

# Commandant's Note

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## PLANNING FOR THE EMERGING THREAT

Over the past three decades, we have learned a great deal from the war in Afghanistan. During the Cold War, we observed the Soviet Union's effort to defeat the diverse threat groups that went under the name Mujahideen. The enemy the Soviets faced in Afghanistan displayed few tactical, logistical, or doctrinal capabilities to match those of Soviet combined arms forces, but the Mujahideen showed themselves to be resourceful, adaptable, and implacable, adapting their own tactical countermeasures to defeat the technological edge of the Soviets. Fort Leavenworth has published a great deal of detailed information on both the Soviet experience and our own, and this is enabling us to project what the future threat and appropriate countermeasures may look like. The demands of future war are at best difficult to anticipate, but we can nevertheless apply the experience gained to prepare our leaders and Soldiers to meet future challenges. The dismounted Infantry squad will remain the foundation of the decisive force, and in this Commandant's Note, I want to discuss future geographical areas of interest and some of the priorities of the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) and outline initiatives we have thus far instituted to achieve our goal of improving the combat effectiveness of the fighting force and the resilience of Soldiers and Families.

World populations are feeling the pressure of increased competition for resources, internal instability based upon economic, ideological, and religious factors, and competition for markets. Likewise, numerous actors — each with their own agendas, objectives, interests, and allegiances — have given rise to unprecedented instability within nations around the world and have threatened regime change in countries such as Egypt, once a reliable ally of the United States. Whether this will be the case in countries such as Turkey, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia remains to be seen, but the rapidly increasing non-state actors along the Pacific Rim in the Indian subcontinent and in sub-Saharan Africa are bringing long-established social and governmental structures into question. If our Army units are to serve effectively in these regions, their role will demand detailed knowledge of the language, political structure, and history of the region, and the MCoE has already initiated programs to facilitate that learning. First among these is the Advanced Situational Awareness Training (ASAT) that is offered to officer and enlisted personnel throughout the year. Ideally, each Soldier graduate will be a sensor, able to assimilate and work within a host nation population, to the highest degree possible conversant in the language, and able to perceive and assess what is going on in his immediate environment. ASAT also teaches the Soldier to become so familiar with his environment that he can immediately identify anything that is out of place and take appropriate action. This is a tall order, and learning the skills taught in ASAT can be a career-long process. Linked to this goal is a maneuver self-study program that will enable leaders to better understand the profession of arms, leadership, and the responsibilities of officers and NCOs. While readings are suggested and the resources available for the many aspects of professional development, this is far from a correspondence-

type learning tool and instead relies upon media resources such as the branch magazines, guest speaker programs, and mentoring by active duty and retired leaders. In this issue of *Infantry*, we have included an article on Sri Lanka's experience in defeating an insurgency that had actually evolved into its own state while the legitimate government was reduced to conducting

positional defense. One lesson of this article is that a small nation willing to learn the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) of counterinsurgency and commit the resources necessary to train and support a competent force can defeat even the most tenacious enemy. We have selected two other articles for this issue that address improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and offer insights into patrolling and the employment of aerial assets to interdict insurgents. Related to the aerial counter-IED subject is a thought-provoking piece on training for the enemy threat posed by his unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). As our potential adversaries acquire their own UAVs, we need to be ready to deal with them, and this offers suggestions on how to go about it.

Feedback from the field is an integral and valued part of what we do at the MCoE, and your input has contributed greatly to our ongoing revision of the program of instruction (POI) for the Infantry Basic Officer Leaders Course (IBOLC). The evolving insurgent threat in Afghanistan and in other potentially threatened regions remains a high priority and is integrated into IBOLC instruction on counterinsurgency and stability operations. The subject matter includes cultural awareness instruction, models on successful units, and is a response to student requests for even more material than was formerly in the POI.

We recognize that deployed Soldiers are exposed to significant and persistent danger for extended periods of time and that the cumulative effects of successive deployments can exacerbate the effects and lengthen the time required to recover from the strains of combat and reintegrate back into normal life. The Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness Program is an initiative that includes the dimensions of physical, emotional, social, and spiritual fitness to increase the resilience of Soldiers and Family members and has helped Soldiers and their dependents to better deal with situations that in many respects are unique to our profession. Our Army Team — Soldiers, Family members, and Civilians — does a tough job, and does it well. I welcome your input on how the MCoE is doing and what we need to do better.

One force, one fight! Follow me!

