



Chapter 4

Military Capabilities for “War Amongst the People”

*General Sir Rupert Smith and *Dr. Ilana Bet-El

In the 21st -century security environment, what U.S. military commanders will have to accomplish and how they use military forces to do so has changed. The concept of operations (CONOPS) for conflict is different. Rather than decisive victory, the objective will be to establish local security and law and order in conflict zones. This serves as a “table setter” enabling civil agencies to execute activities ranging from humanitarian aid to development.

The New CONOPS

The new concept of operations defines the fight at two levels—*confrontation* and *conflict*. *Confrontation* is won by providing security and assistance to the population, *conflict* by destroying enemy forces. *Confrontation* activities establish local security for the people; isolate the enemy from them; and provide civil agencies with secure space to carry out humanitarian and developmental activities, making the desired end state attainable. *Conflict* actions, by destroying enemy forces, support civil activities but are not a substitute for them.

*General Sir Rupert Smith (Ret), UK, was Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, 1998–2001.

*Dr. Ilana Bet-El is a writer, historian, and political analyst based in Brussels.

Required Doctrine, Tools, and Techniques

In the 21st-century security environment, U.S. military forces, together with civil agencies, will defeat enemies by winning the battle for legitimacy with the population. The new doctrines that guide military forces provide for versatile and adaptable forces. Those doctrines include: Counterinsurgency; Counterterrorism; Stabilization, Security, Reconstruction, and Rule of Law Operations; Unconventional Warfare; and Foreign Internal Defense. Regardless of the ways each of these doctrines identifies the opponent, executes specific missions, and achieves core goals, military forces executing them will need—in varying quantities—the following competencies/capabilities:

- Commanders who can lead in battle, and who have an understanding of a range of civil disciplines and an ability to fulfill specific roles traditionally seen as civilian.
- Combat brigades reconfigured to secure the population in conflict zones. Forces organized on a self-contained modular basis. 21st-century war is usually small unit dominated and hence the basic module will be one or a few companies.
- Military units with greater civil proficiencies to meet the needs of the population that are a fusion of civil and military elements. Military and civil activities run in parallel.
- Proactive special operations units to target armed group's clandestine organization. These operations will be intelligence-led and use force in precise ways.
- Information and intelligence are essential for all civil and military actions. And they serve as the basis for devising a convincing narrative, the foundation for the overall campaign.
- A training system is crucial. Home bases prepare core forces for specific missions abroad. The training system's deployable unit will accompany the core forces to provide similar training to the host country's forces.
- A networked command structure is needed to link military forces to civil agencies, allies, and local forces to facilitate collaboration and integration.

Re-shaping Existing Capabilities and Crafting New Ones for Three Security Environments

Some elements of the above competencies/capabilities already exist in the U.S. inventory, including doctrines, combat brigades, civil proficiencies of military forces, and Special Forces. But resources are needed to adapt each for three security environments: 1) war zones where the U.S. military is the main security force; 2) non-war zones with a significant U.S. military presence; 3) zones receiving security assistance with little U.S. presence. For example, several existing Army combat brigades will need to be adapted for population-centric security operations. Likewise, the civil proficiencies of military forces that are mainly in reserve civil affairs brigades will need to be adapted for each of these three security environments.

Resources will also be needed to create the following new competencies/capabilities and add them to the U.S. inventory:

- Expanded education and training of military commanders to encompass an understanding of the civil disciplines, role, and missions of civilian agencies and the ability to execute specific tasks traditionally seen as civilian.
- Information and intelligence capabilities require considerable expansion. This includes additional means for gaining local knowledge to map adversary and civilian networks.
- Additionally, the information staff in the commanders' HQ must be elevated to a core function and provide the driving logic for all operations to include the campaign narrative. This necessitates changes in the people selected; reorganization of the staff itself; and provision of appropriate training.
- The training system and networked command structure also have to be created and crafted to meet the requirements of the three security environments.

Authorities and Costs

Additional authorities are likely to be needed for *Confrontation* activities especially when the military crosses over into civil areas; develops collaborative networks to facilitate collaboration and integration; and expands its information and intelligence activities as noted above.

In terms of costs, these changes can be accomplished largely within the existing budget. But it will require a re-ordering of that budget to

develop these competencies/capabilities within the existing force structure. For example, resources will be needed so that several of U.S. Army and Marine combat brigades and regiments can be re-equipped and trained for irregular warfare missions in each of the three security environments identified above. Likewise, resources will be needed to adapt civil affairs and military training capabilities to these three contexts. Other resources will have to be re-allocated for the new competencies/capabilities that have been identified.

“WAR AMONGST THE PEOPLE”

In this chapter we seek to clarify core issues with the terms security and capabilities, highlight the major changes in our perceptions of these and related fields, and offer both a new conceptual framework for thinking about them and proposals for change. It underlines the need for institutional change in our approach to operations, especially in military structures and skills. At its core it reflects that in order to attain security, military capabilities can no longer be seen as absolute or on their own: they must always be measured not only against the opponent but also in relation to civilian capabilities.

The origins can be traced to *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*¹ which sought to reflect the change of paradigms in war—from industrial war to war amongst the people—and to explain how it came about. At the end of that volume, certain suggestions were offered for the way ahead, especially the need for institutional change. The purpose of the current essay is to elaborate upon some of these suggestions.

A basic premise of that book, which underpins this chapter also, is that our forces are still structured and trained to undertake industrial war, whilst in reality they are usually both deployed and employed in missions of war amongst the people. Not only is this not useful—to the mission and to the military—it has become in many cases an active limitation upon these missions, and sometimes worse. Whether in Afghanistan or Iraq, the presence of heavily armed troops, tanks, and armored vehicles in the midst of cities and villages has often come to be a source of anger, whilst the casualties amassed by their actions—often militarily justified but nonetheless incomprehensible to the civilian onlooker—have led to despair, and in some cases have also become a reason for revenge.

As this situation unfolded we manifestly ignored the changing realities of our battlefield: the secluded one in which militaries clash is long

¹ Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, (London: Allen Lane, 2005.)

dead. Much has been done to rectify this situation, but these changes are still seen as an aberration from the institutional norm rather than a substantive conceptual shift. War is still seen as an event between two defined armies heavily armored—and everything else is the less and the temporary. Moreover, there still exists an equation between “war” and “battle” due to the legacy of industrial war: you fought battles until you won the war. But in our current paradigm there is a vast difference: battles occur but the war goes on because battles are but conflicts within a much broader and overriding confrontation, which cannot be resolved by military force.

The battlefield has changed not only conceptually but in reality: as noted in the *The Utility of Force*, war amongst the people “is the reality in which the people in the streets and houses and fields—all the people, anywhere—are the battlefield. Military engagements can take place anywhere, with civilians around, against civilians, in defense of civilians. Civilians are the targets, objectives to be won, as much as an opposing force.” Moreover, it should be noted that the civilians are in their own territory, which we have entered. Our justification for this act, be it by a coalition or a UN mission, is not that we want their land or treasure, as in the days of industrial war, but that we seek to aid them—to relieve them of oppression, or to stop them fighting amongst each other, or else to bring regional and global peace. In other words, they are our strategic objective: we believe that if they understand our way is good and we can help them, they will do that which we desire. And overall, we desire them to be law abiding, hard working people running a democratic state—within a broad definition of democracy—devoid of threats nuclear or terrorist, and allow globalization to take a just course.

We cannot achieve this aim with military means alone; nor can we achieve it by expecting our military to fulfill civilian functions on a long-term basis. We should acknowledge that just as the military of the state is the legitimate and professional expert in the use of force, so civilian agencies are expert in their own fields. Moreover, these are now crucial to the attainment of our security objectives. We must therefore begin to understand our military as a component of our overall capabilities.

1. Capabilities

The key term in the title, “capabilities,” was defined as the ability (training and doctrine), means (dedicated resources and equipment), and operationalization (personnel in place) to undertake the mission. This definition might have been adequate when the opponent could be assumed in large