

Chapter 3

The Army's Operational Concept

This chapter discusses the Army's operational concept in detail. It first discusses the concept of unified land operations and decisive action. Then it discusses the principles of unified land operations. Lastly, this chapter discusses the tenets of unified land operations.

THE GOAL OF UNIFIED LAND OPERATIONS

3-1. Unified land operations is the Army's operational concept and the Army's contribution to unified action. **Unified land operations are simultaneous offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative and consolidate gains to prevent conflict, shape the operational environment, and win our Nation's wars as part of unified action.** The goal of unified land operations is to apply landpower as part of unified action to defeat the enemy on land and establish conditions that achieve the joint force commander's end state. Unified land operations is how the Army applies combat power through 1) simultaneous offensive, defensive, and stability, or defense support of civil authorities tasks, to 2) seize, retain, and exploit the initiative, and 3) consolidate gains. Where possible, military forces working with unified action partners seek to prevent or deter threats. However, if necessary, military forces possess the capability in unified land operations to prevail over aggression.

DECISIVE ACTION

3-2. **Decisive action is the continuous, simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks.** In unified land operations, commanders seek to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative while synchronizing their actions to achieve the best effects possible. Operations conducted outside the United States and its territories simultaneously combine three elements—offense, defense, and stability. Within the United States and its territories, decisive action combines the elements of defense support of civil authorities and, as required, offense and defense to support homeland defense. (See table 3-1 on page 3-2.)

3-3. Decisive action begins with the commander's intent and concept of operations. As a single, unifying idea, decisive action provides direction for an entire operation. Based on a specific idea of how to accomplish the mission, commanders and staffs refine the concept of operations during planning and determine the proper allocation of resources and tasks. They adjust the allocation of resources and tasks to specific units throughout the operation, as subordinates develop the situation or conditions change.

3-4. The simultaneity of the offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks is not absolute. The higher the echelon, the greater the possibility of simultaneous offensive, defensive, and stability tasks. At lower echelons, an assigned task may require all of the echelons' combat power to execute a specific task. For example, a higher echelon, such as a division, always performs offensive, defensive, and stability tasks simultaneously in some form. Subordinate brigades perform some combination of offensive, defensive, and stability tasks, but they may not perform all three simultaneously.

3-5. For any organization assigned an area of operations, there will always be implied or even specified minimum-essential stability tasks of security, food, water, shelter, and medical treatment. If the organization cannot perform these tasks on its own, it must either request additional resources from higher headquarters or request relief from those tasks. (See figure 3-1 on page 3-3.)

Table 3-1. Tasks of decisive action

<i>Offense</i>	<i>Defense</i>
Tasks:	Tasks:
• Movement to contact • Attack • Exploitation • Pursuit	• Mobile defense • Area defense • Retrograde
Purposes:	Purposes:
• Dislocate, isolate, disrupt, and destroy enemy forces • Seize key terrain • Deprive the enemy of resources • Refine intelligence • Deceive and divert the enemy • Provide a secure environment for stability tasks	• Deter or defeat enemy offense • Gain time • Achieve economy of force • Retain key terrain • Protect the population, critical assets, and infrastructure • Refine intelligence
<i>Stability</i>	<i>Defense Support of Civil Authorities</i>
Tasks:	Tasks:
• Establish civil security • Establish civil control • Restore essential services • Support to governance • Support to economic and infrastructure development • Conduct security cooperation	• Provide support for domestic disasters • Provide support for domestic chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents • Provide support for domestic civilian law enforcement agencies • Provide other designated support
Purposes:	Purposes:
• Provide a secure environment • Secure land areas • Meet the critical needs of the population • Gain support for host-nation government • Shape the environment for interagency and host-nation success • Promote security, build partner capacity, and provide access • Refine intelligence	• Save lives • Restore essential services • Maintain or restore law and order • Protect infrastructure and property • Support maintenance or restoration of local government • Shape the environment for intergovernmental success

3-6. Unified land operations addresses more than combat between armed opponents. Army forces conduct operations amid populations. This requires Army forces to defeat the enemy and simultaneously shape civil conditions. Offensive and defensive tasks defeat enemy forces, whereas stability tasks shape civil conditions. Winning battles and engagements is important, but that alone may not be the most significant task. Shaping civil conditions (in concert with civilian organizations, civil authorities, and multinational forces) often proves just as important to campaign success. In many joint operations, stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks often prove more important than offensive and defensive tasks.

3-7. The emphasis on different tasks of decisive action changes with echelon, time, and location. In an operation dominated by stability, part of the force might conduct simultaneous offensive and defensive tasks in support of establishing stability. Within the United States, defense support of civil authorities may be the only activity actually conducted. Simultaneous combinations of the tasks, which commanders constantly adapt to conditions, are the key to successful land operations in achieving the end state.

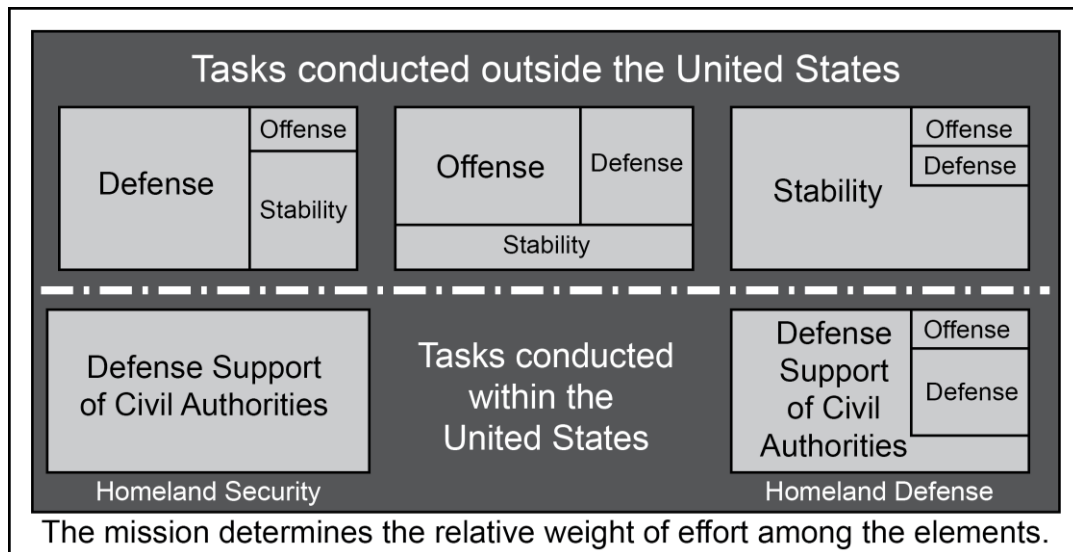


Figure 3-1. Decisive action

3-8. Operations require versatile, adaptive units and flexible leaders who exhibit sound judgment. These qualities develop primarily from training that prepares individuals and units for challenging operational environments. Managing training for unified land operations challenges leaders at all echelons. Training for decisive action tasks develops discipline, endurance, unit cohesion, tolerance for uncertainty, and mutual support. It prepares Soldiers and units to address ambiguities inherent in stability and defense support of civil authorities tasks as well.

3-9. However, operational experience demonstrates that forces trained exclusively for offensive and defensive tasks are not as proficient at stability tasks as those trained specifically for stability tasks. For maximum effectiveness, tasks for stability and defense support of civil authorities require dedicated training, similar to training for offensive and defensive tasks. Likewise, forces involved in protracted stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks require intensive training to regain proficiency in offensive or defensive tasks before engaging in large-scale combat operations. Effective training reflects a balance among the tasks of decisive action that produce and sustain Soldier, leader, and unit proficiency in individual and collective tasks.

THE PURPOSE OF SIMULTANEITY

3-10. Simultaneously conducting offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks requires the synchronized application of combat power. Simultaneity means doing multiple things at the same time. It requires the ability to conduct operations in depth and to integrate them so that their timing multiplies their effectiveness throughout an area of operations and across the multiple domains. Commanders consider their entire area of operations, the enemy, and the information collection activities necessary to shape an operational environment and civil conditions. Then they mount simultaneous operations that immobilize, suppress, or surprise the enemy. Such actions nullify the enemy's ability to conduct synchronized, mutually supporting reactions. Simultaneity presents the enemy with multiple dilemmas. Then, the enemy cannot focus on a single problem, but must address multiple dilemmas, presenting the enemy with more than it can deal with effectively. (See paragraphs 3-72 through 3-73 for a discussion of simultaneity as a tenet of unified land operations.)

3-11. Army forces increase the depth of their operations in time and space through combined arms, economy of force, continuous reconnaissance, advanced information systems, and joint capabilities. Because Army forces conduct operations across large areas, the enemy faces many potential friendly actions. Executing operations in depth is equally important in security; commanders act to keep threats from operating outside

the reach of friendly forces. In defense support of civil authorities and some stability tasks, depth includes conducting operations that reach all citizens in the area of operations, bringing relief as well as hope. (Paragraphs 3-74 through 3-75 discuss depth as a tenet of unified land operations.)

TASKS OF DECISIVE ACTION

3-12. Decisive action requires simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks. Table 3-1 on page 3-2 lists the tasks associated with each element and the purposes of each task. Each task has numerous associated subordinate tasks. When combined with who (unit), when (time), where (location), and why (purpose), the tasks become mission statements.

Offensive Tasks

3-13. **An offensive task is a task conducted to defeat and destroy enemy forces and seize terrain, resources, and population centers.** Offensive tasks impose the commander's will on the enemy. Against a capable, adaptive enemy, the offense is the most direct and sure means of seizing, retaining, and exploiting the initiative to gain physical and psychological advantages and achieve definitive results. In the offense, the decisive operation is a sudden, shattering action against an enemy weakness that capitalizes on speed, surprise, and shock. If that operation does not destroy the enemy, operations continue until enemy forces disintegrate or retreat to where they no longer pose a threat. Executing offensive tasks compels the enemy to react, creating or revealing additional weaknesses that the attacking force can exploit. (See ADRP 3-90 for a detailed discussion of offensive tasks.)

Defensive Tasks

3-14. **A defensive task is a task conducted to defeat an enemy attack, gain time, economize forces, and develop conditions favorable for offensive or stability tasks.** Normally the defense alone cannot achieve a decisive victory. However, it can set conditions for a counteroffensive or counterattack that enables Army forces to regain the initiative. Defensive tasks are a counter to the enemy offense. They defeat attacks, destroying as much of the attacking enemy as possible. They also preserve and maintain control over land, resources, and populations. The purpose of defensive tasks is to retain key terrain, guard populations, protect lines of communications, and protect critical capabilities against enemy attacks and counterattacks. Commanders can conduct defensive tasks to gain time and economize forces so offensive tasks can be executed elsewhere. (See ADRP 3-90 for a detailed discussion of defensive tasks.)

Stability Tasks

3-15. *Stability tasks* are tasks conducted as part of operations outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment and provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief (ADP 3-07). These tasks support governance, whether it is imposed by a host nation, an interim government, or military government. Stability tasks involve both coercive and constructive actions. They help to establish or maintain a safe and secure environment and facilitate reconciliation among local or regional adversaries. Stability tasks assist in building relationships among unified action partners, and promote specific U.S. security interests. Stability tasks can also help establish political, legal, social, and economic institutions while supporting the transition to legitimate host-nation governance. Stability tasks cannot succeed if they only react to enemy initiatives. Stability tasks must maintain the initiative by pursuing objectives that resolve the causes of instability. Commanders are legally required to provide the minimum essential stability tasks when controlling an area of operations where populations exist. These essential services provide for minimal levels of security, food, water, shelter, and medical treatment. (See ADRP 3-07 for a detailed discussion of stability.)

Defense Support of Civil Authorities Tasks

3-16. *Defense support of civil authorities* is support provided by United States Federal military forces, Department of Defense civilians, Department of Defense contract personnel, Department of Defense component assets, and National Guard forces (when the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the

Governors of the affected States, elects and requests to use those forces in Title 32, United States Code, status) in response to requests for assistance from civil authorities for domestic emergencies, law enforcement support, and other domestic activities, or from qualifying entities for special events (DODD 3025.18). For Army forces, defense support of civil authorities is a task that takes place only in the homeland and U.S. territories. Defense support of civil authorities is conducted in support of another primary or lead federal agency, or in some cases, local authorities. When defense support of civil authorities is authorized, it consists of four tasks (see table 3-1 on page 3-2). (See DODD 3025.18 for the full name of each task.) National Guard forces in Title 32 or state active duty status under the command and control of the governor and the adjutant general are usually the first forces to respond on behalf of state authorities. When Federal military forces are employed for defense support of civil authorities activities, they remain under Federal military command and control at all times. (See DODD 3025.18 for a detailed discussion of defense support of civil authorities tasks. See JP 3-28 and ADRP 3-28 for discussions of defense support of civil authorities.)

HOMELAND DEFENSE AND DECISIVE ACTION

3-17. *Homeland defense* is the protection of United States sovereignty, territory, domestic population, and critical infrastructure against external threats and aggression or other threats as directed by the President (JP 3-27). The Department of Defense has lead responsibility for homeland defense. The strategy for homeland defense (and defense support of civil authorities) calls for defending the U.S. territory against attack by state and nonstate actors through an active, layered defense—a global defense that aims to deter and defeat aggression abroad and simultaneously protect the homeland. The Army supports this strategy with capabilities in the forward regions of the world, in the geographic approaches to U.S. territory, and within the U.S. homeland.

3-18. Homeland defense operations conducted in the land domain could be the result of extraordinary circumstances and decisions by the President. In homeland defense, Department of Defense and Army forces work closely with federal, state, territorial, tribal, local, and private agencies. Land domain homeland defense could consist of offensive and defensive tasks as part of decisive action. Homeland defense is a defense-in-depth that relies on collection, analysis, and sharing of information and intelligence; strategic and regional deterrence; military presence in forward regions; and the ability to rapidly generate and project warfighting capabilities to defend the United States, its allies, and its interests. These means may include support to civil law enforcement; antiterrorism and force protection; counterdrug; air and missile defense; chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives; and defensive cyberspace operations; as well as security cooperation with other partners to build an integrated, mutually supportive concept of protection.

TRANSITIONING IN DECISIVE ACTION

3-19. Conducting decisive action involves more than simultaneous execution of all its tasks. It requires commanders and staffs to consider their units' capabilities and capacities relative to each task. Commanders consider their missions; decide which tactics, techniques, and procedures to use; and balance the tasks of decisive action while preparing their commander's intent and concept of operations. They determine which tasks the force can accomplish simultaneously, if phasing is required, what additional resources it may need, and how to transition from one task to another.

3-20. The transitions between tasks of decisive action require careful assessment, prior planning, and unit preparation as commanders shift their combinations of offensive, defensive, stability, or defense support of civil authorities tasks. Commanders first assess the situation to determine applicable tasks and the priority for each. When conditions change, commanders adjust the combination of tasks of decisive action in the concept of operations. When an operation is phased, the plan includes these changes. The relative weight given to each element varies with the actual or anticipated conditions. It is reflected in tasks assigned to subordinates, resource allocation, and task organization.

3-21. Decisive action is not a phasing method. Commanders consider the concurrent conduct of each task—offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities—in every phase of an operation. Figure 3-2 on page 3-6 illustrates combinations and weighting of the tasks of decisive action across the phases of a joint campaign or operation. The phases shown are examples. An actual campaign may name and array phases differently. Also, operations do not necessarily move linearly through the phases. For example, a unit

may move from stability to seizing the initiative with little or no time for deterrence. (See JP 3-0 for a discussion on joint phasing.)

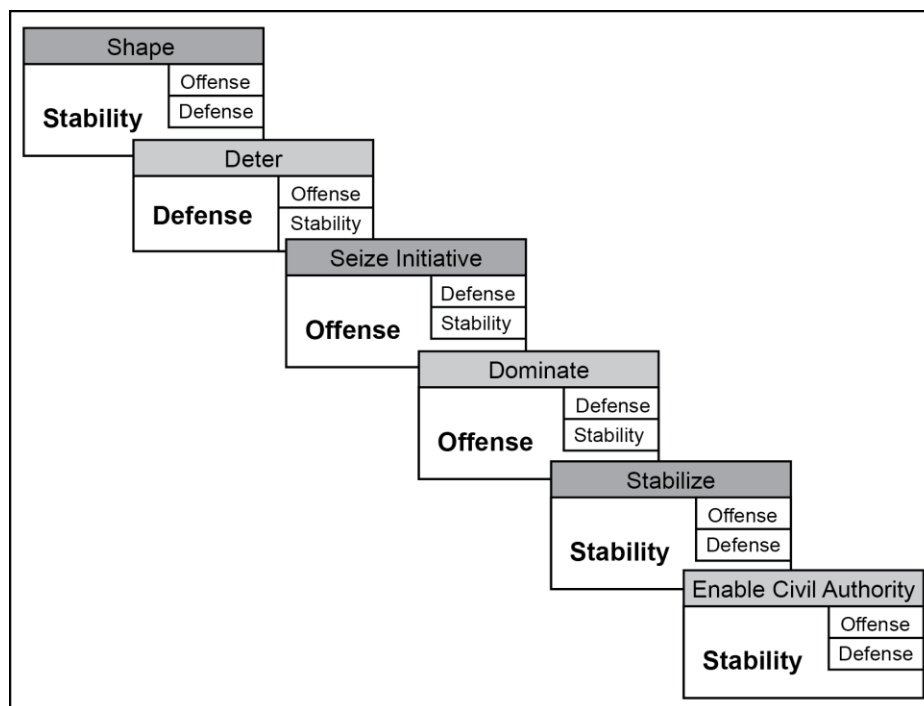


Figure 3-2. Example of combining the tasks of decisive action across the joint phases

3-22. Unanticipated changes in or an improved understanding of an operational environment may result in commanders reframing the problem and modifying operations to adapt to the changing situation. Unforeseen success in an offense resulting in collapse of enemy opposition illustrates one unanticipated change. Another example is degradation in peace operations resulting in a requirement to transition to defensive tasks, or even offensive tasks, to reestablish stability. Commanders need to adjust the task organization to meet changing requirements. In some instances, they incorporate additional forces provided by higher headquarters to assist in the conduct of operations. When transitioning in operations, subordinate commanders must clearly understand the higher commander's intent, concept of operations, and desired end state. Successful commanders understand which transitions involve risks, how much risk to accept, and where risk is accepted.

SEIZE, RETAIN, AND EXPLOIT THE INITIATIVE

3-23. Army forces seize, retain, and exploit the initiative by forcing the enemy to respond to friendly action. By presenting the enemy multiple dilemmas, commanders force the enemy to react continuously until the enemy is finally driven into untenable positions. Seizing the initiative pressures enemy commanders into abandoning their preferred options and making costly mistakes. As enemy mistakes occur, friendly forces seize opportunities and create new avenues for exploitation. Throughout operations, commanders focus combat power to protect populations, friendly forces, and infrastructure; to deny the enemy positions of advantage; and to consolidate gains to retain the initiative.

3-24. Commanders create conditions for seizing the initiative by acting. Without action, seizing the initiative is impossible. Faced with an uncertain situation, there is a natural tendency to hesitate and gather more information to reduce uncertainty. However, waiting and gathering information might reduce uncertainty but not eliminate it. Waiting may even increase uncertainty by providing the enemy with time to seize the initiative. It is far better to manage uncertainty by acting and developing the situation.

3-25. Seizing the initiative means setting and dictating the terms of action throughout the operation. Commanders plan to seize the initiative as early as possible. Effective planning determines where, when, and

how to do so. However, enemies will actively try to prevent this and disrupt friendly plans. Seizing the initiative requires effective plans to counter enemy efforts. During preparation, commanders set conditions that lead to seizing the initiative and assessing the effectiveness of actions. During execution, commanders and staffs recognize and exploit projected opportunities to attack the command and control elements of enemy forces in order to prevent their synchronization of combat power, including use of deception to achieve surprise. Seizing the initiative often requires accepting risk. Commanders and staffs evaluate enemy and friendly actions to determine who has the initiative. They determine what friendly actions will enable friendly forces to retain and exploit the initiative if they have it and seize the initiative if they do not. The following are general indicators that friendly forces have the initiative:

- Friendly forces are no longer decisively engaged or threatened with decisive engagement.
- Subordinate commanders are able to mass combat power or concentrate forces at times and places of their choosing.
- Enemy forces are not offering effective resistance and do not appear capable of reestablishing resistance.
- Friendly forces encounter lighter-than-anticipated enemy resistance or large numbers of prisoners.
- Friendly rates of advance suddenly accelerate or casualty rates suddenly drop.

3-26. Retaining the initiative involves applying unrelenting pressure on the enemy. Commanders do this by synchronizing the warfighting functions to present enemy commanders with continuously changing combinations of combat power at a tempo they cannot effectively counter. Commanders and staffs use information collection assets to identify enemy attempts to regain the initiative. Effective information management processes this information quickly enough to keep commanders inside the enemy's decision-making cycle. Combined with effective planning, information management helps commanders to anticipate key events and likely enemy actions hours or days beforehand and to develop branches, sequels, or adjustments to the plan. During execution, commanders create a seamless, uninterrupted series of actions that force enemies to react immediately and do not allow them to regain synchronization. Ideally, these actions present enemies with multiple critical problems that require more resources to solve than they have.

3-27. Exploiting the initiative means following through on initial successes to realize long-term decisive success. Once friendly forces seize the initiative, they immediately plan to exploit it by conducting continuous operations to accelerate the enemy's complete defeat. Internal to the organization, commanders identify any disorganization among friendly forces and direct reorganization or reconstitution to restore those forces to combat readiness and to develop options to exploit the initiative.

CONSOLIDATE GAINS

3-28. ***Consolidate gains*** is the activities to make permanent any temporary operational success and set the conditions for a sustainable stable environment allowing for a transition of control to legitimate civil authorities. Army forces provide the joint force commander the ability to capitalize on operational success by consolidating gains. Consolidate gains is an integral part of winning armed conflict and achieving success across the range of military operations; it is essential to retaining the initiative over determined enemies and adversaries. To consolidate gains, Army forces reinforce and integrate the efforts of all unified action partners.

3-29. Consolidate gains is not a mission, but rather a capability that Army forces provide to the joint force commander. Consolidate gains is demonstrated by the execution of tasks when emphasis shifts from actions addressing the immediate threats in an operational environment to those measures that address the long term needs of the host nation and its population. It is a transition from the occupation of territory and control of populations by Army forces, gained as a result of military operations, to the transfer of control to legitimate authorities building the capability to govern and secure the host nation. Activities to consolidate gains occur across the range of military operations and are often continuous throughout all phases of an operation.

3-30. Army forces consolidate gains in support of the host nation and its civilian population. These gains may include the relocation of displaced civilians, reestablishment of law and order, performance of humanitarian assistance, and restoration of key infrastructure. Concurrently, Army forces must be able to accomplish such activities while sustaining, repositioning, and reorganizing forces to continue operations.

3-31. Army forces must analyze the host nation's capability and capacity to provide services, or determine the ability of other agencies of government (both host nation and United States), international agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and contractors to provide services that can enable, complement, or conduct as needed. The goal is to address drivers of conflict, foster host-nation resiliencies, and create conditions that enable sustainable peace and security by transitioning capabilities to local authorities and returning to normal peacetime engagement characterized by security cooperation.

3-32. Army forces must deliberately plan and prepare for consolidating gains to capitalize on operational success prior to an operation. Planning considerations include the changes to task organization and the additional assets required. These assets may include engineers, military police, civil affairs, and medical support, especially those assets required for the potential increase in stability tasks. In some instances, Army forces will be in charge of integrating and synchronizing activities. In other situations, the Army will be in support. The Army's campaign quality gives it the capability and capacity to conduct decisive action associated with consolidating gains for a sustained period over large land areas.

3-33. To consolidate gains, Army forces take specific actions. These actions include—

- Consolidation: Forces organize and strengthen their newly occupied positions so that they can be used for subsequent operations.
- Area security: Forces conduct security tasks to protect friendly forces, installation routes, critical infrastructure, populations, and actions within an assigned area of operations.
- Stability tasks: Forces first conduct minimum-essential stability tasks, then maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment and provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.
- Influence over local and regional audiences (when authorized): Commanders ensure that supporting and credible narratives are developed and communicated to the intended population to assist them in understanding the overall goal of military actions and the benefits of those actions for the population.
- Security from external threats: Commanders use forward presence in an area of operations to allow a transition in operations to occur without disruption from nascent threats.

3-34. Army forces routinely conduct consolidation upon occupying a position on the battlefield or achieving success. *Consolidation* is the organizing and strengthening in newly captured position so that it can be used against the enemy (FM 3-90-1). Normally, an attacking unit tries to exploit success, but in some situations, the unit may have to consolidate before exploiting its gains. Consolidation activities include—

- Conducting reconnaissance.
- Establishing security.
- Eliminating enemy pockets of resistance.
- Positioning forces to enable them to conduct a hasty defense by blocking possible enemy counterattacks.
- Adjusting fire planning.
- Preparing for potential additional missions.

(See FM 3-90-1 for an additional discussion of consolidation.)

3-35. However, when consolidating gains, commanders ensure security is both established and can be sustained throughout transition. Army forces conduct continuous reconnaissance and, if necessary, gain or maintain contact with the enemy to defeat or preempt enemy actions and retain the initiative. Consolidating gains may include actions required to eliminate or neutralize isolated or bypassed threat forces (including the processing of enemy prisoners and civilian detainees) to increase area security and protect lines of communications. Commanders must ensure that forces are properly task organized and prepared to confront enemy forces if necessary, while simultaneously consolidating gains. Commanders maintain communications with the population to assist them in understanding the overall goal of military actions and how those actions benefit the population. Capabilities such as military information support operations, public affairs, and combat camera can assist in this effort.

3-36. During the consolidation of gains, Army forces are responsible for accomplishing both the minimum-essential stability tasks and the Army primary stability tasks. Commanders must quickly ensure the provision

of minimum-essential stability tasks of security, food, water, shelter, and medical treatment. Once conditions allow, these tasks are a legal responsibility of Army forces. However, commanders may not need to have Army forces conduct all essential tasks if a military unit or appropriate civilian organization exists that can adequately conduct those tasks. For example, there may be sufficient civilian or military governance in place to ensure that the population has adequate food and medical care. However, Army forces will continue consolidating gains by conducting the Army's primary stability tasks: establish civil security, establish civil control, restore essential services, support to governance, support to economic and infrastructure development, and conduct security cooperation. The tasks associated with the primary stability tasks will evolve over time. The military will retain the lead and execution to establish civil security through the conduct of security force assistance. Eventually, the lead for the other four tasks will transfer to another military or civilian organization, although the Army may retain a supporting role. (For more information on stability tasks, see ADRP 3-07.)

3-37. It is important for commanders to understand that activities to begin and sustain consolidating gains may occur over a significant time. Gradually, emphasis will shift from actions to ensure the defeat of remaining threat forces to those measures that address the needs of the urban population, manage their perceptions, and allow responsibility to shift from Army forces to organizations such as local governing groups, interorganizational groups, or interagency partners. Additionally, there may be interim transitions during consolidating gains when Army forces may transition various tasks to another military force that is task organized to sustain consolidating gains or to a civilian agency to conduct various tasks. If a host-nation government is nonexistent, overall control may transfer to an interim civilian government or to a reconstituted host-nation government.

3-38. Ultimately, commanders conduct decisive action when consolidating gains to make permanent any temporary successes while continuing pressure on enemy forces. Consolidating gains provides security and protection for both friendly forces and the population, facilitates reorganization, and allows forces to prepare for handover of the area of operations and population control to legitimate civil authorities.

3-39. Army forces conduct multi-domain battle, as part of a joint force, to seize, retain, and exploit control over enemy forces. Army forces deter adversaries, restrict enemy freedom of action, and ensure freedom of maneuver and action in multiple domains for the joint force commander. For example, Army forces use aviation and unmanned aircraft systems in the air domain and protect vital communications networks in cyberspace, while retaining dominance in the land domain. Army forces operate dispersed over wide areas while retaining the ability to concentrate rapidly, presenting multiple dilemmas to enemy forces. Key considerations for operating in multiple domains include—

- Effective—
 - Communications.
 - Long-range systems.
 - Systems with reduced sustainment demands.
 - Leaders well versed in the principles of mission command.
- Mobility on land and air to maneuver rapidly over larger distances.
- Combined arms and cross-domain capabilities pushed down to the lowest tactical levels to enable maneuver and survivability. Commanders understanding multi-domain opportunities employ land capabilities to influence or enable operations by unified action partners in other domains.

PRINCIPLES OF UNIFIED LAND OPERATIONS

3-40. A *principle* is a comprehensive and fundamental rule or an assumption of central importance that guides how an organization or function approaches and thinks about the conduct of operations (ADP 1-01). By integrating the six principles of unified land operations—mission command, develop the situation through action, combined arms, adherence to the law of war, establish and maintain security, and create multiple dilemmas for the enemy—Army commanders can achieve operational and strategic success. Success requires fully integrating U.S. military operations with the efforts of unified action partners. Success also requires commanders to exercise disciplined initiative. Initiative is used to gain a position of relative advantage that degrades and defeats the enemy throughout the depth of an organization.

MISSION COMMAND

3-41. *Mission command* is the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations (ADP 6-0). Mission command is exercised by Army commanders. It blends the art of command and the science of control while integrating the warfighting functions to conduct the tasks of decisive action. Mission command has six fundamental principles:

- Build cohesive teams through mutual trust.
- Create shared understanding.
- Provide a clear commander's intent.
- Exercise disciplined initiative.
- Use mission orders.
- Accept prudent risk.

(See ADRP 6-0 for a detailed discussion of the fundamental principles of mission command.)

3-42. Through mission command, commanders integrate and synchronize operations. Commanders understand that they do not operate independently but as part of a larger force. They integrate and synchronize their actions with the rest of the force to achieve the overall objective of the operation. Commanders create and sustain shared understanding and purpose through collaboration and dialogue within their organization and with unified action partners to facilitate unity of effort. They provide a clear commander's intent and use mission orders to assign tasks, allocate resources, and issue broad guidance.

3-43. Guided by the commander's intent and the purpose of the mission, subordinates use disciplined initiative and take actions that will best accomplish the mission. They take appropriate actions and perform the necessary coordination without needing new orders. Often, subordinates acting on the commander's intent develop the situation in ways that exploit unforeseen opportunities. *Commander's intent* is a clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired military end state that supports mission command, provides focus to the staff, and helps subordinate and supporting commanders act to achieve the commander's desired results without further orders, even when the operation does not unfold as planned (JP 3-0).

3-44. Mission command requires commanders to convey a clear commander's intent and concept of operations. These become essential in operations where multiple operational and mission variables interact with the lethal application of ground combat power. Such dynamic interaction often compels subordinate commanders to make difficult decisions in unforeseen circumstances.

3-45. Mission command emphasizes the critical contributions of leaders at every echelon. It establishes a mindset among Army leaders that the best understanding comes from a synthesis of information and an understanding from all echelons and unified action partners—bottom-up input is as important as top-down guidance. Mission command emphasizes the importance of creating shared understanding and purpose. It highlights how commanders—through disciplined initiative within the commander's intent—transition among offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks, look for fleeting opportunities to exploit, and vary the level of control to account for changes in an operational environment.

3-46. Successful mission command fosters adaptability and a greater understanding of an operational environment. Adaptability reflects a quality that Army leaders and forces exhibit through critical thinking, their comfort with ambiguity and uncertainty, their willingness to accept prudent risk, and their ability to rapidly adjust while continuously assessing the situation. A greater understanding enables commanders to make better decisions and develop courses of action that more quickly accomplish missions and achieve the overall end state.

DEVELOP THE SITUATION THROUGH ACTION

3-47. During operations, commanders develop the situation through action. Commanders fight for information to develop the situation while in contact with the enemy and gain information through close association with the population. Developing the situation through action is the responsibility of each and every Soldier. Commanders assign information collection tasks (reconnaissance, surveillance, security

operations, and intelligence operations) to collect information requirements, thus enhancing situational awareness and understanding. A thorough understanding of the operational environment is imperative to identifying conflicting interests and information collection requirements that are developed through reconnaissance, security, and intelligence collection tasks.

3-48. When units encounter an enemy force or an obstacle, commanders must quickly determine the threat they face. For an enemy force, commanders must determine the enemy's composition, dispositions, activities, and movements and then assess the implications of that information. For an obstacle, commanders must determine the type and extent of the obstacle and if it is covered by fire. Obstacles can provide the attacker with information concerning the location of enemy forces, weapon capabilities, and organization of fires. Often this information can only be provided by close combat that forces the enemy to reveal locations, troops, and intentions.

3-49. In planning, commanders actively seek answers to information gaps for developing information requirements that are satisfied through information collection tasks within a given area. Through information collection and analysis, staffs develop options for the commander to further inform the population, influence various actors, seize opportunities, and maintain initiative.

3-50. Commanders take enemy plans, capabilities, and reaction times into account when making decisions. They ensure that plans delegate decision-making authority to the lowest echelon possible to obtain faster and more suitable decisions in battle. Subordinates can then use their initiative to make decisions that further their higher commander's intent. Empowered with trust, authority, and a shared understanding, they can develop the situation through action, adapt, and act decisively.

3-51. In execution, commanders make decisions quickly—even with incomplete information. Commanders who can make and implement decisions faster than the enemy, even to a small degree, gain an accruing advantage that becomes significant over time. Commanders should not delay a decision in hopes of finding a perfect solution to a battlefield problem.

3-52. Timely decisions and actions are essential for effective command. Commanders who consistently decide and act more quickly than the enemy have a significant advantage. By the time the slower commander decides and acts, the faster one has already changed the situation, rendering the slower one's actions inappropriate. With such an advantage, the commander can maintain the initiative and dictate the tempo.

3-53. To make timely decisions, commanders must understand the effects of their decisions on a complex operational environment. To help them understand, staffs work together to develop the environment input to the common operational picture. They must understand the terrain and weather and its impact on operations. They must also understand the population and its needs. Understanding an operational environment includes civil considerations—such as the population (with demographics and culture), the government, economics, nongovernmental organizations, and history—among other factors. Commanders make decisions that start and govern actions by subordinate forces throughout the operations process.

COMBINED ARMS

3-54. ***Combined arms is the synchronized and simultaneous application of all elements of combat power that together achieve an effect greater than if each element was used separately or sequentially.*** Combined arms integrates leadership, information, and each of the warfighting functions and their supporting systems, as well as joint weapon systems. Used destructively, combined arms integrates different capabilities so that counteracting one makes the enemy vulnerable to another. Used constructively, combined arms uses all assets available to the commander to multiply the effectiveness and efficiency of Army capabilities used in stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks.

3-55. Operations against elusive and capable enemies demand an extension of the concept of combined arms from two or more arms or elements of one Service to include the application of unified action partner capabilities. Combined arms uses the capabilities of all Army and joint weapons systems, including cyberspace operations and multinational assets in complementary and reinforcing capabilities. Complementary capabilities protect the weaknesses of one system or organization with the capabilities of a different warfighting function. For example, commanders use artillery (fires) to suppress an enemy bunker complex, pinning down an enemy infantry unit. Protected by integrated air defense systems, the commander's

infantry unit then closes with and destroys the enemy (movement and maneuver). In this example, the fires warfighting function complements the movement and maneuver warfighting function. Also, ground maneuver makes enemy forces vulnerable to joint weapon systems. Electronic warfare assets prevent the enemy from communicating or relaying information about friendly maneuver. Finally, information obtained from nongovernmental organizations can facilitate effective distribution of supplies during humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

3-56. Reinforcing capabilities combine similar systems or capabilities within the same warfighting function to increase the function's overall capabilities. In urban operations, for example, infantry, aviation, and armor units (movement and maneuver) often operate close to each other. This combination reinforces the protection, maneuver, and direct fire capabilities of each. The infantry protects tanks from enemy infantry and antitank systems; tanks provide protection and firepower for the infantry. Attack helicopters maneuver above buildings to fire from positions of advantage, while other aircraft help sustain, extract, or air assault ground forces. Army space-enabled capabilities and services such as communications and Global Positioning System enable communication, navigation, situational awareness, protection, and sustainment of land forces. Army operations are supported by close air support, air interdiction, air defense, and, in some cases, naval surface fire support. Finally, unified action partners bring skills, knowledge, and capabilities that enhance the impact of combined arms on enemy forces.

3-57. Combined arms operations create multiple dilemmas for the enemy. Combined arms operations allow Army forces to gain a position of relative advantage while denying the enemy a relative advantage. Army forces achieve surprise by maneuvering across operational and strategic distances and arriving at unexpected locations. Army forces are reliant on other Services to accomplish such maneuvers. Army forces have the mobility, protection, and firepower necessary to strike the enemy from unexpected directions. In anti-access and area denial environments, dispersion allows Army forces to evade enemy attacks, deceive the enemy, and achieve surprise.

ADHERENCE TO LAW OF WAR

3-58. The *law of war* is that part of international law that regulates the conduct of armed hostilities (JP 1-04). The law of war's evolution was largely humanitarian and designed to reduce the evils of war. The main purposes of the law of war are to—

- Protect combatants, noncombatants, and civilians from unnecessary suffering.
- Provide certain fundamental protections for persons who fall into the hands of the enemy, particularly prisoners of war, civilians, and military wounded, sick, and shipwrecked.
- Facilitate the restoration of peace.
- Assist military commanders in ensuring the disciplined and efficient use of military force.
- Preserve the professionalism and humanity of combatants.

3-59. Soldiers consider five important principles that govern the law of war when planning and executing operations: military necessity, humanity, distinction, proportionality, and honor. Three interdependent principles—military necessity, humanity, and honor—provide the foundation for other law of war principles—such as proportionality and distinction—and most of the treaty and customary rules of the law of war. Law of war principles work as interdependent and reinforcing parts of a coherent system. Military necessity justifies certain actions necessary to defeat the enemy as quickly and efficiently as possible. Conversely, humanity forbids actions unnecessary to achieve that object. Proportionality requires that even when actions may be justified by military necessity, such actions not be unreasonable or excessive. Distinction underpins the parties' responsibility to comport their behavior with military necessity, humanity, and proportionality by requiring parties to a conflict to apply certain legal categories, principally the distinction between the armed forces and the civilian population. Lastly, honor supports the entire system and gives parties confidence in it.

3-60. *Rules of engagement* are directives issued by competent military authority that delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered (JP 1-04). Rules of engagement always recognize the inherent right of self-defense. These rules vary between operations, may vary between types of units in the same area

of operations, and may change during an operation. Adherence to them ensures Soldiers act consistently with international law, national policy, and military regulations.

3-61. Soldiers deployed to a combat zone overseas follow rules of engagement established by the Secretary of Defense and adjusted for theater conditions by the joint force commander. Within the United States and its territories, Soldiers adhere to rules for the use of force. Rules for the use of force consist of directives issued to guide U.S. forces on the use of force during various operations. These directives may take the form of execute orders, deployment orders, memoranda of agreement, or plans. (See JP 3-28 for discussion on rules for the use of force.) There are many similarities among these directives, for example in the inherent right of self-defense, but they differ in intent. Rules of engagement are by nature permissive measures intended to allow the maximum use of destructive combat power appropriate for the mission. Rules for the use of force are restrictive measures intended to allow only the minimum force necessary to accomplish the mission. The underlying principle is a “continuum of force,” a carefully graduated level of response determined by the behavior of possible threats.

3-62. Soldiers use discipline when applying lethal and nonlethal actions, and successful operations require disciplined Soldiers. Today's threats challenge the morals and ethics of Soldiers. Often an enemy does not respect international laws or conventions and commits atrocities simply to provoke retaliation in kind. Enemy and adversary forces, as well as neutral and friendly forces, will take any loss of discipline on the part of Soldiers, distort and exploit it in propaganda, and magnify it through the media. It is therefore crucial that all personnel operate at all times within applicable U.S., international, and in some cases host-nation laws and regulations. The challenge of ensuring Soldiers remain within legal, moral, and ethical boundaries at all times is a leadership concern and priority. This challenge rests heavily on small-unit and company-grade leaders charged with maintaining good order and discipline within their respective units. The Soldier's Rules in AR 350-1 distill the essence of the law of war. They outline the ethical and lawful conduct required of Soldiers in operations, and all Soldiers should follow them. (Table 3-2 lists the Soldier's Rules.)

Table 3-2. The Soldier's Rules

- Soldiers fight only enemy combatants.
- Soldiers do not harm enemies who surrender. They disarm them and turn them over to their superior.
- Soldiers do not kill or torture any personnel in their custody.
- Soldiers collect and care for the wounded, whether friend or foe.
- Soldiers do not attack medical personnel, facilities, or equipment.
- Soldiers destroy no more than the mission requires.
- Soldiers treat civilians humanely.
- Soldiers do not steal. Soldiers respect private property and possessions.
- Soldiers should do their best to prevent violations of the law of war.
- Soldiers report all violations of the law of war to their superior.

ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN SECURITY

3-63. Army forces conduct area security to ensure freedom of movement and action and deny the enemy the ability to disrupt operations. Commanders combine reconnaissance; raids; and offensive, defensive, and stability tasks to protect populations, friendly forces, installations, borders, extended infrastructure, and activities critical to mission accomplishment. Army forces integrate with partner military, law enforcement, and civil capabilities to establish and maintain security. Army forces conduct area security to deny the enemy use of terrain, protect populations, and enable the joint force to project power from land into the air, maritime, space, and cyberspace domains. The Army's ability to establish control on land prevents the enemy from disrupting activities and efforts critical to consolidating gains in the wake of successful military operations.

3-64. Security operations during preparation prevent surprise and reduce uncertainty. They provide early and accurate warning of enemy operations to provide the force being protected with time and maneuver space within which to react to the enemy and to develop the situation to allow the commander to effectively use the protected force. Security operations are designed to prevent enemies from discovering the friendly force's plan and to protect the force from unforeseen enemy actions. Security elements direct their main effort toward

preventing the enemy from gathering essential elements of friendly information. As with reconnaissance, security is a dynamic effort that anticipates and thwarts enemy collection efforts. When successful, security operations provide the force enough time and maneuver space to react to enemy attacks. To accomplish this, staffs coordinate security operations among the units that conduct them and concurrently synchronize them with local unit security.

CREATE MULTIPLE DILEMMAS FOR THE ENEMY

3-65. Army forces present the enemy with multiple dilemmas because they possess the simultaneity to overwhelm the enemy physically and psychologically, the depth to prevent enemy forces from recovering, and the endurance to sustain operations. Simultaneous operations in depth and across multiple domains, supported by military deception, present the enemy with multiple dilemmas, degrade enemy freedom of action, reduce enemy flexibility and endurance, and upset enemy plans and coordination. At the same time, these operations place critical enemy functions at risk and deny the enemy the ability to synchronize or generate combat power. The simultaneous application of combat power throughout the area of operations is preferable to the attritional nature of sequential operations. Army forces use joint and multinational capabilities in a complementary and reinforcing fashion to create multiple dilemmas.

3-66. The capability to project power across operational distances allows forces to present the enemy with multiple dilemmas as forces with mobility, protection, and lethality arrive at unexpected locations, bypassing enemy anti-access and aerial denial systems and strong points. Forcible entry operations can create multiple dilemmas by creating threats that exceed the enemy's capability to respond.

3-67. To create multiple dilemmas, commanders must know the positioning and dispersion of enemy forces. Commanders commit forces to conduct reconnaissance as part of a focused effort to collect information on enemy activities and resources; geographical, hydrological, and meteorological characteristics; and civilian considerations. The information gained is used to inform situational understanding, decision making, intelligence preparation of the battlefield, course of action development, and target development and refinement.

3-68. Reconnaissance efforts, by nature, are not conducted with the expressed purpose to delay, disrupt, divert, or destroy enemy forces. However, reconnaissance efforts develop the situation through actions, such as reconnaissance in force, to test the enemy's strength, dispositions, and reactions or to obtain other information. A *reconnaissance in force* is a deliberate combat operation designed to discover or test the enemy's strength, dispositions, and reactions or to obtain other information (ADRP 3-90). This operation is an aggressive reconnaissance that is conducted as an offensive operation. A commander assigns a reconnaissance in force mission when the enemy is known to be operating within an area, and the commander cannot obtain adequate intelligence by any other means. Because of the lack of information about the enemy, a commander normally conducts a reconnaissance in force across a broad front as a movement to contact, deliberate attack, or raid.

3-69. With knowledge of how the enemy is arrayed, Army forces achieve surprise through maneuver across vast distances and arrival at unexpected locations. Army forces have the mobility, protection, and firepower necessary to strike the enemy from unexpected directions. Army forces operate dispersed while maintaining mutual support. Dispersion allows Army forces to evade enemy attacks, deceive the enemy, and achieve surprise. Even when operating dispersed, combined arms teams are able to concentrate rapidly to isolate the enemy, attack critical enemy assets, and seize upon fleeting opportunities.

3-70. Army forces conduct continuous reconnaissance and security operations to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative over the enemy while protecting the force against dangers. As part of the joint force, Army forces maneuver and project power to ensure joint force freedom of action and deny the enemy the ability to operate freely. Army leaders synchronize the efforts of unified action partners to ensure unity of effort.

TENETS OF UNIFIED LAND OPERATIONS

3-71. *Tenets of operations* are desirable attributes that should be built into all plans and operations and are directly related to the Army's operational concept (ADP 1-01). The tenets of unified land operations describe the Army's approach to generating and applying combat power across the range of military operations through the four tasks of decisive action. For Army forces, an operation is a military action, consisting of two

or more related tactical actions, designed to achieve a strategic objective, in whole or in part. A tactical action is a battle or engagement employing lethal and nonlethal actions designed for a specific purpose relative to the enemy, the terrain, friendly forces, or other entities. Tactical actions include widely varied activities. They can include an attack to seize a piece of terrain or destroy an enemy unit, the defense of a population, and the training of other militaries to assist security forces as part of building partner capacity. In the homeland, Army forces apply the tenets of operations when in support of civil authorities in order to save lives, alleviate suffering, and protect property. Army forces may provide assistance to civil authorities in situations such as natural disasters, chemical or biological incidents, or major public events. Army operations are characterized by four tenets:

- Simultaneity.
- Depth.
- Synchronization.
- Flexibility.

SIMULTANEITY

3-72. **Simultaneity is the execution of related and mutually supporting tasks at the same time across multiple locations and domains.** Operating simultaneously across the land, air, maritime, space, and cyberspace domains allows Army forces to deliver multiple blows to the enemy while reassuring allies and influencing neutrals. The simultaneous application of joint and combined arms capabilities across the range of military operations aims to overwhelm the enemy physically and psychologically. Combined arms operations create multiple dilemmas for the enemy. Army forces achieve surprise by maneuvering across strategic distances and arriving at unexpected locations. Simultaneity extends efforts beyond physical battlefields into other contested spaces such as public perception, political subversion, illicit financing, and criminality.

3-73. Interdependence gained by the right mix of complementary conventional and special operations forces, at the appropriate echelon, enhances success throughout the range of military operations and all phases of joint operations. Simultaneity requires creating shared understanding and purpose through collaboration with all elements of the friendly force.

DEPTH

3-74. **Depth is the extension of operations in time, space, or purpose to achieve definitive results.** Army leaders engage enemy forces throughout their depth, preventing the effective employment of reserves, command and control nodes, logistics, and other capabilities not in direct contact with friendly forces. Operations in depth can disrupt the enemy's decision cycle. These operations contribute to protecting the force by destroying enemy capabilities before the enemy can use them. Commanders balance their forces' tempo and momentum to produce simultaneous results throughout their areas of operations. Commanders provide depth within the commander's intent (the purpose), which empowers subordinates to act on initiative, resulting in increased tempo. To achieve simultaneity, commanders establish a high tempo to target enemy capabilities located at the limit of a force's operational reach.

3-75. Unified land operations achieve the best results when the enemy must cope with U.S. actions throughout the enemy's entire physical, temporal, and organizational depth. Army forces use combined arms, advanced information systems, and joint capabilities to increase the depth of friendly operations.

SYNCHRONIZATION

3-76. **Synchronization is the arrangement of military actions in time, space, and purpose to produce maximum relative combat power at a decisive place and time.** (JP 2-0). Synchronization is not the same as simultaneity; it is the ability to execute multiple related and mutually supporting tasks in different locations at the same time, producing greater effects than executing each in isolation. For example, synchronization of information collection, obstacles, direct fires, and indirect fires results in the destruction of an enemy formation. When conducting offensive tasks, synchronizing forces along multiple lines of operations temporarily disrupts the enemy organization and allows for exploitation.

3-77. Information networks greatly enhance the potential for synchronization. They do this by allowing commanders to quickly understand an operational environment and communicate their commander's intent. Subordinate and adjacent units use that common understanding to synchronize their actions with those of other units without direct control from the higher headquarters. Information networks do not guarantee synchronization; however, they provide a powerful tool for leaders to use in synchronizing their efforts.

3-78. Commanders determine the degree of control necessary to synchronize their operations. They balance synchronization with agility and initiative, never surrendering the initiative for the sake of synchronization. Rather, they synchronize activities to best facilitate mission accomplishment. Excessive synchronization can lead to too much control, which limits the initiative of subordinates and undermines mission command.

FLEXIBILITY

3-79. **Flexibility is the employment of a versatile mix of capabilities, formations, and equipment for conducting operations.** To achieve tactical, operational, and strategic success, commanders seek to demonstrate flexibility. Flexibility is an important trait of effective leaders. Commanders enable adaptive forces through flexibility, which facilitates collaborative planning and decentralized execution. They exercise mission command to achieve maximum flexibility and foster individual initiative. To adapt, leaders constantly learn from experience (their own and that of others) and apply new knowledge to each situation. Flexible plans help units adapt quickly to changing circumstances in operations. Commanders build opportunities for initiative by anticipating events that allow them to operate inside of the enemy's decision cycle or react promptly to deteriorating situations.

3-80. Flexibility and innovation are at a premium, as are creative and adaptive leaders. As knowledge increases, Army forces continuously adapt to changes in an operational environment. Such adaptation enhances flexibility across the range of military operations. Army forces require flexibility in thought, plans, and operations to be successful in unified land operations.

SUCCESS THROUGH UNIFIED LAND OPERATIONS

3-81. Ultimately, the operational concept of unified land operations aims to accomplish the mission. Execution of unified land operations through decisive action requires the following:

- A clear commander's intent and concept of operations that establishes the role of each element and its contribution to accomplishing the mission.
- A flexible mission command system.
- A shared understanding of an operational environment and the purpose of the operation.
- Aggressive information collection and intelligence analysis.
- Aggressive planning for, and when authorized, execution of cyberspace operations.
- Aggressive security operations.
- Units that can quickly change their task organization.
- Operational and disciplined initiative.
- An ability to respond quickly.
- Planned and responsive sustainment.
- Combat power applied through combined arms.
- Well-trained, cohesive teams and bold, adaptive, and imaginative leaders.
- The acceptance of prudent risk.
- An ability to liaise and coordinate operations with unified action partners.
- An ability to consolidate gains to make success in operations permanent.

3-82. Seizing, retaining, and exploiting the initiative requires commanders to interpret developments and shift the weight of effort throughout their operations to achieve decisive results. As they interpret, the assigned forces and priorities for each task of decisive action change. Throughout an operation, commanders constantly adapt and perform many tasks simultaneously, always preparing to consolidate gains. Commanders change tactics, modify their exercise of mission command, change task organization, and adjust the weight placed on each task of decisive action. These actions keep the force focused on accomplishing the mission, enabling it to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative. Commanders base each action on their understanding of the situation, available resources, and the force's ability to execute multiple, diverse tasks. After each action, commanders assess the results. Assessments include the progress of ongoing operations, changes in the situation, and effects the rules of engagement have on the force's effectiveness. Commanders not only assess how well a current operation is accomplishing the mission, but also how its conduct is shaping the situation for subsequent missions within the Army's operational structure.

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