

# Commanding General's Note

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## FULL SPECTRUM OPERATIONS

### Understanding the Implications of Diversity

Change is an ever-present part of our profession, and the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) has significantly altered the way we train and fight. The nature of the enemy and today's operational environment indicate that the future will be one of persistent conflict. The Army recognizes that virtually all operations are now full spectrum operations and has adapted to operate under any conditions, against any adversary, and anywhere across the spectrum of conflict. The mix of cultures, customs, and nationalities; the variety of family, clan, and tribal interests within a given society; and the asymmetrical nature of present warfare demand degrees of adaptability and innovation that we last saw in the Philippines and Vietnam. Our Soldiers' exposure to beliefs and value systems widely divergent from our own will continue to demand high degrees of preparation and flexibility. The mass population movements that removed noncombatants from harm's way in conflicts such as World War II, the Korean War, and to a large extent, in Vietnam, are no longer likely. Even as we have adapted to warfare against an innovative, committed enemy, we have taken measures to protect the civilian population among whom he has chosen to hide. In this Commanding General's Note, I want to talk about full spectrum operations and cite examples from the articles in this issue of *Infantry* to illustrate how we train for and conduct them.

Conducting simultaneous offensive, defensive, and stability operations in an era of persistent conflict is no easy task. A stability operation can quickly degrade into a combat operation, and our response must always take into consideration noncombatants as Soldiers move to develop and stabilize the situation. Fortunately, the training practices we followed prior to the outset of the GWOT provided a firm foundation upon which we have developed the tactics, techniques, and procedures to meet the challenge of an innovative adversary. Recognizing the broad combat experience our Soldiers have gained in multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, commanders have been quick to leverage this expertise as they develop training plans. These training plans need to include the actions that will complement combat operations and contribute to the stability and support operations that facilitate transfer of responsibility to civil authority. An important element of full spectrum operations is being able to recognize the conditions that require transition between offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support operations and take the actions necessary to ensure success. Those best qualified to accomplish this are Soldiers and leaders who are proficient in their core competencies; who possess the cultural awareness and understanding to come up with innovative tactics, techniques, and procedures; and who can operate with joint, multinational, military and civilian agencies to achieve our objectives.

A feature article in this issue, *The Revitalization of Samarra*,

illustrates the transformation of that Iraqi city, with particular focus on the 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment's actions between April and November 2008, after priority had shifted from fighting. This article shows how an innovative battalion

commander maintained the initiative as he set about linking his officers with Iraqi counterparts to restore civil government and the infrastructure necessary to provide the essential services to bring economic stability. Another feature article, *COIN Operations in Afghanistan*, describes three successful approaches to COIN: gaining the trust of the indigenous population; distribution of humanitarian aid and infrastructure development; and mentoring government forces as they develop the skills to aid their own people.

During the Cold War, we and our NATO partners trained to face the monolithic threat of the Soviet Union and its surrogates. Today's threat is, instead, multiple enemies employing asymmetric tactics, often with varying agendas and command structures, and who understand our aversion to collateral casualties well enough to hide and fight from within the civilian population. The enemy is media-savvy and attempts to quickly exploit civilian casualties. Unpredictability is their strength. The challenges the Army is likely to face can be traditional, irregular, catastrophic, or disruptive, and their causes can come from nation-states, organizations, groups, or even conditions causing instability in which dissidents see opportunity to pursue their own agendas. Recognizing the diversity of the threats, our operational training domain is now placing emphasis on COIN in developing the highly adaptive, mentally agile leaders the Army needs to conduct decentralized full spectrum operations.

Cultural awareness is essential to COIN and helps us understand nuances that may vary from district to district, city to city, and even village to village. T. E. Lawrence spent years in the Middle East learning Arab languages, dialects, and customs before his success advising and leading Arab irregulars against the Turkish and German forces in World War I. He read extensively, and so must we. This issue of *Infantry* includes a Professional Forum translation of Arabic documents on the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi that offers cultural insights into seldom seen aspects of one of our most notorious enemies. This biography reveals divisions within the networks of Sunni militants and the networks and connections they used to sustain their operations. Full spectrum operations are the way we prosecute the GWOT, and as we refine our training and assimilate the experience our Soldiers are gaining daily, we draw ever closer to finally bringing an end to an era of persistent conflict. This is our goal, this is our mission. Follow me!

