

commander who understands his mission and his higher commander's intent can continue contributing to his higher commander's mission.

An encircled force acts rapidly to preserve itself. The senior commander assumes control of all encircled elements and assesses the all-around defensive posture of the force. He decides whether the next higher commander wants the force to break out or to defend its position. He reorganizes and consolidates expeditiously. If the force is free to break out, it should do so before the enemy has time to block escape routes. Breaking out might mean movement of the entire encircled force, where one part is attacking and the other defending. The entire formation moves through planned escape routes created by the attacking force. If the force cannot break out, the senior commander continues to defend while planning for and assisting in a linkup with a relieving force.

Reserves preserve the commander's flexibility and provide the offensive capability of the defense. They provide the source of combat power that commanders can commit at the decisive moment. The reserve must have the mobility and striking power required to quickly isolate and defeat breakthroughs and flanking attempts. It must be able to seize and exploit fleeting opportunities in a powerful manner to throw the enemy's overall offensive off balance. The commander must organize his reserve so it can repeatedly attack, regroup, move, and attack again. Commanders may use reserves to counterattack the enemy's main effort to expedite his defeat, or they may elect to exploit enemy vulnerabilities, such as exposed flanks or support units and unprotected forces in depth. Reserves also provide a hedge against uncertainty. Reserves may reinforce forward defensive operations, block penetrating enemy forces, conduct counterattacks, or react to a rear area threat. Reserves must have multiple counterattack routes and plans that anticipate enemy's scheme of maneuver.

Helicopterborne forces can respond rapidly as reserves. On suitable terrain, they can reinforce positions to the front or on a flank. In a threatened sector, they are positioned in depth and can respond to tactical emergencies. These forces are also suitable for swift attack against enemy airborne units landing in the rear area; once committed, however, they have limited mobility.

Timing is critical to counterattacks. Commanders anticipate the circumstances that require committing the reserves. At that moment, they seek to wrest the initiative from the attacker. Commanders commit their reserves with an accurate understanding of movement and deployment times. Committed too soon, reserves may not have the desired effect or may not be available later for a more dangerous contingency. Committed too late, they may be ineffective. Once commanders

commit their reserves, they should immediately begin regenerating another reserve from uncommitted forces or from forces in less threatened sectors.

During battle, protection of rear areas is necessary to ensure the defender's freedom of maneuver and continuity of operations. Because fighting in the rear area can divert combat power from the main effort, commanders carefully weigh the need for such diversions against the possible consequences and prepare to take calculated risks in rear areas. To make such decisions wisely, commanders require accurate information to avoid late or inadequate responses and to guard against overreacting to exaggerated reports.

Threats to the rear area arise throughout the battle and require the repositioning of forces and facilities. When possible, defending commanders contain enemy forces in their rear areas, using a combination of passive and active defensive measures. While commanders can never lose focus on their primary objectives, they assess risks throughout their battlespace and commit combat power where necessary to preserve their ability to accomplish the mission.

Commanders use force protection measures to preserve the health, readiness, and combat capabilities of their force. They achieve the effects of protection through skillful combinations of offense and defense, maneuver and firepower, and active and passive measures. As they conduct operations, they receive protective benefits from deep and close operations as they disrupt the attacker's tempo and blind the enemy reconnaissance efforts. Defenders also employ passive measures such as camouflage, terrain masking, and operations security to frustrate the enemy's ability to find them. Commanders should remain aware that their forces are at risk. They should adjust their activities to maintain the ability to protect their forces from attack at vulnerable points.

Weapons of mass destruction present defenders with great risks. These weapons can create gaps, destroy or disable units, and obstruct the defender's maneuver. Commanders anticipate the effects of such weapons in their defensive plans. They provide for dispersed positions for forces in depth, coordinating the last-minute concentration of units on positions with multiple routes of approach and withdrawal. They also direct appropriate training and implement protective measures.

The general characteristics of MAGTF defensive operations are *preparation, security, disruption, mass and concentration, flexibility, maneuver, and operations in depth.*

Main battle forces engage the enemy as early as possible unless fires are withheld to prevent the loss of surprise. Commanders make maximum use of fires to destroy and disrupt enemy formations as they approach the main battle area. As the enemy closes, he is subjected to an ever-increasing volume of fires from the main battle area forces and all supporting arms. Again, obstacles and barriers are used to delay or canalize the enemy so that he is continually subjected to fires.

Combat power that can be concentrated most quickly, such as fires, is brought to bear while maneuver units move into position. The defender reacts to the enemy's main effort by reinforcing the threatened sector or allowing the enemy's main effort to penetrate into engagement areas within the main battle area to cut him off and destroy him by counterattack. Main battle forces maintain an offensive spirit throughout the battle, looking to exploit any advantageous situations.

The MAGTF commander must determine the mission, composition, and size of the reserve and counterattack forces. Reserves by definition are uncommitted forces; however, reserve forces are not uncommitted if the concept of defense depends upon their employment as a counterattack force. Counterattacking, blocking, reinforcing defending units, or reacting to rear area threats are all actions a reserve may be required to perform. The primary mission of the reserve derives directly from the concept of the defense and, therefore, the commander who established the requirement to have a reserve must approve its commitment.

A counterattack is an attack by part or all of a defending force against an attacking enemy force, for such specific purposes as regaining ground lost or cutting off and destroying enemy advance units, and with the general objective of denying to the enemy the attainment of his purpose in attacking. In many cases, the counterattack is decisive action in defensive operations. It is the commander's primary means of breaking the enemy's attack or of regaining the initiative. Once commenced, the counterattack is the main effort. Its success depends largely on surprise, speed, and boldness in execution. A separate counterattack force may be established by the commander to conduct planned counterattacks and can be made up of uncommitted or lightly engaged forces and the reserve.

The reserve is the commander's tool to influence the course of the battle at the critical time and place to exploit opportunities. The commander uses his reserve at the decisive moment in the defense and refuses to dissipate it on local emergencies. The reserve is usually located in assembly areas or forward operating bases in the main battle area. Once the reserve is committed, the commander establishes or reconstitutes a new reserve.

Reserves are organized based on the factors of METT-T. The tactical mobility of mechanized and helicopterborne forces make them well suited for use as the

reserve in the defense. Mechanized reserve forces are best employed offensively. In suitable terrain, a helicopterborne reserve can react quickly to reinforce the main battle area positions or block penetrations. However, helicopterborne forces often lack the shock effect desired for counterattacks. The inherent surge capability of aviation combat forces provides the commander flexibility for reserve tasking without designating the ACE as the reserve.

Timing is critical to the employment of the reserve. As the area of probable employment of the reserve becomes apparent, the commander alerts his reserve to have it more readily available for action. When he commits his reserve, the commander must make his decision promptly and with an accurate understanding of movement factors and deployment times. If committed too soon or too late, the reserve may not have a decisive effect. The commander may choose to use security forces as part or all of his reserve after completion of their security mission. He must weigh this decision against the possibility that the security forces may suffer a loss of combat power during its security mission.

Rear Area Forces

Rear area forces protect and sustain the force's combat power. They provide for freedom of action and the continuity of logistic and command and control support. Rear area forces facilitate future operations as forces are positioned and support is marshaled to enable the transition to offensive operations. These forces should have the requisite command and control capabilities and intelligence assets to effectively employ the maneuver, fires, and combat service support forces necessary to defeat the rear area threat. Aviation forces are well suited to perform screening missions across long distances in the rear area.

The security of the rear area is provided by three levels of forces corresponding to the rear area threat level. Local security forces are employed in the rear area to repel or destroy Level I threats such as terrorists or saboteurs. These forces are normally organic to the unit, base or base cluster where they are employed. Response forces are mobile forces, with appropriate fire support designated by the area commander, employed to counter Level II threats such as enemy guerrillas or small tactical units operating in the rear area. The tactical combat force is a combat unit, with appropriate combat support and combat service support assets, that is assigned the mission of defeating Level III threats such as a large, combined arms-capable enemy force. The tactical combat force is usually located within or near the rear area where it can rapidly respond to the enemy threat.