

DECISIVE FORCE: The Army In Theater Operations

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Preface

This manual guides US Army forces (ARFOR) functioning at the operational level of war in concert with joint, multinational, and/or interagency organizations. It describes how the Army service component commander (ASCC), previously known as the theater army commander, applies the FM 100-5¹ fundamentals to ARFOR operating within a theater of operations. This is the Army's manual on *operational art* focused at the operational level of war: the link among theater strategy, campaign plans, and tactics and the bridge between theaterwide campaigns and localized battles and engagements.

This manual delineates the *National Security Strategy*, *National Military Strategy*, joint doctrine, and Army doctrine—that is, FM 100-5. It applies to the conduct of operations across the range of military operations and fills a doctrinal void. This is the first operational-level-of-war doctrinal manual to address the roles and functions of the Army service component and how the ASCC relates to the commander in chief (CINC), peers, and subordinates within the theater structure of the unified command. Additionally, this manual describes the ARFOR in a combatant commander's theater strategic and operational environments. It clarifies the various roles and responsibilities of senior army commanders in theater.

The manual outlines principles and functions for planning and conducting subordinate campaigns and major operations that require the integration of Army combat capabilities and support activities within a joint, multinational, or interagency framework. The manual describes Army operations, including force projection, throughout the full range of military operations—*war* and *military operations other than war (MOOTW)*.

FM 100-7 is designed to assist ASCCs, ARFOR commanders, and other senior army commanders and their staffs to develop a framework necessary to translate strategic guidance into operational and tactical execution in joint, multinational, and interagency environments. This manual implements relevant joint doctrine, incorporates lessons learned from recent operations, and conforms with the Army's keystone doctrine. Additionally, it links FM 100-15,² FM 100-16,³ FM 100-20,⁴ FM 100-25,⁵ and other tactical and logistics doctrinal manuals with joint and Army capstone manuals.

The proponent of this manual is HQ TRADOC. Send comments and recommendations on DA Form 2028 directly to Commander, US Army Training and Doctrine Command, ATTN: ATDO-A, Fort Monroe, VA 23651-5000.

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

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1. *Operations*, 14 June 1993.
 2. *Corps Operations*, September 1989.
 3. *Army Operational Support* (final draft), 4 April 1994.
 4. *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict*, December 1990.
 5. *Doctrine for Army Special Operations Forces*, 1 January 1991.

Introduction

The nation needs an Army to defeat our enemies, and it also needs an Army to deter potential foes, reassure and lend stability to our allies, and in times of emergency lend support to our communities at home.

Togo D. West, Jr., Secretary of the Army
General Gordon R. Sullivan, Chief of Staff, United States Army
Decisive Victory: America's Projection Army, A White Paper
October 1994

The nation's force for conducting prompt and sustained land combat is the Army. This has been the Army's mission throughout history. Its unique contribution to the joint team is its ability to dominate the land, including populations and resources. Army in-theater operations must support the nation's and theater commander's strategic intent and be synchronized with his strategic concept of operation.

The Army conducts operations as part of or in support of a joint and multinational force or with a US-only joint force to protect American vital national interests. The Army is the strategic component of the nation's military power that performs contingency force projection and sustained land operations to protect and further national interests. In response to the needs of America's national security interests, the Army is prepared to fight and win. The Army also assists the nation by conducting MOOTW.

- As an instrument of American policy, the Army must be ready to provide the nation a variety of tools to influence the international environment and ultimately force a decision. To do this, the Army must be *ready, deployable, and versatile*.
- It must be able to deploy throughout the world in a timely manner—a requirement that touches every aspect of the force.
- It must be lethal. Lethality is essential to the ability to win with minimum casualties, ensuring the rapid conclusion of hostilities and conflict resolution.
- It must be robust—structured, tailored, trained, and sustained to meet our nation's requirements.
- It must be expansible. Deterrence and rapid conflict resolution require the generation of superior combat power. Expansibility provides the required combat power at the required time—positioned on the battlefield and prepared to accomplish its purpose. The total Army (active and reserve components) must be expansible. The norm must be efficient and rapid mobilization and transition of reserve component personnel and organizations to active component status to reinforce or expand the active component to meet operational requirements across the range of military operations.

The senior army commander in a theater of operations performs three basic tasks:

- Establishes and maintains linkages to joint, multinational, interagency, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and private voluntary organizations (PVOs).
- Provides logistical support to ARFOR and, when directed, to other services, allies, or multinational forces.
- Conducts major land operations to support the campaign or subordinate campaigns when assigned by the CINC as an operational-level commander to accomplish the joint commander's theater strategic and operational objectives.

With the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), the President—through the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF)—establishes the chain of command to the military departments for service functions and to the commanders of combatant commands for missions and forces assigned to their commands.⁶ The senior army leader in unified or subunified commands beneath the combatant commander is designated the ASCC.⁷ The senior army commander in the theater operates within the chain of command. He answers to the theater commander—known as the CINC—for operations and receives logistics and administration from his service. He prosecutes the logistics and administration responsibilities through administrative control (ADCON) authorized by the Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff.

ADCON is subject to the CINC's command authority (COCOM). The services operate under the authority, direction, and control of the SECDEF through the secretary of the military departments. This traditional service branch of the chain of command—for purposes of organizing, training, and equipping forces to fulfill specific combat functions and for administering and supporting such forces—runs from the President, through the SECDEF, to the Secretary of the Army, to the Department of the Army for ARFOR not assigned to a combatant commander. This service branch of the chain of command is separate and distinct from the chain of command that exists within a combatant command.

The CINC practices operational art. When the CINC assigns the senior army commander a warfighting mission, he also practices operational art. The joint force commander (JFC)—a term applied to a commander authorized to exercise COCOM or operational control (OPCON) over a joint force—plans, conducts, and supports theater campaigns, subordinate campaigns, major operations, and battles. His success is measured by the accomplishment of theater strategic objectives. Army commanders in joint and multinational operations function at the operational level of war, thus requiring a broad perspective. They link theater strategy and campaigns to tactical execution. ASCCs and senior army commanders use operational art—the skillful planning, conduct, and support of theater strategy, campaigns, major operations, and battles by ARFOR to attain strategic or operational objectives.

In a joint environment, when the Army is the dominant land force conducting major operations requiring decisive force, the CINC may assign the ARFOR commander as the joint force land component commander (JFLCC).⁸ As the JFLCC, he must integrate and synchronize all available assets to accomplish the mission with minimum casualties in terms favorable to the US and its alliance or coalition partners.

6. The commander of a unified or specified command.

7. The commander in chief and members of his staff are precluded from being a service component commander.

8. Joint Pub 0-2, *Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)*, 11 August 1994.

PART ONE

Background

Commanders employ forces within the three states (peacetime, conflict, and war) of the theater strategic environment. Army commanders, particularly at the operational level, operate with other services, government agencies, United Nations (UN) agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), private voluntary organizations (PVOs), and multinational partners. These unified operations—joint, multinational, and interagency efforts—require a thorough understanding of Army capabilities as they contribute to the unified structure. Combatant commands and theaters form the unified structure for this organizational environment. A combatant command is one of the unified or specified commands established by the President. A theater is the geographical area outside the continental United States (CONUS) for which a commander of a unified command has been assigned military responsibility. Combatant commanders conduct unified operations.

To discuss the US Army in theater operations at the operational level of war, commanders must understand the theater strategic and operational environment. To do that, they must understand the fundamentals that define that strategic environment and how the application of those fundamentals affects Army operations. Chapter 1 discusses planning and execution of major operations, operational art, operations in war, and military operations other than war (MOOTW). Chapter 2 describes the national and theater strategic environments and provides a means to assess Army operations at the operational level. Chapter 3 examines how the commander in chief (CINC) and the Army service component commander (ASCC) apply operational art and design. Operational art and design are the linkage between execution of tactical operations and campaign plans to obtain strategic objectives in theater. These chapters provide the basis necessary for understanding Army operations at the operational level.

Chapter 1

Decisive Victory

In peacetime, conflict, and war, the Army is the nation's predominant decisive land force. Whenever the Army is called upon, it fights to win and operates to achieve decisive results at minimum cost to life and treasure. Army forces (ARFOR) in combat seek to impose their will on the enemy. In MOOTW, they seek to create, set, or control conditions to achieve their purpose. The standard is to achieve the military commander's end state within the strategic end state articulated by the National Command Authorities (NCA).

PLANNING AND EXECUTION

In today's global-based, force-projection Army, planning and executing major operations to support a theater campaign is a formidable task. The theater strategic environment is uncertain and dynamic, with

ever-increasing threats and instabilities. Still, the opportunities for peace, growth, and stability are evident. Army capabilities to succeed in leveraging the environment consistent with national policy and strategy is