

## INTRODUCTION

CONOPS (continuous operations) is combat continuing at the same-high intensity level for extended periods. Soldiers may have opportunities for sleep, but this sleep may be brief or fragmented.

CONOPS is distinguished from SUSOPS (sustained operations). In SUSOPS, the same soldiers and small units engage in continuous operations with no opportunity for the unit to stand down and very little opportunity for soldiers to get more than a few minutes of sleep. Within any CONOPS, there are likely to be periods of SUSOPS.

Continuous land combat is an advanced warfare concept. It is made possible by the almost complete mechanization of land combat forces and by the technology that permits effective movement at night, in poor weather, and in other low-visibility conditions. Continuous combat operations may be fast-paced, around-the-clock, and intense. The reasons that armies have traditionally paused in battle - darkness, resupply, regrouping - have been overcome largely by technological advances. Now that armies have the potential to fight without let up, night operations will become commonplace.

This continuous cycle of day/night operations may cause degradation of perform-

ance in cognitive skills beginning as early as 18 to 24 hours into CONOPS. The ability to think clearly deteriorates even more rapidly than strength and endurance. Mood, morale, initiative, and motivation decline along with mental performance. The soldier increasingly feels the effects of fatigue and stress, especially between 0200 and 0600 hours.

Our force is changing from one that is forward-deployed to one that is CONUS-based and deployment-postured. Therefore, deployments to advanced bases on short notice are becoming routine for all units. Combat support and combat service support units, as well as combat units, are likely to go to the same areas of the world. Deployment starts the process of stress and fatigue which leads to soldier, team, and unit performance degradation.