

ADP 3-37, *Protection*: An Update to the WFF

By Captain Carlos J. Valencia

As we shift our focus to large-scale combat operations against peer adversaries, it is more important than ever that we understand the enemy threat, the operational environment, and all forms of contact in order to protect essential military personnel, equipment, infrastructure, and data. In recent years, protection has gained more notoriety as the technologies of the future have become the threats and hazards of today.¹ Predicting, mitigating, and protecting against enemy threats and hazards remain essential for Army forces to generate combat power at home stations through the Army Protection Program during competition below armed conflict to set conditions for crises and armed conflict. Once crises and armed conflict begin, a transition from the Army Protection Program to the protection warfighting function (WFF) occurs, allowing commanders to protect their forces and preserve their freedom of action on the battlefield. Protection of Army forces, equipment, and installations stems from many factors, such as regulations, programs, standard operating procedures, tactical operations, and the protection capabilities and systems employed to protect a force; still, dedicated planning is arguably the most critical factor. Protection planning and contributions to the operations process are continuous and enduring endeavors that we undertake as we adapt to and predict the actions of our enemy (see Figure 1). Through a comprehensive, integrated, layered, and redundant approach, protection planning can mitigate garrison risk and afford commanders the time, forces, and ability to impose their will on the battlefield. As with previous versions of Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-37, *Protection*,² the pending 2023 revision will provide guidance on the protection WFF and establish the doctrinal foundation for commanders and staffs who are responsible for planning, preparing, executing, and assessing protection in support of Army operations.

The October 2022 publishing of the capstone Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*,³ changed the Army operational concept to multidomain operations. Doctrine writers and developers routinely review early drafts of capstone publications to aid in ensuring concurrency with subject matter areas, and FM 3-0 was no exception. Because all other doctrine must nest with FM 3-0, its impending publication set off a massive effort to begin revisions of the doctrinal libraries governed

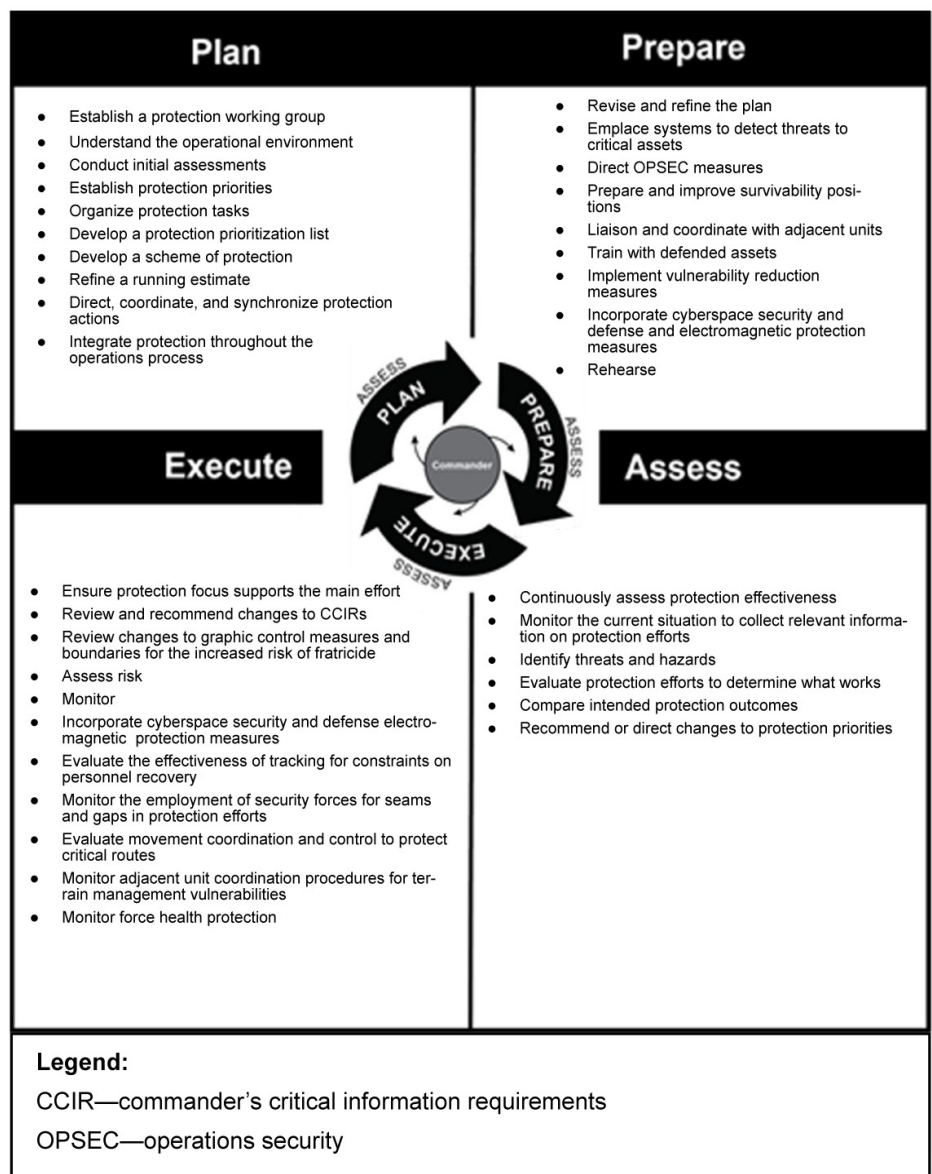


Figure 1. Integration of protection throughout the operations process

by each center of excellence. Starting in February 2022, after providing assistance with the development of FM 3-0, the Doctrine Division, Fielded Force Integration Directorate, Maneuver Support Center of Excellence (MSCoE), Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, began the doctrine development process on ADP 3-37. Following five working group meetings comprised of stakeholders from 12 organizations, two 60-day staffing periods (for the initial and final drafts), and 1,440 comments from the force, the 2023 revision of ADP 3-37 is now nearly ready for publication.

The 2023 ADP 3-37 revision will be consistent with previous protection WFF doctrine. The same 16 primary tasks will be retained; however, these tasks will be grouped into four categories—conduct risk management, protect capabilities, protect areas, and protect information—to provide a better understanding of their organization and employment (see Figure 2).

A significant change has been made to the definition of the protection WFF itself though. The protection WFF was previously defined in ADP 3-0, *Operations*, as “the related tasks and systems that preserve the force so the commander can

apply maximum combat power to accomplish the mission.”⁴ Many believed that this definition fell short of the true importance of the WFF, as it limited most protection preconceptions and planning efforts to survivability. During the development of FM 3-0, MSCoE doctrine developers suggested an updated definition that would better support multidomain operations. As introduced in the latest revision of FM 3-0, the protection WFF is now defined as “the related tasks, systems, and methods that prevent or mitigate detection, threat effects, and hazards to preserve combat power and enable freedom of action.”⁵ This new definition expands our understanding of the protection WFF, particularly by acknowledging that protection consists of more than survivability and passive actions, and includes stopping threats and hazards before they occur. Most importantly, the new definition acknowledges the critical role that the protection WFF plays in preserving a commander’s ability to have freedom of action to exploit opportunities at each echelon and through the depth of the operational environment and strategic situation. This new definition was vital in developing the 2023 revision of ADP 3-37.

<p>Conduct risk management. Risk management is the process used to identify, assess, and control risks and make decisions that balance the cost of risk with the benefits of mission. It focuses on the mission and the force.</p>
<p>Protect capabilities. Capabilities protection involves measures taken to prevent or mitigate friendly detection or the impact of enemy action and to intercept or destroy threats and hazards before they can inflict damage to Army capabilities. Elements of capability protection include—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survivability. (Protect against detection and lethal fires.) • Air and missile defense. (Protect against air and missile threats.) • CBRN operations. (Protect against contamination.) • Force health protection. (Protect against threats and hazards to health.) • Electromagnetic protection. (Protect against electromagnetic spectrum threats.) • Physical security. (Protect personnel, resources, and information.) • Personnel recovery. (Protect isolated personnel.)
<p>Protect areas. Protecting areas prevents, mitigates, and disrupts the enemy’s ability to gain positions of advantage; maintain freedom of action; destroy friendly critical capabilities, assets, and activities; and influence third-party actors, surrogates, proxies, and irregular criminal threats across the operational environment, including force projection and generation platforms in the homeland and abroad. Area protection includes —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area security. (Secure areas, lines of communication, and critical assets from threats.) • Antiterrorism. (Personnel, property, and resources.) • EOD. (Protect against explosive hazards.) • Police operations. (Protect forces, populations, critical infrastructure, and assets and enable stability [Rule of Law].) • Detention operations. (Protect against detained persons.) • Populace and resources control. (Protect people and their economic resources.)
<p>Protect information. Protecting information requires enduring measures that protect and defend friendly information and information systems. These measures are designed to conceal information from, and deny information to, the threat; protect information from unauthorized modification; protect information from unauthorized destruction; and enable information advantage. Information protection includes —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPSEC. (Protect critical information and indicators of friendly force actions.) • Cyberspace security and defense. (Protect cyberspace.)
<p>Legend:</p> <p>CBRN—chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear OPSEC—operations security</p> <p>EOD—explosive ordnance disposal</p>

Figure 2. Protection categories

Additionally, the following updates or expansions will be included in the 2023 revision of ADP 3-37:

- Protection challenges make commanders and staffs think about unique obstacles that they must be prepared to overcome in support of Army operations during competition below armed conflict, crisis, and armed conflict.
- The protection WFF manifests itself differently at each echelon and across the operational framework (see Figure 3) and during competition below armed conflict, crisis, and armed conflict.
- Commanders and staffs synchronize operations and tasks from other WFFs that complement and reinforce protection, such as—
 - Conduct security operations.
 - Conduct countermobility operations.
 - Perform tactical deception.
 - Provide intelligence support to protection.
 - Combat fratricide.
 - Perform general engineering.
 - Perform security measures.

- Counter explosive hazards.
- Collect forensic and biometric material.
- Conduct Army space operations.

- Protection capabilities are integrated throughout the operations process, and commanders and staffs use the operations process to determine protection requirements and priorities and to direct, coordinate, and synchronize protection efforts and capabilities across all domains to reduce risk, mitigate identified vulnerabilities, and create windows of opportunity to achieve mission success.
- Roles and responsibilities of the protection cell at corps, echelon, and below are identified; sections that make up the protection cell are described; the relationship of the protection cell to other key staff sections is explained; and the working groups in which the protection cell must participate are identified.

Protection is vital to protecting critical capabilities, preserving combat power, and mitigating risk across all domains, dimensions, and strategic contexts. The new version of ADP 3-37 will remind leaders that protection is not limited to a specific domain or branch of the Army but applies to the Army as a whole. All units must take it upon themselves to

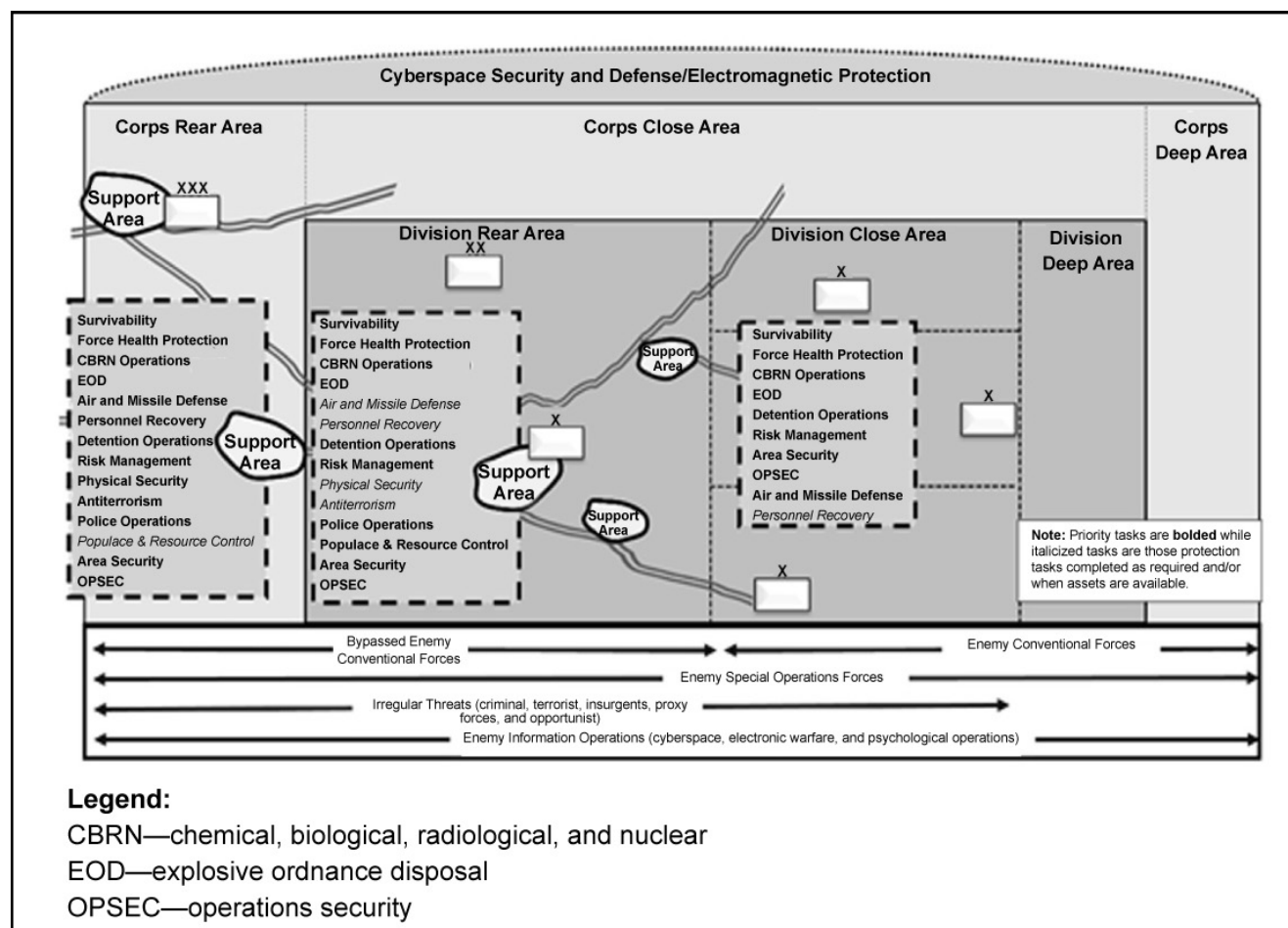


Figure 3. Protection considerations within a corps area of operations during large-scale combat operations.

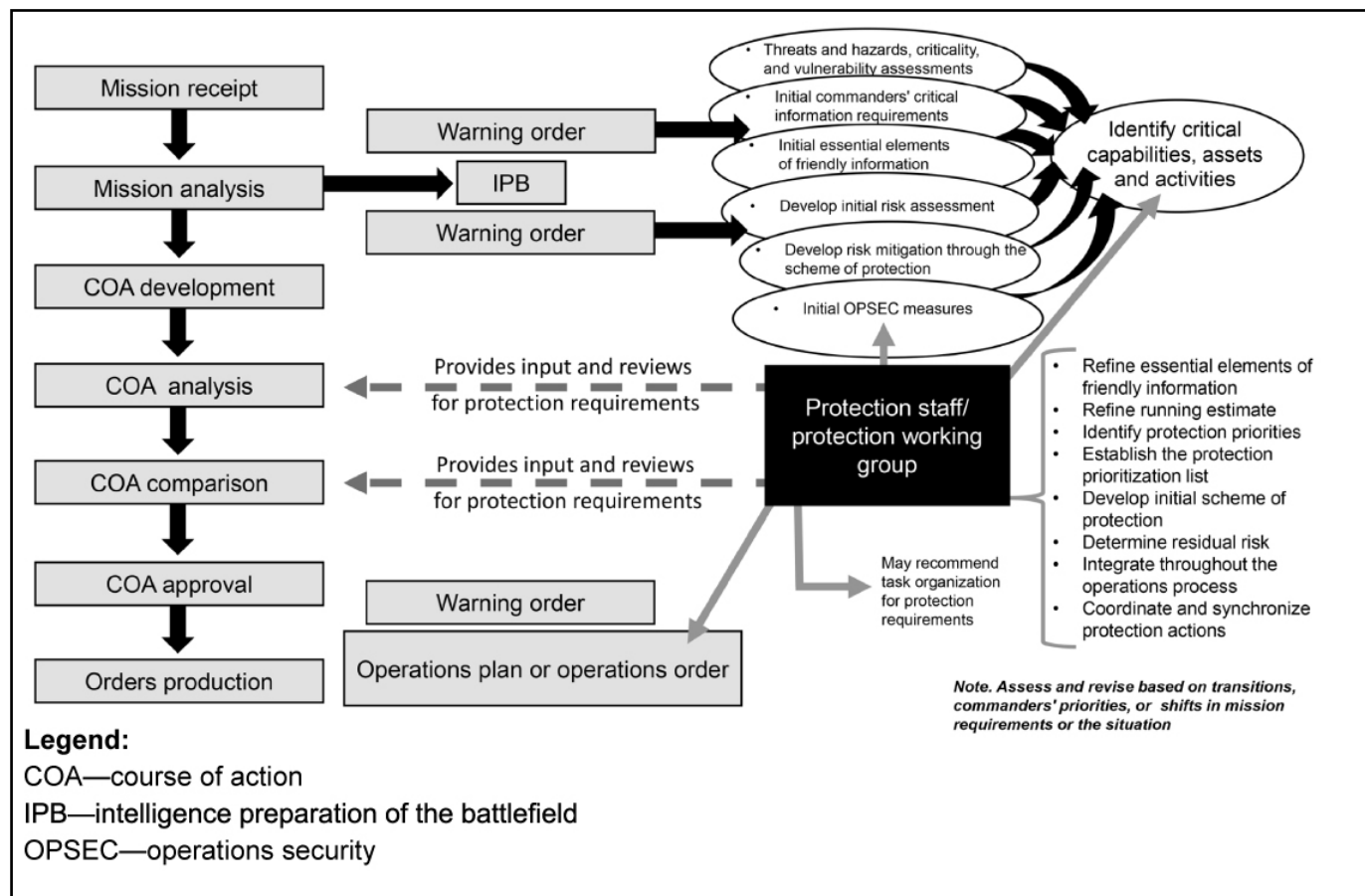


Figure 4. Protection planning

employ security operations, modify the tempo, take evasive action, maneuver to gain positional advantages, decrease electromagnetic signatures, and disperse forces to improve survivability in order to have the combat power necessary to achieve mission success. These survivability tasks fundamentally start with each Soldier achieving proficiency in his or her everyday Soldier tasks and fieldcraft. Additionally, ADP 3-37 will implore protection staffs to be forward-thinking, to predict threats and hazards that may not be readily apparent, and to integrate these predictions and planning efforts into the operations process (see Figure 4). Protection leaders must understand their place within a staff and not only serve as subject matter experts in their field but also become protection WFF experts, which can only be done by gaining an understanding of ADP 3-37.

ADP 3-37 will build on the collective knowledge and wisdom we've gained during recent operations, numerous lessons learned, and doctrinal revisions throughout the Army. ADP 3-37 nests with ADP 3-0; FM 3-0; FM 3-90, *Tactics*;⁶ and other recently revised doctrine and emerging publications and is rooted in time-tested principles and fundamentals while also accommodating new technologies and organizational changes.

Once published, be sure to download a copy of ADP 3-37 from <www.armypubs.army.mil> or obtain a copy from your unit publication manager.

Endnotes:

¹Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations*, 18 June 2022.

²ADP 3-37, *Protection*, 31 July 2019.

³FM 3-0, *Operations*, 12 October 2022.

⁴ADP 3-0, *Operations*, 31 July 2019.

⁵FM 3-0.

⁶FM 3-90, *Tactics*, 1 May 2023.

Captain Valencia is a doctrine analyst/writer for the Military Police Doctrine Branch, Doctrine Division, Fielded Force Integration Directorate, MSCoE. He holds a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Texas, San Antonio.