



Reimagining the Character of Urban Operations for the U.S. Army

How the Past Can Inform the Present and Future

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www.rand.org/t/RR1602

Provides a historical analysis of the ways in which militaries have deployed light and mechanized infantry with armored forces during close urban combat in order to identify the advantages and costs of this warfighting approach and inform how the Army might confront foes in complex, urban environments in the future.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How were light and mechanized infantry forces used by the U.S. Army in Mogadishu in 1993, the Russian Army in Grozny in 1994 and in 1999, the U.S. Army in Baghdad in 2003, the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Army in Fallujah in 2004, and the U.S. Army in the Sadr City suburb of Baghdad in 2008?
- What are the implications of urban combat for the U.S. Army?



KEY FINDINGS

Mobile Protected Firepower Is an Important Necessity in Urban Operations but Does Not Guarantee Success

- Armored ground forces enable freedom of movement in urban areas, providing the basis for shrinking the operational problem of a large urban area down to a neighborhood.
- Mobile protected firepower will face challenges in urban operations. For example, the high lethality of artillery fire used by the Russian Army in the Ukraine will demand a combined arms approach that integrates ground maneuver with joint fires.

The Importance of Intelligence in Urban Operations

- Urban operations will demand innovative forms of intelligence, including new sources and methods of collection, particularly open source information from nonmilitary sources.

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- The principal challenge for intelligence in urban operations will be to integrate and make sense of data from a plethora of sources.
- In some but not all cases, sufficient intelligence may help the Army to reduce the relevant operational area to a scope that it actually has the resources to handle.

Forces Need to Be Creative and Adaptive in Their Employment

- Each city poses different challenges. A constant for troops engaged in urban combat is to shrink the problem to a manageable size, but how to do so varies considerably depending on the city and the enemy confronted.
- The key to reducing the challenge of urban combat to a manageable scope is creative thinking by military leaders who can think outside of established methods and norms of operations.

