

## MILITARY OPERATIONS ON URBANIZED TERRAIN (MOUT) UNDER RESTRICTIVE CONDITIONS

*Across the operational continuum, and especially during OOTW, commanders can expect to encounter restrictions on their use of firepower during MOUT. Basic doctrinal principles remain the same, but the tactics, techniques, and procedures may have to be modified to stay within established rules of engagement and to avoid unnecessary collateral damage.*

### **G-1. HIGH-INTENSITY, PRECISION, AND SURGICAL MOUT**

Infantrymen conduct MOUT under many varying conditions across the spectrum of conflict. These conditions range from large-scale, high-intensity combat, through isolated actions against armed belligerents mixed with noncombatants, to peace operations that may resemble dangerous police work more than traditional combat in built-up areas. Changes from high-intensity MOUT to precision or surgical MOUT are a result of significant alterations in the existing conditions of METT-T and of the imposition of overriding strategic political considerations. These alterations normally require that units modify the way they fight in urban areas. Unfortunately, there are no clear boundaries that delineate the change from high-intensity to precision to surgical MOUT. These terms are merely expressions used to describe the US force's degree of sensitivity to political considerations during the operation being conducted.

a. **High-Intensity MOUT.** Infantry units must be prepared at all times to conduct violent combat under conditions of high-intensity MOUT. These conditions are combat actions against a determined enemy occupying prepared positions or conducting planned attacks. High-intensity MOUT requires the coordinated application of the full combat power of the joint combined arms team. An infantry unit's mission is normally to seize, clear, or defend urban terrain, engaging and defeating the enemy by the use of whatever force is necessary. Although the changing world situation may have made high-intensity MOUT less likely, it represents the high end of the combat spectrum, and units must be trained for it. High-intensity MOUT is the most stressful of all operations in urban areas and can be casualty-intensive for both sides. Even though the full integrated firepower of the joint combined arms team is brought to bear on the enemy, commanders must still make attempts to limit unnecessary destruction and casualties among noncombatants.

b. **Precision MOUT.** Infantry units of all types must routinely expect to operate under conditions of precision MOUT, especially during OOTW. Under precision MOUT conditions, either the enemy is thoroughly mixed with the noncombatants or political considerations require that the ROE be significantly more restrictive than under high-intensity MOUT conditions.

Infantry operations under conditions of precision MOUT normally involve combat action. Some of this combat can be quite violent for short periods. It is marked, however, by conscious acceptance by US forces of the need to focus and restrain the combat power used. The commander may bring overwhelming force to bear, but only on specific portions of the urban area occupied by the enemy. He may choose different TTP in order to remain within the bounds of the more restrictive ROE. Tighter ROE demands strict accountability of individual and unit actions. When preparing for precision MOUT operations, the commander must realize that not only are the ROE changing but also the TTP. These changes require that soldiers be given time to train for the specific operation. For example, when clearing a room, units may modify the procedure of first throwing a grenade into the room before entering. This may be done to lessen the possible casualties among noncombatants interspersed with the enemy. Additional training on close quarters battle techniques may be necessary before the soldiers are prepared to execute the mission.

c. **Surgical MOUT.** Operations conducted under surgical MOUT conditions include special-purpose raids, small precision strikes, or small-scale personnel seizure or recovery operations in a MOUT environment. They may closely resemble US police operations by Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams and are usually conducted by special operations forces. They may even involve cooperation between US forces and host nation police. Though regular units may not be involved in the actual surgical operation, they may support it by isolating the area or providing security or crowd control.

## **G-2. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT**

The unified commander issues the rules of engagement for tactical forces. The ROE are based on the commander's analysis of his guidance from the National Command Authority, the mission that he has been given, the existing threat, the laws of land warfare, and any host nation or third-world country constraints on US forces.

a. The political concerns used while developing the ROE may appear to conflict with the physical security needs of the infantry force. Politically driven constraints must be weighed against the potential risks to mission accomplishment and to the force itself. ROE must be practical, realistic, understandable, and enforceable. Commanders at all levels can affect the ROE by suggesting changes or requesting clarification or modifications. Like the mission, ROE must be tailored to the day-to-day changes in the conditions and threats that face the US forces.

b. Whatever the situation that has called for restricted ROE, infantry forces will then be operating in a dangerous, yet highly constrained, environment. This demands the highest degree of patience, training, and dedication on the part of the military force. An example of ROE used during Operation Just Cause is shown in Figure G-1. It is *not* intended to be used as a sole source document for developing ROE, but as an example of how political considerations during an OOTW mission were translated by the commander into specific ROE.

**ALL ENEMY MILITARY PERSONNEL AND VEHICLES  
TRANSPORTING THE ENEMY OR THEIR SUPPLIES MAY  
BE ENGAGED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING  
RESTRICTIONS:**

- a. Armed force is the last resort.
- b. When possible, the enemy will be warned first and allowed to surrender.
- c. Armed civilians will be engaged only in self-defense.
- d. Civilian aircraft will not be engaged without approval from above division level unless it is in self-defense.
- e. Avoid harming civilians unless necessary to save US lives. If possible, try to arrange for the evacuation of civilians prior to any US attack.
- f. If civilians are in the area, do not use artillery, mortars, armed helicopters, AC-130s, tube- or rocket-launched weapons, or M551 main guns against known or suspected targets without the permission of a ground maneuver commander, LTC or higher (for any of these weapons).
- g. If civilians are in the area, all air attacks must be controlled by a FAC or FO.
- h. If civilians are in the area, close air support (CAS), white phosphorus, and incendiary weapons are prohibited without approval from above division level.
- i. If civilians are in the area, do not shoot except at known enemy locations.
- j. If civilians are not in the area, you can shoot at suspected enemy locations.
- k. Public works such as power stations, water treatment plants, dams, or other utilities may not be engaged without approval from above division level.
- l. Hospitals, churches, shrines, schools, museums, and any other historical or cultural site will not be engaged except in self-defense.
- m. All indirect fire and air attacks must be observed.
- n. Pilots must be briefed for each mission on the location of civilians and friendly forces.
- o. No booby traps. No mines except as approved by division commander. No riot control agents except with approval from above division level.
- p. Avoid harming civilian property unless necessary to save US lives.

Figure G-1. Example of Operation Just Cause ROE.

<p>q. Treat all civilians and their property with respect and dignity. Before using privately owned property, check to see if any publicly owned property can substitute. No requisitioning of civilian property without permission of a company-level commander and without giving a receipt. If an ordering officer can contract for the property, then do not requisition it. No looting. Do not kick down doors unless necessary. Do not sleep in their houses. If you must sleep in privately owned buildings, have an ordering officer contract for it.</p> <p>r. Treat all prisoners humanely and with respect and dignity.</p> <p>s. Annex R to the OPLAN provides more detail. Conflicts between this card and the OPLAN should be resolved in favor of the OPLAN.</p> <p>DISTRIBUTION: 1 per trooper deployed to include all ranks.</p>
<p><b>SUPPLEMENTAL RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR SELECTED RECURRING OPERATIONS:</b></p>
<p>1. CONTROL OF CIVILIANS ENGAGED IN LOOTING.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Senior person in charge may order warning shots.</li><li>b. Use minimum force but not deadly force to detain looters.</li><li>c. Defend Panamanian (and other) lives with minimum force including deadly force when necessary.</li></ul> <p>2. ROADBLOCKS, CHECKPOINTS AND SECURE DEFENSIVE POSITIONS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Mark all perimeter barriers, wires, and limits. Erect warning signs.</li><li>b. Establish second positions to hastily block those fleeing.</li><li>c. Senior person in charge may order warning shots to deter breach.</li><li>d. Control exfiltrating civilians with minimum force necessary.</li><li>e. Use force necessary to disarm exfiltrating military and paramilitary.</li><li>f. Attack to disable, not destroy, all vehicles attempting to breach or flee.</li><li>g. Vehicle that returns or initiates fire is hostile. Fire to destroy hostile force.</li><li>h. Vehicle that persists in breach attempt is presumed hostile. Fire to destroy hostile force.</li><li>i. Vehicle that persists in flight after a blocking attempt IAW instruction 2b is presumed hostile. Fire to destroy hostile force.</li></ul>

Figure G-1. Example of Operation Just Cause ROE (continued).

### 3. CLEARING BUILDINGS NOT KNOWN TO CONTAIN HOSTILE FORCE.

- a. Warn all occupants to exit.
- b. Senior person in charge may order warning shots to induce occupants to exit.
- c. Do not attack hospitals, churches, shrines, or schools, museums, and any historical or cultural sites except in self-defense.
- d. Respect and minimize damage to private property.
- e. Use minimum force necessary to control the situation and to ensure the area is free of hostile force.

Figure G-1. Example of Operation Just Cause ROE (continued).

### G-3. IMPACT OF CIVILIANS ON MOUT

The presence of large concentrations of civilian noncombatants constrains employment of combat power during tactical operations.

a. **Mobility.** Civilians attempting to escape over roads can block military movement. Commanders should plan routes to be used by civilians and should seek the assistance of the military and civil police in traffic control.

b. **Firepower.** The presence of civilians and the desire to limit collateral damage can restrict the use of fires and reduce the firepower available to a commander. Selected areas may be designated as “no fire” areas in order to prevent civilian casualties and damage to important urban structures, or for other reasons. Some areas may be limited to the use of small arms and grenades only, with prohibitions on air strikes, artillery, mortars, and flame. Target acquisition and the conduct of indirect-fire missions may be complicated by the requirement for positive target identification. Detailed guidance on the use of firepower in the presence of civilians will normally be published by the division G3. When no guidance is available, the general rules of the law of land warfare always apply.

c. **Logistical Support and Civil Order.** Commanders at all levels automatically assume the burden of ensuring the bare necessities of life to all civilian noncombatants that fall under their control during MOUT. Depending on the situation, protection, food, water, shelter, and medical care may be provided in special refuges established for that purpose, or they may be provided in place by some other organization. Whatever the final arrangement, US commanders should expect to exercise control and provide support until long-term arrangements can be made.

### G-4. CIVILIAN INFLUENCE ON ENEMY AND FRIENDLY OPERATIONS

Noncombatant civilians in an urban environment and the political setting influence both enemy and friendly operations.

a. **Enemy Operations.** These operations cover the spectrum from terrorism to well-organized military operations. The enemy may be special-purpose forces or insurgents that have the ability to operate freely throughout a city due to having the appearance of civilians. Conventional enemy forces may choose to occupy specific urban areas that civilians have not been able to evacuate. The swift occupation of a city may cause civilians to be trapped between opposing forces. This enhances the enemy's ability to defend.

b. **Friendly Operations.** A critical aspect of friendly operations is the ROE. Examples of different ROEs that US forces used during urban battles are Aachen during World War II in 1944 and Panama City "Just Cause" in 1990. Aachen typified ROE that permitted the free use of most munitions to eliminate the enemy. Panama City, on the other hand, showed US forces operating under very restrictive ROE.

(1) Offensive operations by friendly forces must consider the potential use of precision-guided munitions to achieve identified objectives while avoiding unnecessary collateral damage. Precision operations also include sniper and countersniper operations by both special forces personnel and conventional forces.

(2) When civilian personnel are present or are thought to be present in the objective area, the rules of engagement must be identified and known by all personnel before engaging targets or entering and clearing a room or building.

(3) Psychological operations or civil affairs teams can help remove civilians before a battle starts. Once the objective area has been isolated, PSYOP teams can also be used to induce enemy personnel to surrender.

## **G-5. USE OF NONLETHAL WEAPONS DURING MOUT**

Nonlethal weapons are discriminate weapons that are explicitly designed and employed to incapacitate personnel or materiel while minimizing fatalities and undesired damage to property and the environment. Nonlethal weapons are not guaranteed to be totally nonlethal anymore than lethal weapons are totally lethal. Some fatalities may result from employment of nonlethal weapons. The use of the term nonlethal is not intended to be misleading but to convey the intention to be able to achieve military objectives while greatly reducing fatalities.

a. Unlike weapons that permanently destroy targets through blast fragmentation or penetration, nonlethal weapons have one, or both, of the following characteristics:

(1) They use means other than physical destruction to prevent the target from functioning.

(2) They have relatively reversible effects. Even if they injure humans, the injured will eventually recover.

b. The infantry has had some nonlethal weapons for years. Other weapons represent new developing technology. Examples of nonlethal weapons are as follows:

(1) Riot control gases such as CS and CN.

(2) Incapacitating sprays such as Mace and Pepper Spray.

(3) Kinetic stun projectiles such as rubber bullets, wooden baton rounds, and beanbag or ringfoil grenades.

(4) Rigid, sticky, or disorienting foams.

(5) Superlubricants.

(6) Flash and bang disruption devices.

(7) Acoustic disruption devices.

c. The Army's higher echelons are paying increased attention to nonlethal weapons for the following reasons:

(1) Growing conviction about their potential military utility.

(2) Political sensitivity.

(3) New constraints imposed by arms control.

(4) Increasing interest by US allies and outside organizations concerned with international security.

(5) Recent advances in enabling technologies related to nonlethal weapons.

(6) Emerging missions needing better nonlethal solutions such as crowd control and OOTW in urban areas.

d. Nonlethal weapons provide commanders with additional options between no use of military force at all and the use of lethal force. They may be more appropriate for some missions than lethal weapons. Nonlethal weapons can provide a more humane, discriminate, and reversible means of employing military force, with more precisely tailored and focused effects.

e. Unless constrained by orders from higher headquarters, US commanders are not obligated in any way to use only nonlethal weapons, or to try nonlethal weapons before resorting to more lethal means, in any military operation. Appropriate use of nonlethal weapons is normally authorized solely at the discretion of the commander on the scene. Although US forces may wish to avoid casualties, many situations require overwhelming lethal force as the most effective and efficient means to accomplish the mission. In the final result, a swift victory by overwhelming force may actually involve fewer casualties on both sides.

f. However the commander chooses to use nonlethal force, its use should be in such a way that it would minimize additional risk to friendly forces. The right to use lethal force for self-defense against a deadly threat is unaffected by any earlier choice of nonlethal weapons to achieve mission objectives.