

URBAN OPERATIONS

OCTOBER 2006

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Urban Operations

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Preface

Doctrine provides a military organization with a common philosophy, a language, a purpose, and unity of effort. Rather than establishing a set of hard and fast rules, the objective of doctrine is to foster initiative and creative thinking. To this end, FM 3-06 discusses major Army operations in an urban environment. This environment, consisting of complex terrain, a concentrated population, and an infrastructure of systems, is an operational environment in which Army forces will operate. In the future, it may be the predominant operational environment. Each urban operation is unique and will differ because of the multitude of combinations presented by the threat, the urban area itself, the major operation of which it may be part (or the focus), and the fluidity of societal and geopolitical considerations. Therefore, there will always exist an innate tension between Army doctrine, the actual context of the urban operation, and future realities. Commanders must strike the proper balance between maintaining the capability to respond to current threats and preparing for future challenges.

PURPOSE

This manual provides the analytical tools for evaluating an urban operation to determine if the operation is necessary for overall mission success. It also provides the means to understanding and determining the impacts of the urban environment on military operations and provides information on managing, taking advantage of, and mitigating the effects of those impacts as appropriate. As such, this manual demonstrates how to apply the doctrinal principles in FM 3-0 to this unique environment.

SCOPE

Chapter 1 introduces theoretical and historical perspectives of urban operations that serve as the underlying basis for the rest of the manual. While this manual has incorporated lessons learned from recent and ongoing operations, it has deliberately taken a broad and varied historical perspective in order to remain relevant to future threats and circumstance differing from those that the Army currently faces. Chapter 2 discusses the characteristics of urban centers and populations as well as their impact on operations. It is unlikely that Army forces will ever operate in a benign urban environment; therefore, Chapter 3 discusses the varied nature of potential urban threats. Chapter 4 describes the effects of the urban environment on warfighting functions and tactics. An understanding of the complexities of the urban environment, the nature of the enemy as an adaptive, learning opponent, and the effects of the environment on warfighting capabilities and skills is essential to sound decision making. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the potential costs of urban operations and risk reduction measures that the commander and his staff must consider early in their planning. These chapters also outline an urban operational framework and specific urban considerations that create the foundations necessary for successfully applying operational doctrine to an urban environment.

The second part of the manual (Chapters 7 – 10) discusses how urban operations are conducted and resourced. Urban operations include major offensive and defensive operations in urban environments as well as stability or civil support operations ranging from peace operations and counterterrorism to disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. For the different types of operations—offense, defense, and stability or civil support—the purpose, characteristics, organization, and considerations are discussed. However, commanders consider that most urban operations will normally involve the simultaneous execution of offense and defense with stability or civil support (although proportional emphasis will shift over time) and plan accordingly.

APPLICABILITY

This manual is intended for Army commanders and their staffs at the brigade level and above. It addresses full spectrum operations that Army units will execute in urban settings. However, users should also consult JP 3-06 for specific joint information. Additionally, users should be familiar with FM 3-06.1, FM 3-06.11, TC 90-1,

and urban operations chapters, appendices, or sections found in other infantry, armor, combined arms, and proponent field manuals for the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) and appropriate proponent information necessary to conduct tactical urban operations at the brigade level and below. This publication applies to the Active Army, the Army National Guard (ARNG)/Army National Guard of the United States (ARNGUS), and United States Army Reserve unless otherwise stated.

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

When this FM 3-06 was approved, doctrine was incomplete for incorporating stability operations and civil support operations in place of stability operations and support operations. This manual incorporates stability and reconstruction and civil support operations doctrine found in FM 1 and FMI 5-0.1; it will be revised to reflect the future updates of FM 3-0 and FM 3-07 and, when published, FM 3-28. (Note: Stability and reconstruction operations has been redesignated stability operations to comply with Department of Defense Directive 3000.05.)

Chapter 2 defines “city” according to a population size. However, in historical vignettes and accounts, the term “city” may be applied in its common usage without specific regard to size to maintain conformity with most other historical reports.

In this manual, the term “threat” is applied broadly to include an enemy force (conventional or unconventional), an armed belligerent in a peace operation, antagonistic or unfriendly elements of the civilian population, or some other hazardous condition in the urban environment that negatively influences mission accomplishment.

The term military operations on urban terrain (MOUT) is replaced by urban operations (UO). MOUT is an acronym from FM 90-10, which is superseded by this manual.

Otherwise, the glossary lists most terms used in FM 3-06 that have joint or Army definitions. Where Army and joint definitions are different, (Army) follows the term. Definitions for which FM 3-06 is the proponent manual (the authority) are marked with an asterisk (*). The proponent or amplifying manual for other terms is listed in parentheses after the definition.

The manual attempts to incorporate a broad range of historical vignettes into each chapter where the account supports the doctrinal line of reasoning. Two historical vignettes, however, were included as appendices (A and C) because of their longer lengths.

Unless this publication states otherwise, masculine nouns or pronouns do not refer exclusively to men.

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Chapter 1

The Urban Outlook

Today's security environment demands more from Army leaders than ever before. Army leaders must not only be able to lead Soldiers but also influence other people. They must be able to work with members of other Services and governmental agencies. They must win the willing cooperation of multinational partners, both military and civilian. But ultimately, the Army demands self-aware and adaptive leaders who can compel enemies to surrender in war and master the circumstances facing them in peace. Victory and success depend on the effectiveness of these leaders' organizations. Developing effective organizations requires hard, realistic, and relevant training.

FM 1

Given the prevalence of large cities throughout the world, Army forces will likely be required to conduct operations in, around, and over large urban areas. These operations will normally be in support of a joint force commander (JFC) conducting military operations pursuant to U.S. national security policy. This manual is designed to facilitate the planning and conduct of the full range and spectrum of land operations in a complex urban environment. Each urban environment and urban operation is unique; prescribing a specific doctrinal "solution" for each situation is impossible. Instead, this manual provides a framework to commanders and their staffs for understanding the urban environment, for analyzing and deciding whether or not to initiate urban operations (UO), and for applying operational doctrine to this complex environment. It also provides a broad base of historical vignettes and examples to help develop a refined analytical perspective and stimulate thought. The manual also includes some planning points and tactics and techniques to assist in preparing for and conducting UO. This information provides a foundation for approaching major UO. Combined with other joint and Army doctrine, this information also will help commanders and their staffs learn to adapt and succeed in this challenging environment.

THE PROSPECT OF URBAN OPERATIONS

1-1. The world is undergoing massive urbanization. Although exceptions exist, an overall trend of migration from rural to urban areas is occurring throughout the globe. (Australia, one of the world's most urbanized countries, is actually becoming less urbanized.) This trend is especially evident in developing nations. Combined with the exponential growth of the global population in the last quarter century, this migration has created massive urban areas that hold the centers of population, government, and economics in their respective regions. In many cases, rapid urbanization has overburdened already weak infrastructures, scarce resources, and a fragile economic base. As urbanization has changed the demographic landscape, potential enemies recognize the inherent danger and complexity of this environment to the attacker, and may view it as their best chance to negate the technological and firepower advantages of modernized opponents. Given the global population trends and the likely strategies and tactics of future threats, Army forces will likely conduct operations in, around, and over urban areas—not as a matter of fate, but as a deliberate choice linked to national security objectives and strategy, and at a time, place, and method of the commander's choosing.

Army Urban Operations

Army forces conduct UO either as one component of a larger operation or as a single operation focused totally on a specific urban environment. Major Army UO are often part of a joint and multinational effort requiring rigorous interagency and civil-military coordination that typically includes the full spectrum of military operations. Commanders of Army major operations must determine if UO are essential to mission accomplishment. If so, commanders must carefully integrate the operations into campaign planning to support the operational objectives of the JFC.

Army leaders conducting UO must—

- Understand the urban environment to determine decisive points.
- Shape the operation to set the conditions for success.
- Precisely mass the effects of combat power to thoroughly engage the decisive points that lead to centers of gravity.
- Continually consolidate gains essential to the retention of the initiative.
- Transition the urban area to the control of another force or agency or, ultimately, back to legitimate and functioning civilian control.

AN URBAN PERSPECTIVE

1-2. As a subset of all Army operations, UO are operations focused on an urban environment. UO include full spectrum operations—offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support—that may be executed, either sequentially or (more likely) simultaneously, during the conduct of a single urban operation (see figure 1-1). UO may be the sole mission of the commander or one of several tasks nested in a larger operation. Regardless of the types of operations conducted or whether the urban area is the single focus of the operation or only one component of a larger operation or campaign, the complex urban environment significantly affects the overall conduct of the mission.

1-3. When conceptualizing urban operations, commanders must understand two important terms: urban area and urban environment. The first is a subset of the second. An **urban area is a topographical complex where man-made construction or high population density is the dominant feature**. Focusing on urban areas means concentrating on the physical aspects of the area and their effects on weapons, equipment, line-of-sight, and tactics, techniques, and procedures. The **urban environment includes the physical aspects of the urban area as well as the complex and dynamic interaction and relationships between its key components—the terrain (natural and man-made), the society, and the supporting infrastructure—as an overlapping and interdependent system of systems**.

1-4. Importantly, commanders must also understand and consider that critical elements of the infrastructure may lie far beyond the area's physical confines. For example, the generating source providing power to the urban energy system is part of that system but may be located well outside of the urban area. Similarly, effects of the interaction between components of the infrastructure, located both inside and outside the urban area, extend well into smaller, neighboring urban areas and surrounding rural areas and often form their political, economic, and cultural focus. Understanding the total urban environment is essential to planning and conducting full spectrum urban operations.

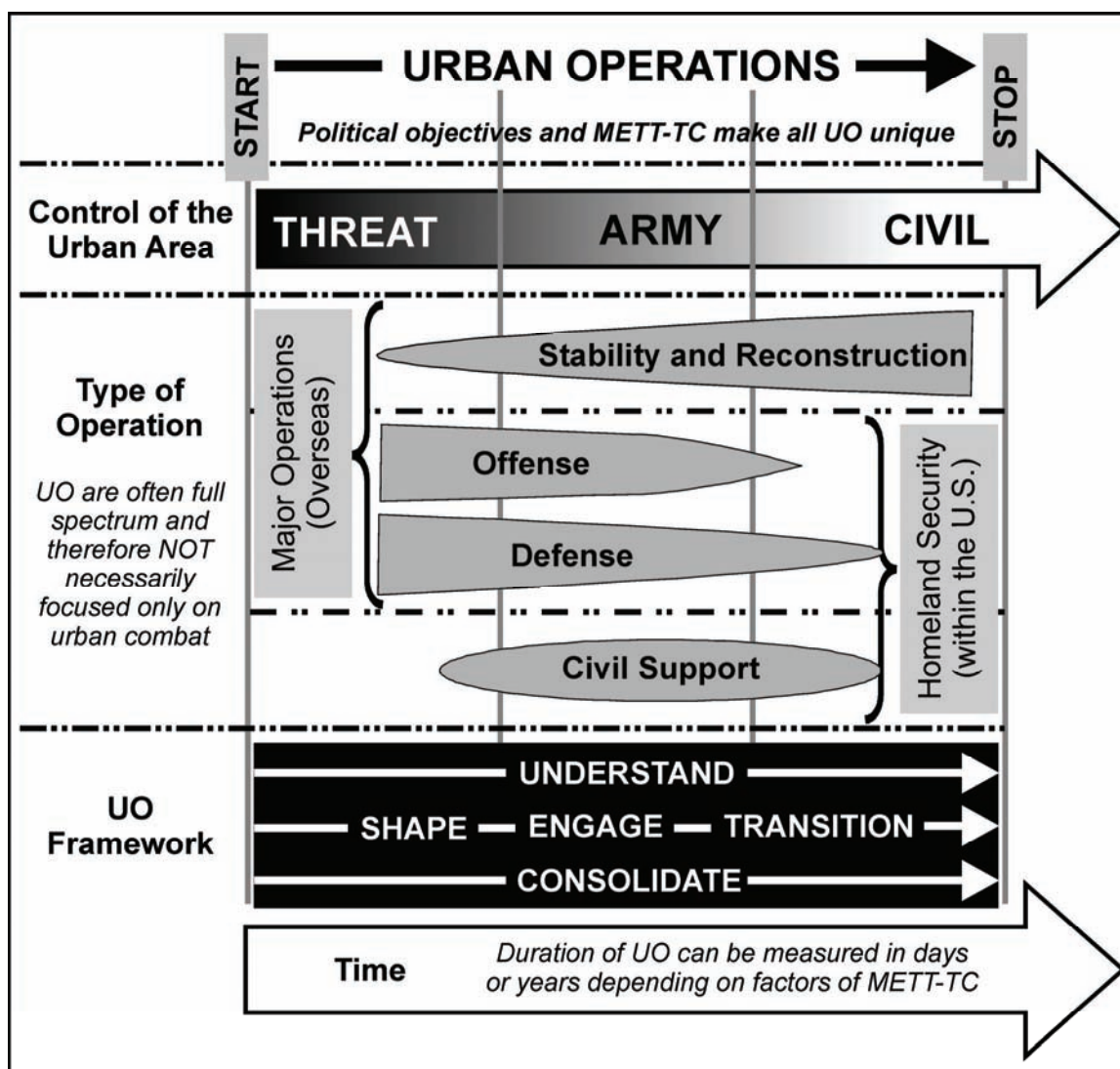


Figure 1-1. Full spectrum urban operations

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF URBAN AREAS IN WARFARE

1-5. Urban areas always have been central to, or have significantly influenced, military operations. One of the first urban-centered battles was the siege of Troy at the beginning of Greek history. Moreover, much of the history of early Greece revolved around wars between its city-states or with Persia and centered on the conquest, siege, or blockade of cities. Five hundred years later, the Roman Empire replaced Greece as the dominant world power; although, urban areas remained central to the Roman method of warfare. Even Rome's history can be viewed as a microcosm of urban warfare over the past two thousand years. Though military operations within the physical confines of many of these historic urban areas were not the norm, the focus of these operations was their conquest or control.

1-6. Although Rome last saw combat in 1944, urban areas have been no less prominent in warfare since that time. Seoul in Korea, Beirut in Lebanon, Panama City in Panama, Grozny in Chechnya, Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kabul in Afghanistan, and Baghdad in Iraq have been centers of conflict in the last 50 years. Urban areas, now more pervasive than ever before, will continue to be essential to successful

operational and strategic warfighting. Today, armies cannot expect to execute major military operations without the influence of the urban environments within their area of operations.

Rome: A Microcosm of Urban Warfare

During two millennia, Rome has been the center of at least 12 battles. The Gauls lay siege to Rome first in 387 BC. That first siege lasted six months and ended after the barbarians burnt much of the city. The surviving patrician families paid a ransom for the withdrawal of Brennus' army. From 408 to 410 AD, the Goth leader, Alaric, successfully besieged Rome no less than three times. The Byzantine General Belisarius captured Rome twice from the Goths and withstood siege inside the city once between 536 and 549. Five hundred years later in 1084, Norman adventurer Robert Guiscard captured medieval Rome and sacked the city during a dispute between the Pope and the Holy Roman Empire. Forces of the Holy Roman Empire again stormed and captured the city to punish the Pope in 1527. During the Italian Revolution in 1849, a French army supporting the Pope captured the city from the Italian revolutionary army under Garibaldi. In 1944, the last military action took place in and around Rome when the U.S. Fifth Army captured the city from the retreating German army. Rome's turbulent history—fought over ethnic and religious differences, prestige, and military necessity—demonstrates the importance of urban areas in warfare and the various causes and combatants within this complex environment.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF URBAN AREAS

1-7. Several reasons have attracted (and continue to attract) armies to combat in urban areas:

- A military force chooses to position itself in an urban area to capitalize on the perceived defensive advantages offered by the environment. In contrast, an opposing force, by analyzing the factors of the situation, determines that it must enter the urban area to attack and destroy its enemy (or devote essential combat power to their isolation).
- The urban environment's people (their allegiance and support), infrastructure, capabilities, or other resources have or can be of significant operational or strategic value.
- The urban area has significant symbolic importance.
- The urban area's geographical location dominates a region or avenue of approach.

1-8. Russia's 1994 experience in Chechnya illustrates an increasingly important motivation for conducting urban operations. The Chechen rebels, after failing to engage Russian forces outside the city, chose to turn Grozny into the main battlefield. Leaders of the defeated Chechen conventional forces recognized that fighting in the urban area provided them their best chance for success. The complexities of urban combat and the perceived advantages of defending an urban area mitigated their numerical and technological inferiority. The urban area provided the Chechens protection from fires, resources, interior lines, and covered and concealed positions and movement. Given such advantages offered by the environment, smaller or less-sophisticated military forces have similarly chosen to fight in urban areas either as a deliberate strategy or to escape certain destruction in open terrain.

1-9. Such advantages of operating in an urban environment also prompt forces to conduct an urban operation to facilitate a larger campaign plan and decisive battle in another location. The urban operation can focus the enemy on the urban area and allow other forces to conduct operations elsewhere. From a defensive perspective, an urban defense may gain time and space to reorganize forces in new defensive positions, to divert enemy forces from other critical tasks, or to prepare to conduct offensive operations. To some extent, these reasons motivated Soviet forces defending Leningrad and Stalingrad from the Germans in World War II. The stubborn defense permitted the Soviets to reorganize for later offensive operations. From an offensive perspective, an attack on an urban area may be a shaping operation used to divert enemy resources from the decisive operation that will follow.

1-10. Armies also fight in an urban area to obtain some critical feature or resource in the area, such as a port facility. The desire to control an important seaport and access to the Persian Gulf largely motivated the Iranian and Iraqi struggle for Basra in the 1980s. Earlier, in 1944, British forces fought German units in Arnhem for control of the Rhine River Bridge. Other key infrastructure of the urban environment may have operational or strategic significance and can compel military forces to attack or defend the area. As urban areas account for an increasing share of a country's national income, often generating over 50 percent of gross national product, the strategic implications for their control or influence become even greater.

1-11. Urban areas are often located on terrain that dominates a region or an avenue of approach. In these cases, offensive armies capture these areas to proceed with security to another objective. Conversely, defensive forces commonly defend the area to deny the area of operations. To illustrate, Cassino, Italy during World War II stood astride the critical highway approach up the Liri valley to Rome. The allies had to attack and capture the monastery to facilitate the allied offensive north. Cassino's location made bypassing virtually impossible. Likewise, in the early 1980's, Israeli army urban operations in Beirut were a result of its strategic location near the Israeli security zone; various Arab insurgent and terrorist groups used Beirut as a base for attacks against Israel. Beirut evolved as the major base of the Palestine Liberation Organization, a major opponent of Israel. Beirut's location made it a security threat to Israel and thus compelled several major Israeli operations in the urban area (see Appendix A).

1-12. Another reason for engaging in urban operations is the symbolic—historical, cultural, political, and even economic—importance of many urban areas. Often, capital cities—such as Rome, Paris, Seoul, Berlin, and Baghdad—are identified as the strategic centers of gravity of their respective nations. Possessing or threatening these urban areas may impact directly on the outcome of a conflict. The objective of Germany's wars with France in 1870 and 1914 was ultimately Paris. Napoleon's 1812 campaign had as its objective Moscow, as did Hitler's 1941 offensive into Russia. The objective of the Soviet 1945 offensive was Berlin, and the North Vietnamese 1975 offensive had as its objective the South's capital of Saigon. Still, history also reminds us that commanders must assess the sustainability and decisiveness of operations directed toward these "prestige" objectives. For example, in 1812, Napoleon captured Moscow but had to evacuate it within 30 days. He lacked supplies and shelter, failed to destroy the Russian Army, and failed to defeat the political will of the Czar and the people. Similarly, the North Korean occupation of Seoul during the Korean War was equally indecisive.

U.S. ARMY'S EXPERIENCE IN URBAN OPERATIONS

1-13. The U.S. Army has a varied history of conducting urban operations. The American Revolution saw the Army conduct several urban operations. These operations included the unsuccessful defense of New York, the successful attack on Trenton, and the decisive siege and attack on British forces at Yorktown. The Mexican War also had a successful assault on the fortified city of Monterey and the decisive siege of Mexico City. During the American Civil War, the armies, in the tradition of Napoleonic maneuver warfare, avoided urban areas and fought in the open. However, the opposing armies frequently made urban areas their objective because of their importance as railheads. Success in the siege of several key urban areas—Vicksburg, Atlanta, and Petersburg—contributed to the Northern victory.

1-14. Following the Civil War, the U.S. Army faced no large-scale urban combat for several generations. The Indian Wars, the Spanish-American War, the Philippine Insurrection, and even World War I did not require the Army to fight in large urban areas. Between the Civil War and World War II, the U.S. Army fought in several urban areas worldwide supporting U.S. commitments. These limited urban combat operations were small but essential parts of what are currently called urban stability operations. From 1900 to 1901, the Army provided public security for a sector of Peking, China of around 50,000 inhabitants. The Army conducted UO and, in the course of the operation, the 9th U.S. Infantry suffered 20-percent casualties while fighting in Tientsin. Punitive expeditions to places such as Siberia, Cuba, Philippines, Central America, and Mexico put the Army in various urban situations that required using military power, notably, the occupation and security of Vera Cruz, Mexico in 1914. In the context of these smaller-scale contingencies, UO became a staple of U.S. Army employment.

1-15. World War II forced the Army to grapple with the issues of large-scale urban combat almost immediately. In his 1941 defense of the Philippines, General MacArthur examined how to defend Manila.

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