Chapter 6

Conducting Full Spectrum Operations

I think the time has come when we should attempt the boldest moves, and my experience is that they are easier of execution than more timid ones...

Major General William Tecumseh Sherman

6-1. While differing dramatically in their particulars, full spectrum operations follow a cycle of planning, preparation, execution, and continuous assessment. These cyclic activities are sequential but not discrete; they overlap and recur as circumstances demand. As a whole, they make up the *operations process*. Battle command drives the operations process (see Figure 6-1, page 6-2). Army forces design and conduct operations to win on the offensive; dictate the terms of combat and avoid fighting the enemy on his terms; seize and retain the initiative; and build momentum quickly to win decisively.

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PLAN

6-2. The commander's intent and planning guidance direct the activities of the staff and subordinate commanders. The staff assists the commander with the coordination and detailed analysis necessary to convert the planning guidance and commander's intent into a plan. The plan becomes a common reference point for operations (see FM 5-0).

6-3. ***Planning* is the means by which the commander envisions a desired outcome, lays out effective ways of achieving it, and communicates to his subordinates his vision, intent, and decisions, focusing on the results he expects to achieve.** Plans forecast but do not predict. A plan is a continuous, evolving framework of anticipated actions that