



ADP 3-90

OFFENSE AND DEFENSE



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OFFENSE AND DEFENSE

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Preface

Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-90 provides the doctrine on the conduct of offensive and defensive tasks. It establishes a common frame that commanders, supported by their staffs, use to plan, prepare, execute, and assess offensive or defensive tasks. The doctrine in this publication is a guide for action rather than a set of fixed rules. ADP 3-90 also forms the foundation for training and Army education system curricula on the conduct of tactical offensive and defensive tasks. In operations, effective leaders recognize when and where doctrine, training, or even their experience no longer fits the situation and adapt accordingly.

The principal audience for ADP 3-90 is all members of the profession of arms. Commanders and staffs of Army headquarters serving as joint task force or multinational headquarters should also refer to applicable joint or multinational doctrine concerning the range of military operations and joint or multinational forces. Readers should also refer to Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-90, *Offense and Defense*, for a more detailed explanation of the doctrine associated with the conduct of offensive and defensive tasks. Specific tactics and procedures associated with offensive and defensive tactics and associated enabling tasks are located in Field Manual (FM) 3-90, *Offensive and Defensive Tactics*.

Commanders, staffs, and subordinates ensure their decisions and actions comply with applicable U.S., international, and, in some cases, host-nation laws and regulations. Commanders at all levels ensure their Soldiers operate in accordance with the law of war and the rules of engagement. (See FM 27-10.)

ADRP 3-90 implements standardization agreement (STANAG) Allied Tactical Publication-3.2.1.

ADP 3-90 uses joint terms where applicable. Selected joint and Army terms and definitions appear in both the glossary and the text. These terms are italicized and the number of the proponent publication follows the definition.

ADP 3-90 applies to the Active Army, the Army National Guard (ARNG) /Army National Guard of the United States (ARNGUS), and the United States Army Reserve (USAR) unless otherwise stated.

The proponent of ADP 3-90 is the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center. The preparing agency is the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate, United States Army Combined Arms Center. Send written comments and recommendations on a DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) to Commander, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, ATTN: ATZL-MCK-D (ADP 3-90), 300 McPherson Avenue, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2337; by e-mail to usarmy.leavenworth.mccoe.mbx.cadd-org-mailbox@mail.mil; or submit an electronic DA Form 2028.

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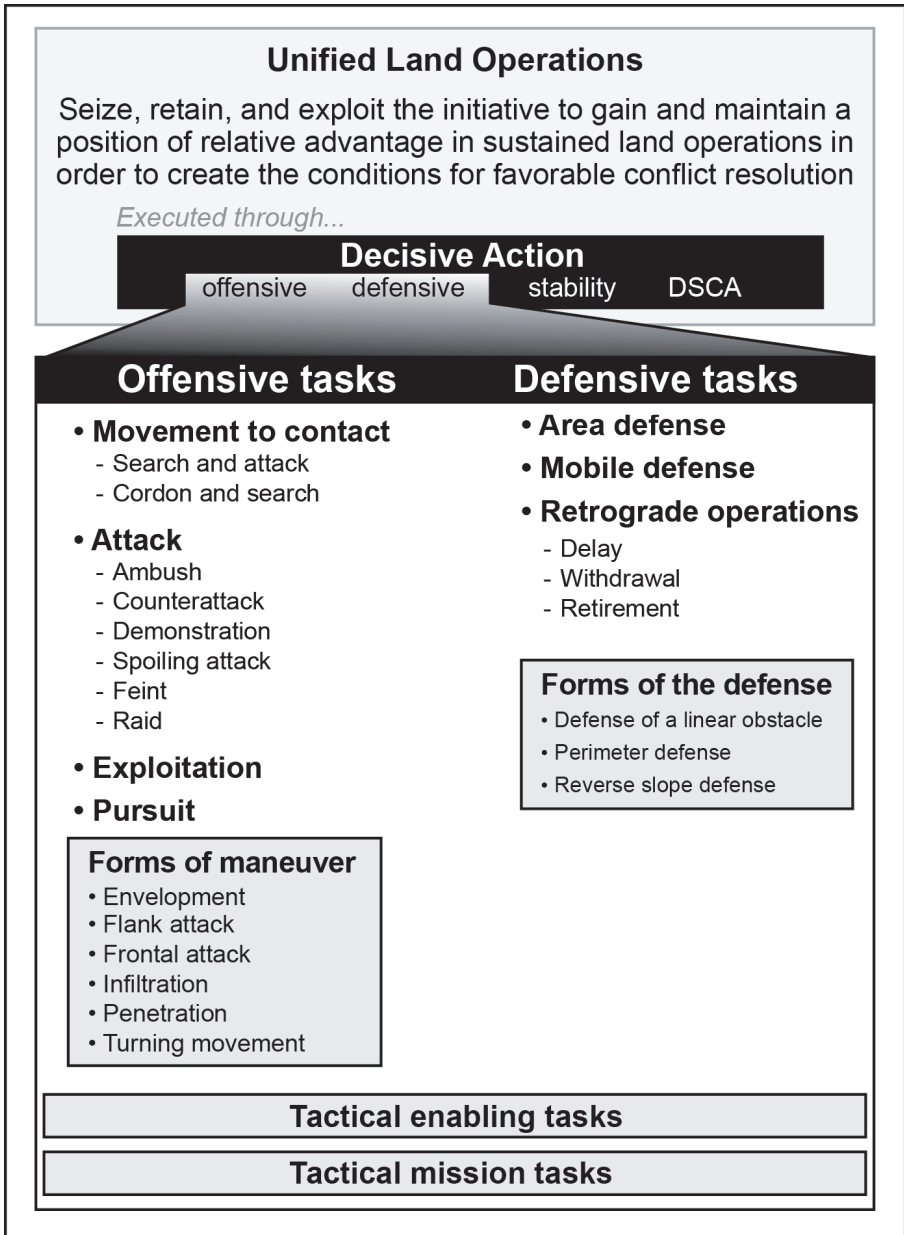


Figure 1. Offense and defense unifying logic chart

TACTICS

1. *Tactics* is the employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other (CJCSM 5120.01). Through tactics, commanders use combat power to accomplish missions. The tactical-level commander employs combat power in the conduct of engagements and battles. This section addresses the tactical level of war, the art and science of tactics, and hasty versus deliberate operations.

THE TACTICAL LEVEL OF WAR

2. This is the primary manual for offensive and defensive tasks at the tactical level. It does not provide doctrine for stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks. It is authoritative and provides guidance in the form of combat tested concepts and ideas for the employment of available means to win in combat. These tactics are not prescriptive in nature, and they require judgment in application.

3. Tactical operations always require judgment and adaptation to the unique circumstances of a specific situation. Techniques and procedures are established patterns that can be applied repeatedly with little or no judgment in a variety of circumstances. Tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) provide commanders with a set of tools to use in developing a solution to a tactical problem. The solution to any specific problem is a unique combination of these TTP or the creation of new ones based on a critical evaluation of the situation. Commanders determine a solution by their mastery of doctrine and existing TTP, tempered and honed by experience gained through training and operations. Commanders use their creativity to develop solutions for which the enemy is neither prepared nor able to cope. At all times, however, commanders, staffs, and subordinates ensure their decisions and actions comply with applicable U.S., international, and, in some cases, host-nation laws and regulations. Commanders at all levels ensure their Soldiers operate in accordance with the law of war and the rules of engagement. (See FM 27-10).

4. The *tactical level of war* is the level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces (JP 3-0). Activities at this level focus on the ordered arrangement and maneuver of combat elements in relation to each other and to the enemy to achieve combat objectives. It is important to understand tactics within the context of the levels of war. The strategic and operational levels provide the context for tactical operations. Without this context, tactical operations are just a series of disconnected and unfocused actions. Strategic and operational success is a measure of how one or more battles link to winning a major operation or campaign. In turn, tactical success is a measure of how one or more engagements link to winning a battle.

5. An *engagement* is a tactical conflict, usually between opposing, lower echelon maneuver forces (JP 3-0). Brigades and smaller echelons typically conduct engagements. They are usually short, executed in terms of minutes, hours, or days. Engagements can result from one side's deliberate offensive movement against an opponent or from a chance encounter between two opponents, such as a meeting engagement.

6. A *battle* consists of a set of related engagements that lasts longer and involves larger forces than an engagement (ADRP 3-90). Battles can affect the course of a campaign or major operation. A battle occurs when a division, corps, or army commander fights for one or more significant objectives. Battles are usually operationally significant, if not operationally decisive.

7. Levels of command, sizes of units, types of equipment, or types of forces or components are not associated with a particular level of war. National assets, such as intelligence and communications satellites, previously considered principally in a strategic context, are an important adjunct to tactical operations. Commanders consider actions strategic, operational, or tactical based on their effect or contribution to achieving strategic, operational, or tactical objectives. Commanders should also assess their unit's actions considering all levels of war.

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF TACTICS

8. Military professionals at all echelons must understand and master the art and science of tactics—two distinctly different yet inseparable concepts—to solve the problems that will face them on the battlefield. An art, as opposed to a science, requires exercising intuitive faculties that cannot be learned solely by study. A tactical problem is one in which the situation differs from the desired end state, expressed in terms of the mission variables of mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, time available, and civil considerations (METT-TC).

The Art of Tactics

9. The *art of tactics* consists of three interrelated aspects: the creative and flexible array of means to accomplish assigned missions, decisionmaking under conditions of uncertainty when faced with a thinking and adaptive enemy, and understanding the effects of combat on Soldiers (ADRP 3-90). The first aspect of the art of tactics is the creative and flexible application of the means available to the commander to seize and retain the initiative from the enemy. These means include doctrine; tactics, TTPs; training; organizations; materiel; and Soldiers. The military professional must understand how to train and employ forces simultaneously conducting offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks. The mission variables of METT-TC have infinite permutations that always combine to form a new tactical situation. They never produce exactly the same situation; thus, there can be no checklists that adequately address each unique situation. Because the enemy changes and adapts to friendly moves during the planning, preparation, and execution of an operation, there is no guarantee that tactics which worked in one situation will work again. Each tactical problem is unique and must be solved on its own merits.

10. The second aspect is decisionmaking under conditions of uncertainty in a time constrained environment that features the clash of opposing wills—a violent struggle between two hostile, thinking, adaptive, and independent opposing commanders with irreconcilable goals. Every commander needs a high degree of creativity and clarity of thought to outwit a willing and able opponent. Commanders must quickly apply their judgment to a less than omniscient common operational picture provided by their

mission command systems to understand the implications and opportunities afforded by the situation.

11. The effect of combat on Soldiers is the third and final aspect of the art of tactics. It is what differentiates actual combat from the problems encountered during training and in a classroom. Combat is one of the most complex human activities, characterized by violent death, friction, uncertainty, and chance. Success depends as much on this human aspect as it does on numerical and technological superiority.

12. Military professionals invoke the art of tactics to solve tactical problems within their commander's intent by choosing from interrelated options, including—

- Types and forms of offensive or defensive tasks, forms of maneuver, and tactical mission tasks.
- Task organization of available forces, to include allocating scarce resources.
- Arrangement and choice of control measures.
- Tempo of the operation.
- Risks the commander is willing to take.

These options represent a starting point for the professional to create a unique solution to a specific tactical problem. Each decision represents a choice among a range of options; each balances competing demands, requiring judgment at every turn. Military professionals evolve their skill in employing the art of tactics through a variety of relevant, practical experiences.

The Science of Tactics

13. The *science of tactics* encompasses the understanding of those military aspects of tactics—capabilities, techniques, and procedures—that can be measured and codified (ADRP 3-90). The science of tactics includes the physical capabilities of friendly and enemy organizations and systems, such as determining how long it takes a given organization, such as a brigade, to move a certain distance. It also includes techniques and procedures used to accomplish specific tasks, such as the tactical terms and control graphics that compose the language of tactics. While not easy, the science of tactics is straightforward. Much of what is contained in subordinate publications is the science of tactics—techniques and procedures for employing the various elements of the combined arms team to create the effects necessary to accomplish assigned combat missions.

HASTY VERSUS DELIBERATE OPERATIONS

14. A *hasty operation* is an operation in which a commander directs immediately available forces, using fragmentary orders, to perform activities with minimal preparation, trading planning and preparation time for speed of execution (ADRP 3-90). The conduct of a hasty operation allows a commander to capitalize on fleeting opportunities. The 9th Armored Division's seizure of the bridge at Remagen in March 1945 illustrates a hasty operation conducted with the forces immediately available. A *deliberate operation* is an operation in which the tactical situation allows the development and coordination of detailed plans, including multiple branches and sequels (ADRP 3-90). Forces are task organized specifically for the operation to provide a fully

synchronized combined arms team. That combined arms team conducts extensive rehearsals while conducting shaping operations to set the conditions for the conduct of the force's decisive operation. The 1st Infantry Division's breach operation during the opening hours of Operation Desert Storm in 1991 illustrates a deliberate operation. Most operations lie somewhere along a continuum between these two extremes.

CHOICES AND TRADEOFFS

15. The commander bases the decision to conduct a hasty or deliberate operation on current knowledge of the situation and an assessment of whether the assets available (to include time) and the means to coordinate and synchronize those assets are adequate to accomplish the mission. If they are not, the commander takes additional time to plan and prepare for the operation or bring additional forces to bear on the problem. The commander makes that choice in an environment of uncertainty, which always entails some risk.

16. Uncertainty and risk are inherent in tactical operations. A commander cannot be successful without the capability of acting under conditions of uncertainty while balancing various risks and taking advantage of opportunities. Although the commander strives to maximize knowledge of the mission variables of METT-TC, a lack of information cannot paralyze the decisionmaking process. The more information known about the mission variables of METT-TC, the better able the commander is to make an assessment. Less information means that the commander has a greater risk of making a poor decision for the specific situation. A commander never has perfect information, but knowing when there is enough information to make a decision within the higher commander's intent and constraints is part of the art of tactics and is a critical skill for a commander.

17. The commander can be less deliberate in planning and preparing for an operation when facing a clearly less capable and less prepared enemy. In these circumstances, the commander can forego detailed planning, extensive rehearsals, and significant changes in task organization. For example, an attacking battalion task force encountering enemy security elements just moving into position will conduct actions on contact to immediately destroy these security elements without the loss of momentum. *Actions on contact* are a series of combat actions, often conducted nearly simultaneously, taken on contact with the enemy to develop the situation (ADRP 3-90). Against a larger and more prepared enemy, the commander needs more preparation time and a larger force to succeed. If the commander determines the enemy cannot be defeated with the forces immediately at hand, the commander must determine what additional measures to take to be successful.

RISK REDUCTION

18. An important factor in reducing risk is how much intelligence is available about the enemy. If the commander decides to execute a hasty operation based on limited intelligence, there is a higher level of risk of uncoordinated operations against an enemy about which little is known. Moreover, available forces may not be strong enough to accomplish their mission with minimum casualties. This could lead to piecemeal

commitment and potential defeat in detail. The commander must balance this option against the risk of waiting to attack, which allows the enemy time to reinforce or conduct additional defensive preparations.

19. The commander can reduce the risks associated with any situation by increasing knowledge of the terrain and friendly, neutral, and enemy forces. The commander has a greater risk of making a poor decision if that individual's situational understanding is incomplete or faulty. If the commander lacks sufficient information to make an informed choice, the first priority must be to gain the required information to support decisionmaking while at the same time taking precautions to protect friendly forces from surprise.

20. Risk reduction does not always mean increasing knowledge of the enemy at the expense of time. A commander can partially compensate for a lack of intelligence by being flexible in troop dispositions through an increase in the depth of the security area, the size and number of security units, and the size of the reserve. The commander's choices of combat and movement formations provide the versatility to allow for initial enemy contact with the smallest possible friendly force. Another way to compensate for increased risk is to allow time and resources for subordinate elements to develop the situation.

COMMON TACTICAL CONCEPTS AND ECHELONS

21. Commanders and staffs must understand the common tactical concepts and definitions used by the military profession in the conduct of offensive and defensive tasks. This section introduces joint interdependence, principles of joint operations, operational and mission variables, basic tactical concepts, and tactical echelons that are common to most combat operations.

JOINT INTERDEPENDENCE

22. The Army conducts offensive and defensive tasks as members of interdependent joint forces. This joint interdependence is the purposeful reliance by one Service's forces on another Service's capabilities to maximize the complementary and reinforcing effects of both. Joint capabilities make Army forces more effective than they would be otherwise. (See JP 1, JP 3-0, and ADP 3-0 for additional information on joint interdependence.)

PRINCIPLES OF JOINT OPERATIONS

23. The twelve principles of joint operations defined in JP 3-0 provide general guidance for conducting military operations. They are fundamental truths governing all operations. They are not a checklist, and their degree of application varies with the situation. Blind adherence to these principles does not guarantee success, but each deviation

Principles of Joint Operations

- Objective
- Offensive
- Mass
- Maneuver
- Economy of force
- Unity of command
- Security
- Surprise
- Simplicity
- Perseverance
- Legitimacy
- Restraint

may increase the risk of failure. The principles of joint operations lend rigor and focus to the purely creative aspects of tactics and provide a crucial link between pure theory and actual application.

OPERATIONAL VARIABLES

24. Army planners describe the conditions of an operational environment in terms of operational variables. Operational variables are those aspects of the operational environment, both military and nonmilitary, that may differ from one operational area to another and affect operations. Operational variables describe not only the military aspects of an operational environment but also the population's influence on it. Army planners analyze an operational environment in terms of eight interrelated operational variables: political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment, and time (PMESII-PT). As soon as a commander and staff have an indication of where their unit will probably deploy, they begin analyzing the operational variables associated with that location. Commanders may request (and are often assigned) staff augmentation for Army and joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational partners to assist in this analysis. They continue to refine and update that analysis even after receiving a specific mission and throughout the course of the ensuing operation.

Operational Variables

Political
Military
Economic
Social
Information
Infrastructure
Physical environment
Time

Mission Variables

Mission
Enemy
Terrain and weather
Troops and support available
Time available
Civil considerations

MISSION VARIABLES

25. Upon receipt of a warning order or mission, Army leaders filter relevant information categorized by the operational variables into the categories of the mission variables used during mission analysis. The mission variables of METT-TC describe the unique situation in which commanders and staffs execute the art and science of tactics. An analysis of these mission variables is critical during the military decisionmaking process. Mission command doctrine provides a detailed discussion of the mission variables of METT-TC.

Basic Tactical Concepts

Area of operations
Combined arms
Concept of operations
Decisive engagement
Defeat in detail
Flanks
Maneuver
Operation
Operational frameworks
Piecemeal commitment
Reconstitution
Reserve
Rules of engagement
Tactical mobility
Uncommitted forces

BASIC TACTICAL CONCEPTS

26. ADRP 3-90 discusses basic tactical concepts common to the conduct of both offensive and defensive tasks. These concepts, along with the principles of joint operations, mission variables of METT-TC, elements of operational design, warfighting functions, estimates, input from other commanders, and the commander's

own experience and judgment allow the commander to visualize the conduct of operations.

TACTICAL ECHELONS

27. The Army echelons its broad array of capabilities to perform diverse functions. These functions vary with the type of unit, the nature of the operation, and the number of friendly forces committed to the effort. The Army's tactical echelons range from the fire team or crew, through the squad, section, platoon, company, battalion, brigade, and division. The division can also be an operational echelon depending on the situation.

THE OFFENSE

28. The offense is the decisive form of war. While strategic, operational, or tactical considerations may require defending for a period of time, defeat of the enemy eventually requires shifting to the offense. Army forces strike the enemy using offensive action in times, places, or manners for which the enemy is not prepared to seize, retain, and exploit the operational initiative. *Operational initiative* is setting or dictating the terms of action throughout an operation (ADRP 3-0). This section deals with the purposes and characteristics of the offense, and it provides a definition of the four offensive tasks and the five forms of maneuver.

PURPOSES OF THE OFFENSE

29. The main purpose of the offense is to defeat, destroy, or neutralize the enemy force. Additionally, commanders conduct offensive tasks to secure decisive terrain, to deprive the enemy of resources, to gain information, to deceive and divert the enemy, to hold the enemy in position, to disrupt his attack, and to set the conditions for future successful operations.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OFFENSE

30. The main feature of offensive tasks is taking and maintaining the initiative. The aim of the commander in the offense is to expedite the outcome. Audacity, concentration, surprise, and tempo characterize the conduct of offensive tasks and are components of initiative. Initiative—within the higher commander's intent, combined with maneuver and fires, makes possible the conduct of decisive offensive tasks.

Audacity

31. Audacity is a key component of any successful offensive action. Commanders should understand when and where they are taking risks but must not become tentative in the execution of their plan. A difficult situation, such as numerical inferiority, handled boldly often leads to dramatic success. The offense is inherently a bold action and commanders must audaciously conduct offensive tasks.

Concentration

32. Concentration is the ability to mass effects without massing large formations and is therefore essential for achieving and exploiting success. Concentration of any size force is also a vulnerability. Modern technology can make the process of physically concentrating without detection by the enemy more difficult to achieve and more dangerous, if that physical concentration is detected. On the other hand, modern technology, such as modern control systems, can also make the concentration or massing of effects easier to accomplish.

Surprise

33. Commanders achieve surprise by striking the enemy at a time, place, or manner for which the enemy is not physically or mentally ready. Surprise delays enemy reactions, overloads and confuses enemy decisionmakers and command and control systems, induces psychological shock in enemy soldiers and leaders, and reduces the coherence of the enemy defense. Commanders achieve surprise by varying the direction, timing, boldness, means, and force of the attack. Being unpredictable and using military deception, cunning, and guile also help to gain surprise.

Tempo

34. Tempo is the rate of speed and rhythm of military operations over time with respect to the enemy. It reflects the rate of military action; controlling or altering that rate is essential for maintaining the initiative. As opposing forces battle one another, military operations alternate between actions and pauses. The aggressive application of maneuver and fires can keep an enemy off balance and in a reactive state. Commanders seek a tempo that maintains relentless pressure on the enemy to prevent the enemy from recovering from the shock and effects of the attack. Disrupting the enemy's operations throughout the area of operations with synchronized Army and joint fires can prevent the enemy from establishing the enemy's desired tempo of operations and concentration of forces.

OFFENSIVE TASKS

35. The four primary offensive tasks are *movement to contact*, *attack*, *exploitation*, and *pursuit*. While it is convenient to talk of them as different tasks, in reality they flow readily from one to another.

Movement to Contact

36. *Movement to contact* is an offensive task designed to develop the situation and to establish or regain contact (ADRP 3-90). The goal is to make initial contact with a small element while retaining enough combat power to develop the situation and mitigate the associated risk. It may also include preliminary diversionary actions and preparation fires. The extent and nature of the movement to contact depends on whether opposing forces were previously in contact. If forces are not in contact, then the central feature of the movement-to-contact is gaining or reestablishing contact with the enemy.

Establishing contact occurs at some level in virtually all offensive tasks where forces are not in immediate proximity to one another. Knowing the enemy's location and activities is an underpinning of a unit's ability to conduct mobile, force-oriented combat.

Attack

37. The *attack* is an offensive task that destroys or defeats enemy forces, seizes and secures terrain, or both (ADRP 3-90). The primary differences between attack types—ambush, counterattack, demonstration, spoiling attack, feint, and raid—lie in the mission variables of METT-TC and the specific purpose of the attack. Force-oriented objectives allow greater freedom of action than terrain-oriented objectives and are therefore the preferred option. The attack usually follows a movement to contact but is also appropriate after the conduct of exploitations and pursuits and the conduct of defensive tasks. Deciding when to begin and end an attack is a tactical or operational judgment based upon its contribution to the commander's objectives.

Exploitation

38. The *exploitation* is an offensive task—usually following the conduct of a successful attack—designed to disorganize the enemy in depth (ADRP 3-90). In an exploitation, the attacker extends the destruction of the defending force by maintaining offensive pressure. Attacks that result in annihilating a defending enemy are rare. More often, the enemy will attempt to disengage, withdraw, and reconstitute an effective defense as rapidly as possible. In large-scale operations, the enemy may attempt to draw forces from less active areas or bring forward previously uncommitted reserves. Opportunities for local exploitation may occur even as the attack continues elsewhere in the area of operations.

Pursuit

39. A *pursuit* is an offensive task designed to catch or cut off a hostile force attempting to escape, with the aim of destroying it (ADRP 3-90). It follows a successful attack or exploitation when the enemy cannot conduct an organized defense and attempts to disengage. If it becomes apparent that enemy resistance has broken down entirely and the enemy is fleeing the battlefield, any offensive task can give way to pursuit. Like exploitation, pursuit encompasses broad decentralization of control and rapid movement. Unlike exploitation, however, commanders can rarely anticipate pursuit, so they do not normally hold forces in reserve solely to accomplish this mission. Therefore, commanders must be agile enough to react when the situation presents itself. Bold action, calculated initiative, and accounting for the associated risks are required in the conduct of a pursuit.

COMMON OFFENSIVE CONTROL MEASURES

40. ADRP 3-90 explains the use of common offensive control measures—defined in ADRP 1-02—that a commander uses to synchronize the effects of combat power during the conduct of offensive tasks. These control measures include assault position, assault time, attack-by-fire position, attack position, axis of advance, direction of attack, final

coordination lines, limit of advance, lines of departure, objective, point of departure, probable line of deployment, rally point, support-by-fire position, and time of attack. The commander uses the minimum control measures required to successfully complete the mission while providing subordinates the flexibility needed to respond to changes in the situation.

FORMS OF MANEUVER

41. *Maneuver* is the employment of forces in the operational area through movement in combination with fires to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy (JP 1-02). The forms of maneuver are envelopment, flank attack, frontal attack, infiltration, penetration, and turning movement. Commanders use these forms of maneuver to orient on the enemy, not terrain. They determine what form of maneuver to use by their analysis of the mission variables of METT-TC. However, this is art, not science, and more than one form of maneuver may apply. The forms of maneuver and the offensive tasks complement one another and may apply to either contiguous or noncontiguous areas of operations. Further, a commander's statement of intent or concept of operations should articulate how fires will support whatever form of maneuver the commander decides to use. (See FM 3-90 for a discussion of these forms of maneuver.)

COMMON OFFENSIVE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

42. Each battle or engagement, even those occurring simultaneously as a part of the same campaign, has its own unique peculiarities, determined by the situation's actual conditions. Combined arms warfare is characterized by the widespread application of highly accurate and lethal weapons, a high degree of tactical mobility, a dynamic nature, rapid situational changes, and the large spatial scope of unit areas of operations. The commander first able to correctly visualize the battlefield, understand the implications of existing friendly and enemy dispositions, and take effective action to impose the commander's will on the situation has the best chance to enjoy tactical success. ADRP 3-90 uses the six warfighting functions defined in ADRP 3-0 as the framework for discussing planning considerations that apply to all offensive tasks.

THE DEFENSE

43. While the offense is the most decisive type of combat operation, the defense is the stronger type. Army forces conduct defensive tasks as part of major operations and joint campaigns, while simultaneously conducting offensive and stability tasks as part of decisive action outside the United States. This section addresses the purposes and characteristics of the defense and defines the three defensive tasks.

PURPOSES OF THE DEFENSE

44. Commanders choose to defend to create conditions for a counteroffensive that allows Army forces to regain the initiative. Other reasons for conducting a defense include to retain decisive terrain or deny a vital area to the enemy, to attrit or fix the enemy as a

prelude to the offense, in response to surprise action by the enemy, or to increase the enemy's vulnerability by forcing the enemy to concentrate forces.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEFENSE

45. A feature of defensive battle is a striving to regain the initiative from the attacking enemy. The defending commander uses the characteristics of the defense—disruption, flexibility, mass and concentration, preparation, and security—to help accomplish that task.

Disruption

46. The defender disrupts the attacker's tempo and synchronization by constantly seeking to wrest the initiative from the attack and preventing the attacker from massing overwhelming combat power against elements of the defending force. Defending commanders do this by defeating or misleading enemy reconnaissance forces and disrupting the attacker's combat formations so that they cannot fight as part of an integrated whole. Defenders seek to separate the enemy's forces so that selected enemy units or capabilities can be isolated and then defeated, destroyed, or neutralized. The defender interrupts the attacker's fire support, sustainment, and command and control capabilities. Defending commanders deceive the enemy as to the true dispositions and intentions of friendly forces, unravel the coordination of the enemy's supporting arms, and break the tempo of the offense. The defending force may engage the attacking force with long range joint and Army fires and spoiling attacks before the attacking force is able to focus its available combat power. The defender counterattacks the attacker before the attacker is able to consolidate any temporary gains.

Flexibility

47. The defense epitomizes flexible conduct of the operations process. (See Army doctrine on the operations process.) In exercising the initiative, the attacker initially decides where and when combat will take place. The defender who is agile enough to counter or evade the attacker's blow can then strike back effectively. Tactical flexibility stems from properly conducting the four major activities of the operations process—plan, prepare, execute, and assess. Commanders and staffs employ particularly detailed planning, and use the three integrating processes—intelligence preparation of the battlefield, targeting, and risk management—to synchronize the application of specific warfighting functions. This is especially important in the conduct of intelligence preparation of the battlefield and targeting. The products of the operations process enable commanders to shift their decisive operation or main effort quickly without losing synchronization. Commanders add flexibility to their basic plans by organizing their defense in depth, retaining reserves, designing counterattack plans, and preparing to assume the offensive. A rigid plan and a static defense can cede the initiative to an adaptive, free-thinking enemy.

48. Maneuver allows the defender to take full advantage of the area of operations and to mass and concentrate when desirable. Maneuver, through movement in combination with fire, allows the defender to achieve a position of advantage over the enemy to

accomplish the mission. It also encompasses defensive actions such as security and support area operations.

Mass and Concentration

49. The defender seeks to mass the effects of overwhelming combat power at points and times of the defender's own choosing. The defender seeks to shift those massed effects repeatedly in accordance with the defensive scheme. The defender economizes and takes risks in some areas and maneuvers to gain local advantage at the point of decision. The defender may have to surrender some ground to gain the time necessary to concentrate the defending force's effects. Defending commanders retain reserves as a means of ensuring mission accomplishment and for exploiting opportunities through offensive action.

50. Simultaneous application of combat power throughout the area of operations improves the chances for success while minimizing friendly casualties. Quick, violent, and simultaneous actions that mass and concentrate effects throughout the depth of the defender's area of operations can hurt, confuse, and even paralyze an enemy force just as that enemy force is most exposed and vulnerable. Such actions weaken the enemy's will and do not allow any early enemy successes to build the confidence of the enemy's soldiers and leaders.

Preparation

51. The defender arrives in the main battle area before the attacker, making the most thorough preparations that time allows. In the early stages of the defense, the defender capitalizes on the advantage of fighting from prepared positions. Preparations involve positioning forces in depth, improving terrain to favor the defense, wargaming plans, integrating available fires into those plans, organizing the force for movement and support, rehearsing, and taking measures to protect the force. Synchronization of decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations facilitates mission success.

Security

52. The purpose of security measures is to coordinate and synchronize the defense, to provide early warning, and to begin the process of disrupting the integrity of the enemy attack as early as possible. Commanders must provide for the protection of their forces. The primary physical means for providing security is by the use of a security force. The higher commander can assign the security force the task of cover, guard, screen, or area security for the protected force. (All units are responsible for providing their own local security.) Normally the higher commander gives the security force its own area of operation.

DEFENSIVE TASKS

53. There are three basic defensive tasks—area defense, mobile defense, and retrograde. These apply to both the tactical and operational levels of war, although the mobile defense is more often associated with the operational level. The *area defense* is a

defensive task that concentrates on denying enemy forces access to designated terrain for a specific time rather than destroying the enemy outright (ADRP 3-90). Area defenses seek to retain terrain and absorb the enemy in an interlocking series of positions and attriting the enemy largely by fires. For the Army, the *mobile defense* is a defensive task that concentrates on the destruction or defeat of the enemy through a decisive attack by a striking force (ADRP 3-90). Mobile defenses orient on the destruction of the attacking force by permitting the enemy to advance into a position that exposes the enemy to counterattack by the striking force. The *retrograde* is a defensive task that involves organized movement away from the enemy (ADRP 3-90).

54. The three forms of the retrograde are delay, withdrawal, and retirement. Joint doctrine defines a *delaying operation* as an operation in which a force under pressure trades space for time by slowing down the enemy's momentum and inflicting maximum damage on the enemy without, in principle, becoming decisively engaged (JP 3-04). In delays, units yield ground to gain time while retaining flexibility and freedom of action to inflict the maximum damage on the enemy. A *withdrawal* operation is a planned retrograde operation in which a force in contact disengages from an enemy force and moves in a direction away from the enemy (JP 1-02). Withdrawing units, whether all or part of a committed force, voluntarily disengage from the enemy to preserve the force or release it for a new mission. A *retirement* is a form of retrograde in which a force out of contact moves away from the enemy (ADRP 3-90). In each form of the retrograde, a force moves to another location—normally by a tactical road march. In all retrograde operations, firm control of friendly maneuver elements is a prerequisite for success.

55. Although these descriptions convey the general pattern of each defensive task, all employ static and dynamic elements. In an area defense, commanders closely integrate information collection means and reserve forces to cover the gaps between defensive positions. They reposition forces and reinforce those defensive positions threatened by the enemy. They counterattack when necessary. In a mobile defense, the commander employs the fixing force in a mix of static defensive positions and repositions the fixing force to help control the depth and breadth of an enemy penetration and ensure retention of ground from which the striking force can launch the decisive counterattack. In the retrograde, commanders likewise maneuver their security forces to protect the main body from any enemy offensive actions. Defending commanders conducting all three tasks use static elements to delay, canalize, and ultimately halt the attacker and dynamic elements (spoiling attacks and counterattacks) to strike at and destroy enemy forces. The balance among these elements depends on the mission variables of METT-TC.

COMMON DEFENSIVE CONTROL MEASURES

56. The commander controls the defense by using control measures to provide the flexibility needed to respond to changes in the situation and allow the defending commander to rapidly concentrate combat power at the decisive point. In addition to those offensive control measures previously introduced, control measures that a commander conducting a defense employs include designating the security area, the main battle area with its associated forward edge of the battle area, and the echelon support area. The commander can use battle positions and additional direct fire control and fire support coordination measures in addition to other control measures defined in

FM 1-02 to further synchronize the employment of combat power. The commander designates disengagement lines to trigger the displacement of subordinate forces. ADRP 3-90 discusses the use of these common defensive control measures.

FORMS OF THE DEFENSE

57. Subordinate forms of the defense have special purposes and have their own unique planning considerations. The Army recognizes three forms of the defense—

- Defense of a linear obstacle.
- Perimeter defense.
- Reverse slope defense.

(See FM 3-90 for an expanded discussion.)

COMMON DEFENSIVE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

58. The common defensive planning considerations addressed in ADRP 3-90 apply to all defensive tasks. In the defense, synchronizing the effects of the warfighting functions with information and leadership allows a commander to apply overwhelming combat power against selected advancing enemy forces to unhinge the enemy commander's plan and destroy the enemy's combined arms team. Defensive synchronization is normally the result of detailed planning and preparation among the various units participating in the defense. While these activities may be separated in time and space, they are synchronized if their combined consequences are felt at decisive times and places. All defensive actions are a mix of static and dynamic actions. As an operation evolves, the commander knows there will probably be a requirement to shift decisive and shaping operations or main and supporting efforts to press the fight and keep the enemy off balance. Synchronized prior planning and preparation bolster the commander's combat power and increase the effectiveness of the defense.

TACTICAL ENABLING TASKS

59. Commanders direct tactical enabling tasks to support the conduct of decisive action. Tactical enabling tasks are usually shaping or sustaining. They may be decisive in the conduct of stability tasks. Tactical enabling tasks discussed in ADRP 3-90 include reconnaissance, security, troop movement, relief in place, passage of lines, encirclement operations, and urban operations. Tactical enabling tasks and special environments discussed in other doctrinal publications are not repeated in ADRP 3-90.

Glossary

The glossary lists acronyms and terms with Army or joint definitions. Where Army and joint definitions differ, (Army) precedes the definition. Terms for which ADP 3-90 is the proponent are marked with an asterisk (*). The proponent publication for other terms is listed in parentheses after the definition.

SECTION I – ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Army doctrine publication
ADRP	Army doctrine reference publication
CJCSM	Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff manual
FM	field manual
JP	joint publication
METT-TC	mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, time available, and civil considerations
PMESII-PT	political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment, and time
STANAG	standardization agreement
TTP	tactics, techniques, and procedures
U.S.	United States

SECTION II – TERMS

actions on contact

A series of combat actions, often conducted nearly simultaneously, taken on contact with the enemy to develop the situation. (ADRP 3-90)

area defense

A defensive task that concentrates on denying enemy forces access to designated terrain for a specific time rather than destroying the enemy outright. (ADRP 3-90)

art of tactics

Consists of three interrelated aspects: the creative and flexible array of means to accomplish assigned missions, decisionmaking under conditions of uncertainty when faced with a thinking and adaptive enemy, and understanding the effects of combat on Soldiers. (ADRP 3-90)

attack

An offensive task that destroys or defeats enemy forces, seizes and secures terrain, or both. (ADRP 3-90)

battle

Consists of a set of related engagements that lasts longer and involves larger forces than an engagement. (ADRP 3-90)

delaying operation

An operation in which a force under pressure trades space for time by slowing down the enemy's momentum and inflicting maximum damage on the enemy without, in principle, becoming decisively engaged. (JP 3-04)

deliberate operation

An operation in which the tactical situation allows the development and coordination of detailed plans, including multiple branches and sequels. (ADRP 3-90)

engagement

A tactical conflict, usually between opposing, lower echelon maneuver forces. (JP 3-0)

exploitation

An offensive task—usually following the conduct of a successful attack—designed to disorganize the enemy in depth. (ADRP 3-90)

hasty operation

An operation in which a commander directs immediately available forces, using fragmentary orders, to perform activities with minimal preparation, trading planning and preparation time for speed of execution. (ADRP 3-90)

maneuver

Employment of forces in the operational area through movement in combination with fires to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy. (JP 3-0)

mobile defense

A defensive task that concentrates on the destruction or defeat of the enemy through a decisive attack by a striking force. (ADRP 3-90)

movement to contact

An offensive task designed to develop the situation and to establish or regain contact. (ADRP 3-90)

operational initiative

Setting or dictating the terms of action throughout an operation. (ADRP 3-0)

pursuit

An offensive task designed to catch or cut off a hostile force attempting to escape, with the aim of destroying it. (ADRP 3-90)

retirement

A form of retrograde in which a force out of contact moves away from the enemy. (ADRP 3-90)

retrograde

A defensive task that involves organized movement away from the enemy. (ADRP 3-90)

science of tactics

Encompasses the understanding of those military aspects of tactics—capabilities, techniques, and procedures—that can be measured and codified. (ADRP 3-90)

tactical level of war

The level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces. (JP 3-0)

tactics

The employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other. (CJCSM 5120.01)

withdrawal

A planned retrograde operation in which a force in contact disengages from an enemy force and moves in a direction away from the enemy. (JP 1-02)

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References

Field manuals and selected joint publications are listed by new number followed by old number.

REQUIRED PUBLICATIONS

These documents must be available to intended users of this publication.

ADRP 1-02. *Operational Terms and Military Symbols*. 31 August 2012.

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RELATED PUBLICATIONS

These documents contain relevant supplemental information.

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<http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jointpub.htm>

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