CHAPTER 6

Planning and Conducting Expeditionary Operations

Contents

"The art of war is simple enough. Find out where your enemy is. Get at him as soon as you can. Strike at him as hard as you can, and keep moving on."

—Lieutenant General U.S. Grant, USA

"To move swiftly, strike vigorously, and secure all the fruits of victory is the secret of successful war."

—Lieutenant General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, CSA

This chapter provides the foundation for MAGTF tactical operations because it discusses the importance of single battle, decisive and shaping actions, centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities, main and supporting efforts, security, and the reserve. It describes operational design and addresses how the MAGTF commander plans and conducts expeditionary operations. It also identifies the tactical tenets essential to succeeding on the battlefield.

MANEUVER WARFARE

The Marine Corps practices maneuver warfare when conducting operations. MCDP 1 defines maneuver warfare as a warfighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a variety of rapid, focused, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which the enemy cannot cope. Maneuver warfare is based on the avoidance of the enemy's strengths—surfaces—and the exploitation of the enemy's weaknesses—gaps. Rather than attacking the enemy's surfaces, Marines bypass the enemy's defense and penetrate those defenses through gaps to destroy the enemy system from within. The goal of maneuver warfare is to render the enemy incapable of effective resistance by shattering his moral, mental, and physical cohesion.

Maneuver provides a means to gain an advantage over the enemy. Traditionally, maneuver has meant moving in a way that gains positional—or spatial—advantage. For example, a force may maneuver to envelop an exposed enemy flank or deny him terrain critical to his goals. The commander may maneuver to threaten the enemy's lines of communications and force him to withdraw. He

may maneuver to seize a position that brings effective fire to bear against the enemy but protects his forces against enemy fires.

To maximize the usefulness of maneuver, the commander must maneuver his forces in other dimensions as well. The essence of maneuver is taking action to generate and exploit some kind of advantage over the enemy as a means of accomplishing his objectives as effectively as possible. That advantage may be psychological, technological or temporal as well as spatial.

A force maneuvers in time by increasing relative speed and operating at a faster tempo than the enemy. Normally, forces maneuver both in time and space to gain advantage and, ultimately, victory at the least possible cost. Operation Desert Storm (1991) is a classic example where forces used time and space to their advantage to outmaneuver the enemy. While the Marines and Arab coalition forces fixed the Iraqis in Kuwait, other coalition forces rapidly maneuvered through the Iraqi desert to out flank the enemy. The success of this maneuver led to the complete disruption of the Iraqi defense and their rapid capitulation. This operation illustrates the importance of synchronizing the maneuver of all MAGTF elements to achieve a decision.

OPERATIONAL DESIGN

Commanders initiate the conduct of operations with a design that will guide their subordinate commanders and the staff in planning, execution, and assessment. This operational design is the commander's tool for translating the operational requirements of his superiors into the tactical guidance needed by his subordinate commanders and his staff. The commander uses his operational design to visualize, describe, and direct those actions necessary to achieve his desired end state and accomplish his assigned mission. It includes the purpose of the operation, what the commander wants to accomplish, the desired effects on the enemy, and how he envisions achieving a decision. Visualization of the battlespace and the intended actions of both the enemy and the friendly force is a continuous process that requires the commander to understand the current situation, broadly define his desired future situation, and determine the necessary actions to bring about the desired end state. The commander then articulates this visualization to his subordinate commanders and staff through his commander's battlespace area evaluation (CBAE) and guidance. By describing his visualization in this concise and compelling method, the commander focuses the planning and execution of his subordinate commanders and staffs. Finally, the commander directs the conduct of operations by issuing orders, assigning missions and priorities, making decisions, and adjusting his planned actions as necessary based on assessment. See figure 6-1 on page 6-4.

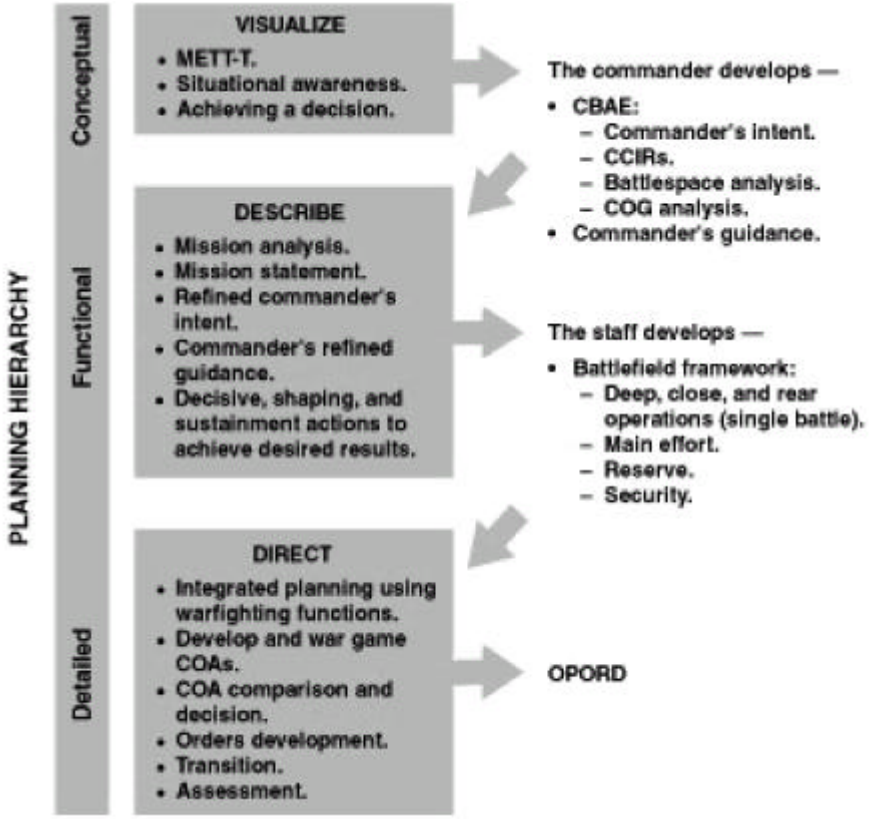


Figure 6-1. Operational Design.

Operational design differs at various levels of command, principally in the scope and scale of operations. Higher level commanders, such as the component and MAGTF commander, identify the time, space, resources available, and purpose of operations that support the joint force commander's campaign plan or component commander's operational design. At a lower level of command, the commander may be able to include in his operational design a detailed description of the battlespace, objectives, available forces and desired task organization, and guidance on the phasing of the operation. The elements of operational design include—

- Factors of METT-T.
- CBAE consisting of the commander's analysis of the battlespace, commander's intent, center of gravity analysis, and commander's critical information requirements.
- Commander's guidance, to include desired effects.
- Decisive actions.
- Shaping actions.

- Sustainment.
- Principles of war and tactical fundamentals. See appendix B.
- Battlefield framework.
- Operation plan or order.

Visualize

The visualize portion is what MCDP 5, *Planning*, refers to as conceptual planning, the highest level of planning. The commander determines the aims and objectives of the operation. During visualization, the first task for the commander is to understand the situation. He studies the situation to develop a clear picture of what is happening, how it got that way, and how it might further develop. The commander considers the information available on the factors of METT-T and any other information on the situation or potential taskings from higher headquarters. He develops an initial view of friendly actions, desired effects and their results, and determines the means to achieve those results. Part of the commander's thinking should also include assuming the role of the enemy, considering what the enemy's best course of action may be, and deciding how to defeat it. Thinking through these factors helps the commander develop increased situational awareness. The commander must also address possible outcomes and the new situations that will result from those possibilities. As the situation changes, so will the solution and the actions that derive from it. Combining this initial understanding of the situation within the battlespace with his experience and military judgment, he may begin his visualization by posing the following questions:

- Where am I? Where is the enemy?
- Where are my friends? Where are the enemy's friends?
- What are my strengths? What are the enemy's strengths?
- What must I protect? What are the enemy's weaknesses?
- What must I do and why? What will the enemy do and why?
- What is the enemy's most dangerous course of action?

As the commander considers these questions, he visualizes what he thinks he has to accomplish to achieve a decision and best support his higher commander's operation. This becomes the basis for his CBAE and guidance he provides to his subordinate commanders and the planners in the describe portion of operational design.

Describe

The describe portion is a combination of conceptual planning and what MCDP 5 refers to as functional planning, the middle level of planning where the

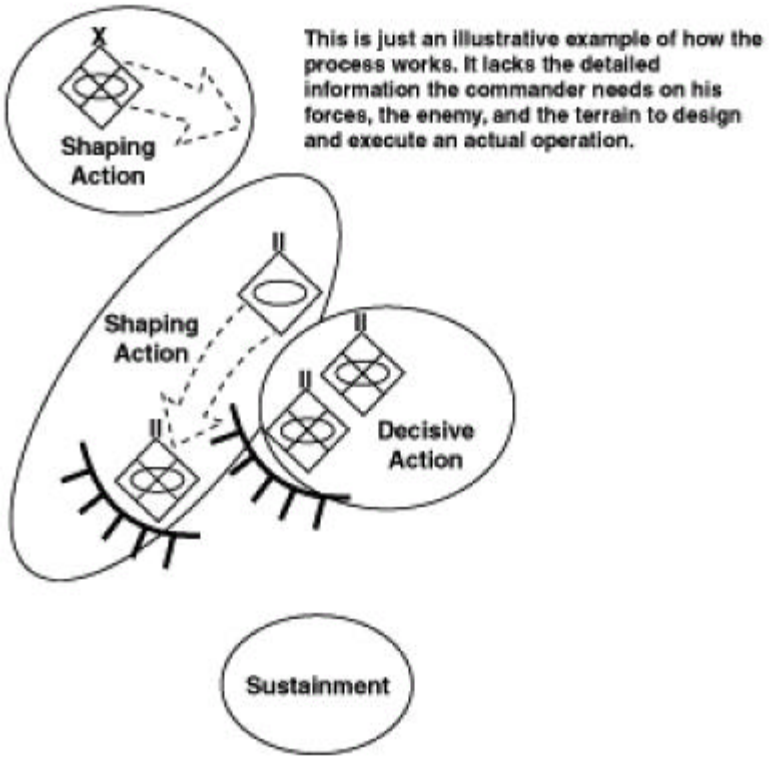
commander and the staff consider discrete functional activities that form the basis for all subsequent planning. It begins when the commander articulates his vision through his CBAE and initial guidance. The commander then uses this visualization to focus and guide the staff as they conduct mission analysis to determine the mission of the force. Mission analysis provides the commander and his staff with additional insight on the situation. Combined with any intelligence or operational updates, mission analysis may prompt the commander to refine his vision, confirming or modifying his commander's intent or other initial guidance on decisive and shaping actions and sustainment. See figure 6-2.

Once the mission statement has been produced, the commander and staff are ready to further develop the operational design by describing how the command will achieve a decision through decisive and shaping actions that accomplish the mission and achieve the desired effects. They also describe how these actions will be sustained. Receiving necessary commander's planning guidance, the staff begins to develop the battlefield framework. See figure 6-3 on page 6-8. It describes how the commander will organize his battlespace and his forces to achieve a decision. The battlefield framework consists of the battlespace organization of envisioned deep, close, and rear tactical operations as well as the organization of the force into the main effort, reserve, and security. Supporting efforts are addressed in the context of deep, close, and rear operations as part of the single battle.

Direct

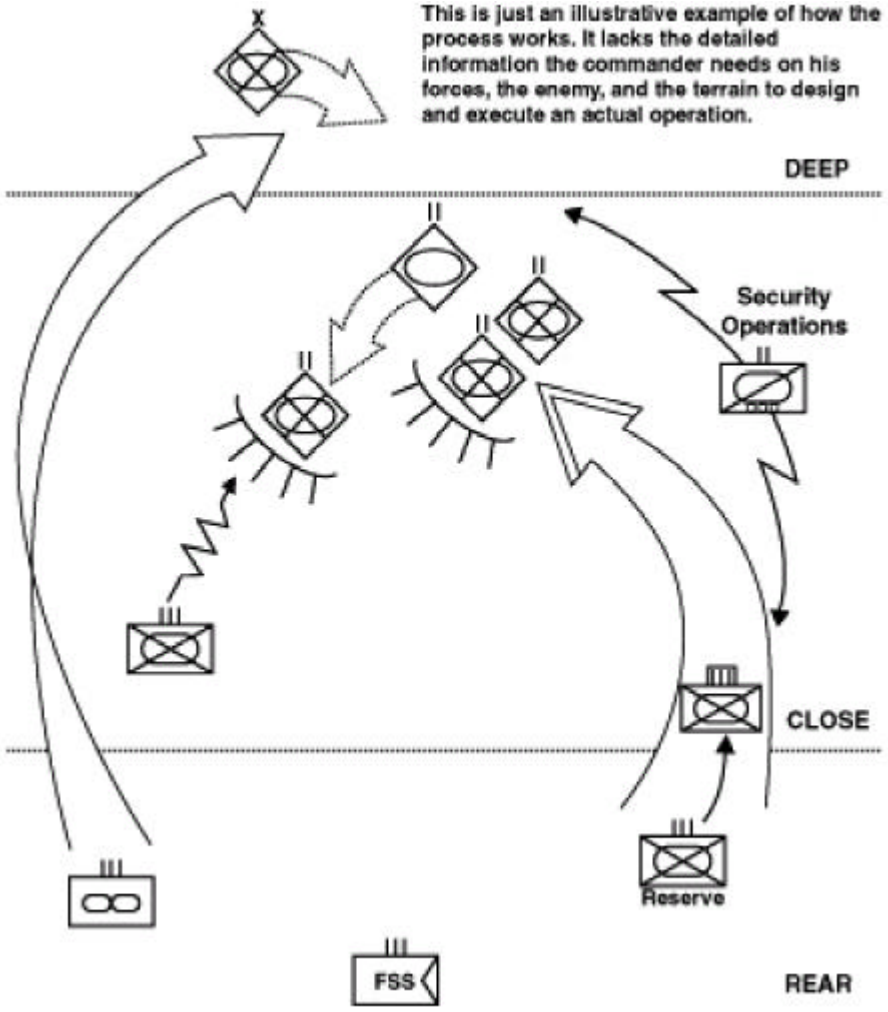
The direct portion is a combination of functional planning and what MCDP 5 refers to as detailed planning, the lowest level of planning. During direct, the commander and the staff determine the specifics of implementing the operational design through the operation plan or order. Armed with the description of how the commander intends to achieve a decision and obtain his desired end state, planners conduct integrated planning using the battlefield framework and the six warfighting functions to develop and war game courses of action that address the following considerations and issues:

- Type of operation.
- Forms of maneuver.
- Phasing/sequencing of the operation.
- Security operations.
- Sustaining the operation.
- IO.
- Targeting priorities.
- Intelligence collection priorities.
- Assessment.



The purpose of this operation is to defeat the enemy's first tactical echelon. I see the enemy's tactical strength as his mobile reserves. I cannot let the enemy commit these reserves in a decisive manner. To support the higher commander's plan, I will have to keep the reserve mechanized brigade from committing against our higher commander's main effort or being used decisively against my forces. I want to shape the enemy by having him first commit his reserve armor battalion against my secondary effort. Simultaneously, by using lethal and nonlethal fires, I want to control the timeline for the commitment of the enemy's reserve mechanized brigade and once committed against my forces, I want to limit its capability. These shaping actions will allow me to fix the enemy reserves while I mass my combat power at the time and place of my choosing. I want to exploit my tactical center of gravity—my superior tactical mobility—and combined arms. I want to avoid the enemy's fixed defenses and focus my decisive action against the enemy's flank to defeat the two isolated mechanized battalions. Once defeated, I want to rapidly focus on the defeat of his remaining mechanized and reserve units that were fixed by my supporting effort. I want a viable security force protecting the flank of my main effort. My sustainment must be task-organized and positioned forward to allow the force to maintain operational momentum.

Figure 6-2. Commander's Vision of Decisive and Shaping Actions and Sustainment.



On order the division attacks in zone to defeat the first echelon. **Close Operations**—In the west a mechanized regiment conducts a supporting attack to fix the forward mechanized battalion and cause the commitment of the enemy reserve armor battalion. To support this attack our deception effort will focus on portraying this supporting attack as our main effort. Upon the commitment of the enemy reserve, our main effort, consisting of a mechanized regimental task force, conducts a flanking attack through the gap between the two defending mechanized infantry battalions and defeats the enemy armor battalion. Fires will disrupt any movement of the two mechanized enemy battalions and the enemy division's command and control. The reserve is a mechanized regiment that follows the main effort and is prepared to defeat a flank counterattack from either enemy mechanized infantry battalion. If not committed against the two mechanized battalions, it will be prepared to block the enemy reserve mechanized brigade. **Deep Operations**—The MAG limits the reserve mechanized infantry brigade from reinforcing the first echelon. **Rear Operations**—A mobile combat service support detachment is prepared to follow the main effort and conduct refuel on the move to maintain operational momentum. **Security**—A light armored reconnaissance battalion screens the main effort's eastern flank.

Figure 6-3. Battlefield Framework.

As this integrated planning continues, the commander chooses a course of action and, if time and situation allow, the staff conducts detailed planning to provide further direction to the force and prepare necessary operation plans and orders. Once the plan or order is completed, the direct portion of operational design concludes with the transition of the plan or order to the subordinate commanders and the staff that will execute it. The operational design, once developed into an operation plan or order, is the basis for execution and aids the commander and the staff as they execute operations.

The commander assesses the success of the operation by comparing the envisioned operational design—as expressed in the operation order—with what is actually occurring in the battlespace. If the assessment indicates the need to modify or adjust the operational design, the commander will again visualize what must be done and then he and the staff will describe how it will be accomplished by modifying or adjusting the battlefield framework. Fragmentary orders, branch plans or sequels to direct the operation will be prepared and issued, if necessary.

PLANNING

As described in MCDP 5, planning is the art and science of envisioning a desired future and laying out effective ways of bringing it about. It encompasses envisioning this desired end state and arranging a configuration of potential actions in time and space that will realize the end state. Planning is an essential element of command and control and the responsibility to plan is inherent in command. It is a truism that planning is half of command and control. The fundamental object of command and control is also the fundamental object of planning—to recognize what needs to be done in any situation and to ensure appropriate actions are taken. This requires commanders who can visualize what they want to happen, the effects they want to achieve, and how they will employ their forces to achieve their goals. They must be able to contemplate and evaluate potential decisions and courses of action in advance of taking action. The commander must be constantly aware of how much time a situation allows for planning and make the most of that available time. Whether planning is done deliberately or rapidly, the commander must display an acute awareness of the time available. All planning is time sensitive.

Planning can be viewed as a hierarchical continuum with three levels of planning—conceptual, functional, and detailed. All three levels are used at various times in the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP), such as the use of conceptual planning during mission analysis, functional planning during course of action development, and detailed planning during orders development.

While the commander is primarily involved at the conceptual level, he is an important participant throughout the planning process and must supervise his subordinate commanders and the staff in their efforts at the functional and detailed levels of planning. The commander's conceptual planning provides the basis for all planning performed by the staff. He must organize and train his staff to gather, manage, and process information essential to the commander's decisionmaking process. The size and capabilities of the staff depend on the level of command and the information and decisionmaking needs of the commander.

The MCPP is the vehicle the Marine Corps component or MAGTF commander and their staffs use to provide input to the joint planning process. It interfaces with the joint planning system during the supporting plan development phase in deliberate planning and during the situation development phase during joint crisis action planning. The Army's planning process closely resembles the MCPP, enabling close coordination in planning and execution among Marine Corps and Army forces assigned supporting missions or attached to the other Service. MAGTF planners must ensure that IO planning begins at the earliest stage of operation planning, is nested within the IO plans of the higher headquarters, and fully integrated into the MAGTF operations plan.

COMMANDER'S BATTLESPACE AREA EVALUATION

CBAE is the commander's personal vision based on his understanding of the mission, the battlespace, and the enemy. It is his visualization of what needs to be done and his first impressions of how he will go about doing it. He uses CBAE to articulate his initial view of the operational design. This visualization is used to transmit critical information to subordinate commanders and the staff and is the basis for the commander's planning and decisionmaking. It identifies the commander's battlespace, center of gravity and critical vulnerabilities, the commander's intent, and his critical information requirements. The staff normally assists the commander in preparing much of his CBAE, including battlespace appreciation, center of gravity analysis, and determining commander's critical information requirements. The G/S-2 is particularly helpful to the commander in determining possible enemy centers of gravity.

Analyze and Determine the Battlespace

As described in chapter 4, the commander's battlespace consists of his AO, area of influence, and area of interest. The commander analyzes his assigned AO, comparing the capabilities of his forces with the mission assigned to determine his area of influence. He then visualizes how he will use his forces within the battlespace to accomplish his mission. This visualization allows the commander

to recognize critical information requirements that will determine the extent of his area of interest.

The commander compares his AO to his area of influence to determine whether the AO's size and location will allow him to accomplish his mission. If the AO is too small to allow the commander to use all the assets of the MAGTF effectively to accomplish the mission, then he should request a larger AO be assigned. If he determines that the AO assigned is too large for his force or that it is not located to best accommodate the MAGTF, then he should request a new or modified AO, or additional forces, from his commander. Regardless of its size, the MAGTF commander must be able to command and control his forces throughout the assigned AO.

Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities

The commander continues to visualize what he must do and how he thinks he will use his force to accomplish that mission. An important aspect of the commander's visualization includes his analysis of centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities. This analysis, based on the expected enemy COA, assists the commander in visualizing the relative strengths and weaknesses of the enemy and friendly forces.

As discussed in MCDP 1, a center of gravity is an important source of strength. Both enemy and friendly forces have centers of gravity. Depending on the situation, centers of gravity may be intangible characteristics such as resolve or morale. They may be capabilities such as armored forces or aviation strength. They may be the cooperation between two arms, the relations in an alliance or a force occupying key terrain anchoring an entire defensive system. Employing friendly strengths or centers of gravity to directly attack the enemy's strength should be avoided whenever possible. Rather, the commander seeks to employ his strength against threat weaknesses. To accomplish this task, the commander must identify the enemy's critical vulnerabilities; i.e., vulnerabilities that permit destruction of a capability without which the enemy cannot function effectively. Attacking critical vulnerabilities may achieve effects that bend the enemy to the commander's will.

Critical vulnerabilities provide an aiming point for the application of friendly strengths against threat weaknesses. The commander directs his force's strength at those capabilities that are critical to the enemy's ability to function—to defend, attack or sustain himself or to command his forces. The commander focuses on those critical vulnerabilities that will bend the enemy to his will most quickly. He must establish a process to identify those capabilities that are vulnerable and whose destruction or disruption will achieve the desired results. Once identified,

critical vulnerabilities assist the commander in choosing where, when, and what will constitute decisive action. By attacking critical vulnerabilities, the commander increases the potential that the attack may in fact be the decisive action. Friendly critical vulnerabilities must also be identified to protect the friendly center of gravity from similar attack by the enemy.

The commander's analysis of centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities during CBAE may require refinement as more information about the enemy and the tactical situation becomes available. The commander will continue to refine his visualization of the battlespace and his mission, which may require him to modify or delete his current choice for centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities. Center of gravity and critical vulnerability analysis is an ongoing process and the commander's thinking on these items during CBAE may be radically altered during the remainder of the planning process and once the plan is executed.

Commander's Intent

The commander continues his CBAE by describing the interaction of the enemy, his own force and the battlespace over time and how he will achieve a decision that leads to the desired end state. He communicates this vision to his subordinates through the most important element of CBAE—commander's intent.

As described in MCDP 1, commander's intent is the commander's personal expression of the purpose of the operation. It must be clear, concise, and easily understood. It may also include how the commander envisions achieving a decision as well as the end state, conditions, or effects that, when satisfied or achieved, accomplish the purpose.

Commanders intent helps subordinates understand the larger context of their actions and guides them in the absence of orders. It allows subordinates to exercise judgment and initiative—in a way that is consistent with the higher commander's aims—when the unforeseen occurs. This freedom of action, within the broad guidance of the commander's intent, creates tempo during planning and execution.

Higher and subordinate commander's intent must be aligned. Commander's intent must be promulgated and clearly understood two levels down so that commander's intent and the resulting concepts of operation are "nested" to ensure unity of effort. Nested commander's intent ensures that while subordinates have the freedom to conduct their part of the operation as their situation dictates, the results of these disparate actions will contribute to achieving the higher commanders desired end state.

Commander's intent focuses on the enduring portion of any mission—the purpose of the operation—which continues to guide subordinates' actions, while the subordinates' tasks may change as the situation develops. As the commander proceeds through planning and his situational awareness grows, he may refine his intent. He may also include how he envisions achieving a decision—his method—as well as the end state that, when satisfied, accomplishes the purpose of the operation.

The commander's intent provides the overall purpose for accomplishing the task assigned through mission tactics. Although the situation may change, subordinates who clearly understand the purpose and act to accomplish that purpose can adapt to changing circumstances on their own without risking diffusion of effort or loss of tempo. Subordinate commanders will be able to carry on this mission on their own initiative and through lateral coordination with other units.

Commander's Critical Information Requirements

The commander's critical information requirements (CCIRs) identify information on friendly activities, enemy activities, and the environment that the commander deems critical to maintaining situational awareness, planning future activities, and assisting in timely and informed decisionmaking. Commanders use CCIRs to help them confirm their vision of the battlespace, assess desired effects, and how they will achieve a decision to accomplish their mission or to identify significant deviations from that vision.

Not all information requirements support the commander in decisionmaking. CCIRs must be linked to the critical decisions the commander anticipates making. They focus the commander's subordinate commanders and staff's planning and collection efforts. The number of CCIRs must be limited to only those that support the commander's critical decisions. Too many CCIRs diffuse focus.

CCIRs help the commander tailor his command and control organization. They are central to effective information management, which directs the processing, flow, and use of information throughout the force. While the staff can recommend CCIRs, only the commander can approve them. CCIRs are continually reviewed and updated to reflect the commander's concerns and the changing tactical situation.

CCIRs are normally divided into three subcategories: priority intelligence requirements, friendly force information requirements, and essential elements of friendly information. A priority intelligence requirement is an intelligence requirement associated with a decision that will critically affect the overall success of the command's mission. A friendly force information requirement is

information the commander needs about friendly forces to develop plans and make effective decisions. Depending on the circumstances, information on unit location, composition, readiness, personnel status, and logistic status could become a friendly force information requirement. An essential element of friendly information is a specific fact about friendly intentions, capabilities, and activities needed by adversaries to plan and execute effective operations against friendly forces.

COMMANDER'S GUIDANCE

Guidance and intent are distinctly different and cannot be used interchangeably. Commander's intent is the purpose of the operation and allows subordinates to exercise judgment and initiative when the unforeseen occurs. Commander's guidance provides preliminary decisions required to focus the planners on the commander's conceptual vision of the operation. The commander develops his commander's initial guidance using how he envisions planning and conducting the operation, his CBAE, his experience, and any information available from higher headquarters. This guidance provides his subordinate commanders and the staff with additional insight of what the force is to do and the resources that will be required to achieve the desired end state. It may be based on the warfighting functions or how the commander envisions the sequence of actions that will allow his force to achieve a decision. The commander may provide general guidance and specific points he wants the staff to consider, like a particular enemy capability, a certain task organization or constraints or restraints from higher headquarters. The commander should articulate those desired effects that will lead to mission accomplishment. This initial guidance is best transmitted to the subordinate commanders and the staff by the commander personally as it will set the direction for the initial planning and preparations and will contribute to establishing tempo in the operation.

Effects are the results of actions—both lethal and nonlethal—taken against the enemy that the commander must achieve to obtain a decision and accomplish his mission. The Marine Corps' warfighting philosophy of maneuver warfare calls for the synchronization of efforts—their arrangement in time, space, and purpose to maximize combat power—to achieve the desired effects on the enemy. Commanders focus combat power to maximize the convergence of effects in time and space at the decisive location and moment. Instead of relying on massed forces and sequential operations, the commander achieves desired effects through the tailored application of the MAGTF's combat power combined with joint combat power. The commander uses lethal and nonlethal means to obtain physical as well as psychological effects against the enemy commander.

There are two forms of effects: direct and indirect. Direct effects are the first-order consequence of a military action, such as the physical attack of an enemy unit or psychological operations to influence the enemy's will to resist. Indirect effects are second- and third-order consequences of military action, often delayed, such as the demoralization of other than the targeted units. Indirect effects can ripple through an enemy force, often influencing other elements of the enemy force physically or psychologically. If combat power is focused on key enemy capabilities and units at the proper place and time, the direct effects of this action may cause the cascade of indirect effects throughout the enemy force and lead to the breakdown of the enemy's will to resist.

Direct and indirect effects often spill over and create unintended consequences, usually in the form of injury or damage to persons or objects unrelated to the objective. Often these unintended consequences can benefit the commander as the effects of friendly actions compound and then cascade throughout the entire enemy force. Integrated planning by the commander includes considering risks of unintended second- and third-order consequences that may result in a negative outcome for friendly forces and noncombatants.

While estimating the outcome of direct and indirect effects can never be an exact process, it becomes increasingly difficult as effects continue to compound and cascade. The commander must consider the factors of METT-T when choosing the desired effect. He must focus on the combination of lethal and nonlethal actions that best accomplishes the desired effects. These effects should be articulated in terms of conditions and measures of effectiveness to facilitate assessment and should be included in the CCIRs. If the desired effect was not achieved, the action may need to be repeated or another method should be sought to achieve the effect.

MISSION

Commanders determine their missions through an analysis of the tasks assigned. This analysis will reveal the essential tasks, together with the purpose of the operation, that clearly indicate the actions required and the desired end state of the operation. The mission includes who, what, when, where, and why the task is to be accomplished.

There are two parts to any mission: the task to be accomplished and the reason or intent behind it. The task describes the action to be taken while the intent describes the purpose of the action. The task denotes what is to be done, and sometimes when and where; the intent explains why. Tasks can be either specified or implied.

Specified tasks are specifically assigned to a unit by its higher headquarters. They are derived primarily from the mission and execution paragraphs of the higher headquarters operation order but may be found elsewhere, such as in the coordinating instructions or annexes.

Implied tasks are not explicitly stated in the higher headquarters order but should be performed to accomplish specified tasks. Implied tasks emerge from analysis of the higher headquarters order, the threat, and the terrain. Routine or continuing tasks are not included in implied tasks.

Essential tasks are those specified or implied tasks that define mission success and apply to the force as a whole. If a task must be successfully completed for the commander to accomplish his purpose, it is an essential task. Once they have been identified as essential tasks, they form the basis of the mission statement.

Tasks normally include a desired end state, which helps the subordinate to more fully understand the purpose of the task and to allow him to make an informed deviation from the stated task if the situation warrants. A task may also have pre-determined conditions that when satisfied tells a subordinate when the desired end state has been reached. End state and conditions help the commander to measure the effectiveness of his subordinate's actions in achieving a decision and accomplishing the mission. See appendix C.

Mission tactics is the assignment of a mission to a subordinate without specifying how the mission must be accomplished. It is a key tenet of maneuver warfare. The higher commander describes the mission and explains its purpose. The subordinate commander determines the tactics needed to accomplish the task based on the mission and the higher commander's intent. Each leader can act quickly as the situation changes without passing information up the chain of command and waiting for orders to come back down.

At the conclusion of mission analysis the commander issues his commander's planning guidance. Planning guidance may be either broad or very detailed depending on the commander and the time and information available. Whatever the nature of this guidance, it must convey the essence of the commander's vision. This guidance should include the commander's vision of decisive and shaping actions and desired effects on the enemy. This assists the staff in applying the elements of the battlefield framework in developing courses of action. The commander's planning guidance may also include phases of the operation, targeting guidance, location and timing of critical events and other aspects of the operations the commander considers important. The commander's planning guidance assists the staff in developing and wargaming courses of action and other planning activities.

Decisive Action

The purpose of all military operations is mission success. Decisive action achieves mission success with the least loss of time, equipment and, most importantly, lives. It causes a favorable change in the situation or causes the threat to change or cease planned and current activities. When a commander seeks battle, he seeks victory: accomplishment of the assigned mission that leads to further significant gains for the force as a whole. Tactical battles are planned for their overall operational and strategic effect. Consequences of a tactical engagement should lead to achieving operational and strategic goals. The goal is not just for the MAGTF commander to achieve a decision, but to ensure that decision has greater meaning by contributing to the success of his senior commander's operation or campaign. For an action to be truly decisive, it must lead to a result larger than the action itself. Decisive action creates an environment where the enemy has either lost the physical capability or his will to resist. Forcing the enemy to reach a culminating point could be a decisive action by a defending force. A culminating point is that point in time and space where an attacker's combat power no longer exceeds that of the defender and/or an attacker's momentum can no longer be sustained. A culminating point for a defender is that point in time when a defender must withdraw to preserve his force.

Decisive action may occur anywhere and at any time in the single battle. Any of the MAGTF's three major subordinate commands can achieve a decision. The ACE and the GCE normally achieve a decision through combat. The CSSE may be called upon to achieve a decision in MOOTW; e.g., humanitarian assistance. The commander considers the following in planning decisive action:

- What are the enemy's intentions?
- What are the centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities?
- What is the battlespace and is it appropriate to the MAGTF's capabilities?
- What are the effects necessary to achieve a decision?
- Are the command relationships appropriate to the mission and battlespace?
- Have proper missions been assigned to the main effort, supporting efforts, and the reserve?
- How to synchronize the actions of the major subordinate commands?
- Does the MAGTF have the resources to accomplish the mission within the battlespace assigned?
- Have the MAGTF's resources been allocated and apportioned properly?
- Can the MAGTF be sustained in its effort to achieve a decision?

- Can the MAGTF accomplish the mission without reaching a culminating point?
- How does the MAGTF commander recognize whether the MAGTF succeeded in executing the plan?
- How does the commander assess success and whether changes must be made?

Decisive action at the MAGTF level involves more than just fire and maneuver. The MAGTF commander arranges a series of battles or engagements to achieve a decision. The commander arranges the actions of the MAGTF in terms of time, space, and resources to generate combat power at the decisive time and place.

Shaping Actions

The MAGTF commander sets the conditions for decisive action by conducting shaping actions to achieve desired effects. Shaping is all lethal and nonlethal activities conducted throughout the battlespace to influence a threat capability, force or the enemy commander's decision. The commander shapes the battlespace principally by creating conditions to protect friendly critical vulnerabilities and attack enemy critical vulnerabilities. In many cases, the MAGTF can achieve much of its own shaping. The objective of shaping actions might include—

- Limit enemy freedom of action.
- Deny the enemy the capability to concentrate forces.
- Deceive the enemy as to friendly intentions.
- Destroy enemy capabilities.
- Alter the tempo of operations.
- Gain and maintain momentum.
- Influence perceptions of the enemy, allies, and noncombatants.

Shaping can have a favorable impact on friendly forces. The sense of being on the offensive and taking the fight to the enemy helps to maintain morale and foster offensive spirit for later decisive actions. Shaping incorporates a wide array of functions and capabilities to achieve desired effects and is more than just fires and targeting. It may include, but is not limited to, direct attack, psychological operations, electronic warfare, deception, civil affairs, information management, public affairs, engineer operations, and preventive medical services. Logistics operations, such as the marshalling of critical ammunition, fuel, and supplies to facilitate future operations, shape both friendly and threat forces.

Shaping makes the enemy vulnerable to attack, impedes or diverts his attempts to maneuver, aids the MAGTF's maneuver, and otherwise dictates the time and place for decisive action. It forces the enemy to abandon their course of action and adopt a course of action favorable to the MAGTF. Shaping actions must be relevant to the envisioned decisive action. The commander attempts to shape events in a way that allows him several options, so that by the time the moment for decisive action arrives, he is not restricted to only one course of action. The goal of shaping is to eliminate the enemy's capability to fight effectively before the MAGTF initiates decisive action. As stated in MCDP 5, ideally, when the decisive moment arrives, the issue has been resolved. Our actions leading to this point have so shaped the conditions that the result is a matter of course.

BATTLEFIELD FRAMEWORK

This framework describes how the commander will organize his battlespace and his forces to achieve a decision. The battlefield framework consists of the battlespace organization of envisioned deep, close, and rear tactical operations as well as the organization of the force into the main effort, reserve, and security. Supporting efforts are addressed in the context of deep, close, and rear operations as part of the single battle. The battlefield framework provides the commander and his staff with an organized way to ensure that they consider in planning and execution all essential elements of successful military operations.

INTEGRATED PLANNING

Integrated planning is a disciplined approach that is systematic, coordinated, and thorough. It uses the warfighting functions to integrate the planning and supervise execution. Planners use integrated planning to consider all relevant factors, reduce omissions, and share information across the warfighting functions.

Integrated planning is essential to eliminate "stove pipe" planning when individual planners, staff sections, and functional areas plan in a vacuum, without coordination with others. This approach often results in disjointed plans and execution that is not synchronized. Staffs will produce more useful operation plans and orders and commanders will realize more synchronized operations across the elements of the MAGTF with increased tempo.

The warfighting functions are used extensively in integrated planning. Commanders and staffs use warfighting functions as a planning framework. Their use ensures that the commander and his planners consider all critical functional areas when planning and making decisions. Warfighting functions are planning and execution tools used by planners and subject matter experts in each of the

functional areas to produce comprehensive plans that are integrated with the other warfighting functions. This integration of the planning effort helps the commander to achieve unity of effort.

SINGLE BATTLE

The MAGTF commander conducts operations within the context of the single battle. Single battle allows the commander to effectively focus the efforts of all MAGTF elements of the force to accomplish his mission. Within the single battle, the commander conducts centralized planning while fostering decentralized execution allowing subordinates to exercise disciplined initiative and exploit opportunities. Centralized planning is essential for controlling and coordinating the efforts of all available forces. Decentralized execution is essential to generate the tempo of operations required and to cope with the uncertainty, disorder, and fluidity of combat.

A commander must always view his AO as an indivisible entity. Operations or events in one part of the AO may have profound and often unintended effects on other areas and events. While the AO may be conceptually divided to assist centralized planning and decentralized execution, the commander's intent ensures unity of effort by fighting a single battle. The asymmetrical nature of the MAGTF elements makes this particularly critical to the success of the MAGTF's operations. See figure 6-4.

Under single battle, the AO consists of three major areas—deep, close, and rear—where distinctly different operations are performed. These operations are not necessarily restricted to or characterized by distance or location in the AO. They are functional actions that must be accomplished for other functions to be effective. The MAGTF does not merely divide the battlespace up with the ACE taking the deep, the GCE taking the close, and the CSSE taking the rear area. The MAGTF commander is in charge and is responsible for the entire battle. To synchronize actions within the single battle, the commander must determine what, where, when, and how to apply the warfighting functions.

While the MAGTF commander desires to defeat the enemy in a single battle or engagement, it may be beyond the capabilities of the MAGTF to achieve this. Thus, MAGTF operations may need to be phased. All actions and phases must be connected and focused on achieving a decision. This arrangement of forces in time and space to generate sufficient combat power to achieve a decision is the result of detailed and integrated planning.

Deep Operations

Deep operations shape the battlespace to influence future operations. They seek to create windows of opportunity for decisive action, restrict the enemy's freedom of action, and disrupt the cohesion and tempo of his operations. Deep operations help the commander seize the initiative and set the conditions for close operations. Because of its operational reach, deep operations are primarily conducted by the ACE, although the GCE and CSSE may play significant roles. MAGTF intelligence assets; e.g., force reconnaissance and signals intelligence and ACE and GCE surveillance and reconnaissance assets (UAVs and ground surveillance radars) contribute to the conduct of deep operations.

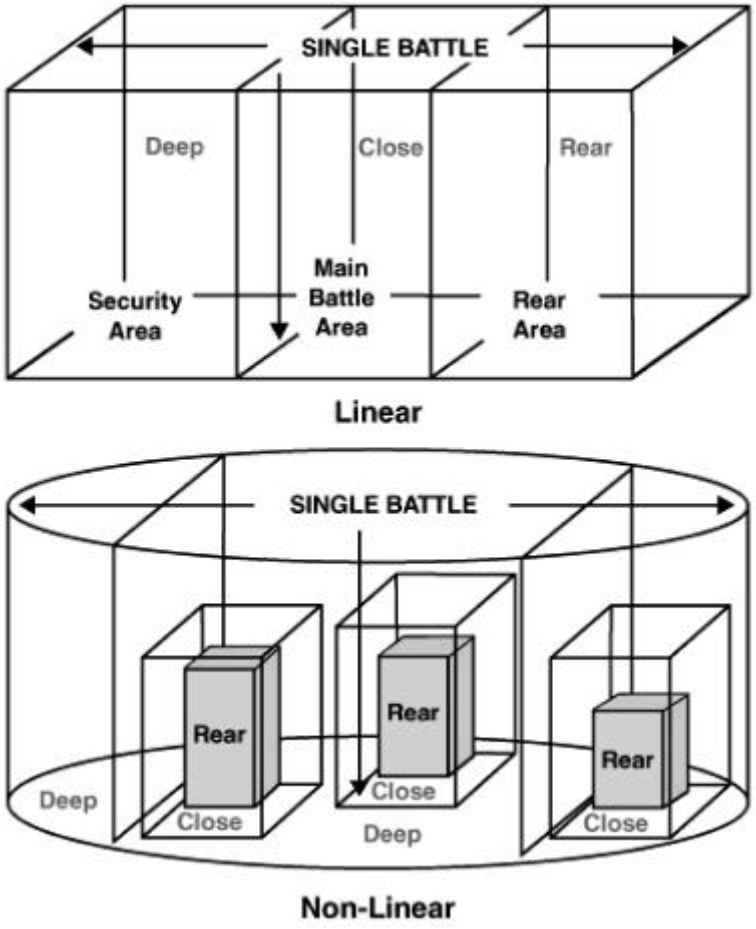


Figure 6-4. Single Battle.

The commander focuses on attacking enemy capabilities—moral and physical—that most directly contribute to the accomplishment of his mission. Deep operations should exploit or create these critical enemy vulnerabilities. Deep operations normally focus on the enemy's follow-on and supporting forces, command and control nodes, and key lines of communications or facilities. Deep operations may require coordination and integration with national-level assets and joint forces. They may include—

- Interdiction through fires and maneuver.
- Surveillance, reconnaissance, and target acquisition.
- IO such as deception or psychological operations.
- Offensive antiair warfare.

Close Operations

Close operations project power against enemy forces in immediate contact and are often the decisive actions. These operations require speed and mobility to rapidly concentrate overwhelming combat power at the critical time and place and exploit success. Close operations are dominated by fire and maneuver conducted by combined arms forces from the GCE and the ACE. Combined arms forces maneuver to enhance the effects of their fires and fire to enhance their ability to maneuver. As they maneuver to gain positions of advantage over the enemy, combined arms forces deliver fires to disrupt the enemy's ability to interfere with that maneuver. Commanders prioritize fires to weight the main effort and to focus combat power to achieve effects that lead to a decision. The effects of fires can be massed to strike the enemy at the decisive point and time, while reducing the risks to the force entailed in massing maneuver forces at a single point or in a single portion of the battlespace.

Rear Operations

Rear operations support deep and close operations and facilitate future operations. Security is inherent in rear operations. Sustainment must not be interrupted and assets must be protected. Rear operations ensure the freedom of action of the force and provide continuity of operations, logistics, and command and control. Rear area operations deny the use of the rear area to the enemy. To minimize the logistical footprint, rear operations may require the maximum use of sea-basing, push logistics, host-nation support, and existing infrastructure. Rear operations are conducted by all MAGTF elements.

Rear area operations are evolutionary in nature. As the operation progresses, the geographic location, command and control structure, and the organization of the

rear area can be expected to change. The broad functions of rear area operations, as delineated in joint and Marine Corps doctrine, include—

- Communications.
- Intelligence.
- Sustainment.
- Security.
- Movement.
- Area management.
- Infrastructure development.
- Host-nation support.

To provide command and control of rear area operations, the commander may assign a rear area coordinator or commander with specific, designated functions. He usually establishes a rear area operations center to assist in the conduct and coordination of those functions of rear area operations assigned. For more information, see MCWP 3-41.1, *Rear Area Operations*.

Noncontiguous and Contiguous

The battlefield framework may reflect linear operations where there is a continuous and contiguous array of units across the AO and through the depth of the deep, close, and rear areas. A more likely situation is one where the MAGTF conducts nonlinear operations within a noncontiguous battlespace and within an operational framework with noncontiguous deep, close, and rear areas. Operation Restore Hope in Somalia (1992–1993) is an example of a battlefield framework with noncontiguous areas. The MAGTF's rear area was centered around the separate sites of the embassy compound, port, and airfield in the city of Mogadishu, while its close area was widely scattered around the towns and villages of the interior that were occupied by the MAGTF. The MAGTF's deep area included the rest of the country and particularly those population and relief centers not under the joint force commander's supervision.

The MAGTF commander must be well versed in the capabilities and limitations of his forces and their role in deep, close, and rear operations to conduct the single battle. He must consider that there may be deep, close, and rear operations at every level of command. For example, a subordinate commander's deep operations may constitute part of the higher commander's close operations. See figure 6-5 on page 6-24.

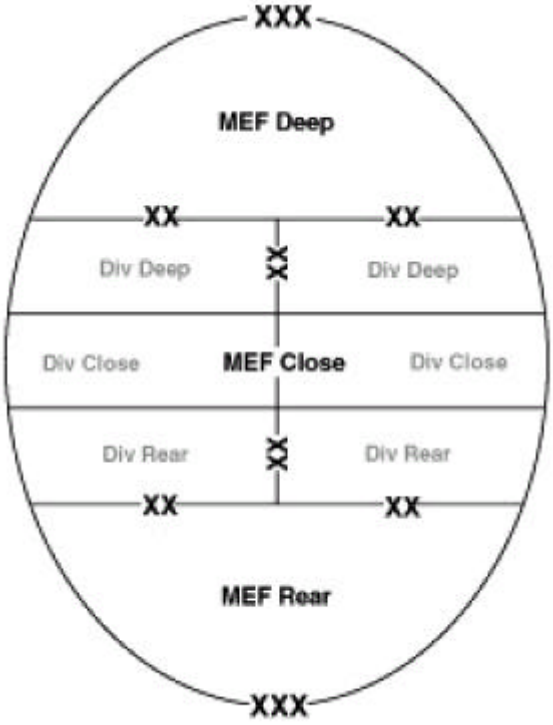


Figure 6-5. Battlespace Organization.

By conceptually dividing the AO and using the warfighting functions to conduct integrated planning for each area, the commander ensures the coordination of his forces in executing the single battle. It is important to remember that the enemy's disposition and actions will seldom coincide with how the Marine commander has organized his AO. Therefore, the commander's planning and execution must be flexible enough to accommodate this difference and exploit resulting opportunities.

MAIN AND SUPPORTING EFFORTS

The main effort is a central concept of maneuver warfare. It calls for concentrating efforts on achieving objectives that lead to victory. The main effort is that unit assigned to accomplish the mission or task critical to mission success. *The main effort normally is that unit with which the commander plans to conduct the decisive action and it should be selected, reinforced, and supported accordingly*. The commander assigns the main effort to a specifically designated subordinate unit.

The commander focuses the combat power of the force against enemy critical vulnerabilities in a bold bid to achieve decisive results. The main effort may be viewed as a harmonizing force for subordinate's initiative.

The main effort may be from any MAGTF element or force assigned. MCDP 1-3 says the commander provides the bulk of his combat power or other assets to the main effort to maintain momentum and ensure accomplishment of the mission. These assets may include not only maneuver forces but also capabilities that enhance the main effort's ability to accomplish its mission. The commander normally gives the main effort priority of various types of support. It is also provided with the greatest mobility and the preponderance of combat support and combat service support. However, overburdening the main effort with unnecessary assets can degrade its ability to move rapidly and decisively. The reserve is positioned to best exploit the main effort's success.

The commander may concentrate the combat power of the main effort by assigning it a narrower zone of action or reducing its AO. In summary, the commander weights the main effort by task-organizing his force or by providing priority of—

- Air support.
- Fire support assets.
- Transportation and mobility assets such as heavy equipment transporters, assault support helicopters, bridging, and obstacle clearing engineer support.
- Combat service support to preclude the main effort from reaching the culminating point prematurely. This support might include mobile CSSEs, critical supplies like fuel and ammunition, and exchange or rapid repair of essential equipment.
- Specialized units or capabilities, such as civil affairs or psychological operations units during MOOTW.
- Personnel replacements.
- Command and control support.
- Intelligence support.

The commander disguises the main effort until it is too late for the enemy to react to it in strength. He accomplishes this through demonstrations and feints, security, cover and concealment, and by dispersing his forces until the last instant and achieving mass at the critical time and place.

Supporting efforts help shape the battlespace in support of the main effort's envisioned decisive action. Faced with a decision, commanders of supporting

efforts must ask themselves how can I best support the main effort? Conversely, they must avoid actions that do not contribute to the success of the main effort. There may be more than one supporting effort in support of the main effort.

Massing of combat power to support the main effort may require time and additional transportation assets to marshal the necessary support. Task organization of supporting units may also be required to provide responsive and flexible support.

Commanders apply the principle of economy of force to supporting efforts. They make effective use of available assets needed to support the main effort, while conserving others for future actions. MCDP 1-3 states that forces not in a position to directly support the main effort should be used to indirectly support it. For example, a commander may use other forces to deceive the enemy as to the location of the main effort. Such forces might be used to distract the enemy or to tie down enemy forces that might otherwise reinforce the threatened point. The commander weighs the value of the deception against the cost in terms of forces and assets needed to portray a credible force. Uncommitted forces can be used in this effort by maneuvering them in feints and demonstrations that keep the enemy off balance.

The reserve may be tasked to support the main effort and often will become the main effort when employed. It is important for the commander to ensure that the reserve is not assigned nonessential tasks that degrade its ability to respond rapidly to fleeting opportunities created by the main effort or to reinforce the main effort at the decisive time and place.

While a commander always designates a main effort, it may shift—either planned or unplanned—during the course of a battle as events unfold. Because events and the enemy are unpredictable, few battles flow exactly as the commander has planned. A supporting effort may achieve unexpected success during execution. As a result, the commander must make adjustments. After assessing the changing situation, he may designate the supporting effort as the main effort. Commanders of supporting efforts must be prepared to assume the role of the main effort as the situation changes as a result of emerging opportunities or unforeseen setbacks.

There may be costs in shifting the main effort. The larger the organization, the more costly this shift may be. The costs include the time and effort to shift resources and priority of support (fires, supply, transportation, medical, engineering). The commander must weigh the benefits and costs for shifting the main effort. He should only shift the main effort when he is convinced this will lead to decisive action.

The flexibility inherent in Marine aviation allows the commander to shift the main effort to the ACE rapidly and usually with significantly less repositioning of resources than other forces of the MAGTF. Normally the greatest impact on the ACE is that the new tasks resulting from the shift of the main effort may not be performed as timely or with the optimum combination of forces and ordnance as the previously planned tasks. Forces may be required to reorganize and plan new missions or to redirect previously planned missions designed to attack specific targets against new targets.

To conduct decisive actions and to weight the main effort sufficiently so that he can achieve a decision, the commander must organize his assigned and attached forces for specific missions and tasks. This process of allocating available assets to subordinate commanders and establishing appropriate command and supporting relations is called task-organizing. The grouping of forces or units to accomplish a specific mission or task is task organization. Marine Corps forces are task-organized routinely and are used to operate in task forces to accomplish specific missions and then rapidly resume their duties with their parent command. While taking advantage of the close coordination and cooperation realized by units with habitual relations with other units; e.g., Marine artillery units habitually support certain infantry regiments, these forces are agile enough to assume a new supporting relationship or attachment to a different unit.

The ability to rapidly tailor Marine Corps forces through task organization to accomplish a wide array of missions or tasks allows the commander to effectively and efficiently use the forces and assets available to him. It is incumbent on the commander to understand the capabilities and limitations of the forces available to develop the best possible task organizations. He must also realize that the creation of a task-organized force will take some time and may have an affect on his forces' tempo. Frequent or gratuitous task-organizing may actually reduce the effectiveness of the force.

THE RESERVE

The reserve is an essential tool used by the commander to exploit success. The reserve is part of the commander's combat power initially withheld from action in order to influence future action and deal with emerging opportunities or a crisis. The reserve provides the commander the flexibility to react to unforeseen developments. Often a commander's most difficult and important decision concerns the time, place, and circumstances for committing the reserve. While the commander sometimes must employ his reserve to deal with a crisis, he should always attempt to use the reserve to reinforce success and exploit opportunities to achieve a decision. The commander uses his reserve to restore

momentum to a stalled attack, defeat enemy counterattacks, and exploit success. Once committed, the reserve's actions normally become the decisive operation. Every effort is made to reconstitute another reserve from units made available by the revised situation. Since the reserve is often the commander's bid to achieve a decision, it is usually designated the main effort when committed. The reserve is not to be used as a follow and support force or a follow and assume force.

The reserve should be as strong a force as possible with appropriate mobility and firepower. Its strength and location will vary with its contemplated mission, the form of maneuver, the terrain, the possible enemy reaction, and the clarity of the situation. The commander should organize, equip, and rehearse the reserve for the intended mission. He should not constitute his reserve by weakening his decisive operation. A reserve must have mobility equal to or greater than the most dangerous enemy threat, and it must be able to fight the most dangerous enemy threat. The more uncertain the situation, the larger should be the reserve. When the situation is obscure, the reserve may consist initially of the bulk of the force, centrally located and prepared to be employed at any point. The commander only needs to provide a small reserve to respond to unanticipated enemy reactions when he has detailed information about the enemy. However, the reserve must always be sufficient to exploit success.

The commander must also consider intangible factors when selecting and tasking a reserve, including the proficiency, leadership, morale, fatigue and combat losses, and maintenance and supply status of the unit. Care is taken in the positioning of the reserve to balance force protection requirements with the imperative to best position the reserve to enhance its ability to exploit opportunities. When committed, the reserve—as the main effort—receives priority for resources and services.

SECURITY

Security is inherent in all MATGF operations and includes those measures taken by a military unit, an activity, or installation to protect itself against all acts designed to, or which may, impair its effectiveness. See chapter 11. Security operations are an element of overall force protection measures that must be conducted in all operations, whether offense or defense. Sound security operations are based on—

- **Orientation.** Security forces position themselves between the main force and the enemy. Security elements depend on the movement of the main force. The operations of the security force must be closely coordinated with the concept of operations.

- **Reconnaissance.** Security forces conduct reconnaissance, which seeks to reduce unknowns for the commander. The security force reduces the chance of surprise to friendly forces.
- **Early and Accurate Warning.** Unless warning of an enemy threat reaches the commander in time for him to react, the warning is useless. An erroneous warning may be as detrimental as no warning as all.
- **Reaction Time and Maneuver Space.** The security force gives the commander the time and space to counteract an enemy threat. A security force executes its mission to the greatest depth possible based on its capabilities and the tactical situation.
- **Gain and Maintain Contact.** Security forces seek to gain contact with the enemy as early as possible. Based on the assigned mission and the capabilities of the security force, contact may vary from observation to combat. Contact is normally not broken off without permission from higher headquarters because accurate information about the enemy's location, disposition, and movement prevents surprise by the enemy. However, the requirement to maintain contact must be balanced with the friendly concept of operations.
- **Conduct Counterreconnaissance.** Counterreconnaissance is an important aspect of all security operations. It is all measures taken to prevent hostile observation of a force, area or place.
- **Mobility.** Security forces normally require mobility equal or greater than that of the enemy. In mountains, dense forests or built up urban areas, dismounted lighter forces may have greater relative mobility than mechanized forces. The inherent mobility of the ACE provides the MAGTF with an ideal force for the conduct of selected security operations.

PHASING

Phasing assists the commander and staff in planning and executing operations. The commander uses phasing to divide his vision for how he intends to accomplish his mission into portions that reflect the requirement to perform a major task to achieve a decision. A change in phase usually involves a change of a major task. I MEF offensive operations during Operation Desert Storm (1991) was conducted using the following phases:

- **Phase I.** Strategic air operations to attain air supremacy, attack Iraqi warmaking infrastructure, and destroy the Republican Guard.
- **Phase II.** Attainment of air supremacy in the Kuwait theater of operations and the suppression of the Iraqi integrated air defense system.

- **Phase III.** Preparation of the battlespace to reduce the combat effectiveness of the enemy in the Kuwait theater of operations, specifically the reduction of Iraqi armor and artillery by 50 percent and FROG (free rocket over ground) missiles and multiple rocket launchers by 100 percent.
- **Phase IV.** Ground offensive operations.

Commanders should establish clear conditions for the initiation and termination of each phase. While phases are distinguishable by friendly forces, they should not be readily apparent to the enemy. The commander should take whatever actions necessary to conceal from the enemy the distinctions and, most especially, the transitions between phases.

Phases may be further subdivided into stages to provide greater detail in planning and enhance control and coordination in execution. I MEF's Phase IV ground offensive operations consisted of—

- **Stage A.** Penetration of forward Iraqi defenses.
- **Stage B.** Exploit the success of the penetration to destroy Iraqi forces in zone.
- **Stage C.** Consolidate to prevent reinforcement or escape of Iraqi forces in zone.

Phases and stages should be aligned as closely as possible with those adopted by higher headquarters to reduce confusion during transition from one phase or stage to another and to enhance coordinated efforts.

OPERATION PLANS AND ORDERS

Operation plans and orders communicate the commander's intent, guidance, and decisions in a clear, useful, and timely form. They should be easily understood by those who must execute the order. Operation plans and orders should only contain critical or new information—not routine information and procedures normally found in standing operating procedures.

Plans and orders should be the product of integrated planning to eliminate stovepiping of information. Critical information, such as the mission, commander's intent, and tactical tasking should be prominently positioned in the basic order. Concepts of maneuver, fires, and support should also be in the basic order. Planners need to reconcile plans and orders to ensure all critical information is presented. Comparison or "crosswalking" of the plan or order with those of higher, adjacent, and subordinate commands help to identify conflicts or omissions and achieve unity of effort. The operation plan or order is the source of

authority on the operation, *not* briefing slides and e-mail messages. Chiefs of staff must maintain close control over versions and changes to the plan or order to ensure unauthorized changes do not get promulgated and that the approved version is properly disseminated.

TRANSITIONING BETWEEN PLANNING AND EXECUTION

The actions of the commander and the staff during the transition from planning to execution may be of critical importance in accomplishing the mission. Transition ensures a successful shift from planning to execution. It enhances the situational awareness of those who must execute the plan, maintains the intent of the concept of operations, promotes unity of effort, and generates tempo. Transition facilitates the synchronization of plans between higher and subordinate commands and aids in integrated planning by ensuring the synchronization of the warfighting functions. At the MAGTF level (where the planners may not be the executors), transition provides a full understanding of the plan to those who were not involved in its development.

Transition occurs at all levels of command. A formal transition normally occurs on staffs with separate planning and execution teams. Planning time and personnel may be limited at lower levels of command, such as the regiment, aircraft group, or below. Therefore, transition may take place intuitively as the planners are also the executors. Transition may be accomplished through the assignment of a plan proponent—a planner who aids the executors in interpreting and applying the plan in action—and through participation in transition briefs, drills, and a confirmation brief. Confirmation briefs are a particularly valuable technique to ensure synchronization or nesting of higher, adjacent, and subordinate command's plans.

EXECUTION

Execution of MAGTF operations is the concerted action of the commander and his forces to conduct operations based on the operation plan or order, modified as the current tactical situation dictates, to achieve the commander's end state and accomplish the mission. The commander and his forces must seize and retain the initiative, create overwhelming tempo, establish and maintain momentum, achieve desired effects, exploit success, and successfully finish the operation. He commands the activities of his various subordinate units and assesses the success of those activities in obtaining the goals of the operation.

The commander, assisted by his deputy commander and the staff, must control or coordinate the activities of all of the MAGTF elements. These activities include

the movement and maneuver of the force, coordination and control of fires, collection of intelligence, sustainment and protection of the force, and assessment of these activities to determine the progress of the command in achieving the desired end state. He must command the force and supervise the activities of his subordinate commanders in carrying out his mission and intent.

Command and Control

MCDP 6 states that no single activity in war is more important than command and control. It is the means by which the commander recognizes what needs to be done and sees to it that appropriate actions are taken. Command and control provides purpose and direction to the varied activities of a military unit. If done well, command and control adds to the strength of the force—if done poorly, it may be a liability to the force.

JP 1-02 defines command as the authority that a commander in the Armed Forces lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources and for planning the employment of, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling military forces for the accomplishment of assigned missions. The commander must effectively command the activities of his subordinate commanders during operations. His span of control should not exceed his capability to effectively command.

Command in battle incorporates two vital skills—the ability to decide and the ability to lead. They integrate a commander's vision of the situation and battlespace and how he plans to achieve his desired end state with leading, guiding, and motivating subordinates. These two skills are tightly interwoven and are the central factors from which the warfighting functions are integrated to create combat power and conduct expeditionary maneuver warfare.

Leadership is the influencing of people to work toward the accomplishment of a common objective and is essential to effective command. While the component, MAGTF, and major subordinate command commanders exercise leadership by visualizing and describing how the operation will be conducted, commanders at lower levels accomplish the goals of the operation by motivating and directing the actions of their units.

The ability to command and control an organization is enhanced when the commander decentralizes decisionmaking authority as much as each situation allows. This means that commanders on the scene and closest to the events have the latitude to deal with the situation as required *on their own authority*—but always in accordance with the higher commander's intent. Decentralization

speeds up reaction time: the commander does not have to wait for information to flow up to a higher commander and orders to flow back down. Confidence in the abilities of subordinates is an important part in decentralization. Leaders who have confidence in their subordinates will feel more comfortable in granting them greater latitude in accomplishing tasks. It fosters a climate where senior leaders know that their intent will be carried out.

Control can generally be divided into two types: centralized and decentralized. Centralized control tends to work from the top down: the commander determines what his subordinates will and will not do. Decentralized control works from the bottom up. While cooperation is required for both types of control, it is essential in decentralized control. Subordinates work together laterally and from the bottom up to accomplish tasks that fulfill the commander's intent.

Battle rhythm is an important aspect of command and control. The commander must ensure that the planning, decision, and operating cycles of his command are nested or linked to that of his higher headquarters and that his subordinate commanders synchronize their battle rhythms with his headquarters. Ensuring information and requests for support are forwarded to higher headquarters in time for that headquarters to act increases the likelihood that the command will obtain the desired support or effects. Some of the planning, decision, and operating cycles that influence the battle rhythm of the command include the intelligence collection cycle, targeting cycle, air tasking order cycle, reconnaissance tasking cycle, and the battle damage assessment collection cycle.

Effective decisionmaking is essential to command and control. Commanders develop information management processes to ensure access to timely and useful information to make decisions. Information management is the processes and techniques the command uses to obtain, manipulate, direct, control, and safeguard information. Sound information management practices facilitates the rapid, distributed, and unconstrained flow of information in all directions—to higher headquarters, adjacent units, and subordinate commanders. Information management policies and procedures enable the staff to determine the importance, quality, and timeliness of information to provide the commander with focused information to prevent information overload.

Assessment

Assessment is the continuous appraisal of military operations to determine progress toward established goals. It answers the commander's question *"How are we doing?"* It helps the commander recognize whether his planned activities are achieving their desired effects and whether he has to modify or cease those activities to achieve his desired end state. Assessment is continuous and is

focused on the overall effectiveness of the command in achieving the commander's goals. Assessment is the basis for the commander's decisions concerning future actions. It allows him to rapidly act to exploit unexpected success or opportunity and to counter unanticipated enemy success.

Successful assessment requires a commander who can clearly and accurately visualize the battlespace and the operation. It requires situational awareness on the part of the commander that allows him to recognize the difference between the desired effects and the actual effects of the operation. This perceived difference between what was planned and what actually happened then becomes the catalyst for decisionmaking.

Commanders assess their operation's effectiveness by measuring how successful they have been in completing the tasks stated or inherent in their mission. They determine if operations have met the conditions previously established that support an upcoming decision by the commander or if the task has been completed. Conditions should be linked to the purpose of the task and be understandable, relevant, and measurable. Since some conditions are necessarily complex, commanders and their staffs may also use measures of effectiveness to further describe those conditions that must be met before a task is completed or a new phase of the operation can commence. Measures of effectiveness are indicators that demonstrate the degree to which a condition has been satisfied. They provide the commander with a tangible indicator of how close he is to achieving his desired conditions.

The intelligence collection effort, as well as the overall combat reporting process in the force, must focus on providing timely and useful information to the commander to aid him in his assessment of operations. The fulfillment of CCIRs and priority intelligence requirements will often be critical in determining whether the task has been completed and the conditions exist to support transition from one phase of the operation to another. While assessment routinely takes place throughout the planning, deployment, and redeployment phases of an operation it is truly essential during execution.

TACTICAL TENETS

Actions at the tactical level of war are the building blocks the MAGTF commander uses to achieve operational success and fulfill the joint force commander's operational goals. Every action the MAGTF commander and the major subordinate element commanders take is aimed at achieving the senior commander's goals and accomplishing their mission. The tactical level of war is the province of combat. It includes the maneuver of forces to gain a fighting