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MAJ Michael Oeschger, commander of 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment's Military Transition Team (MiTT), talks with a local gas station owner about illegal vendors on 15 June 2006.

The FA in the Long War

A New Mission in COIN

America's overwhelming conventional military superiority makes it unlikely that future enemies will confront us head on. Rather, they will attack us asymmetrically, avoiding our strengths—firepower, maneuver, technology—and come at us and our partners the way the insurgents do in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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Events during the last two decades demonstrate that insurgency and terrorism are the most likely and most dangerous threats our country will face for the foreseeable future. Like the rest of the Army, the Field Artillery must continue to adapt to become more capable in counterinsurgency (COIN) operations that will mark the 21st century.

Precision fires play an important role in countering these threats, and it is essential that the *King of Battle* remain

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capable of providing such fires. However, both the Army and the FA would benefit were the *King of Battle* to take responsibility for what is, perhaps, the most vital task in counterinsurgency—developing host-nation security forces.

The Threats of the Long War. Our thinking enemies have studied our strengths and weaknesses and adapted their tactics to inflict maximum harm on our society. Those who have faced the US in conventional, interstate combat (Grenada, Panama, Afghanistan under the Taliban and Iraq under Saddam Hussein) have suffered defeat in days or weeks. However, those who fight the US using insurgent tactics (Vietnam, Lebanon, Somalia and the insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq) have fared far better.

The stark contrast between the 1991 Gulf War and the current war in Iraq

clearly demonstrates this dichotomy. In 1991, we destroyed the world's fourth largest Army in 100 hours of ground combat. In 2006, we have spent three years, thousands of lives and billions of dollars to stabilize Iraq, yet our insurgent enemies remain a dangerous and capable force.

A thinking enemy has a better chance of exhausting our political will through a protracted insurgency than to defeat our military through conventional combat. Insurgent tactics negate our asymmetric advantages in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and precision fires by using innocent civilians as cover and concealment and the media as strategic "fires." By hiding "in plain sight" among innocent civilians, insurgents maintain their freedom to maneuver. Insurgents rarely mass or defend terrain. Instead, they seek to discredit and demoralize free societies and societies who aspire to freedom by terrorizing innocent civilians.¹

For the foreseeable future, the least

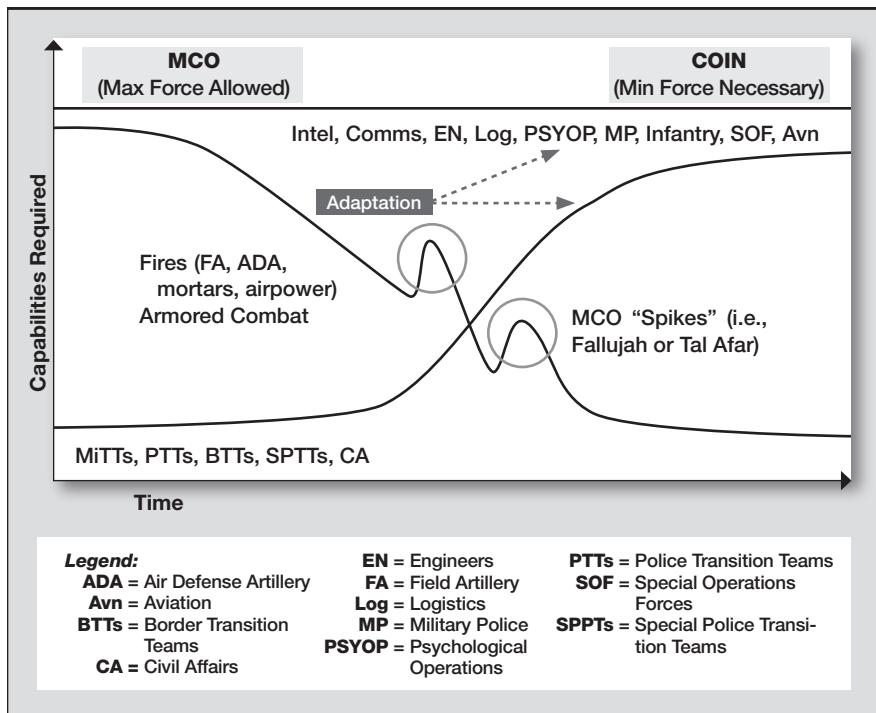


Figure 1: Adaptation for Full-Spectrum Dominance. From major combat operations (MCO) to counterinsurgency (COIN) operations, our forces must adapt to maintain dominance throughout full-spectrum operations. From MCO through COIN, there is a continuing requirement for intelligence (Intel), communications (comms), etc., and a diminishing requirement for fires and armored combat. The ascending requirement for elements, such as military transition teams (MiTTs), helps to develop capable, reliable security forces for the host nation.

likely form of combat our forces will face is conventional interstate combat with a major military power. China, Russia, India and Pakistan all have nuclear weapons, and North Korea and Iran are determined to acquire them at any cost. A small but secure nuclear arsenal is capable of deterring an attack by even the most capable conventional force. Simply put, nuclear weapons make their possessors virtually invulnerable to invasion and regime change.²

Were the US to invade a state with a secure nuclear capability, we could neither deter nor prevent that state from turning its nuclear arsenal on our forces, allies or homeland. A nuclear-armed regime facing a conventional invasion literally has nothing more to lose and every incentive to go down fighting.

The US understands this point. We never have attacked a nuclear power, and we spend a great deal of energy attempting to prevent nuclear proliferation. Our potential adversaries understand this point and have either acquired or are actively attempting to acquire nuclear weapons.

When confronting a nuclear-armed enemy, the US may opt for diplomacy or covert action. However, unless science or tactics solve the stand-off created by nuclear weapons, conventional war

among nuclear powers is implausible.

When the US engages in major combat operations (MCO) in the future, our most likely adversaries are weak states and non-state actors. Weak states (e.g., Grenada 1982, Panama 1989, Haiti 1994, Afghanistan 2001, Iraq 2003) by definition have neither a nuclear deterrent nor the conventional forces to resist the US for any prolonged period of time. In these situations, the conventional might of American power quickly destroys the enemy's capacity for organized resistance, and US forces quickly transition to stability and reconstruction operations (SRO).

Another possible scenario for MCO occurs when non-state actors, such as terrorists or insurgents, choose to mass forces and defend terrain. This scenario has occurred several times in Iraq, including in battles in Fallujah (2004), Najaf (2004) and Tal Afar (2004 and 2005). When our enemies commit the blunder of massing and defending terrain, our joint forces seize the opportunity to destroy them. Such operations are limited in both time and space and quickly return to COIN operations, once we destroy the enemy's capacity to hold ground.

The Essential Role of Precision Fires in Future Combat. Precision fires will play an essential role in future combat

and are essential for America to maintain her dominance in MCO. In those comparatively rare instances when our enemies choose to mass and defend terrain, precision fires enable US forces to destroy targets with minimal losses to friendly forces or innocent civilians. Coupled with our superb maneuver and support forces, precision fires enable us to destroy our enemies' capacity to defend terrain.

Precision fires also play an important but more limited role in COIN. Time-sensitive targets in areas where friendly security forces cannot strike are ideal targets for precision fires in COIN. However, effective COIN makes such targets rare by denying insurgents sanctuaries outside the reach of friendly security forces. Precision fires have a more limited role in COIN due to the inherent difference between COIN and MCO.

In MCO, friendly forces use the maximum force allowable to destroy the enemy. The rapid and overwhelming application of force hastens the collapse of enemy forces with minimal loss to friendly units.

In COIN, the opposite is true—units must rely on the minimum force needed to subdue insurgents. In fact, in COIN, “the more force you use, the less effective you are.”³ In a COIN environment, the use of fires can affect intelligence collection adversely, and intelligence is the lifeblood of COIN. When we capture an insurgent, we can exploit his knowledge of the terrorist network; when we kill an insurgent, his knowledge of the terrorist network dies with him.

The use of fires also can affect civilian perceptions of security adversely. After the use of fires, insurgents often claim that the strikes were necessary due to the host-nation government's inability to provide security or that the victims of the strike were innocent civilians. The truth of these claims is beside the point; by employing fires, we create an insurgent propaganda opportunity. Commanders must weigh these adverse effects carefully when employing fires in COIN.

MCO and COIN require different forces with different capabilities. (See Figure 1.) Some capabilities are in high demand for both MCO and COIN—intelligence, communications, engineers, logistics, psychological operations (PSYOP), military police (MP), infantry, special operations forces (SOF) and aviation are required in roughly equal amounts for both COIN and MCO. Other capabilities in high demand during MCO are less well suited

for COIN—armored combat and fires, such as FA, air defense artillery (ADA), mortars and airpower. This decreasing use of firepower is consistent with the principle of employing the minimum force necessary to defeat insurgents.

However, even in COIN, it is necessary to preserve the capability to transition to MCO. As operations in Fallujah, Tal Afar and elsewhere have demonstrated, there are rare opportunities in COIN in which the enemy chooses to mass and defend terrain. When these opportunities occur, we must rapidly transition to MCO for periods limited in space and time to defeat insurgent forces.

Other forces are in demand less during MCO but become critical in COIN. Providing security and other services to civilian populations is essential to COIN. Military transition teams (MiTTs), police transition teams (PTTs) and border transition teams (BTTs) develop the host-nation security forces needed to provide security for the civilian population. Civil affairs (CA) units build host-nation governance capacity to redress popular grievances, including the need for sewer, water, electricity, academics, trash, medical and security (SWEAT-MS).⁴

During the transition from MCO to COIN, forces organized, trained and equipped for MCO tasks must transition to tasks that are in high demand. By doing so, friendly forces maintain continuous pressure on the enemy and deny him the ability to hide in plain sight among the civilian population.

If forces are so specialized that they are unable to make the transition from MCO to COIN, then the population will be without security and other essential services in the post-conflict environment. This failure to adapt provides the enemy an opportunity to create chaos immediately after the end of MCO and fuels the growth of the insurgency.⁵

A New Role for the FA in COIN. The Army and the FA would benefit greatly if the *King of Battle* would take primary responsibility for developing host-nation security forces. The Army would benefit by ensuring that an important new mission is led by a branch that can take a holistic approach to innovation. The FA would benefit because its newly formed fires brigades are ideal for this vital mission. (While fires battalions within brigade combat teams, or BCTs, have many of the same attributes as fires brigades, the fires battalions usually are fully committed as maneuver formations in a COIN environment.)

Assigning the Fires Center at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, responsibility for developing the host-nation security forces would benefit the Army as a whole. Innovation occurs best when one branch or service takes a holistic approach to developing a new capability. This holistic approach includes not only doctrine and training development, but also manning cohesive units dedicated to the mission with promotions tied to performance in the new mission field. The development of armor, amphibious operations, submarines, bombers and SOF in the 20th century confirms this observation.

Furthermore, scholarly research shows that innovation flourishes when innovative practices are linked to professional advancement. According to Stephen Peter Rosen, “innovation may thus require the creation of a new promotion pathway to the senior ranks, so that young officers practicing the new way of war can rise to the top, as part of a generational change.”⁶

Forces Command (FORSCOM) currently has responsibility for the host-nation security force mission with support from the Combined Arms Center

(CAC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. FORSCOM is centralizing all advisory team training at Fort Riley, Kansas, with primary responsibility for the mission being assigned to the First Infantry Division upon its re-stationing at Fort Riley in the late summer of 2006.

While developing host-nation security forces is vital to the war on terrorism, no branch has the responsibility for holistically developing this capability. Perhaps more importantly, the current method of forming advisory teams to develop host-nation security forces offers no promotion pathway to reward the best leaders for mastering this vital skill. We must send our best personnel as advisors and give them the training required for success in this most demanding mission.⁷

Developing host-nation security forces is a new way of war. A branch that sees this work as a mission-essential task should lead the mission and reward the leaders and the Soldiers who master it.

The steps necessary to implement such a significant change are too complex to cover in this space. However, Figure 2 briefly outlines 10 steps that the Artillery Branch could take were it to embrace

1. Revise “DA Pamphlet 600-3 Commissioned Officer Development and Career Management” to recognize service as a host-nation security force advisor as a key developmental assignment for Field Artillery officers.
2. Create a leader’s course for developing host-nation security forces at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in cooperation with the COIN Academy at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.
3. Develop a plan for transitioning fires brigades and their subordinate battalions into advisory units.
4. Propose to Forces Command (FORSCOM) that future MiTT/BTT/PTT/SPTT requirements be filled by fires brigade units.
5. Assign Iraqi and Afghan exchange officers to Fort Sill.
6. Develop cooperative programs with the Defense Language Institute, Monterey, California, and colleges and universities for Arab area and language studies; endow one or more chairs in these institutions to support culture and language training for Field Artillerymen.
7. Assign a liaison officer (LNO) to Fort Riley, Kansas, to coordinate host-nation security force development doctrine with the 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 1st Infantry Division (1/1ID).
8. Assign Field Artillerymen with experience in developing security forces to the combat training centers (CTCs) to serve as observer/controllers (O/C) during fires brigade mission readiness exercises (MRXs).
9. Assign LNOs to the MultiNational Security Transition Command, Iraq (MNSTC-I) and the Phoenix Academy, also in Iraq, to provide feedback on training Iraqi security forces.
10. Offer FORSCOM a fires brigade to reinforce and, eventually, replace 1/1ID with a fires brigade as the lead unit for training units deploying as security force trainers.

Figure 2: Ten Steps for the Field Artillery Branch to Embrace the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Mission of Advising Host-Nation Security Forces

Rank	MCO	COIN
Colonel	Brigade Commander	Division Senior Advisor
Lieutenant Colonel	Battalion Commander	Brigade Senior Advisor
Major/Captain	Brigade Primary Staff	Division Staff Advisors
Captain	Battery Commander	Battalion Senior Advisor
Captain/1st Lieutenant	Battalion Primary Staff	Battalion Senior Advisors
1st Lieutenant/2nd Lieutenant	Platoon Leader	Company Senior Advisors
Staff Sergeant	Section Chief	Platoon Senior Advisor

Figure 3: Fires Brigade Structure in MCO and COIN. The fires brigade would make a superb division MiTT.

the mission of developing host-nation security forces.

Taking responsibility for developing host-nation security forces would benefit the FA by providing fires brigades a high-priority mission during COIN. Fires brigades have many attributes that make them ideal to be advisory units. They are cohesive units that are readily available during the transition from MCO to COIN. Upon conclusion of MCO, fires brigades could transition to developing host-nation security forces, thereby denying insurgents freedom of action in the immediate post-conflict environment.

Fires brigades contain a high ratio of leaders, including centrally selected senior commanders and command sergeants major. This ratio of leaders enables embedding security force advisors down to the platoon level. Advisory teams currently do not extend to the company and platoon levels.

Fires brigades have the staff expertise needed to develop the host-nation security forces' ability to perform vital administrative, logistical, and command and control tasks.⁸ The organizational structure of a fires brigade would make a superb division-level MiTT. (See Figure 3.)

Finally, fires brigades can coordinate for fires in the event insurgents try to overwhelm and destroy a host-nation's security forces. To be effective, security forces must disperse among the civilian

population they secure. However, this dispersion places them at risk for insurgent attacks. Redlegs with the ability to call for fire reduce this risk and increase the confidence and the effectiveness of host-nation security forces.

FA forces already train host-nation security forces as well as superbly perform many other tasks, including serving as maneuver forces, MPs, truck drivers, CA and PSYOP Soldiers, and area support group staff members. However, Field Artillerymen should not be content to fill in gaps for high-demand capabilities in COIN operations.

The FA's future is served better by taking responsibility for a vital COIN requirement: advising host-nation security forces. FA doctrine must teach leaders how to perform this task, and FA institutional and unit training must hone this difficult but essential craft.

The FA's "staking out" this skill would ensure that fires brigades are in high demand for both MCO and COIN. Combatant commanders fighting active insurgencies would seek fires brigades to build the combat power needed to defeat insurgents. Likewise, combatant commanders who seek to deter conflict would seek fires brigades to build host-nation deterrent capabilities.

The struggle to defend free societies and societies seeking to be free from the perils of insurgency and terrorism will be the work of a generation of Army leaders. Defeating these threats requires

full-spectrum capabilities.

The Field Artillery is a powerful instrument for destroying America's enemies. The branch must become an equally powerful instrument for strengthening America's friends. Developing host-nation security forces is vital to victory in the long war and is a mission worthy of the *King of Battle*.

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1. T. X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Zenith Press, 2004.) Hammes provides a superb description of the difficulties encountered by conventional military forces when confronting insurgencies.

2. See Kenneth Waltz, "Nuclear Myths and Political Realities," in Robert Art and Ken Waltz, eds., *The Use of Force, Military Power and International Politics, 4th Edition* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of American, 1993) 333-349. Waltz argues, "Nuclear weapons strip conventional forces of most of their functions...The probability of major war among states having nuclear weapons approaches zero...We do not need ever larger forces to deter. Smaller forces, so long as they are invulnerable,

would be quite sufficient."

3. Eliot Cohen, Conrad Crane, Jan Horvath and John Nagl, "Principles, Imperatives, and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* LXXXVI, 2 (March-April 2006), 52. See *FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency* for more on the limited role of force in counterinsurgency.

4. See Major General Peter W. Chiarelli and Major Patrick R. Michaelis, "Winning the Peace: The Requirement of Full-Spectrum Operations," *Military Review* LXXXV, 4 (July-August 2005), 4-17.

5. Nigel R. F. Alwyn-Foster, "Changing the Army for Counterinsurgency Operations," *Military Review* LXXXV, 6

(November-December 2005), 2-15.

6. Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 20. For more on innovation in wartime, see John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

7. For an excellent case study on the advisory efforts in Iraq, see Greg Jaffe, "A Camp Divided," *The Wall Street Journal* (June 17, 2006), 1.

8. See Brigadier General Daniel P. Bolger, "So You Want to be an Advisor?" *Military Review* LXXXVI, 2 (March-April 2006), 2-7.