

Clear The Way

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As we once again transition leadership at the Engineer School and come together for the annual ENFORCE conference, I thought it appropriate to provide a regimental perspective on the current operational and strategic environment, as we are at a time that offers great challenge—but also great opportunity.

We all know that our Army and Regiment have changed dramatically over the past decade, but from an enduring perspective, this past year may be the most significant. With the February 2008 publishing of FM 3.0, *Operations*, our Army's capstone doctrine, stability operations are now equally as important as offensive and defensive operations. For years, tasks associated with "nation building" were to be avoided because we were designed and equipped for high-intensity operations and would only do those other tasks when we had to. From our experiences over the past decade, we know that stability operations require new capabilities and new tactical and technical competencies for engineer Soldiers. Prior to this new doctrine, most engineer Soldiers and leaders were not required to have a high level of technical skills. The Engineer Regiment has been at the tip of the spear in terms of transformation and in prosecuting full spectrum operations in two separate theaters, and we should be proud of how well we have done on both fronts under an operational design that never expected us to conduct the myriad of tasks associated with stability operations. However, experience over the past 5 years illustrates that stability operations need military engineer capabilities and skills that were not previously required, and it is important that we articulate to Army leadership how important it is to support our Regiment's efforts to continue to adapt to this new reality. I believe we have done a relatively good job of identifying how we must change and are working many initiatives to develop the Engineer Regiment we need now and for the foreseeable future. Central to this is the *Building Great Engineers* campaign, which we will again focus on during this year's ENFORCE. However, to be successful in these endeavors, we must collectively educate the Army at large on these new realities, and to do this, we must educate our own Regiment. To this end, I ask each of you to work the following three strategic messages into your conversations, writings, and briefings whenever possible:

Strategic Message #1: FM 3-0 places stability and civil support operations on equal par with offensive and defensive operations. These operations require new and significantly higher engineer technical capabilities than under previous Army doctrine, and the Army must adapt its engineer force within the context of this new doctrine.

Strategic Message #2: The current Army and engineer leader development and personnel management system is not optimized



to create engineer leaders with the technical and tactical engineering skills needed for full spectrum operations. The Army needs to recognize this and support the Engineer Regiment's actions to build great engineers in order to provide the higher degree of technical capabilities our force needs, even at a time when the United States as a nation is producing fewer engineers.

We are focused on the personnel domain, which has historically compensated for shortcomings in other domains. We will never have the exact doctrine, organization, or materiel that we need, so it is up to our Soldiers and leaders to adapt and develop solutions on the battlefield that will achieve victory. We recognize that

our challenges do not reside entirely in the personnel domain. The modular force has not been fully fielded, and we must have the tactical patience to grow the complete force before we make radical judgments on its effectiveness. We must remind ourselves that the modular engineer force provides much more balanced engineer capabilities for the force at large (combat, general, geospatial), and there is universal recognition that the new modular engineer battalion headquarters is much more capable than were the legacy engineer battalions. The primary shortfall that has become clear is engineer command and control (C2)—specifically within the brigade combat team (BCT). To leverage the engineer force pool, the BCT needs a more robust engineer C2 solution. To this end, I offer the final strategic message for your use as you engage our Army leaders:

Strategic Message #3: The Army's modular BCTs will need augmentation from the engineer force pool for virtually every mission assigned, because there is not enough engineer capability within the Army to provide each BCT with the organic engineer support it will need for full spectrum operations. These high-demand engineer capabilities must be carefully managed and seamlessly moved within and between BCTs throughout any campaign. In many cases, the engineer augmentation will be large enough to allocate up to an engineer battalion to the BCT to provide C2 of these units. Short of having the organic engineer capability needed, BCTs must be trained on how to leverage and integrate engineer capabilities from the force pool to meet this gap and must have a capable and robust organic engineer staff to enable efficient engineer integration.

It has been a great privilege to serve as your Commandant during the past 6 months. The Army has made an outstanding choice in the selection of our new Commandant, COL Bryan Watson, who comes to us with the right experience and is the perfect leader to take our Regiment forward. I will continue to serve the Regiment and the new Commandant as the Assistant Commandant and look forward to seeing you at ENFORCE. Remember that we are in a period of tremendous opportunity for the Regiment! Essayons!