

Urban Operations/Complex Terrain

Marine forces will be trained and configured to operate effectively in mountainous, jungle, arctic, desert, and urban areas where spatial maneuver is influenced by geographic and topographic features that impose compartmentalization and affect lines of visibility. We recognize that operations in urban areas are the most likely to occur and the most dangerous. Urban areas are complex terrain, which emphasizes the need to maneuver in the human dimension of conflict. This requires a thorough understanding of the relationships, fears, and objectives of the people and organizations that populate the battlespace. Conducting operations in very large urban areas poses especially challenging conditions that can soak up personnel resources in labor-intensive ground actions. Where our capacity is limited, our capability to effectively prosecute maneuver warfare in every dimension will be critical to success. To improve our ability to operate in a manner that accounts for complex terrain including urban environments, we must:

- Train to address the full degree and extent of compartmentalization (block, street, building; sewer; tunnel; cave; jungle; mountains).
- Exploit man-machine interface and manned-unmanned teaming to overcome challenges in urban terrain.
- Refine our ability to use open sources of information and human sources of intelligence to create accurate, mission-informed course of action analysis that reflects a nuanced sense of the conflict from the perspective of all parties and how that changes as the adversary adapts.
- Improve our ability to find cover and concealment and retain the element of surprise while maneuvering in and among a dense population.
- Develop fires solutions that enable precise effects in compartmentalized terrain.
- Continue to explore non-lethal weapons, devices and munitions specifically designed to disable, inhibit or degrade personnel or materiel while minimizing civilian casualties and limiting collateral damage.