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.

CONTENTS

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

maximizes opportunities. It guides subordinates as they progress through each phase of the operation. Any plan is a framework from which to adapt, not a script to be followed to the letter. The measure of a good plan is not whether execution transpires as planned but whether the plan facilitates effective action in the face of unforeseen events. Good plans foster initiative.

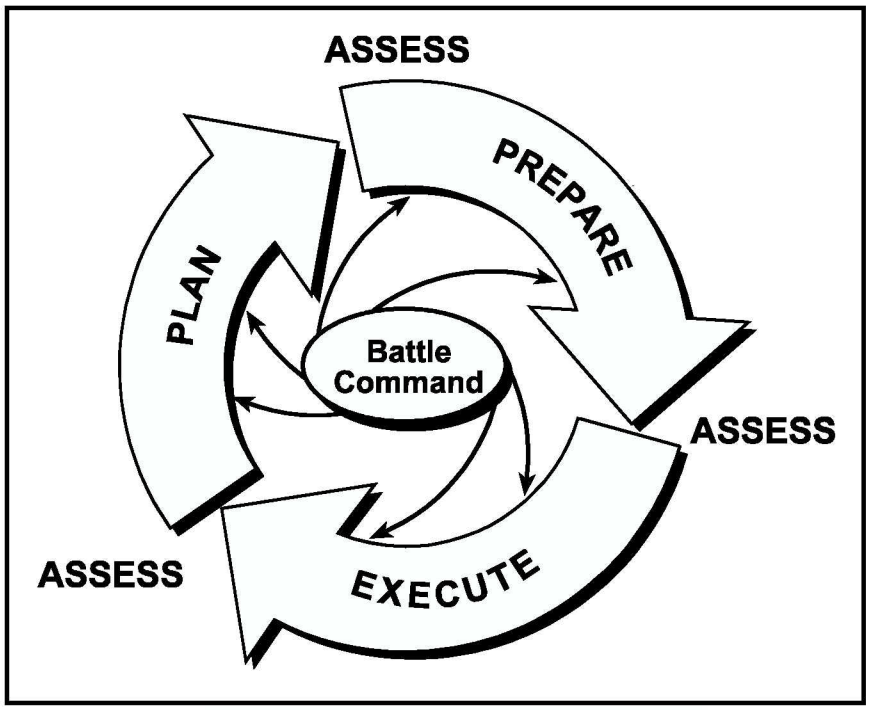


Figure 6-1. The Operations Process

6-4. Scope, complexity, and length of planning horizons differ between operational and tactical planning. Campaign planning coordinates major actions across significant periods. Planners mesh service capabilities with those of joint and multinational formations as well as interagency and nongovernmental organizations. Tactical planning has the same clarity of purpose as operational planning, but has a shorter planning horizon. Comprehensive, continuous, and adaptive planning characterizes successful operations at both the operational and tactical levels.

6-5. Plans specify what commanders will decide personally. In the offense, for example, commanders normally decide when to commit the reserve. In a tense stability operation, the commander may decide the exact positions of tactical elements. Regardless of echelon, commanders identify those information requirements they consider most important to their decisions—the commander's critical information requirements (CCIR). These are typically information requirements that help them confirm their vision of the battlefield or identify significant deviations from it. The staff incorporates CCIR into the appropriate parts of the plan and passes them to subordinate units.

6-6. Plans give subordinates the latitude and guidance to exercise disciplined initiative within the bounds of the commander's intent. For example, aviation and ground maneuver elements might attack enemy missiles capable of

delivering weapons of mass destruction (WMD) wherever located, no matter what their mission at the time. Some operations require tight control over subordinate elements. However, commanders ensure that plans remain as flexible as possible and impose the minimum control required for mission success. Commanders encourage subordinates to seize the initiative through plans and directions that provide guidance concerning opportunity.

6-7. German Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke (victor in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870) observed that "no plan...extends with any degree of certainty beyond the first encounter with the main enemy force." This is as true today as it was more than a century ago. Moltke's dictum, rather than condemning the value of planning, reminds commanders and staffs of the relationship between planning and execution during operations. The purpose of any plan is to establish the conceptual basis for action. The plan provides a reasonably accurate forecast of execution. However, it remains a starting point, not the centerpiece of the operation. As GEN George S. Patton Jr. cautioned, "...one makes plans to fit circumstances and does not try to create circumstances to fit plans. That way danger lies."

OPERATIONAL AND TACTICAL PLANNING

6-8. Planning is dynamic and continuous (see JP 5-0). Operational-level planning focuses on developing plans for campaigns, subordinate campaigns, and major operations. Combatant commanders develop theater campaign plans to accomplish multinational, national, and theater strategic objectives. Subordinate unified commands typically develop subordinate campaign plans or operation plans that accomplish theater strategic objectives. Joint task force (JTF) commanders may develop subordinate campaign plans if the mission requires military operations of sufficient scope, size, complexity, and duration. Land component commanders normally develop plans for major operations that support the campaign plan.

6-9. In major operations, Army force commanders choose to accept or decline battle, decide what use to make of tactical successes and failures, and advise joint force commanders (JFCs) on the long-term needs and prospects of their operations. Since campaign plans generally set a series of long-term objectives, they often require phases. Therefore, a campaign plan normally provides a general concept of operations for the entire campaign and a specific operation order for the campaign's initial phase. Planning for major operations mirrors planning for the overall campaign but is reduced in scope. Even if a major operation is not the initial phase of a campaign, planning for it as a branch or a sequel may begin long before actual execution.

6-10. Operational and tactical planning complement each other but have different aims. Operational planning prepares the way for tactical activity on favorable terms; it continually seeks to foster and exploit tactical success. Major operations depend on creatively using tactical actions to accomplish strategic or operational purposes in specific contexts against adaptive opponents. Tactical planning emphasizes flexibility and options. Planning horizons for tactical actions are relatively short. Comprehensive planning may be feasible only for the first engagement or phase of a battle; succeeding actions depend on enemy responses and circumstances. The art of tactical planning lies in anticipating and developing sound branches and sequels.

6-11. Brevity is essential; so is speed. Staffs must avoid consuming too much time developing lengthy plans that contain irrelevant details. When plans arrive late, subordinate units can only react. To save time and shorten plans, commanders and staffs anticipate support requirements and forecast options. Headquarters at each level plan in parallel with higher and lower headquarters. Parallel planning expedites the exchange of information among headquarters and should be used as much as possible. Commanders exploit technology to increase situational understanding and speed of planning.

Change of Plans at Normandy

On 6 June 1944, Army forces executed Operation Overlord, an air and sea invasion of Western Europe. VII Corps planned an assault on Utah Beach by the 4th Infantry Division along with predawn airborne drops by the 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions. Like most D-Day operations, events proceeded differently than planned.

Upon execution, the airborne units were scattered across the French countryside with some units forming quickly while others grouped into small, isolated pockets. Regardless, airborne troops pressed on to their objectives or fought where they were, creating disorder among the defenders.

The 4th Infantry Division landed at Utah Beach where, of four beach control vessels guiding the force, one broke down and two others were sunk. The remaining vessel guided the landing force to the beaches, but they arrived south of their designated areas. BG Theodore Roosevelt Jr., the assistant division commander, made a personal reconnaissance and realized that the original plan must change. He returned to the landing site and ordered the two infantry battalions to advance inland instead of realigning onto the original amphibious landing sites, a decision that was executed without confusion. Changing plans fit the circumstances, and the 4th Infantry Division successfully pressed the fight inland.

6-12. There are two doctrinal planning procedures (see FM 5-0). In units with a formally organized staff, the military decision making process helps commanders and staffs develop estimates, plans, and orders. It provides a logical sequence of decision and interaction between the commander and staff. The military decision making process provides a common framework for all staffs that supports the maximum use of parallel planning. At the lowest tactical echelons, commanders do not have a staff. Consequently, commanders and leaders follow the troop leading procedures. Both procedures hinge on the commander's ability to visualize and describe the operation. Both are means to an end: their value lies in the result, not the process.

PHASING

6-13. **A *phase* is a specific part of an operation that is different from those that precede or follow. A change in phase usually involves a change of task.** Phasing assists in planning and controlling. Considerations of time, distance, terrain, resources, and important events contribute to the decision to phase an operation.

6-14. If Army forces lack the means to overwhelm an enemy in a single simultaneous operation, then commanders normally phase the operation. A phase is a period when a large portion of the force conducts similar or mutually supporting activities. Operations link successive phases. Individual phases gain significance only in the larger context of the campaign or major operation. Each phase should strive for simultaneity in time, space, and purpose. In this way, commanders combine simultaneous operations within phases while sequencing operations to achieve the end state.

6-15. Links between phases and the requirement to transition between phases are critically important. Commanders establish clear conditions for how and when these transitions occur. Although phases are distinguishable to friendly forces, the operational design conceals these distinctions from opponents through concurrent, complementary joint and Army actions.

BRANCHES AND SEQUELS

6-16. Operations never proceed exactly as planned. An effective design places a premium on flexibility. Commanders incorporate branches and sequels into the operational design to gain flexibility. Visualizing and planning branches and sequels are important because they involve transition—changes in mission, in type of operation, and often in forces required for execution. Unless planned and executed efficiently, transitions can reduce the tempo of the operation, slow its momentum, and cede the initiative to the adversary.

6-17. **A *branch* is a contingency plan or course of action (an option built into the basic plan or course of action) for changing the mission, disposition, orientation, or direction of movement of the force to aid success of the current operation, based on anticipated events, opportunities, or disruptions caused by enemy actions. Army forces prepare branches to exploit success and opportunities, or to counter disruptions caused by enemy actions.** Commanders anticipate and devise counters to enemy actions. Although anticipating every possible threat action is impossible, branches anticipate the most likely ones. Commanders execute branches to rapidly respond to changing conditions.

6-18. ***Sequels* are operations that follow the current operation. They are future operations that anticipate the possible outcomes—success, failure, or stalemate—of the current operation.** A counteroffensive, for example, is a logical sequel to a defense; exploitation and pursuit follow successful attacks. Executing a sequel normally begins another phase of an operation, if not a new operation. Commanders consider sequels early and revisit them throughout an operation. Without such planning, current operations leave forces poorly positioned for future opportunities, and leaders are unprepared to retain the initiative. Both branches and sequels should have execution criteria, carefully reviewed before their implementation and updated based on assessment of current operations.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

6-19. **The *concept of operations* describes how commanders see the actions of subordinate units fitting together to accomplish the mission. As a minimum, the description includes the scheme of**

maneuver and concept of fires. The concept of operations expands the commander's selected course of action and expresses how each element of the force will cooperate to accomplish the mission. Where the commander's intent focuses on the end state, the concept of operations focuses on the method by which the operation uses and synchronizes the battlefield operating systems (BOS) to translate vision and end state into action. Commanders ensure that the concept of operations is consistent with both their intent and that of the next two higher commanders.

RISK MANAGEMENT

6-20. ***Risk management*** **is the process of identifying, assessing, and controlling risk arising from operational factors, and making an informed decision that balances risk cost with mission benefits.** It provides leaders with a systematic mechanism to identify risk associated with a course of action during planning (see FM 3-100.14; FM 5-0). Commanders integrate risk management into all aspects of the operations process. During planning, commanders identify, assess, and weigh risks. They convey risk considerations as guidance. Risk guidance affects course of action development. It also affects application of some elements of operational design, such as end state, designation of objectives, and lines of operation. Risk management also influences task organization; control measures; and the concepts of operations, fires, and CSS. During execution, assessment of risk assists commanders in making informed decisions regarding changes to task organization, shifting priorities of effort and support, and shaping future operations. Effective risk management results in mission accomplishment at least cost.

ORDERS

6-21. Orders translate plans into execution. When possible, commanders issue them personally, face-to-face. If this is not possible, a video teleconference or other communication means can substitute. Commanders allow their subordinates maximum freedom of action, providing mission-type orders whenever practical. Mission-type orders specify what to do and the purpose for doing it, without prescribing how to do it (see FM 6-0). Control measures should aid cooperation among forces without imposing needless restrictions on their freedom of action.

PREPARE

6-22. ***Preparation*** **consists of activities by the unit before execution to improve its ability to conduct the operation including, but not limited to, the following: plan refinement, rehearsals, reconnaissance, coordination, inspections, and movement.** It requires staff, unit, and soldier actions. The complexity of operations imposes significant challenges. The nature of land operations differs tremendously from situation to situation. Mission success depends as much on preparation as planning. Rehearsals help staffs, units, and individuals to prepare for full spectrum operations. Preparation includes a range of activities. These include mission rehearsals, brief-backs, equipment and communications checks, standing operating procedure (SOP) reviews, load plan verification, soldier readiness preparation, and weapons test-firing.

STAFF PREPARATION

6-23. Each staff section and element conducts activities to maximize the operational effectiveness of the force. Coordination between echelons and preparation that precedes execution are just as important, if not more important, than developing the plan. Staff preparation includes assembling and continuously updating estimates. For example, continuous intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) provides accurate situational updates for commanders when needed. Whether incorporated into a formal process or not, the preparatory activities of staff sections and force elements inform planning and continue throughout preparation and execution. Updated estimates form the basis for staff recommendations; the value of current, reasonably accurate estimates increases exponentially with tempo.

UNIT PREPARATION

6-24. Warfighting skills developed and honed in training form the base of mission success. Without the Army's ability to fight and win, commitment of its units to a theater would entail unacceptable risks. Combat-ready units can adapt readily to noncombat situations; units not trained to standard cannot survive in combat situations. The knowledge, discipline, cohesion, and technical skill necessary to defeat an enemy are also fundamental for success in environments that seem far removed from the battlefield. The combat capability of Army forces is the basis for all it does. In a stability operation, the threat of force may deter escalation. In a support operation, it may preempt violence and lawlessness.

6-25. The tempo may not allow commanders to withdraw entire formations for extensive reorganization and training. However, Army unit modularity lets commanders designate some elements for training while the rest of the force continues the mission. This concurrent training may take place in theater-designated training areas, where units receive intensified maintenance support while conducting individual and collective training. The creation of training areas is both necessary and a challenge for Army commanders.

INDIVIDUAL PREPARATION

6-26. Before the force deploys, soldiers prepare for overseas action. Army units frequently receive augmentation and replacements during preparation for deployment. Commanders pay special attention to the reception and preparation of these soldiers and to integrating their families into support groups. In addition to preparing replacements for deployment, commanders ensure that gaining units rapidly assimilate them as team members.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

6-27. Operational requirements, policy, and law define rules of engagement (ROE). ROE always recognize the right of self-defense, the commander's right and obligation to protect assigned personnel, and the national right to defend US forces, allies, and coalition participants against armed attack. The Joint Chiefs of Staff standing ROE provide baseline guidance (see CJCSI 3121.01A). The standing ROE may be tailored and supplemented for specific operations to meet commanders' needs. Effective ROE are enforceable, understandable, tactically sound, and legally sufficient. Further,

effective ROE are responsive to the mission and permit subordinate commanders to exercise initiative when confronted by opportunity or unforeseen circumstances.

6-28. In all operations, whether using lethal or nonlethal force, ROE may impose political, practical, operational, and legal limitations upon commanders. Commanders factor these constraints into planning and preparation as early as possible. Withholding employment of particular classes of weapons and exempting the territory of certain nations from attack are examples of such limitations. Tactically, ROE may extend to criteria for initiating engagements with certain weapons systems (for example, unobserved fires) or reacting to an attack. ROE never justify illegal actions. In all situations, soldiers and commanders use the degree of force that is militarily necessary, proportional to the threat, and prudent for future operations.

6-29. ROE do not assign specific tasks or require specific tactical solutions; they allow commanders to quickly and clearly convey to subordinates a desired posture regarding the use of force. In passing orders to subordinates, commanders act within the ROE received. However, ROE never relieve commanders from the responsibility to formulate an operational design. The end state, objectives, and mission must be clear. Commanders at all levels continually review the ROE to ensure their effectiveness in light of current and projected conditions. Such considerations may include ROE for computer network attack. Soldiers who thoroughly understand ROE are better prepared to apply the proper balance of initiative and restraint.

Home Station, Predeployment, and Deployment Training

In 1995, the 1st Armored Division changed its mission essential task list (METL) to prepare for peace enforcement operations in Bosnia. The nature of ongoing diplomatic negotiations created difficult circumstances for commanders trying to determine when they would deploy. Regardless, the on-again, off-again nature of diplomatic negotiations allowed the 1st Armored Division to transition from a wartime to a peacekeeping METL. The division made maximum use of the available time, undergoing a two-month intensive training and certification process at home station and the Combat Maneuver Training Center, Hohenfels, Germany. Commanders and staff participated in command post exercises designed to match Balkan political-military realities, while leaders and soldiers engaged in situational training exercises and cold weather training. Upon deployment, observers from the Center for Army Lessons Learned accompanied the division and observed ongoing operations. Center for Army Lessons Learned members sent reports to Combat Maneuver Training Center trainers, who updated existing training scenarios to match changing operational conditions in the theater. The division also continued training after deployment to keep a warfighting edge during the peace enforcement operation. 1st Armored Division maneuver battalion soldiers rotated from Bosnia to Taborfalva Training Area in Hungary once during their tour. There they underwent gunnery qualification. The soldiers then returned to Bosnia and resumed their mission.

EXECUTE

6-30. Execution is concerted action to seize and retain the initiative, build and maintain momentum, and exploit success. The tenet of initiative is fundamental to success in any operation, yet simply seizing the initiative is not enough. A sudden barrage of precision munitions may surprise and disorganize the enemy, but if not followed by swift and relentless action, the advantage diminishes and disappears. Successful operations maintain the momentum generated by initiative and exploit successes within the commander's intent.

SEIZE AND RETAIN THE INITIATIVE

6-31. Initiative gives all operations the spirit, if not the form, of the offense. Operationally, seizing the initiative requires leaders to anticipate events so their forces can see and exploit opportunities faster than the enemy. Once they seize the initiative, Army forces exploit opportunities it creates. Initiative requires constant effort to force an enemy to conform to friendly purposes and tempo while retaining friendly freedom of action. From the leader's perspective, commanders place a premium on audacity and making reasoned decisions under uncertain conditions. The commander's intent and aggressiveness of subordinates create conditions for exercising disciplined initiative.

6-32. Enemies who gain and maintain the initiative compel Army forces to react to their strengths and asymmetric capabilities. Ways enemies may try to do this include attempting to neutralize US technological and organizational superiority, adapting the tempo to their capabilities, and outlasting Army forces. Therefore, Army forces seize the initiative as soon as possible and dictate the terms of action throughout the operation. Army forces compel the adversary to accept action on terms established by friendly forces. Provoked to react to US actions, the adversary cedes the initiative and opens himself to exploitation when he errs or fails to react quickly enough.

Take Action

6-33. Commanders create conditions for seizing the initiative by acting. Without action, seizing the initiative is impossible. Faced with an uncertain situation, there is a natural tendency to hesitate and gather more information to reduce the uncertainty. However, waiting and gathering information might reduce uncertainty, but will not eliminate it. Waiting may even increase uncertainty by providing the enemy with time to seize the initiative. It is far better to manage uncertainty by acting and developing the situation. When the immediate situation is unclear, commanders clarify it by action, not sitting and gathering information.

6-34. Commanders identify times and places where they can mass the effects of combat power to relative advantage. To compel a reaction, they threaten something the enemy cares about—his center of gravity or decisive points leading to it. By forcing the enemy to react, commanders initiate an action-to-reaction sequence that ultimately reduces enemy options to zero. Each action develops the situation further and reduces the number of possibilities to be considered, thereby reducing friendly uncertainty. Each time the enemy must react, his uncertainty increases. Developing the situation by forcing the enemy to react is the essence of seizing and retaining the initiative.

6-35. Action is not solely offensive. Force projection may initiate enemy reactions. Movement of forces, together with military deception, often triggers an enemy response. Commanders may deter or induce a desired enemy action by beginning defensive preparations. Aggressive reconnaissance, in particular, allows commanders at every level to gain and maintain contact with enemy forces. Reconnaissance develops the situation, protects friendly forces from surprise, and retains the initiative. Action includes force protection activities that preclude or reduce specific enemy threats.

Create and Exploit Opportunities

6-36. Events that offer better ways to success are opportunities. The key to recognizing them is continuous monitoring of the battlespace in light of the objectives and the commander's intent. Failure to understand the opportunities inherent in an enemy's action surrenders the initiative. CCIR must include elements that support seizing and retaining the initiative so soldiers can recognize opportunities as they develop.

6-37. Commanders encourage subordinates to act within their intent as opportunities occur. Vision, clear communication of intent, and the command climate create an atmosphere conducive to the exercise of subordinate initiative. Digitized information processes, the common operational picture (COP), and situational understanding enhance commanders' ability to recognize possibilities, visualize opportunities, and share them with others.

Assess and Take Risk

6-38. Uncertainty and risk are inherent in all military operations. Recognizing and acting on opportunity means taking risks. Reasonably estimating and intentionally accepting risk is not gambling. Carefully determining the risks, analyzing and minimizing as many hazards as possible, and executing a supervised plan that accounts for those hazards contributes to successfully applying military force. Gambling, in contrast, is imprudently staking the success of an entire action on a single, improbable event. Commanders assess risk in ascending orders of magnitude by answering three questions:

- Am I minimizing the risk of losses?
- Am I risking the success of the operation?
- Am I risking the destruction of the force itself?

6-39. When commanders embrace opportunity, they accept risk. Audacity is a catalyst that can reverse a situation through its influence on enemy perception. It is counterproductive to wait for perfect preparation and synchronization. The time taken to issue complete orders across successive nets could mean an opportunity lost. It is far better to quickly summarize the essentials, get things moving, and send the details later. Leaders optimize the use of time with warning orders, fragmentary orders, and routine COP updates. Too great a desire for orderliness leads to overdetailed orders, overcontrol, and failure to seize and retain the initiative.

BUILD AND MAINTAIN MOMENTUM

6-40. Army forces fight thinking, adaptive enemies. Presented with consistent patterns of activity, enemies devise countermeasures. The benefits of

seizing the initiative do not last long, given enemy determination to overthrow the friendly design. Momentum retains and complements initiative.

6-41. Momentum derives from seizing the initiative and executing shaping, sustaining, and decisive operations at a high tempo. Momentum allows commanders to create opportunities to engage the enemy from unexpected directions with unanticipated capabilities. Having seized the initiative, commanders continue to control the relative momentum by maintaining focus and pressure, and controlling the tempo. They ensure that they maintain momentum by anticipating transitions and moving rapidly between types of operations. When the opportunity presents itself to exploit, commanders push all available forces to the limit to build on momentum gained.

Maintain Focus

6-42. In the stress of combat, a commander's instinct may be to focus on the dangers enemy activity poses. That concern is valid, but it must not cloud the commander's primary focus: achieving his own purpose and objectives. Commanders assess enemy activity in terms of the end state and concentrate on what their forces can do to attain it. Further, commanders assess the situation to determine how they can best attack enemy decisive points and protect friendly ones. Commanders evaluate the current situation, seeking opportunities to turn enemy activity to their immediate advantage.

> *...I am heartily tired of hearing about what Lee is going to do. Some of you always seem to think he is suddenly going to turn a double somersault and land in our rear and on both flanks at the same time. Go back to your command and try to think what we are going to do ourselves, instead of what Lee is going to do.*
>
> Lieutenant General U.S. Grant
> Battle of the Wilderness, 1864

Pressure the Enemy

6-43. Pressure derives from the uninterrupted pace, level, and intensity of activity applied to an enemy. Once Army forces gain contact, they maintain it. Constant pressure and prompt transition to an exploitation deny the enemy time to regain balance and react. Operational pauses, even if intentional and designed to improve a combat service support (CSS) posture or restore order, may carry real dangers—to include potential loss of the hard-won benefits of the offensive. Army forces press relentlessly without hesitation and are ruthlessly opportunistic.

6-44. Adept commanders anticipate the need to maintain appropriate forces suitably positioned for exploitation and continuity of action. As maneuver forces slow and approach culmination, commanders consider the best way to maintain tempo and continue to press the enemy. Commanders can replace the leading units with fresh forces, reinforce the lead units, or apply precision fires against targets in depth. As long as the force in contact can maintain pressure and is not approaching a culminating point, reinforcement is generally preferable to battle handover. Operational fires may also create new opportunities for pressing the enemy by complementing maneuver.

Control the Tempo

6-45. Speed promotes surprise and can compensate for lack of forces. It magnifies the impact of success in seizing the initiative. By executing at a rapid tempo, Army forces present enemies with new problems before they can solve current ones. Rapid tempo should not degenerate into haste. Ill-informed and hasty action usually precludes effective combinations of combat power; it may lead to unnecessary casualties. The condition of the enemy force dictates the degree of synchronization necessary. When confronted by a coherent and disciplined enemy, commanders may slow the tempo to deliver synchronized blows. As the enemy force loses cohesion, commanders increase the tempo, seeking to accelerate the enemy's moral and physical collapse.

EXPLOIT SUCCESS

6-46. Ultimately, only successes that achieve the end state count. To determine how to exploit tactical and operational successes, commanders assess them in terms of the higher commander's intent. An operational design links objectives along lines of operations. However, success will likely occur in ways unanticipated in the plan. Commanders may gain an objective in an unexpected way. Success signals a rapid assessment to answer these questions:

- Does the success generate opportunities that more easily accomplish the objectives?
- Does it suggest other lines of operations?
- Does it cause commanders to change their overall intent?
- Should the force transition to a sequel?
- Should the force accelerate the phasing of the operation?

6-47. Operationally, success may signal a transition to the next phase of the campaign or major operation. Ideally, an appropriate sequel is ready. However, even a prepared sequel requires rapid refinement to reflect the realities of the actual success. Commanders see beyond the requirements of the moment. They employ every available asset to extend their operations in time and space to make the success permanent. Commanders understand that they must maintain momentum and initiative to win rapidly and decisively.

6-48. Exploitation demands assessment and understanding of the impact of sustaining operations. CSS provides the means to exploit success and convert it into decisive results. Sustainment preserves the freedom of action necessary to take advantage of opportunity. Commanders remain fully aware of the status of units and anticipate CSS requirements, recognizing that CSS often determines the depth to which Army forces exploit success.

6-49. Rapid tempo and repeated success always disorganize units to some extent. To exploit success and maintain momentum, reorganization occurs concurrently with other operations rather than as a separate phase. Prolonged reorganization can jeopardize momentum and require committing reserves. Enhanced situational understanding gives commanders an accurate description of unit status and expedites reorganization. Successful reorganization depends on CSS. Force commanders provide timely reorganization guidance and priorities to the CSS commanders. Doing this allows CSS commanders to anticipate requirements and position resources.

COMBINE DECISIVE, SHAPING, AND SUSTAINING OPERATIONS

6-50. During execution, commanders combine and direct decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations. Ideally, the decisive operation occurs approximately as planned. However, opportunity and circumstances often alter the sequence and details of the decisive operation. Commanders create or preserve opportunities through shaping operations. Shaping operations precede and occur concurrently with the decisive operation. Sustaining operations ensure freedom of action to maintain momentum and exploit success.

6-51. Ideally, decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations occur at the same time. Simultaneous operations allow commanders to seize and retain the initiative. However, they require overwhelming combat power and information superiority. Commanders determine if they can accomplish the mission with a single, simultaneous operation; if they cannot, they phase it. In making this decision, they consider the skill and size of the opponent, the size of the area of operations (AO), operational reach, available joint support, and the scope of the mission. The crucial consideration is the success of the decisive operation, which must have enough combat power to conclusively determine the outcome. If that combat power is not available, commanders phase the operation to achieve the maximum possible simultaneous action within each phase.

Maneuver and Fires

6-52. Through maneuver, Army forces seek to defeat the enemy decisively. Maneuver directly engages the enemy center of gravity if feasible; if not, it concentrates against decisive points. Maneuver implies more than the use of fire and movement to secure an objective; it aims at the complete overthrow of the enemy's operational design. It requires audacious concepts and ruthless execution.

6-53. Maneuver avoids those enemy forces best prepared to fight; it engages them at a time or place or in a manner that maximizes relative friendly force advantages. Maneuver creates and exposes enemy vulnerabilities to the massed effects of friendly combat power.

6-54. Operations may include periods of extremely fluid, nonlinear operations, alternating with linear operations (see Figure 6-2, page 6-14). A commander may start an operation with a compact arrangement of forces and quickly transition into nonlinear maneuver against an array of objectives throughout the AO. In different circumstances, the commander might direct multiple attacks in depth to disorganize the enemy and seize key terrain; the attacking force would then consolidate, defend, and prepare to resume the offensive. Another example: A joint land force seizes a lodgment using airborne, air assault, and amphibious operations, while special operations forces attack important facilities distributed across a portion of the AO. The airborne and amphibious units then establish a defense around the lodgment to defend against enemy reaction. When additional forces arrive, the land forces conduct nonlinear operations to end the conflict.

6-55. In some cases, multinational considerations may limit the commander's ability to conduct operations throughout the AO. Multinational partners may lack the information systems, precision attack capabilities, and maneuverability of US forces. Commanders adapt their concept of operations

accordingly, blending multinational and US capabilities. The multinational participants might conduct linear operations, while US Army forces conducted simultaneous nonlinear maneuver in depth. Such an operational design would employ each force according to its capabilities and complement linear operations with nonlinear operations.

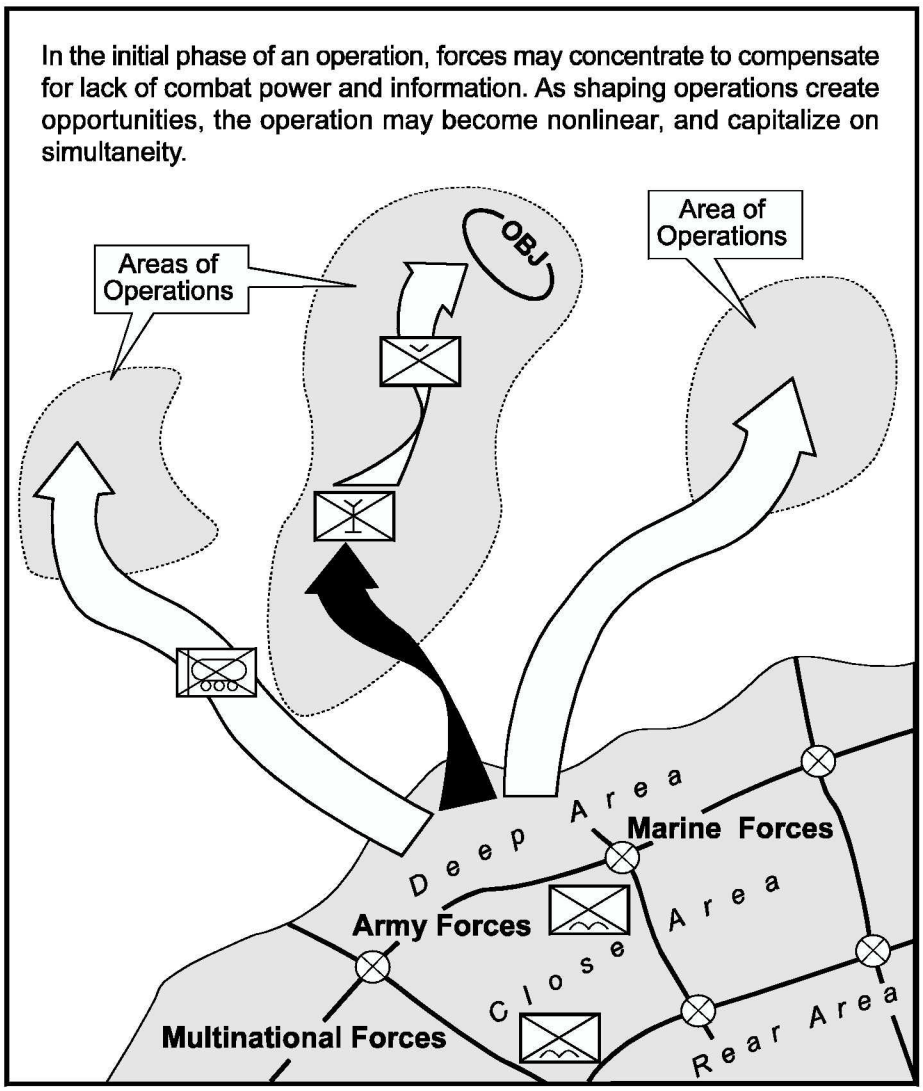


Figure 6-2. Linear and Nonlinear Combinations

6-56. More than ever, precision fires can shape the situation and create conditions for operational and tactical maneuver. Modern weapons are accurate enough for attacks to become very selective. Advanced systems—land, sea, and air—create effects that only complete saturation with fires could achieve in the past. Modern military forces are still assimilating the full consequences of this technological revolution. However, today's weapons allow commanders to avoid lengthy and costly periods of shaping operations to "set the conditions" with fires and other means. Avoiding a lengthy prelude to decisive operations preempts the enemy's chance to seize the initiative.

Commanders determine the appropriate combination of shaping operations needed to ensure success of the decisive operation, recognizing that the effects of fire are transitory.

6-57. The integration of operational fires with operational maneuver requires careful design and effective coordination with the joint force headquarters. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) identify specific enemy capabilities whose loss significantly degrades enemy coherence. Army forces attack the targets with organic lethal and nonlethal means or pass the mission to a supporting joint element. Ideally, the attacks are simultaneous. Simultaneity shocks enemy command and control (C2) systems and often induces paralysis. When the means are insufficient for simultaneous action, commanders plan sequential attacks.

Create Overmatch

6-58. Decisive operations synchronize the BOS to create overmatch at decisive points in the AO. Overmatch is a quantitative or qualitative disparity of such magnitude that the stronger force overwhelms the weaker. Overmatch may apply to one or all of the elements of combat power in combination. Rapid tempo, offensive information operations (IO), and lethal fires combine to disrupt enemy C2 and create a condition of information superiority. Fire support, force protection capabilities, and maneuver neutralize enemy fire support. Supported by indirect and joint fires, maneuver forces close with the enemy and complete his destruction with close combat.

Sustain Combat Power

6-59. Commanders develop a keen understanding of the effects of sustainment on operations. They balance audacity and prudence in terms of CSS and the other BOS. To a significant degree, sustainment determines operational reach and approach. Sustaining operations establish the staying power of Army forces and the depth of operations. They enable commanders to mass the effects of combat power repeatedly and maintain freedom of action.

Use Adaptive Combinations

6-60. As they visualize their battlefield framework and operational design, commanders consider incorporating combinations of contiguous and noncontiguous AOs with linear and nonlinear operations. They choose the combination that fits the situation and the purpose of the operation. Association of contiguous and noncontiguous AOs with linear and nonlinear operations creates the four combinations in Figure 6-3, page 6-16).

6-61. **Linear Operations in Contiguous AOs.** Linear operations in contiguous AOs (upper left in Figure 6-3) typify sustained offensive and defensive operations against powerful, echeloned, and symmetrically organized forces. The contiguous areas and continuous forward line of own troops (FLOT) focus combat power and protect sustaining operations. Commanders normally shape in the deep area, conduct the decisive operation in the close area, and sustain in the rear area.

6-62. **Linear Operations in Noncontiguous AOs.** The upper right box depicts a headquarters with subordinate units conducting linear operations in

noncontiguous AOs. In this case, the higher headquarters retains responsibility for the portion of its AO outside the subordinate unit AOs. The higher headquarters operational design uses nonlinear operations. The subordinate units are conducting linear operations. The subordinate units' battlefield organizations have close, deep, and rear areas; the higher headquarters battlefield organization does not. This combination might be appropriate when the higher headquarters is conducting widely separated simultaneous operations, for example, a vertical envelopment against a decisive point (the decisive operation) from a lodgment (shaping and sustaining operations).

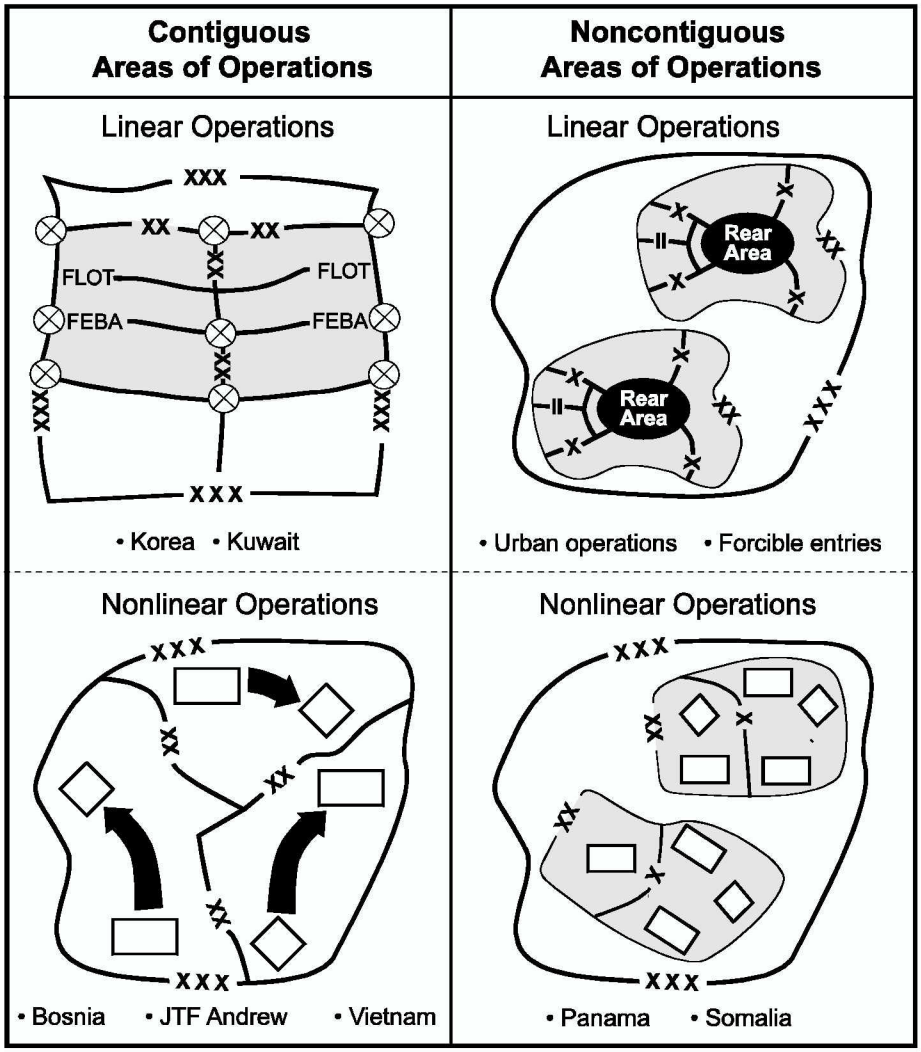


Figure 6-3. Combinations of Contiguous and Noncontiguous Areas of Operations with Linear and Nonlinear Operations

6-63. **Nonlinear Operations in Contiguous AOs.** The lower left box illustrates nonlinear operations being conducted in contiguous AOs. This combination typifies stability operations, such as those in Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Hurricane Andrew support operations also followed this design. The higher headquarters assigns the responsibility for its entire AO to

subordinate units. Within the subordinate AOs, operations are nonlinear, with the subordinate headquarters receiving support and resources from the higher headquarters. On a tactical scale, search and attack operations are often nonlinear operations conducted in contiguous AOs.

6-64. **Nonlinear Operations in Noncontiguous AOs.** The lower right box depicts units conducting nonlinear operations in noncontiguous AOs. The operations of both higher and subordinate units are nonlinear. The size of the land AO, composition and distribution of enemy forces, and capabilities of friendly forces are important considerations in deciding whether to use this battlefield organization and operational design. In Somalia in 1992, for example, Army forces conducted nonlinear stability operations and support operations in widely separated AOs around Kismayu and Mogadishu.

COMPLEX OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

6-65. Army forces execute full spectrum operations in environments that contain complex operational considerations. All operations include challenges. However these complex operational considerations require special attention by commanders and staffs:

- Nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) environments.
- Local populace and displaced persons.
- Unconventional threats.
- Urban operations.

Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Environments

6-66. The threat of WMD profoundly changes theater conditions and imposes major force protection requirements. A major JFC objective is to deter WMD deployment, and if deterrence fails, to find and destroy enemy WMD before they are used. The potential for destruction or contamination of infrastructure by NBC weapons increases the requirement for Army forces that can operate effectively in and around contaminated environments. To a significant degree, the readiness of Army forces to operate in NBC environments deters enemies from using WMD and encourages them to seek solutions that avoid the risk of strategic retaliation.

6-67. Operations in NBC environments demand careful preparation (see JP 3-11; FM 3-11). Vaccines protect soldiers against some biological weapons, but inoculations may need weeks to fully protect recipients. Therefore, protection against these weapons becomes part of the continuous process of keeping units ready. In similar fashion, soldiers may receive medical countermeasures, such as pretreatment before the operation or antidotes during the operation. Medical surveillance programs provide tactical commanders with a tool to develop a baseline of disease threats in the AO. This baseline aids in detecting when the enemy begins biological warfare.

6-68. Units require equipment specifically designed for operations in an NBC environment. Specially trained units may be required to mitigate its effects. NBC operations are CSS-intensive; therefore, sustaining operations require careful planning.

6-69. Commanders at all echelons recognize that the WMD threat is also psychological. Every soldier fears these weapons and has doubts concerning countermeasure and antidote effectiveness. In many cases, the actual threat is less than soldiers imagine, but only realistic individual training will minimize their fear. Training gives soldiers confidence in their equipment and their ability to use it.

6-70. The psychological impact of NBC use goes beyond individual soldiers. Commanders and staffs must be prepared to conduct operations in an NBC environment. Failure to exercise command and staff procedures in scenarios featuring realistic use of NBC weapons can lead to a mentality that NBC hazards present insurmountable obstacles. Only tough command post exercises that force commanders and staffs to work through the problems NBC hazards pose can overcome this attitude. Realistic training demonstrates that NBC hazards, like any other condition, are simply obstacles to overcome.

6-71. Successful US operations may increase the likelihood of enemy WMD use. If the enemy believes that only WMD will retrieve victory, he may resort to using them. Army forces adjust operations accordingly. Rapid maneuver places Army forces near the enemy, compelling him to risk employing WMD on his own forces. Army forces disperse as much as possible and concentrate swiftly, and only as necessary to mass effects. Nonlinear operations position Army forces deep within the enemy AO, complicating his targeting decisions. Precision attacks destroy enemy C2 and CSS systems. Commanders emphasize active and passive force protection. They disperse assembly areas and CSS units. ISR focuses on locating and identifying WMD-capable enemy forces. Reconnaissance units detect and mark hazardous and contaminated areas. Planning also considers US retaliatory or preemptive strikes. Other active measures include theater missile defense, counterair operations, precision fires against enemy WMD systems, and offensive IO.

Local Populace and Displaced Persons

6-72. Army forces create opportunities for success by enlisting the support of the local populace and displaced persons. Frequently, Army forces operate in AOs characterized by chaos and disorder. They may encounter populations with diverse cultures and political orientations that may support, oppose, or remain ambivalent to US presence. In any operation, Army forces will likely encounter displaced civilians or persons of unknown status. Commanders identify these people and design operations with their protection in mind.

6-73. Commanders depend on accurate knowledge of group locations and beliefs to ensure actions taken are consistent with achieving JFC goals and objectives. IO, especially psychological operations, and its related activities (public affairs, and civil-military operations) help commanders influence perceptions and attitudes of the local population. In some operations, IO and its related activities may constitute the decisive operation. The importance of influencing civilians varies, depending on the mission and force objectives.

6-74. The cornerstone of successful action with local populace and displaced persons is discipline. When Army forces operate with the local populace, discipline cements the relationship. In circumstances where the populace is ambivalent or unfriendly, discipline prevents tension from flaring into open

hostility and fosters respect. ROE guide the use of lethal force, not to inhibit action and initiative but to channel it within acceptable limits. The disciplined application of force is more than a moral issue; it is a critical contributor to operational success.

Unconventional Threats

6-75. Commanders protect the force from unconventional threats in four ways. First, they train units and soldiers to protect themselves against terrorist tactics and intrusion. They complement self-defense capabilities by enforcing security policies, such as movement procedures, appropriate to the situation. Second, commanders consider the threat posed by unconventional elements and act to fill gaps in protective capabilities. Actions may include requesting additional combat forces. Third, commanders use all available information resources (including host nation, theater, national, and organic assets) to understand unconventional threats to the force. Commanders at major headquarters may form a national intelligence support team with a total focus on unconventional threats. Finally, by example and constant attention, commanders dispel any sense of complacency toward unconventional threats.

Urban Operations

6-76. ***Urban operations*** **include offense, defense, stability, and support operations conducted in a topographical complex and adjacent natural terrain where manmade construction and high population density are the dominant features.** The world is largely urban in terms of population concentration. Army forces conduct urban operations in large, densely populated areas that present distinct problems in clearing enemy forces, restoring services, and managing major concentrations of people. The topography and proximity of noncombatants degrade the effectiveness of technically advanced sensors and weapons. Thus, cities are likely battlegrounds where weaker enemies attempt to negate the advantages Army forces have in more open terrain.

6-77. From a planning perspective, commanders view cities not just as a topographic feature but as dynamic entities that include hostile forces, local population, and infrastructure. Planning for urban operations requires careful IPB, with particular emphasis on the three-dimensional nature of the topography and the intricate social structure of the population. CSS planning accounts for increased consumption, increased threats to lines of communications, and anticipated support to noncombatants. Commanders develop ROE carefully, adapting them to a variety of circumstances, and ensuring soldiers thoroughly understand them.

6-78. Urban operations compress the spatial scale of tactical operations and require combined arms integration at small unit level. Units require careful preparation and thorough rehearsal to master using combined arms techniques in very close quarters. Urban operations place a premium on closely coordinated, combined arms teams and carefully protected CSS. Urban operations are CSS-intensive, demanding large quantities of materiel and support for military forces and noncombatants displaced by operations.

FOLLOW-ON OPERATIONS

6-79. All operations evolve in terms of nature, purpose, and type. Successful operations create new conditions that lead to significant changes in the situation. A new or fundamentally altered center of gravity may emerge. Typically, new conditions initiate sequels.

Transition

6-80. Transitions mark the intervals between the ongoing operation and full execution of branches and sequels. Transitions often mark the change from one dominant type of operations, such as offense, to another such as stability. At lower echelons, transitions occur when one formation passes through another, for example, or when units must breach an obstacle belt. Commanders consider transitions from the current operation to future operations early in the planning process. Command arrangements, for example, often change. Typically, the command structure evolves to meet changing situations. A JTF, for example, may dissolve, and forces revert to their parent components. The operational requirements for Army forces may pass to a new commander, who continues postconflict missions even as some Army forces prepare to redeploy. Frequently, US forces transition from a US-led coalition to a multinational United Nations structure supported by US troops. This occurred at the end of Operation Restore Democracy in Haiti, as US combat forces withdrew.

6-81. Changes in the strategic situation require adjusting the strength and composition of deployed forces. When the dominant type of operation changes—from offense to stability, for example—the types of units originally deployed may no longer be appropriate. As each new force prepares for operations, the JFC and the commander of the Army service component command tailor the Army force to meet mission requirements and theater constraints. The force that initiated the operation may only superficially resemble the force in theater when the operation concludes.

6-82. Transitions are the sequels that occur between types of operations. Commanders anticipate and plan for them as part of any future operation. Transitions between operations are difficult and during execution may create unexpected opportunities for Army forces, enemies, or adversaries. Such opportunities must be recognized quickly, developed as branches to the transition operation, and acted upon immediately. Transition between operations may be the most difficult follow-on operation to accomplish.

Reconstitution

6-83. Prolonged combat or intensive engagements diminish unit combat effectiveness. When a unit is no longer combat effective, commanders consider reconstituting it (see FM 4-100.9). *Reconstitution* consists of those actions that commanders plan and implement to restore units to a desired level of combat effectiveness commensurate with mission requirements and available resources. Reconstitution operations include regeneration and reorganization. *Regeneration* consists of rebuilding a unit through large-scale replacement of personnel, equipment, and supplies. This includes the reestablishment or replacement of essential C2 and training for the newly rebuilt unit.

Reorganization is that action taken to shift internal resources within a degraded unit to increase its level of combat effectiveness.

6-84. The headquarters two echelons up normally controls reconstitution. Commanders and staffs plan reconstitution to fit mission priorities and support the higher commander's intent. The reconstitution plan takes into account follow-on missions. The final decision on whether to reconstitute a depleted unit depends on the situation. Commanders remain flexible. Mission requirements and available resources (including time) determine appropriate reconstitution actions.

6-85. Reconstitution planning is part of course of action development. Units with roles in reconstitution train to perform it. Commanders, staffs, and executing units plan and prepare for reconstitution before they confront it. Any combat, combat support, or CSS unit may require reconstitution. In particular, operations in an NBC environment increase the likelihood that some units will require reconstitution after decontamination.

6-86. Reconstitution requires aggressive application of the tenets of Army operations. Reconstitution actions must regenerate units that allow commanders to continue to set the terms of battle. These actions are necessary to maintain the agility of the force. Quickly recognizing the need for and executing reconstitution help provide the combat effective forces needed to retain the initiative. Commanders visualize reconstitution in terms of depth of time, space, and resources just as they do other operations. They look ahead, consider the resources required and available, and direct the extensive synchronization required.

Conflict Termination

6-87. Conflict termination describes the point at which the principal means of conflict shifts from the use or threat of force to other means of persuasion. Conflict termination may take several forms: for example, the adversary may surrender, withdraw, or negotiate an end to the conflict. Commanders and staffs consider conflict termination requirements when developing campaign plans. If the end state is a situation that promotes economic growth, for example, commanders consider the effects of destroying the economic infrastructure. Regardless of how the conflict ends, it often changes into less violent, but persistent, forms of confrontation.

6-88. Conflict termination is more than the achievement of a military end state: it is the military contribution to broader success criteria. As the policy governing the conflict evolves, so does the end state at both joint and Army levels. Effective campaign plans account for more than military objectives; they specify end states that support national policy. They are also careful to distinguish between the military and other instruments of national power.

6-89. A period of postconflict activities exists between the end of a conflict and redeployment of the last US soldier. Army forces are vital in this period. As a sequel to decisive major operations, Army forces conduct stability operations and support operations to sustain the results achieved by the campaign. These operations ensure that the threat does not resurrect itself and that the conditions that generated the conflict do not recur. Postconflict stability

operations and support operations—conducted by Army forces—transform temporary battlefield successes into lasting strategic results.

ASSESS

6-90. Commanders, assisted by the staff, continuously assess the situation and the progress of the operation, and compare it with the initial vision. ***Assessment* is the continuous monitoring—throughout planning, preparation, and execution—of the current situation and progress of an operation, and the evaluation of it against criteria of success to make decisions and adjustments.** Commanders direct adjustments to ensure that operations remain aligned with the commander's intent. Subordinates assess their unit's progress by comparing it with the senior commander's intent and adjusting their actions to achieve the envisioned end state, particularly in the absence of orders.

6-91. Assessment precedes and guides every activity within the operations process and concludes each operation or phase of an operation. Assessment entails two distinct tasks: continuously monitoring the situation and the progress of the operation, and evaluating the operation against measures of effectiveness. Together, the two tasks compare reality to expectations.

6-92. Not all operations proceed smoothly toward the desired end state. Commanders examine instances of unexpected success or failure, unanticipated enemy actions, or operations that simply do not go as planned. They assess the causes of success, friction, and failure, and their overall impact on the force and the operation. In assessing the cause of failure or substandard performance, commanders address immediate causes while retaining the intellectual flexibility to look for related or hidden contributors. For example, a commander may replace an ineffective leader after an engagement in which Army forces suffer severe losses. In another instance, the commander may retain subordinate commanders within a defeated force. In both instances, the commander seeks answers to larger questions concerning operations security, enemy doctrine, leadership, equipment, and the state of training of friendly and enemy forces. Commanders also learn from their mistakes and allow subordinates to learn from theirs.

6-93. The American way of war has historically included rapid adaptation to unexpected challenges and situations. A tactical or operational success may prove the worth of a significant technological or procedural innovation. Conversely, Army forces may discover a dangerous vulnerability during the operation. Leaders continuously identify, assess, and disseminate lessons learned throughout the force.

6-94. Formal, postoperational assessments combine the after-action reports prepared by the units involved with the observations compiled by observers. These assessments become the basis for changes to doctrine, training, leader development, organization, and materiel that support soldiers. They typically include interviews with commanders and staffs as well as with small unit leaders and soldiers. Just as commanders encourage and accept initiative on the part of subordinates during the operation, commanders encourage and accept complete candor during the postoperational assessment.

PART THREE

Conducting Decisive Full Spectrum Operations

Part Three discusses the four types of operations—offensive, defensive, stability, and support—that Army forces conduct. It illustrates how to apply the concepts described in Part Two within the operational environment described in Part One.

Chapter 7 discusses offensive operations. The offense is the decisive form of war. The will to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative defines the spirit and purpose of the offense. It is essential to success in all operations—defensive, stability, and support—as well as offensive. Combined with a demonstrated combat capability, it makes Army forces credible in any situation. Circumstances may require defending; however, victory requires shifting to the offense as soon as possible. The offense ends when the force accomplishes the mission, reaches a limit of advance, or approaches culmination. It then consolidates, resumes the attack, or prepares for another operation.

Chapter 8 discusses defensive operations. Commanders direct defensive operations to defeat enemy attacks, buy time, economize forces, or develop conditions favorable for the offense. Although the defense is the stronger form of war, it normally cannot achieve a decision. Thus, commanders simultaneously or sequentially combine defensive operations with offensive operations.

Chapter 9 discusses stability operations. Stability operations include a range of actions that Army forces conduct outside the US and US territories. Their purpose is to promote and sustain regional and global stability. Stability operations are diverse, continuous, and often long-term. However, the credibility and staying power of Army forces allow them to maintain stability until the situation is resolved. Army forces may execute stability operations as part of a theater engagement plan, smaller-scale contingency, or follow-on operation to a campaign or major operation. They are inherently complex and place great demands on leaders, units, and soldiers. Stability operations require the mental and physical agility to shift among situations of peace, conflict, and war and between combat and noncombat operations.

Chapter 10 discusses support operations. Army forces conduct support operations to relieve suffering and help civil authorities prepare for or respond to crises. Support operations are divided into two categories: Domestic support operations are conducted within the US and US territories. Foreign humanitarian assistance is conducted outside the US and US territories. Domestic support operations include civil support—operations to help civil authorities protect US territory, population, and infrastructure against attacks. Other government agencies have primary responsibility for these areas; however, Army forces have specialized capabilities and provide important support. Support operations usually aim to overcome manmade or natural disaster conditions for a limited time until civil authorities no longer need help.

In all environments, the initiative of Army leaders, agility of Army units, depth of Army resources, and versatility of Army soldiers combine to allow Army forces to conduct decisive full spectrum operations. Commanders synchronize offensive, defensive, stability, and support operations to defeat any enemy or dominate any situation—anywhere, anytime.

Chapter 7

Offensive Operations

In war the only sure defense is offense, and the efficiency of the offense depends on the war-like souls of those conducting it.

General George S. Patton Jr.
War as I Knew It

7-1. The offense is the decisive form of war. Offensive operations aim to destroy or defeat an enemy. Their purpose is to impose US will on the enemy and achieve decisive victory. While immediate considerations often require defending, decisive results require shifting to the offense as soon as possible.

PURPOSES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-2. Offensive operations seek to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative to defeat the enemy decisively. Army forces attack simultaneously throughout the area of operations (AO) to throw enemies off balance, overwhelm their capabilities, disrupt their defenses, and ensure their defeat or destruction. The offense ends when the force achieves the purpose of the operation, reaches a limit of advance, or approaches culmination. Army forces conclude a phase of an offensive by consolidating gains, resuming the attack, or preparing for future operations. Additional tasks offensive operations accomplish include—

- Disrupting enemy coherence.
- Securing or seizing terrain.
- Denying the enemy resources.
- Fixing the enemy.
- Gaining information.

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS AT THE OPERATIONAL AND TACTICAL LEVELS OF WAR

7-3. Army operational commanders conduct offensive campaigns and major operations to achieve theater-level effects based on tactical actions. They concentrate on designing offensive land operations. They determine what objectives will achieve decisive results; where forces will operate; the relationships among subordinate forces in time, space, and purpose; and where to apply the decisive effort. Operational commanders assign AOs to, and establish command and support relationships among, tactical commanders. Tactical

commanders direct offensive operations to achieve objectives—destroying enemy forces or seizing terrain—that produce the theater-level effects operational commanders require.

CONTENTS

OPERATIONAL OFFENSE

7-4. At the operational level, offensive operations directly or indirectly attack the enemy center of gravity. Commanders do this by attacking enemy decisive points, either simultaneously or sequentially. Massed effects of joint and multinational forces allow attackers to seize the initiative. They deny the enemy freedom of action, disrupt his sources of strength, and create the conditions for operational and tactical success.

7-5. To attain unity of effort, operational commanders clearly identify objectives and reinforce the relationships among subordinate forces. By minimizing interoperability challenges and harnessing system capabilities, commanders tailor their forces to achieve decisive effects. They allocate sufficient joint and multinational forces to achieve their objectives.

TACTICAL OFFENSE

7-6. Tactical commanders exploit the effects that joint and multinational forces contribute to the offense. They synchronize these forces in time, space, resources, purpose, and action to mass the effects of combat power at decisive points. Commanders direct battles as part of major operations. Battles are related in purpose to the operational commander's objectives.

7-7. Battles may be linear or nonlinear and conducted in contiguous or noncontiguous AOs. Tactical commanders receive their AO, mission, objectives,

boundaries, control measures, and intent from their higher commander. They determine the decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations within their AO. They direct fires and maneuver to attack and destroy the enemy and attain terrain objectives. Tactical commanders normally have clearly defined tasks—defeat the enemy and occupy the objective.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-8. Surprise, concentration, tempo, and audacity characterize the offense. Effective offensive operations capitalize on accurate intelligence and other relevant information regarding enemy forces, weather, and terrain. Commanders maneuver their forces to advantageous positions before contact. Force protection, including defensive information operations (IO), keeps or inhibits the enemy from acquiring accurate information about friendly forces. The enemy only sees what the friendly commander wants him to see. Contact with enemy forces before the decisive operation is deliberate, designed to shape the optimum situation for the decisive operation. The decisive operation is a sudden, shattering action that capitalizes on subordinate initiative and a common operational picture (COP) to expand throughout the AO. Commanders execute violently without hesitation to break the enemy's will or destroy him.

SURPRISE

7-9. In the offense, commanders achieve surprise by attacking the enemy at a time or place he does not expect or in a manner for which he is unprepared. Estimating the enemy commander's intent and denying him the ability to gain thorough and timely situational understanding is necessary to achieve surprise. Unpredictability and boldness help gain surprise. The direction, timing, and force of the attack also help achieve surprise. Surprise delays enemy reactions, overloads and confuses his command and control (C2) systems, induces psychological shock in enemy soldiers and leaders, and reduces the coherence of the defense. By diminishing enemy combat power, surprise enables attackers to exploit enemy paralysis and hesitancy.

7-10. Operational and tactical surprise complement each other. Operational surprise creates the conditions for successful tactical operations. Tactical surprise can cause the enemy to hesitate or misjudge a situation. But tactical surprise is fleeting. Commanders must exploit it before the enemy realizes what is happening.

7-11. Outright surprise is difficult to achieve. Modern surveillance and warning systems, the availability of commercial imagery products, and global commercial news networks make surprise more difficult. Nonetheless, commanders achieve surprise by operating in a way the enemy does not expect. They deceive the enemy as to the nature, timing, objective, and force of an attack. They can use bad weather, seemingly impassable terrain, feints, demonstrations, and false communications to lead the enemy into inaccurate perceptions. Sudden, violent, and unanticipated attacks have a paralyzing effect. Airborne, air assault, and special operations forces (SOF) attacks—combined with strikes by Army and joint fires against objectives the enemy regards as secure—create disconcerting psychological effects on the enemy.

7-12. Surprise can come from an unexpected change in tempo. Tempo may be slow at first, creating the conditions for a later acceleration that catches the enemy off guard and throws him off balance. US forces demonstrated such a rapid change in tempo before Operation Just Cause in 1989. Accelerated tempo resulted in operational and tactical surprise despite increased publicity and heightened tensions beforehand.

7-13. Commanders conceal the concentration of their forces. Units mask activity that might reveal the direction or timing of an attack. Commanders direct action to deceive the enemy and deny his ability to collect information.

Surprise—Coup de Main in Panama

The activity of US forces throughout Panama during 1989 before Operation Just Cause provides an example of achieving strategic surprise. After assuming power in 1984, Manuel Noriega threatened Panamanian democracy and American legal guarantees under the Panama Canal treaties. In response, US forces developed military contingency plans known as Prayer Book and Blue Spoon. In May 1989, Noriega's Dignity Battalions and the Panama Defense Forces increased political pressure on the US to leave Panama by harassing American service members at gunpoint. President George Bush responded by deploying Army and Marine forces during Operation Nimrod Dancer as a show of force. Over the next six months, Army forces conducted Purple Storm and Sand Fleas exercises to reinforce American maneuver rights and gain moral ascendancy over Noriega's forces. Despite the increased US activity, Noriega discounted the possibility of an invasion. On 20 December 1989, SOF conducted the initial assault upon Panama Defense Forces garrisons, airports, media centers, and transportation facilities. Conventional forces soon followed, attacking decisive points throughout Panama. Noriega and his forces were completely surprised. He fled, losing control over his forces as US forces tracked him down.

CONCENTRATION

7-14. Concentration is the massing of overwhelming effects of combat power to achieve a single purpose. Commanders balance the necessity for concentrating forces to mass effects with the need to disperse them to avoid creating lucrative targets. Advances in ground and air mobility, target acquisition, and long-range precision fires enable attackers to rapidly concentrate effects. C2 systems provide reliable relevant information that assists commanders in determining when to concentrate forces to mass effects.

7-15. Attacking commanders manipulate their own and the enemy's force concentration by combining dispersion, concentration, military deception, and attacks. By dispersing, attackers stretch enemy defenses and deny lucrative targets to enemy fires. By massing forces rapidly along converging axes, attackers overwhelm enemy forces at decisive points with concentrated combat power. After a successful attack, commanders keep their forces concentrated to take advantage of their momentum. Should enemy forces threaten them,

they may disperse again. Commanders adopt the posture that best suits the situation, protects the force, and sustains the attack's momentum.

7-16. Concentration requires coordination with other services and multinational partners. At every stage of an attack, commanders integrate joint intelligence assets with joint fires. They capitalize on air superiority to deny the enemy the ability to detect or strike friendly forces from the air. Commanders direct ground, air, and sea resources to delay, disrupt, or destroy enemy reconnaissance elements or capabilities. They also direct security, IO, and counterfire to protect friendly forces as they concentrate.

TEMPO

7-17. Controlling or altering tempo is necessary to retain the initiative. At the operational level, a faster tempo allows attackers to disrupt enemy defensive plans by achieving results quicker than the enemy can respond. At the tactical level, a faster tempo allows attackers to quickly penetrate barriers and defenses and destroy enemy forces in depth before they can react.

7-18. Commanders adjust tempo as tactical situations, combat service support (CSS) necessity, or operational opportunities allow to ensure synchronization and proper coordination, but not at the expense of losing opportunities to defeat the enemy. Rapid tempo demands quick decisions. It denies the enemy the chance to rest and continually creates opportunities.

7-19. By increasing tempo, commanders maintain momentum. They identify the best avenues for attack, plan the action in depth, provide for quick transitions to other operations, and concentrate and combine forces effectively. Commanders and staffs ensure that CSS operations prevent culmination. Once combat begins, attackers execute violently. They follow reconnaissance units or successful probes and quickly move through gaps before defenders recover. Attackers shift combat power quickly to widen penetrations, roll up exposed flanks, and reinforce successes. Friendly forces attack in depth with fires and maneuver to shatter the enemy's coherence and overwhelm his C2. While maintaining a tempo faster than the enemy's, attackers balance the tempo with the ability to exercise C2. Commanders never permit the enemy to recover from the shock of the initial assault. They prevent defenders from massing effects against the friendly decisive operation.

AUDACITY

7-20. Audacity is a simple plan of action, boldly executed. Commanders display audacity by developing bold, inventive plans that produce decisive results. Commanders demonstrate audacity by violently applying combat power. They understand when and where to take risks and do not hesitate as they execute their plan. Commanders dispel uncertainty through action; they compensate for lack of information by seizing the initiative and pressing the fight. Audacity inspires soldiers to overcome adversity and danger.

OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS WITHIN THE OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

7-21. Commanders conduct offensive operations within the operational framework (AO, battlespace, and battlefield organization). They synchronize

their forces in time, space, resources, purpose, and action to conduct simultaneous and sequential decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations in depth (see Figure 7-1). In certain situations, commanders designate deep, close, and rear areas.

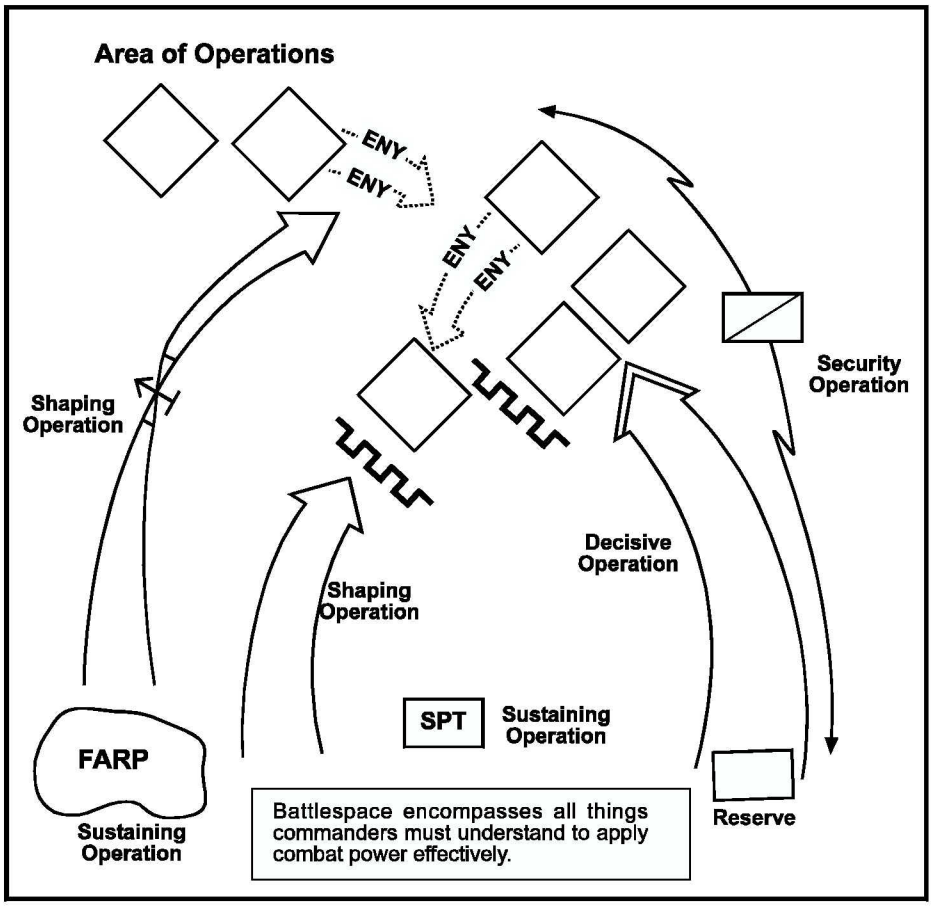


Figure 7-1. Operational Framework in the Offense

DECISIVE OPERATIONS IN THE OFFENSE

7-22. Decisive offensive operations are attacks that conclusively determine the outcome of major operations, battles, and engagements. At the operational level, decisive operations achieve the goals of each phase of a campaign. Ground operations within campaigns may include several phases. Within each phase is a decisive operation. Its results substantially affect the course of the campaign. At the tactical level, decisive battles or engagements achieve the purpose of the higher headquarters mission. Commanders win decisive operations through close combat that physically destroys the enemy; overcomes his will to resist; or seizes, occupies, and retains terrain.

7-23. Commanders weight the decisive operation with additional resources and by skillful maneuver. For example, commanders may fix part of the enemy force with a frontal attack (a shaping operation), while the majority of the force envelops it to seize a decisive point. Commanders decide when,

where, and if to commit additional supporting fires and reserves. Commanders shift priority of fires as necessary. Maneuvering forces positions them to mass fires against the enemy.

7-24. Commanders designate a reserve to provide additional combat power at the decisive time and place. The more uncertain the situation is, the larger the reserve. Once the reserve is committed, the commander designates another. The initial strength and location of reserves vary with—

- Potential missions, branches, and sequels.
- Form of maneuver.
- Possible enemy actions.
- Degree of uncertainty.

Audacity—Turning Movement at Inchon

On 25 June 1950, North Korean forces invaded South Korea. By August, the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) occupied most of the peninsula, with US and Republic of Korea forces confined to a shrinking perimeter behind the Naktong and Nam Rivers. For over a month, both sides engaged in a series of bloody attacks and counterattacks. On 15 September, while United Nations (UN) and North Korean forces were decisively engaged far to the south, X Corps conducted a two-division amphibious landing at Inchon, on the west coast of Korea north of Seoul. This operational turning movement, code-named Operation Chromite, caught the NKPA completely by surprise. Simultaneously, UN aircraft bombarded North Korean forces along the Naktong River to support an Eighth Army counteroffensive. During the following days, American and South Korean Marines pressed toward Seoul. The remainder of X Corps captured the Seoul-Suwon area and severed NKPA supply lines. Army forces soon averaged 10 miles per day over rugged terrain, with the North Korean retreat soon turning into a general rout. By October 1950, the NKPA had dissolved into disorganized remnants fleeing into borderlands adjacent to Manchuria and the Soviet Union.

Reserves provide a hedge against uncertainty. Commanders assign them only those tasks necessary to prepare for their potential mission. Only the commander who designates the reserve can commit it, unless he specifically delegates that authority.

SHAPING OPERATIONS IN THE OFFENSE

7-25. Shaping operations create conditions for the success of the decisive operation. They include attacks in depth to secure advantages for the decisive operation and to protect the force. Commanders conduct shaping operations by engaging enemy forces simultaneously throughout the AO. These attacks deny the enemy freedom of action and disrupt or destroy the coherence and tempo of his operations. Attacking enemy formations in depth destroys, delays, disrupts, or diverts enemy combat power. They may expose or create vulnerabilities for exploitation. Shaping operations in the offense include—

- Shaping attacks designed to achieve one or more of the following:

  - Deceive the enemy.
  - Destroy or fix enemy forces that could interfere with the decisive operation.
  - Control terrain whose occupation by the enemy would hinder the decisive operation.
  - Force the enemy to commit reserves prematurely or into an indecisive area.
- Reconnaissance and security operations.
- Passages of lines.
- Breaching operations.
- Unit movements that directly facilitate shaping and decisive operations.
- Operations by reserve forces before their commitment.
- Interdiction by ground and air movement and fires, singularly or in combination.
- Offensive IO.

Other shaping operations include activities in depth, such as counterfire and defensive IO. These shaping operations focus on effects that create the conditions for successful decisive operations.

Desert Storm—A Decisive Offensive Operation

On 24 February 1991, after a 38-day major shaping operation by the US Central Command air component with land component support, Army forces began one of the most decisive land combat operations of modern warfare. Army forces attacked Iraqi forces as part of a coalition offensive, XVIII Airborne Corps in the west with VII Corps on its right flank. First (Tiger) Brigade, 2d Armored Division, attacked as part of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in the east. Army forces quickly penetrated Iraqi defenses, rapidly seizing their objectives. Soldiers used advanced technology that allowed vehicle and air crews to acquire and engage targets from beyond the range of Iraqi weapons systems. The shock effect of armor and well-trained infantry—coupled with overwhelming fire support and responsive combat support and CSS—shattered the Iraqi army. XVIII Airborne Corps drove 100 miles north and 70 miles east into Iraq; VII Corps moved 100 miles north and 55 miles east. Coalition forces destroyed 3,800 of 4,200 tanks, over half the personnel carriers, and nearly all of the 3,000 artillery pieces belonging to the Iraqi Army. Coalition forces captured over 60,000 prisoners. After 100 hours of combat, only 7 of 43 Iraqi divisions remained combat effective. The coalition had crushed the fourth largest army in the world and liberated Kuwait.

7-26. The advance, flank, or rear security forces conduct security operations (see FM 3-90). These elements—

- Provide early warning.
- Find gaps in defenses.
- Provide time to react and space to maneuver.

- Develop the situation.
- Orient on the force or facility to be secured.
- Perform continuous reconnaissance.
- Maintain enemy contact.

In extended and noncontiguous AOs, commanders secure or conduct surveillance of the gaps between subordinate units. Commanders secure gaps by assigning a force to secure the area, dedicating surveillance efforts to monitor it, designating a force to respond to an approaching enemy, or by installing and overwatching obstacles.

SUSTAINING OPERATIONS IN THE OFFENSE

7-27. Sustaining operations in the offense ensure freedom of action and maintain momentum. They occur throughout the AO. CSS unit locations need not be contiguous with those of their supported forces. An extended major operation may place tactical units far from the original support area. Commanders may separate attacking forces from the CSS base, thus extending their lines of communication (LOCs). Commanders provide security to CSS units when operating with extended LOCs.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR NONLINEAR OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-28. Nonlinear offensive operations can occur in both contiguous and noncontiguous AOs. The size of an AO is normally very large compared to the number of soldiers deployed. The AO may also encompass diverse terrain. Enemy forces will be widely dispersed and may be numerically superior. Attacking forces must focus offensive actions against decisive points, while allocating the minimum essential combat power to shaping operations. Reserves must have a high degree of tactical mobility. Forces conducting nonlinear operations require robust communications and sustainment capabilities. Commanders may dedicate forces for LOC security operations beyond that provided by available military police.

7-29. The higher headquarters conducts security operations in those portions of the AO not allocated to subordinates. Flank security importance increases as operations extend and attacking forces expose their flanks. Linkup operations often occur in this environment. Linkup operations, particularly those involving vertical envelopments, require extensive planning and rehearsal. The potential for fratricide increases due to the fluid nature of the nonlinear battlefield and the changing disposition of attacking and defending forces. The presence of noncombatants in the AO further complicates operations. In this setting, commanders exercise prudent judgment in clearing fires, both direct and indirect.

FORMS OF MANEUVER

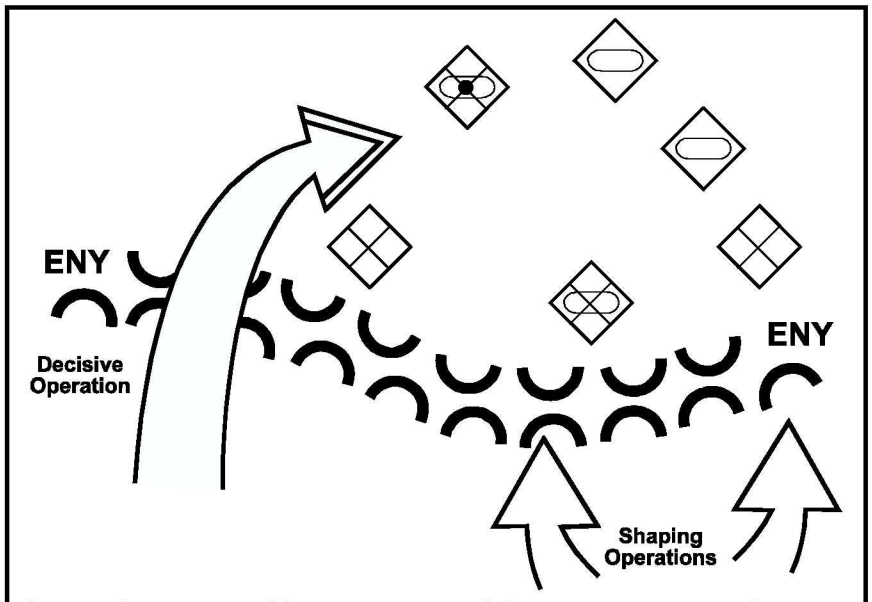
7-30. The five forms of maneuver are the envelopment, turning movement, infiltration, penetration, and frontal attack. While normally combined, each form of maneuver attacks the enemy differently. Each poses different challenges for attackers and different dangers for defenders. Commanders determine the form of maneuver to use by analyzing the factors of METT-TC.

ENVELOPMENT

7-31. **The *envelopment* is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to avoid the principal enemy defenses by seizing objectives to the enemy rear to destroy the enemy in his current positions. At the tactical level, envelopments focus on seizing terrain, destroying specific enemy forces, and interdicting enemy withdrawal routes** (see Figure 7-2). Envelopments avoid the enemy front, where he is protected and can easily concentrate fires. Single envelopments maneuver against one enemy flank; double envelopments maneuver against both. Either variant can develop into an encirclement.

7-32. To envelop the enemy, commanders find or create an assailable flank. Sometimes the enemy exposes a flank by advancing, unaware of friendly locations. In other conditions, such as a fluid battle involving forces in noncontiguous AOs, a combination of air and indirect fires may create an assailable flank by isolating the enemy on unfavorable terrain.

7-33. Attackers may also create an assailable flank by arriving from an unexpected direction. A vertical envelopment (an air assault or airborne operation) is an example of such a shaping operation. Attackers may also fix defenders' attention forward through a combination of fires and shaping or diversionary attacks. Attackers maneuver against the enemy's flanks and rear and concentrate combat power on his vulnerabilities before he can reorient his defense.



An envelopment avoids enemy strength by maneuver around or over enemy defenses. The decisive operation is directed against the enemy flanks or rear.

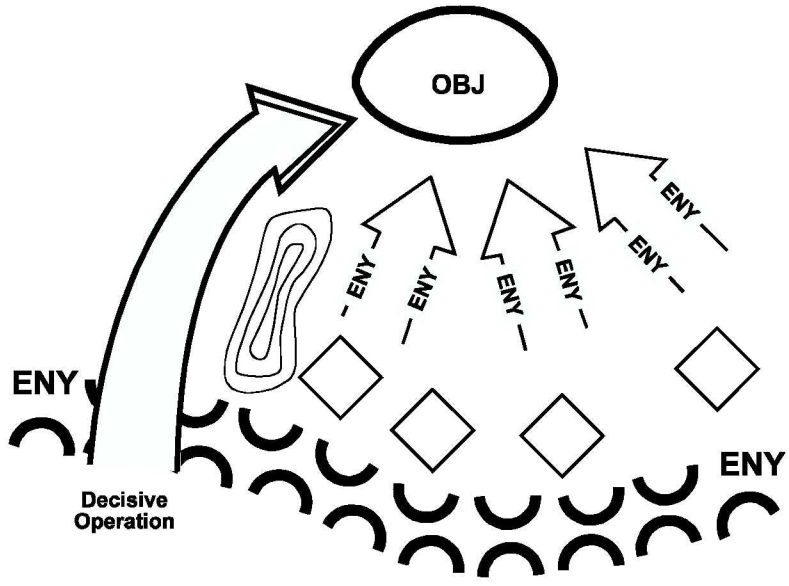
Figure 7-2. Envelopment

7-34. An envelopment may result in an encirclement. ***Encirclements* are operations where one force loses its freedom of maneuver because an opposing force is able to isolate it by controlling all ground lines of**

communications. An offensive encirclement is typically an extension of either a pursuit or envelopment. A direct pressure force maintains contact with the enemy, preventing his disengagement and reconstitution. Meanwhile, an encircling force maneuvers to envelop the enemy, cutting his escape routes and setting inner and outer rings. The outer ring defeats enemy attempts to break through to his encircled force. The inner ring contains the encircled force. If necessary, the encircling force organizes a hasty defense along the enemy escape route, while synchronizing joint or multinational fires to complete his destruction. All available means, including obstacles, should be used to contain the enemy. Then friendly forces use all available fires to destroy him. Encirclements often occur in nonlinear offensive operations.

TURNING MOVEMENT

7-35. **A *turning movement* is a form of maneuver in which the attacking force seeks to avoid the enemy's principal defensive positions by seizing objectives to the enemy rear and causing the enemy to move out of his current positions or divert major forces to meet the threat** (see Figure 7-3). A major threat to his rear forces the enemy to attack or withdraw rearward, thus "turning" him out of his defensive positions. Turning movements typically require greater depth than other forms of maneuver. Deep fires take on added importance. They protect the enveloping force and attack the enemy. Operation Chromite, the amphibious assault at Inchon during the Korean War, was a classic turning movement that achieved both strategic and operational effects.



A turning movement attacks the enemy rear to "turn" him out of his position and force him to fight to the rear of his flanks.

Figure 7-3. Turning Movement

INFILTRATION

7-36. **An *infiltration* is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force conducts undetected movement through or into an area occupied by enemy forces to occupy a position of advantage in the enemy rear while exposing only small elements to enemy defensive fires** (see Figure 7-4). The need to avoid being detected and engaged may limit the size and strength of infiltrating forces. Infiltration rarely defeats a defense by itself. Commanders direct infiltrations to attack lightly defended positions or stronger positions from the flank and rear, to secure key terrain to support the decisive operation, or to disrupt enemy sustaining operations. Typically, forces infiltrate in small groups and reassemble to continue their mission.

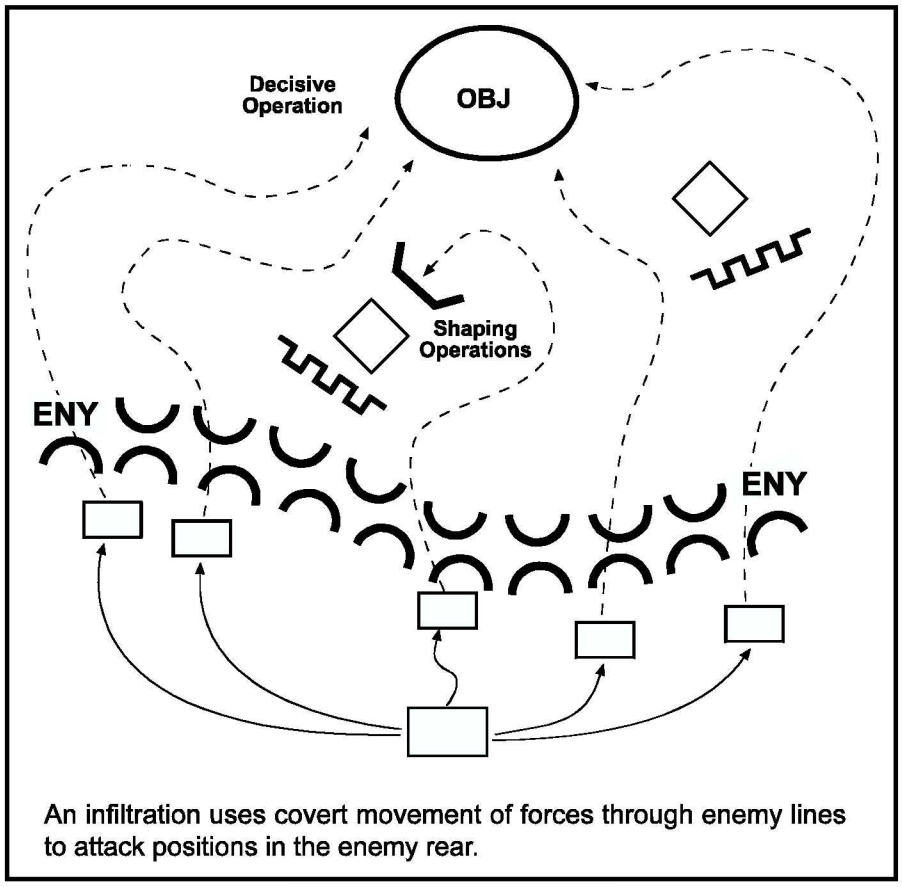
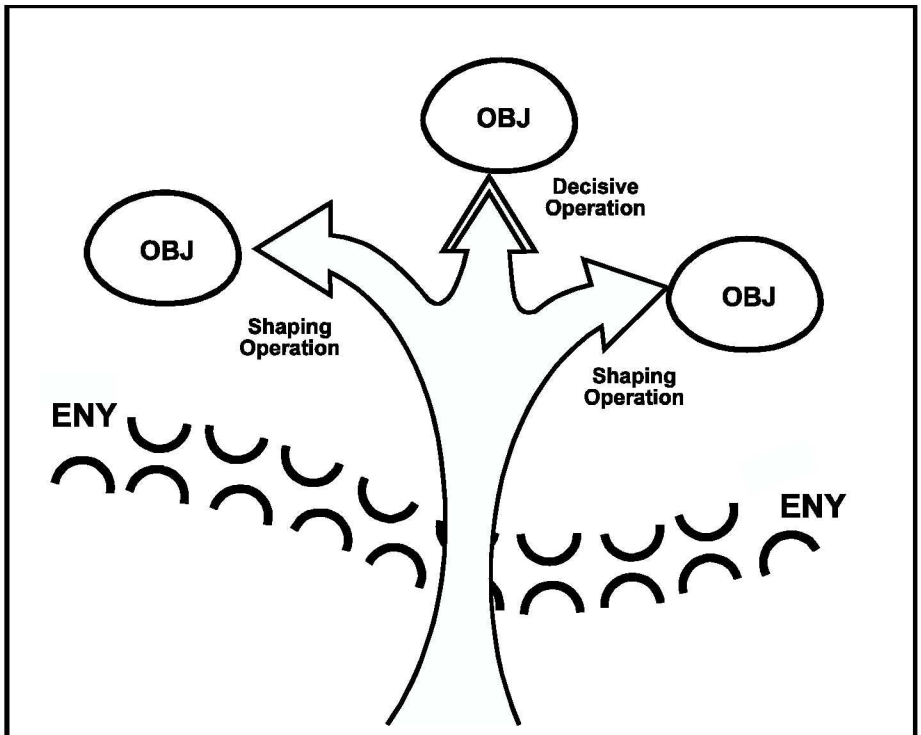


Figure 7-4. Infiltration

PENETRATION

7-37. **A *penetration* is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to rupture enemy defenses on a narrow front to disrupt the defensive system** (see Figure 7-5, page 7-14). Commanders direct penetrations when enemy flanks are not assailable or time does not permit another form of maneuver. Successful penetrations create assailable flanks and provide access to enemy rear areas. Because penetrations frequently are directed into the front of the enemy defense, they risk significantly more friendly casualties than envelopments, turning movements, and infiltrations.

7-38. Swift concentration and audacity are particularly important during a penetration. Commanders mass effects from all available fires at the point of penetration to make the initial breach. Then they widen the penetration by enveloping enemy units on its shoulders and pass forces through to secure objectives in the enemy rear or defeat the penetrated enemy forces in detail. Forces making the initial breach move rapidly to avoid enemy counterattacks to their flanks. Follow-on forces secure the shoulders and widen the breach. Throughout all phases, fires in depth target enemy indirect fire assets, units along the shoulders of the penetration, and counterattack forces. Other friendly forces fix enemy forces that can move against the penetration with attacks, fires, feints, and demonstrations.



A penetration has three stages: the initial rupture, rolling up the flanks, and continuing the attack to secure a deep objective.

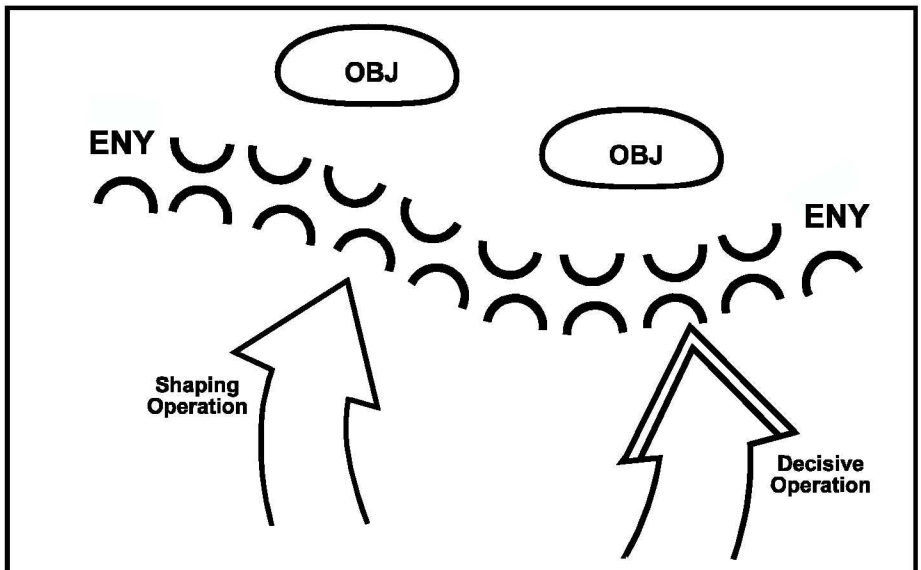
Figure 7-5. Penetration

7-39. If sufficient combat power is available, operational commanders may direct multiple penetrations. Commanders carefully weigh the advantage of such attacks. Multiple penetrations force the enemy to disperse his fires and consider multiple threats before committing his reserves. Commanders then decide how to sustain and exploit multiple penetrations and whether penetrating forces converge on one deep objective or attack multiple objectives. At the tactical level, there is normally insufficient combat power to conduct more than one penetration.

FRONTAL ATTACK

7-40. **A *frontal attack* is a form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to destroy a weaker enemy force or fix a larger enemy force in place over a broad front** (see Figure 7-6). At the tactical level, an attacking force can use a frontal attack to rapidly overrun a weaker enemy force. A frontal attack strikes the enemy across a wide front and over the most direct approaches. Commanders normally use it when they possess overwhelming combat power and the enemy is at a clear disadvantage. Commanders mass the effects of direct and indirect fires, shifting indirect and aerial fires just before the assault. Success depends on achieving an advantage in combat power throughout the attack.

7-41. The frontal attack is frequently the most costly form of maneuver, since it exposes the majority of the attackers to the concentrated fires of the defenders. As the most direct form of maneuver, however, the frontal attack is useful for overwhelming light defenses, covering forces, or disorganized enemy resistance. It is often the best form of maneuver for hasty attacks and meeting engagements, where speed and simplicity are essential to maintain tempo and the initiative. Commanders may direct a frontal attack as a shaping operation and another form of maneuver as the decisive operation. Commanders may also use the frontal attack during an exploitation or pursuit. Commanders of large formations conducting envelopments or penetrations may direct subordinate elements to conduct frontal attacks as either shaping operations or the decisive operation.



A frontal attack is conducted across a wide front over the most direct approach.

Figure 7-6. Frontal Attack

TYPES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-42. The four types of offensive operations are movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit. Commanders direct these offensive operations sequentially and in combination to generate maximum combat power and destroy the enemy. For instance, a successful attack may lead to an exploitation, which can lead to a pursuit. A deliberate attack to complete the enemy's destruction can follow a pursuit. In other cases, commanders may direct an attack against the enemy during a pursuit to slow his withdrawal.

7-43. Commanders combine and sequence movements to contact, attacks, exploitations, and pursuits to gain the greatest advantage. Attacks do not always lead to exploitations and pursuits. For example, spoiling attacks, feints, and demonstrations rarely develop into exploitations; however, circumstances may allow commanders to exploit an unexpected success with a full-scale attack.

7-44. Commanders recognize that the many types of offensive and defensive operations may run together with no discernible break. They employ spoiling attacks while defending to slow the enemy tempo until they are ready to attack. As they prepare to transition from one offensive operation to another, or from offense to defense, commanders can conduct a feint in one area to divert enemy attention from operations elsewhere.

7-45. A form of troop movement often precedes an offensive operation. The three forms of troop movement are administrative movement, tactical road march, and approach march.

- An *administrative movement* is a movement in which troops and vehicles are arranged to expedite their movement and conserve time and energy when no enemy interference, except by air, is anticipated. Administrative movements occur in areas where enemy forces do not pose an immediate threat to operations and heightened security is not necessary.
- **A *tactical road march* is a rapid movement used to relocate units within an area of operations to prepare for combat operations.** Although contact with enemy forces is not anticipated, security against air attack, enemy SOF, and sympathizers is maintained and the unit is prepared to take immediate action against an enemy threat. Tactical road marches occur when a force must maintain security or when movements occur within range of enemy influence. Commanders may still execute tactical road marches in low-threat environments to maintain C2 and meet specific movement schedules.
- **An *approach march* is the advance of a combat unit when direct contact with the enemy is intended.** Soldiers are fully or partially deployed. Commanders direct an approach march when they are relatively certain of the enemy location and are a considerable distance from it. They decide where their forces can deploy into attack formations that facilitate the initial contact and still provide freedom of action for the bulk of their forces. In contiguous AOs, a passage of lines often precedes or follows an approach march.

MOVEMENT TO CONTACT

7-46. **The *movement to contact* is a type of offensive operation designed to develop the situation and establish or regain contact.** Forces conducting a movement to contact seek to make contact with the smallest force feasible. On contact, the commander has five options: attack, defend, bypass, delay, or withdraw.

7-47. A successful movement to contact requires units with sufficient mobility, agility, and combat power to gain enemy contact and rapidly develop the situation. Six fundamentals apply:

- Focus all efforts on finding the enemy.
- Make initial contact with the smallest element possible, consistent with protecting the force.
- Make initial contact with small, mobile, self-contained forces to avoid decisive engagement of the main body on ground chosen by the enemy. Doing this allows the commander maximum flexibility to develop the situation.
- Task organize the force and use movement formations to deploy and attack rapidly in any direction.
- Keep forces postured within supporting distances to facilitate a flexible response.
- Maintain contact once gained.

7-48. Commanders organize forces to provide all-around security. This normally requires advance, flank, and rear guards. They lead with a combined arms security force to locate and fix the enemy. Corps and divisions normally organize a powerful, self-contained covering force to do this. Smaller formations organize security forces within the limits of their resources. Commanders employ the security force far enough ahead of the main body to provide enough time and space to react to enemy contact. Guard formations remain within supporting range of the main body. Advance and flank guards perform continuous reconnaissance to the front and flanks of the main body. They destroy or suppress small enemy forces so they cannot threaten the main body. The advance guard moves as fast and as far ahead of the main body as possible without moving beyond supporting range. The main body provides the advance guard, normally organized as a separate element. Main body units normally provide and control flank and rear security forces.

Supporting distance **is the distance between two units that can be traveled in time for one to come to the aid of the other. For small units, it is the distance between two units that can be covered effectively by their fires.**

Supporting range **is the distance one unit may be geographically separated from a second unit, yet remain within the maximum range of the second unit's indirect fire weapons systems.**

7-49. Security forces remain oriented on the main body, taking into account enemy capabilities and the terrain. They bypass or breach obstacles in stride.

Commanders decentralize movement authority to leaders on the front and flanks. Normally, commanders should position themselves well forward during movements to contact.

Search and Attack

7-50. ***Search and attack*** **is a technique for conducting a movement to contact that shares many of the characteristics of an area security mission.** Light and medium maneuver units, attack aviation, air cavalry, and air assault units normally conduct them. The purpose of a search and attack operation is to destroy enemy forces, protect the friendly force, deny an area to the enemy, or collect information. Commanders direct search and attack when the enemy disperses in close terrain unsuited for heavy forces, when they cannot find enemy weaknesses, or when they want to deny the enemy movement in an area. They also direct search and attack against enemy infiltrators or SOF operating in a given area. Search and attack is useful in area security missions, such as clearing AOs.

Meeting Engagement

7-51. A ***meeting engagement*** **is a combat action that occurs when a moving force engages an enemy at an unexpected time and place.** Such encounters normally occur by chance in small unit operations, typically when two moving forces collide. They may result in brigade or larger unit operations when intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations have been ineffective. Meeting engagements can also occur when opposing forces are aware of the general presence but not the exact location of each other and both decide to attack immediately. On contact, commanders quickly act to gain the advantage. Speed of action and movement, coupled with both direct and indirect fires, are essential. To maintain momentum, lead elements quickly bypass or fight through light resistance. Freedom to maneuver is always advantageous; however, commanders may choose to establish a hasty defense if the enemy force is larger or the terrain offers a significant benefit.

7-52. The initiative and audacity of small unit leaders are essential for the friendly force to act faster than the enemy. Commanders balance focusing combat power rapidly with keeping other options open and maintaining pressure on the enemy. In meeting engagements, the force that gains and retains the initiative wins. Commanders seize and maintain the initiative through battle command: rapidly visualizing the situation, deciding what to do, and directing forces to destroy enemy combat power. A successful meeting engagement fixes or reduces the enemy force with maneuver and massed, overwhelming fires—both direct and indirect—while the friendly force bypasses or attacks it.

ATTACK

7-53. **An *attack* is an offensive operation that destroys or defeats enemy forces, seizes and secures terrain, or both.** Attacks incorporate coordinated movement supported by direct and indirect fires. They may be either decisive or shaping operations. Attacks may be hasty or deliberate, depending on the time available for assessing the situation, planning, and preparing. Commanders execute hasty attacks when the situation calls for

immediate action with available forces and minimal preparation. They conduct deliberate attacks when there is time to develop plans and coordinate preparations (see FM 3-90). The same fundamentals of the offense apply to each type of attack. Success depends on skillfully massing the effects of combat power.

Types of Attack

- Hasty
- Deliberate
- Special Purpose
  - Spoiling
  - Counterattack
  - Raid
  - Ambush
  - Feint
  - Demonstration

Hasty Attack

7-54. Commanders direct hasty attacks to seize opportunities to destroy the enemy or seize the initiative. These opportunities are fleeting. They usually occur during movements to contact and defensive operations. In a hasty attack, commanders intentionally trade the advantages of thorough preparation and full synchronization for those of immediate execution. In a movement to contact, commanders launch hasty attacks to destroy enemy forces before they concentrate or establish a defense. In the defense, commanders direct hasty attacks to destroy an exposed or overextended attacker. On-order and be-prepared missions allow units to respond quickly in uncertain situations.

7-55. Once they decide to attack, commanders execute as quickly as possible. While hasty attacks maximize the effects of agility and surprise, they incur the risk of losing some synchronization. To minimize this risk, commanders make maximum use of standing operating procedures (SOPs) that include standard formations and well-understood and rehearsed battle drills. Supporting arms and services organize and position themselves to react quickly, using prearranged procedures. Habitual relationships among supported and supporting units at all echelons facilitate these actions.

Deliberate Attack

7-56. In contrast to hasty attacks, deliberate attacks are highly synchronized operations characterized by detailed planning and preparation. Deliberate attacks use simultaneous operations throughout the AO, planned fires, shaping operations, and forward positioning of resources needed to sustain momentum. Commanders take the time necessary to position forces and develop sufficient intelligence to strike the enemy with bold maneuver and accurate, annihilating fires. Because of the time required to plan and prepare deliberate attacks, commanders often begin them from a defensive posture. However, an uncommitted force may conduct a deliberate attack as a sequel to an ongoing offensive operation.

7-57. Time spent preparing a deliberate attack may allow the enemy to improve defenses, retire, or launch a spoiling attack. Therefore, commanders direct deliberate attacks only when the enemy cannot be bypassed or overcome with a hasty attack. Commanders maintain pressure on the enemy while they plan and prepare. They aggressively disrupt enemy defensive preparations through aggressive patrolling, feints, limited-objective attacks, harassing indirect fires, air strikes, and offensive IO.

7-58. Deliberate attacks require extensive planning and coordination, to include positioning reserves and follow-on forces while preparing troops and

equipment. Commanders and staffs refine plans based on rehearsals and intelligence from reconnaissance and surveillance. Commanders conduct IO to deceive the enemy and prevent him from exercising effective C2. Effective IO mask attack preparations and conceal friendly intentions and capabilities. Commanders direct reconnaissance and surveillance missions to collect information about the enemy and AO. The intelligence system analyzes this information to find weaknesses in enemy capabilities, dispositions, or plans. Friendly forces exploit enemy weaknesses before and during the attack. Effective information management (IM) routes data collected by reconnaissance and surveillance assets to the right place for analysis. IM also facilitates rapid dissemination of intelligence products to forces that need them.

Special Purpose Attacks

7-59. Certain forms of attack employ distinctive methods and require special planning. Commanders direct these special purpose attacks to achieve objectives different from those of other attacks. Spoiling attacks and counterattacks are usually phases of a larger operation. Raids and ambushes are generally single-phased operations conducted by small units. Feints and demonstrations are military deception operations.

7-60. **Spoiling Attack. A *spoiling attack* is a form of attack that preempts or seriously impairs an enemy attack while the enemy is in the process of planning or preparing to attack.** Normally conducted from a defensive posture, spoiling attacks strike where and when the enemy is most vulnerable—during preparations for attack in assembly areas and attack positions or while he is moving toward his line of departure. Therefore, proper timing and coordinating with higher headquarters are critical requirements for them. Spoiling attacks are highly dependent on accurate information on enemy dispositions. Commanders are alert for opportunities to exploit advantages created by a spoiling attack.

7-61. **Counterattack. A *counterattack* is a form of attack by part or all of a defending force against an enemy attacking force with the general objective of denying the enemy his goal in attacking.** Commanders normally conduct counterattacks from a defensive posture; they direct them to defeat or destroy enemy forces or to regain control of terrain and facilities after enemy successes. Commanders direct counterattacks with reserves, lightly committed forward elements, or specifically assigned forces. They counterattack after the enemy launches an attack, reveals his main effort, or offers an assailable flank.

7-62. Commanders conduct counterattacks much like other operations, synchronizing them within the overall effort. When possible, units rehearse and prepare the ground. Counterattacking forces may conduct local exploitations to take advantage of tactical opportunities, but then usually resume a defensive posture. Large-unit headquarters preplan counterattacks as major exploitations and pursuits. In those cases, a counterattack may be the first step in seizing the initiative and transitioning to offensive operations. A counterattack is the decisive operation in a mobile defense.

7-63. **Raid.** A raid is a form of attack, usually small scale, involving a swift entry into hostile territory to secure information, confuse the enemy, or

destroy installations. It usually ends with a planned withdrawal from the objective area upon mission completion. Raids have narrowly defined purposes. They require both detailed intelligence and deliberate planning. Raids may destroy key enemy installations and facilities, capture or free prisoners, or disrupt enemy C2 or other important systems.

7-64. **Ambush. An *ambush* is a form of attack by fire or other destructive means from concealed positions on a moving or temporarily halted enemy**. An ambush destroys enemy forces by maximizing the element of surprise. Ambushes can employ direct fire systems or other destructive means, such as command-detonated mines, nonlethal fires, and indirect fires. Ambushes can disrupt enemy cohesion, sense of security, and confidence. They are particularly effective against enemy sustaining operations.

7-65. **Feint. A *feint* is a form of attack used to deceive the enemy as to the location or time of the actual decisive operation. Forces conducting a feint seek direct fire contact with the enemy but avoid decisive engagement**. Feints divert attention from the decisive operation and prevent the enemy from focusing combat power against it. They are usually shallow, limited-objective attacks conducted before or during the decisive operation. During Operation Desert Storm, units of the 1st Cavalry Division conducted feints in the Ruqi pocket before 24 February 1991. The purpose of these feints was to fix Iraqi frontline units and convince Iraqi commanders that the coalition decisive operation would occur along the Wadi al-Batin.

7-66. **Demonstration. A *demonstration* is a form of attack designed to deceive the enemy as to the location or time of the decisive operation by a display of force. Forces conducting a demonstration do not seek contact with the enemy**. Demonstrations are also shaping operations. They seek to mislead the enemy concerning the attacker's true intentions. They facilitate decisive operations by fixing the enemy or diverting his attention from the decisive operation. Commanders allow the enemy to detect a demonstration. However, doing this without revealing the demonstration's true purpose requires skill. If a demonstration reveals an enemy weakness, commanders may follow it with another form of attack.

EXPLOITATION

7-67. An exploitation is a type of offensive operation that usually follows a successful attack and is designed to disorganize the enemy in depth. Exploitations seek to disintegrate enemy forces to the point where they have no alternative but surrender or flight. Commanders of exploiting forces receive the greatest possible latitude to accomplish their missions. They act with great aggressiveness, initiative, and boldness. Exploitations may be local or major. Local exploitations take advantage of tactical opportunities, foreseen or unforeseen. Division and higher headquarters normally plan major exploitations as branches or sequels.

7-68. Attacks that completely destroy a defender are rare. More often, the enemy attempts to disengage, withdraw, and reconstitute an effective defense as rapidly as possible. In large-scale operations, the enemy may attempt to mass combat power against an attack by moving forces from less active areas

or committing reserves. During exploitations, commanders execute simultaneous attacks throughout the AO to thwart these enemy actions.

7-69. During attacks, commanders remain alert to opportunities for exploitation. Indicators include—

- Large numbers of prisoners and the surrender of entire enemy units.
- Enemy units disintegrating after initial contact.
- A lack of an organized defense.
- The capture or absence of enemy leaders.

7-70. Commanders plan to exploit every attack unless restricted by higher headquarters or exceptional circumstances. Exploitation pressures the enemy, compounds his disorganization, and erodes his will to resist. Upon shattering enemy coherence, attacking forces strike targets that defeat enemy attempts to regroup. Attackers swiftly attack command posts, sever escape routes, and strike enemy reserves, field artillery, and critical combat support and CSS assets.

7-71. Opportunities for local exploitations may emerge when the main effort is elsewhere in the AO. Commanders vary tempos among subordinate commands to take advantage of these opportunities while continuing to press the main effort. Simultaneous local exploitations at lower echelons can lead to a major exploitation that becomes the decisive operation.

7-72. Exploiting success is especially important after a deliberate attack in which the commander accepted risk elsewhere to concentrate combat power for the decisive operation. Failure to exploit aggressively the success of the decisive operation may allow the enemy to detect and exploit a friendly weakness and regain the initiative.

7-73. When possible, lead forces transition directly into an exploitation. If that is not feasible, commanders pass fresh forces into the lead. Exploitations require the physical and mental aggressiveness to combat the friction of night, bad weather, possible fratricide, and extended operations.

7-74. Successful exploitations demoralize the enemy and disintegrate his formations. Commanders of exploiting units anticipate this situation and prepare to transition to a pursuit. They remain alert for opportunities that develop as enemy cohesion and resistance break down. Commanders posture CSS forces to support exploitation opportunities.

PURSUIT

7-75. A pursuit is a type of offensive operation designed to catch or cut off a hostile force attempting to escape with the aim of destroying it. Pursuits are decisive operations that follow successful attacks or exploitations. They occur when the enemy fails to organize a defense and attempts to disengage. If it becomes apparent that enemy resistance has broken down entirely and the enemy is fleeing, a force can transition to a pursuit from any type of offensive operation. Pursuits encompass rapid movement and decentralized control. Unlike exploitations, commanders can rarely anticipate pursuits, so they normally do not hold forces in reserve for them.

7-76. For most pursuits, commanders designate a direct pressure force and an encircling or enveloping force. The direct pressure force maintains pressure against the enemy to keep him from establishing a coherent defense. The encircling force conducts an envelopment or a turning movement to block the enemy's escape and trap him between the two forces. The trapped enemy force is then destroyed. The encircling force must have greater mobility than the pursued enemy force. Joint air assets and long-range precision fires are essential for slowing enemy movement.

7-77. Exploitations and pursuits test the audacity and endurance of soldiers and leaders. After an attack, soldiers are tired and units have suffered personnel and materiel losses. As an exploitation or pursuit unfolds, LOCs extend and commanders risk culmination. Commanders and units must exert extraordinary physical and mental effort to sustain momentum, transition to other operations, and translate tactical success into operational or strategic victory.

CONDUCTING OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-78. Commanders direct the operations process. They strive for continuous attacks at tempos the enemy cannot match. Commanders visualize the situation, make effective decisions, and assess the planning, preparation for, and execution of offensive operations. Staffs help commanders anticipate the outcome of current and planned operations. Commanders apply judgment to develop the situational understanding upon which they base decisions that lead to mission success (see FM 6-0).

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-79. Commanders plan to attack enemy forces and systems simultaneously throughout the AO to seize the initiative, exploit success, and maintain momentum. In the decisive operation, commanders focus combat power to defeat the enemy. They conceive simple plans by assessing and visualizing their battlespace and mission. Commanders select the best course of action and develop a concept of operations that ensures mission accomplishment.

7-80. Commanders tailor their concept of operations to the situation. Offensive plans—

- Allow rapid concentration and dispersal of units.
- Introduce fresh forces to exploit success while resting other forces.
- Protect the force.
- Facilitate transition to future operations.
- Sustain forces throughout the operation.

Offensive planning may occur while units defend. Plans anticipate shifting efforts and transitioning to other forms of attack to exploit opportunities. By planning to exploit success, commanders avoid losing momentum.

7-81. Staffs analyze the situation in terms of METT-TC to understand the mission and to prepare estimates. Staff sections maintain current estimates for their functional fields or battlefield operating system throughout an offensive operation. Commanders incorporate staff estimates into their visualization. As the operation unfolds and the situation changes, commanders

continuously assess threats and opportunities and decide whether to modify the concept of operations (see FM 5-0).

Mission

7-82. Commanders provide their subordinates with a clear statement of what to accomplish and why—the mission. They anticipate likely developments. To prepare subordinates for subsequent actions, commanders give them their superior's mission and intent, tell them what they envision for the future, and issue warning orders as appropriate. To maintain momentum, they assign subordinates tasks that encompass the full scope of the operation. Some offensive operations, such as deliberate attacks, require greater control and coordination. However, whenever possible, commanders assign force-oriented objectives and AOs and avoid restrictive control measures.

Enemy

7-83. In offensive operations, commanders look for gaps or weaknesses in enemy defenses. They study enemy defensive preparations and direct actions to obstruct and frustrate them. They set priorities for ISR operations. They plan to penetrate enemy security areas, overcome obstacles, avoid enemy strengths, and destroy the coherence of the defense. Success requires an active, responsive intelligence effort oriented on critical units and areas.

Terrain and Weather

7-84. Commanders select avenues of approach that orient on key terrain and provide maneuver opportunities for attackers. Good avenues of approach permit rapid advance, provide cover and concealment, allow good communications, and are hard to block with obstacles. Commanders exploit weather conditions that affect mobility, concealment, and air support. They need tactical weather forecasts that focus on how weather might affect the operation.

7-85. Terrain designated for the decisive operation should allow for rapid movement into the enemy rear. Commanders typically identify and avoid terrain that will hinder a rapid advance; however, an initial maneuver over difficult terrain may surprise defenders. Commanders personally reconnoiter the terrain whenever possible, particularly the terrain where they will conduct the decisive attack.

7-86. Attackers pay particular attention to obstacles. Commanders plan to negotiate or avoid urban areas, rivers, extreme slopes, thick forests, or soft ground. Such terrain, when it parallels axes of advance, can protect attackers' flanks. Light forces can use such areas as avenues of approach, or they can defend from them, freeing heavier forces for maneuver. To deny key terrain to the enemy, commanders seize it or control it by fire. Most offensive operations are force-oriented; however, attacks can focus on decisive terrain.

7-87. Weather and visibility conditions affect offensive operations. Concealment and protection from air attacks that weather or light conditions offer is important, especially for air assault and airborne operations. Ground conditions affect the number of avenues available and movement speed. Inclement weather also increases heavy force maintenance and CSS requirements.

Troops and Support Available

7-88. Commanders consider a unit's readiness and its leaders' experience when assigning missions. They take into account their force's mobility, protection, and firepower relative to enemy capabilities.

7-89. Commanders employ units according to their capabilities and limitations. The number of possible force combinations enhances agility. Dismounted infantry can attack through heavy cover or penetrate antiarmor defenses to open approaches for armored and mechanized forces. Air assault and airborne units can seize objectives in depth to block enemy reserves or secure choke points. Armor can move rapidly through gaps to disorganize the defense. Field and air defense artillery, engineer, and chemical units provide critical support. Aviation maneuvers to attack the enemy throughout the AO.

7-90. Attackers carefully integrate CSS operations into plans. Effective CSS is especially important during high-tempo operations. Habitually associating combat units with the CSS units that support them facilitates it. When plans call for attacking units to pass through defending units, defending units assist CSS operators in conducting sustaining operations.

Time Available

7-91. Commanders consider the risk involved when deciding how much time to allocate to planning and preparing an offensive operation. The more time attackers take to plan and prepare, the more time defenders have to improve their defenses. Attackers reduce the time available to the enemy by operating at a high tempo, achieving surprise, and avoiding detection. Defenders gain time by delaying and disrupting attacks. In all cases, commanders give as much time as possible to their subordinates for planning.

7-92. Modern telecommunications capabilities and activities in the information environment may reduce the time available to plan and prepare. Modern information systems reduce the time required to collect and process information. This reduction may provide advantages for either attackers or defenders. Commanders who act quickly and make good decisions retain the initiative in fast-moving situations. Activities in the information environment, such as live news broadcasts of pending or ongoing attacks, may reduce the time available to accomplish a mission.

Civil Considerations

7-93. Civil considerations are present throughout offensive operations. Commanders focus their staffs on considerations that may affect mission accomplishment. These factors include care and support for civilians within the AO and the possible effect of refugees on operations and movements. Other considerations include enemy locations with respect to civil populations, political and cultural boundaries, and language requirements. Civil considerations may preclude the attack of some targets, such as infrastructure and historically significant areas. They may also limit the use of land mines.

7-94. Enemy propaganda may affect the attitude of civilians in the AO. It may also affect domestic and foreign support for the operation. Operational commanders pay particular attention to the effects of actions in the information environment. Tactical commanders may have limited awareness of

media reporting and its effect on public opinion. Operational commanders gauge the effect of public opinion and keep their subordinates informed.

PREPARING FOR OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-95. Preparation postures the force to begin offensive operations. It includes assembling and positioning necessary resources. At the operational level, commanders arrange forces and resources to allow dispersion, responsiveness, protection, and sustainment, while retaining the ability to mass effects quickly. Commanders assign units a position and time to begin or support the attack. Selected friendly forces start conducting shaping and sustaining operations to develop opportunities for the entire force. To preserve surprise, attacking forces avoid and mask actions that could alert the enemy.

7-96. Preparation includes reconnaissance operations conducted concurrently with planning (see FM 5-0). Reconnaissance collects information that is processed into intelligence and incorporated into plans. Intelligence tasks for offensive operations include identifying and locating enemy reserves, locating and tracking enemy fire support systems, and gathering information about enemy intelligence, air, and air defense capabilities. Conducting aggressive reconnaissance and surveillance, integrating joint collection assets, and exploiting the capabilities of information systems allow commanders to assess enemy capabilities and anticipate his reactions. Rehearsals help subordinates fully understand the commander's intent and how their actions relate to those of other friendly forces and contribute to the overall operation.

7-97. Sustaining operations create conditions for executing an attack suddenly, violently, and efficiently. More important, they help preserve freedom of action as one operation or phase ends and another begins. At the operational level, sustainment is a key consideration in linking battles within major operations. CSS forces prepare by positioning supplies and units to support the operation. Movement control, terrain management, and engineer-conducted mobility operations contribute to efficient movements. Engineers also conduct countermobility operations to protect flanks. As in all operations, air defense forces protect the force from air and missile attack.

EXECUTING OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

7-98. Offensive operations require rapid shifts in the focus of combat power to take advantage of opportunities. Sustaining a tempo the enemy cannot match is vital to success. Commanders vary the tempo and methods of attack, while maintaining momentum. Units press the fight. A commander's ability to continually anticipate and visualize both enemy and friendly situations is essential. Making timely decisions is likewise important.

7-99. Commanders increase the tempo of an operation through reconnaissance and by providing the proper field artillery and other combat support, including air support. They maintain a high tempo by passing forces forward and minimizing the time friendly forces spend under fire. Attacks succeed only if they achieve their objective before the enemy recovers his balance, identifies the threat, and masses combat power against it. Attackers must keep the enemy off balance as long as possible and maintain the momentum

of the attack. Successful attacks maintain a tempo and degree of lethality that the enemy cannot match.

7-100. ISR and IM provide commanders with enough relevant information to direct their attack. Commanders attack once they have sufficient information, even if it is not comprehensive. They can seize the initiative by attacking, even without a detailed operational picture or COP.

7-101. The violence and intensity of the assault unhinges the coherence of the enemy's defense. Precision fires and IO allow attackers to strip away enemy security forces, cripple enemy C2 and CSS, and mislead defenders as to the true objective of the attack. The combined effects of these and other actions hinder the enemy's ability to make decisions. As attacking forces assault the objective, fires shift, fixing the enemy in depth and denying him the use of reserves. Whether seeking to destroy an enemy force or to seize terrain, the attacking force does not slow until it achieves success. A high tempo contributes to protection and enhances security.

7-102. Commanders integrate fires with maneuver throughout offensive operations. Accomplishing this requires detailed planning and coordination between assaulting and supporting forces, precise execution, and careful control of fire support. Dismounted assault forces move as closely behind their fires as possible. Armored forces attack under overhead field artillery fire. Air assault and airborne forces land directly on or as near to objectives as possible, once defenders and supporting field and air defense artillery have been suppressed or destroyed. As attackers near the enemy force, they overcome resistance with violent, massed firepower and rapid movement. Speed during this phase is essential to reduce casualties and avoid becoming stalled. Air defense and joint air assets destroy enemy air threats. Attack aviation strikes against uncommitted forces and reserves to isolate current engagements, shape future battles, and deny the enemy options.

7-103. Attackers quickly move through the objective, destroying remaining enemy resistance. They anticipate a counterattack by maneuver forces, indirect fires, or aircraft. Security is paramount, as the attacker now occupies a position known to the enemy. Attackers consolidate on the objective, reorganize to meet a counterattack, prepare for the next mission, or continue the attack. If the situation allows, commanders immediately begin an exploitation, either with the same force or by passing follow-on forces through the objective area. Reconstitution may be necessary to return units to the fight. Initial attacking forces may reconstitute as follow-on forces pass forward.

7-104. To maintain offensive momentum, commanders direct the introduction of fresh troops into the attack. Passing follow-on forces allows commanders to rest soldiers, resupply units, and move them to new areas and missions. The introduction of fresh troops is most common when forces enter an exploitation or pursuit, but may be necessary during the attack itself if committed forces cannot reach their objectives. Commanders usually commit fresh troops through a forward passage of lines to maintain the tempo and avoid a significant pause. A forward passage may occur before or after the attack starts. For it to be successful, a forward passage must be concealed from the enemy.

7-105. Forward passages of lines and offensive reliefs require detailed planning and preparation. Planning a passage includes determining the battle

handover criteria that designate when the passing force assumes the fight from the stationary force. The common higher headquarters of the two forces designates control measures for the passage. Subordinate commanders coordinate the details. During a passage, the stationary force provides all possible support to the passing force. The stationary force integrates its direct and indirect fires into the fire support plan of the passing force.

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY

7-106. Technology is changing the ways that modernized Army forces attack. Information technology allows commanders and subordinates to share a COP tailored to each echelon. Commanders throughout the attacking force use it to achieve greater situational understanding. They conduct operations based on more accurate and current information than ever before. Commanders may now lead from the front while remaining fully connected to the C2 system and the information it provides. Situational understanding, supported by the COP, allows commanders to synchronize their forces effectively and make rapid adjustments as the situation changes. Subordinates can view the overall situation and exercise initiative to achieve the commander's intent without waiting for higher headquarters to provide direction.

7-107. Situational understanding based on an accurate COP changes the nature of maneuver before and during attacks. With it, Army forces depend less on movements to contact and meeting engagements to create the conditions to attack. Modernized Army forces may avoid movements to contact altogether, developing the situation largely out of contact. Advanced surveillance and reconnaissance assets refine the picture of the enemy, while precision fires and IO destroy enemy cohesion. Reconnaissance and security elements maintain contact only as required to collect information that unmanned sensors cannot. Commanders maneuver forces into position to begin the attack before major forces make contact. Attacks unfold as simultaneous sets of blows that bewilder and shock enemy forces. Attacks become opportunistic and fluid as commanders mass the effects of combat power swiftly and decisively and exploit the results ruthlessly.

7-108. Fusing information from C2, ISR, indirect fire, and CSS systems increases tempo and the number of offensive options. Greater awareness of enemy and friendly forces means attacks need not originate from one place. Better situational understanding allows commanders to shift forces and efforts from one area to another to exploit opportunities. Nonlinear operations in noncontiguous AOs occur more frequently. Commanders project attacking forces on multiple axes throughout the AO. Lines of operations in the offense are related less by space than they are by purpose; thus, commanders bypass some enemy forces while focusing combat power at the decisive point. Exploiting opportunities that result from efficiently fusing information and determining its significance secures the initiative with attackers.