

Chapter 5

Attack

I approve of all methods of attacking provided they are directed at the point where the enemy's army is weakest and where the terrain favors them the least.

Frederick the Great

An *attack* is an offensive operation that destroys or defeats enemy forces, seizes and secures terrain, or both (FM 3-0). When the commander decides to attack or the opportunity to attack occurs during combat operations, the execution of that attack must mass the effects of overwhelming combat power against selected portions of the enemy force with a tempo and intensity that cannot be matched by the enemy. The resulting combat should not be a contest between near equals. The attacker must be determined to seek decision on the ground of his choosing through the deliberate synchronization and employment of his combined arms team.

5-1. Attacks take place along a continuum defined at one end by fragmentary orders that direct the execution of rapidly executed battle drills by forces immediately available. Published, detailed orders with multiple branches and sequels; detailed knowledge of all aspects of enemy dispositions; a force that has been task organized specifically for the operation; and the conduct of extensive rehearsals define the other end of the continuum. Most attacks fall between the ends of the continuum as opposed to either extreme. ([Chapter 1](#) discusses this continuum between hasty and deliberate operations.)

ORGANIZATION OF FORCES

5-2. Once a commander determines his scheme of maneuver, he task organizes his force to give each unit enough combat power to accomplish its

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