**TOPIC 3/3**

**COUNTERMOBILITY tasks AND FUNDAMENTALS**

Counter-mobility operations affect an adversant’s ability to manoeuvre freely and selectively deny him the use of terrain. They may also reduce the effect of an attacker’s superiority in numbers, and channel him into areas of our choosing where he can be defeated. Counter-mobility planning must also take account of own-force manoeuvre requirements.

There is an enduring requirement for Alliance members to retain a robust counter mobility inventory for the foreseeable future, in spite of the obvious constraints placed upon nations by international and domestic laws. Operational Analysis (OA) has clearly demonstrated the benefits of munitions based capability in particular but there are other ways of achieving this effect including air, direct and indirect fire weapon systems. The planned development of a range of technologically advanced munition-based systems for the future featuring Self Neutralize (SN) and Self Destruct (SD) characteristics, should greatly enhance the ability of NATO forces to create a range of appropriate counter mobility effects (lethal and non-lethal) rapidly across the battlespace, shaping it to our own advantage. Such a capability is also likely to be useful in other situations, particularly the urban environment.

**The Threat.** Adversant military doctrine may emphasize mobility in order to achieve superiority of forces at the decisive time and place and to maintain the momentum of combat operations. Adversant equipment may be designed to enable their forces to meet these requirements. Adversant engineers may be organized and equipped to assist in maintaining high rates of movement by clearing and maintaining routes for the advance of all arms/branches units, including breaching minefields and other obstacles, and crossing gaps.

**The Concept.** Counter-mobility operations must be correctly balanced so as to disrupt the adversant’s mobility while limiting the restriction on our own ability to manoeuvre freely. Barriers may be terrain, target or situation oriented. The increasing likelihood of operating in the urban/close terrain environment has already been noted and the requirement for a coherent counter-mobility capability can be demonstrated here as well as in more open terrain, with the common intent of shaping adversant movement into areas of our choosing.

In order to achieve the precise effects on adversant manoeuvre that are required by the commander, obstacle planning will take place following Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) and the estimate process, in which the commander will express his intent in terms of Combined Arms Obstacle Integration (CAOI) and will seek to maintain his own freedom of manoeuvre whilst constraining that of his adversary by disrupting, turning, fixing or blocking.

**Main Tasks.** The main counter-mobility tasks are:

* Emplacing Obstacles. This includes a wide range of options such as the use of mines, explosives, digging etc, to achieve the desired effect depending on the situation.
* Reinforcing Man Made Obstacles. The strengthening of civilian structures and military obstacles.
* Enhancing Natural Obstacles. The enhancement of natural obstacles, to include gaps and trees.
* Increasing Combined Arms/Branch Synchronization. The value of obstacles can be greatly increased by overlaying them with effective fires.

**COUNTERMOBILITY IN OPERATIONS**

Terrain, situation and target oriented barriers may be used in offensive operations. To limit the restriction on friendly force manoeuvre, control measures, such as Barrier Restricted Areas (BRA) may be imposed.

In offensive operations, counter-mobility tasks may include:

* Flank protection.
* Consolidation on an objective with consequent adoption of a defensive posture.
* Denying adversant withdrawal routes.

Support to flank protection forces is likely to be the most important counter-mobility

task for offensive operations with an open flank. Engineer tasks could include:

* Route denial.
* The planning and use of rapid scatterable mine systems.
* Preparing a range of other obstacles depending on time and the terrain.

**Consolidation.** Engineers must plan for and be ready to execute a rapid transition to defensive operations. When an objective has been taken, engineers may carry out counter- mobility tasks in order to support the attacking force against counter-attacks.

Care must be taken during consolidation that any counter-mobility activities undertaken do not impede our own freedom of manoeuvre, in relation to subsequent offensive operations.