The five-month battle in and around Stalingrad... was only a part of a far vaster drama played across an immense stage of steppes and forests and mountains.... As stiffening Soviet resistance, plus their own difficulties, slowed the German advance, Hitler milked more and more troops away from the vital northern flank... the hinge of the whole operation to re-enforce Paulus’s 6th Army at Stalingrad.¹

—The Battle for Stalingrad

The role of doctrine in establishing a foundation for MOUT training, technological development, and potential organizational change was widely recognized, as was the fundamental necessity for a doctrine that includes consideration of more than the tactical level of operations. There was a call for revision of current doctrine at all levels with an emphasis on maintaining continuity from strategic-level guidance to that provided for the individual soldier and marine. This call also stressed the need for joint MOUT doctrine. Both joint and service doctrine need to be comprehensive not only in the sense of the levels of operations, but also with regard to the complete spectrum of potential operations (e.g., stability and support missions as well as those entailing combat), multinational issues, and interagency considerations. There was some unresolved debate between a minority who believed the primary focus of MOUT doctrine should be at the tactical level and those who posited that current doctrine already had too great a tactical focus.

Several strategic and operational elements were thought to be essential to the creation of effective doctrine. The responsibilities of CINCs for making requirements known, overseeing training, promoting technological development, and supporting other activities critical to MOUT preparedness should be identified. A definition of joint “MOUT” and analysis of current and future cooperative approaches to urban operations was considered necessary. The difficulties confronting air and aviation elements during MOUT raised questions on whether joint air operations in MOUT required specialized tactics, techniques, procedures, and command relationships. Several individuals felt there was inadequate description of how joint operations should be conducted during urban contingencies. Effective operational-level doctrine was thought to be fundamental for guiding Joint Task Force (JTF) operations and training. None exists at present; current joint MOUT doctrine was seen as little more than “lip service.”

Another important element of this doctrinal enhancement will be the addressing of the limits of U.S. capabilities. Joint doctrine must account for diminished force strengths; no longer can the United States expect to commit multiple divisions to a long-term urban operation unless means of dramatically reducing personnel losses are developed. A precipitate conclusion is that doctrine to achieve desired end states via methods other than complete seizure or clearing of a built-up area is necessary.

Doctrine should emphasize that urban operations may not be desirable for many reasons, but that a policy of avoidance is no longer viable in many circumstances. Given the alternative of fighting in a city or doing so elsewhere, guidance to select the second is probably wise. Increasingly, however, no such alternative will be available; it is therefore essential to synchronize strategic expectations and capabilities. To paraphrase Clausewitz, any representative of the National Command Authorities must be “aware of the entire political situation,” while also understanding “exactly how much he can achieve with the means at his disposal.”

A new doctrine must include the complete scope of likely military activities. The USMC has recently labeled the possibility of humani-

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tarian missions, stability activities, and combat occurring simultaneously during a single operation and in a single city as the “three block war.” This contingency, in which units have three dramatically different types of actions ongoing over distances measured in a few hundred meters, is virtually unrecognized in doctrine today.

It was recommended that future MOUT doctrine take a broader and more integrated approach to address these varied demands. Guidance for combat operations should not be neglected, but doctrine to cover other scenarios was deemed essential. For example, manuals should include discussions of how to select and neutralize critical urban nodes to facilitate success during stability missions. Similarly, coverage of how to prioritize and restore essential services is necessary. Doctrine should cover contingencies such as those now commonplace in Bosnia, situations in which soldiers and marines must constrain their actions to meet stringent rules of engagement but be prepared for the high-intensity MOUT that could be but “one heartbeat away.”

Dealing with such divergent requirements requires guidance that considers the use of both lethal and nonlethal means of engagement.

There is an immediate need to update joint publications and the Army’s Field Manual (FM) 90-10, Military Operations on Urbanized

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4The quotation is taken from a conference participant who used it to describe the thin line that sometimes exists between combat and a noncombat environment during stability and support missions.
Those attending the conference generally agreed that although improvements in the current approach to MOUT (designated as “close combat MOUT” due to its reliance on closing with an adversary and engaging him at short range) might mitigate friendly casualties to a limited extent, success in addressing today’s strategic requirements may not be attainable unless an alternative method is adopted. However, there was no universal agreement on the nature of that alternative. The aforementioned RAND strategy designed to remove U.S. soldiers and marines from an environment in which short-range engagements were the norm was believed by some to be both desirable and feasible for the long term. Given a commitment to move toward this capability, steps to capitalize on advances in that direction should be taken when possible. Others were unconvinced that this was the proper approach, but no other predominant concept emerged. It was agreed, however, that future doctrine should support reductions in force vulnerability and the employment of alternatives to the commitment of friendly forces in high-risk situations when other viable courses of action are available.

The following additional areas were noted by one or more persons as requiring further attention in MOUT doctrine:

- **Fire support**: Both fire support doctrine and the training derived from it were seen as deficient in the urban operations arena.

- **Casualty evacuation**: Current reliance on limited numbers of medical personnel results in combat personnel having to assist with medical evacuation, further draining fighting strengths in an environment notorious for manpower consumption.

- **Intelligence collection, analysis, and dissemination**: The short duration of response times and the fleeting nature of opportunities demand rapid and accurate completion of the collection → analysis → dissemination intelligence cycle. MOUT are squad leaders’ operations to a large degree, so promulgation

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5The Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-35.3, *MOUT*, was being reviewed and updated at the time of the conference. The document was released in April 1998.
of real-time intelligence must be to the lowest levels if they are to be of value.

- **Psychological operations:** Chechens’ effective use of psychological operations against their Russian adversaries emphasized both the value of well-conceived psyops and the need to prepare friendly forces for an adversary’s employment of this resource.

- **Early deployment of human intelligence (HUMINT), psychological operations, information operations, and deceptions assets into theaters involving MOUT:** Preliminary identification of critical nodes, preparation of the indigenous population, determination of optimum insertion points, establishment of contacts with local guides, and other activities crucial to success and requiring significant lead times are difficult or impossible to accomplish effectively if initiation is too greatly delayed.

- **Defensive MOUT:** Doctrine for defensive urban combat operations is very limited. Future doctrinal improvements should adequately address friendly and enemy defensive operations to include the use of “layers” or “belts.”

- **Anti-tank defense:** Techniques to better deny an enemy effective employment of RPGs and use of defensive positions above or below the depression limits of IFV and tank guns were seen as essential.

- **Deception:** The conference attendees called for doctrine that (1) supports seizing opportunities offered by deception, and (2) ensures superior friendly C4ISR operations.

- **Command and control operations:** Russians in Chechnya modified the well-known OODA (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act) loop to account for cultural differences confronted during operations in the city of Grozny, labeling it an OCODA (Observe, Culturally Orient, Decide, Act) loop instead. U.S. forces must be ready to operate in built-up areas where communications are

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6The significance of RPGs in MOUT is evident from their status as the most feared weapon during Russian fighting in Grozny (Timothy L. Thomas, lecture at RAND-DBBL MOUT conference, February 24, 1998) and the vulnerability of circling helicopters to their fires in 1993 Mogadishu.
I remembered battles against the White Guards and White Poles in the [Russian] Civil War when we had to attack under artillery and machine-gun fire without any artillery support of our own. We used to run up close to the enemy, and his artillery would be unable to take fresh aim and fire on rapidly approaching targets. . . . I came to the conclusion that the best method of fighting the Germans would be close battle, applied night and day in different forms. We should get as close to the enemy as possible so that his air force could not bomb our forward units or trenches.7

—Vasili I. Chuikov