enemies conduct operations in a dispersed manner to degrade the BCT's target acquisition and reduce signature. In this operational environment, enemy planning tends to be centralized, and execution is decentralized through coordinated operations. Target effects may be difficult to achieve due to dispersion and signature reduction.

Enemy in Major Combat Operations

1-17. Enemy forces in major combat operations (MCO) oppose U.S. forces with a variety of means including high-technology niche capabilities built into mechanized, motorized, and light Infantry forces. Possible enemy equipment includes newer generation tanks and Infantry fighting vehicles, significant numbers of antitank guided missile (ATGM) systems, rocket propelled grenades, man-portable air defense (MANPADS) weapons, advanced fixed- and/or rotary-wing aviation assets, missiles, rockets, artillery, mortars, mines, and advanced nonlethal capabilities. The enemy can field large numbers of Infantry and robust military and civilian communications systems. In addition, they may possess weapons of mass destruction. Enemy forces may be capable of long-term resistance using conventional formations such as divisions and corps, as well as sustained unconventional operations and protracted warfare.

Enemy in Irregular Warfare

1-18. The threat during irregular warfare is likely to be from insurgents, guerrillas, or terrorists. These enemies are highly motivated. They are capable of employing advanced communications and precision weapons (e.g., guided mortar rounds, MANPADS missiles). In addition, they can use ground-based sensors in varying combinations with conventional weapons, mines, and improvised explosive devices (IED). They attempt to shape the information environment to their advantage through such activities as suicide attacks. The threat executes these actions to attract high-profile media coverage or local publicity, and inflate perceptions of insurgent capabilities. Assassinations, kidnappings, and other terrorist acts are common techniques. This type of enemy makes it essential that the BCT uses information engagement with the local population. Whenever possible, the BCT operates in support of host nation government forces, rather than acting as the lead organization. This means task organizing with civil affairs (CA), military information support operations (MISO), and special operations forces (SOF) elements to restore law and order alongside multi-national forces.

FULL SPECTRUM OPERATIONS

1-19. A BCT operates in a framework of full spectrum operations. FM 3-0 provides a discussion of full spectrum operations, which includes offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support tasks conducted simultaneously. The operational theme under which the joint force operates helps the BCT commander determine the mix of full spectrum operations in which the BCT will participate.

1-20. Offensive operations are combat operations conducted to defeat and destroy enemy forces and seize terrain, resources, and population centers. They impose the commander's will on the enemy. In combat operations, the offense is the decisive element of full spectrum operations. Chapter 2 describes how BCTs conduct the following types of offensive operations:

- Movement to contact.
- Attack.
- Exploitation.
- Pursuit.

1-21. Defensive operations are combat operations conducted to defeat an enemy attack, gain time, economize forces, and develop conditions favorable for offensive or stability operations. Defensive operations can secure and protect areas in which forces conduct stability operations. Defensive operations

counter enemy offensive operations. They defeat attacks by destroying as much of the attacking enemy as possible. They also preserve control over land, resources, and populations. Defensive operations retain terrain, guard populations, and protect critical capabilities against enemy attacks. Chapter 3 describes how BCTs conduct, or participate as part of, the following defensive operations:

- Mobile defense.
- Area defense.
- Retrograde.

1-22. Stability operations encompass various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power. The goals are to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief (Joint Publication [JP] 3-0). Forces can conduct stability operations in support of a host nation or interim government, or as part of an occupation when no government exists. Stability operations involve both coercive and constructive military actions. They help to establish a safe and secure environment, and facilitate reconciliation among local or regional adversaries. Stability operations also can help establish political, legal, social, and economic institutions and support the transition to legitimate local governance. Chapter 4 describes how BCTs can perform, or assist in, the following primary stability tasks:

- Civil security.
- Civil control.
- Restoration of essential services.
- Support to governance.
- Support to economic and infrastructure development.

1-23. Civil support is Department of Defense support to U.S. civil authorities for domestic emergencies, and for designated law enforcement and other activities (JP 1-02). Civil support includes operations that address the consequences of natural or manmade disasters, accidents, terrorist attacks, and incidents in the United States and its territories. Army forces conduct civil support operations when the size and scope of events exceed the capabilities or capacities of domestic civilian agencies. The National Guard is suited to conduct these missions; however, the scope and level of destruction may require states to request assistance from Federal authorities. FM 3-28.1 provides more information about these operations.

1-24. BCTs can perform, or support, the following primary civil support tasks:

- Provide support in response to disaster or terrorist attack.
- Support civil law enforcement.
- Provide other support as required.

1-25. The simultaneous conduct of full spectrum operations requires careful assessment, prior planning, and unit preparation as commanders shift their combinations of full spectrum operations. This begins with an assessment of the situation to determine which primary tasks are applicable, and the priority for each. For example, a division assigns a BCT an area of operations and the tasks of eliminating any enemy remnants, securing a dam, and conducting stability operations following a joint offensive phase. The BCT commander determines that the brigade has an immediate primary stability task of establishing civil security—to establish a safe and secure environment in its area of operation and to protect the dam. Simultaneously, the BCT staff begins planning for the next phase in which civil control, and assisting the local authorities with restoring essential services will become priorities while continuing to protect the dam. Reconnaissance and security operations, joint information operations, and protection are continuous. The commander assigns tasks to subordinates, modifies the BCT task organization, replenishes, and requests additional resources if required. Depending on the length of operations, the higher headquarters may establish unit training programs to prepare units for certain tasks.

1-26. When conditions change, commanders adjust the emphasis among the elements of full spectrum operations in the concept of operations. When an operation is phased, these changes are included in the plan. The relative weight given to each element varies with the actual or anticipated conditions. It is reflected in tasks assigned to subordinates, resource allocation, and task organization. Full spectrum

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