



Chief of Staff Reflects on Updated FM 3-0

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Crafted from the hard lessons in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army released an updated version of FM 3-0, *Operations*, February 28.

Army Chief of Staff GEN George Casey, Jr., said the manual is a blueprint for how the Army will conduct missions in the 21st century.

GEN Casey outlined the three biggest contributions of the updated manual. The first major change elevates “stability operations” to the level of offensive and defensive operations.

The Army’s top Soldier said when he was a division commander back in 2001, his main focus for training was conventional warfare. He doesn’t believe that’s necessarily the case for divisions and brigade combat teams any more.

“What’s clear to us is that every operation — whether it is major combat operations, irregular warfare or even peacetime engagement — will include some form of offensive operations, some form of defensive operations and some form of stability operations,” GEN Casey said.

The second major contribution is approaching hard military problems from an intellectual standpoint. He hopes this will take the Army away from a process-oriented decisions-making method. The updated manual describes how commanders must first understand the complex issues they have to deal with, he said.

They have to visualize it in a way that enables them to describe it to their subordinates, so they can direct the execution of plans and orders,” GEN Casey said.

The updated FM 3-0 also stresses the importance of information in the 21st century.

“Any operation that we conduct will be conducted under the unblinking eye of the 24-hour media cycle,” GEN Casey said. “That’s not a bad or a good thing. It just is. It’s clear that information is far more important now than it has been in the past.”

The new doctrine is not meant to affect the Army’s resources today or provide cookie-cutter solutions, he said, but rather, “it’s designed to spur debate and thinking about how we fight and how we will use it to adapt and how we develop our equipment.”

GEN Casey said that Soldiers still remain the center piece of the Army. “And they will remain our ultimate asymmetric advantage.”

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