Chapter 6

Conducting Full Spectrum Operations

I think the time has come when we should attempt the boldest moves, and my experience is that they are easier of execution than more timid ones…

Major General William Tecumseh Sherman

6-1. While differing dramatically in their particulars, full spectrum operations follow a cycle of planning, preparation, execution, and continuous assessment. These cyclic activities are sequential but not discrete; they overlap and recur as circumstances demand. As a whole, they make up the *operations process*. Battle command drives the operations process (see Figure 6-1, page 6-2). Army forces design and conduct operations to win on the offensive; dictate the terms of combat and avoid fighting the enemy on his terms; seize and retain the initiative; and build momentum quickly to win decisively.

CONTENTS

PLAN

6-2. The commander's intent and planning guidance direct the activities of the staff and subordinate commanders. The staff assists the commander with the coordination and detailed analysis necessary to convert the planning guidance and commander's intent into a plan. The plan becomes a common reference point for operations (see FM 5-0).

6-3. ***Planning* is the means by which the commander envisions a desired outcome, lays out effective ways of achieving it, and communicates to his subordinates his vision, intent, and decisions, focusing on the results he expects to achieve.** Plans forecast but do not predict. A plan is a continuous, evolving framework of anticipated actions that

maximizes opportunities. It guides subordinates as they progress through each phase of the operation. Any plan is a framework from which to adapt, not a script to be followed to the letter. The measure of a good plan is not whether execution transpires as planned but whether the plan facilitates effective action in the face of unforeseen events. Good plans foster initiative.

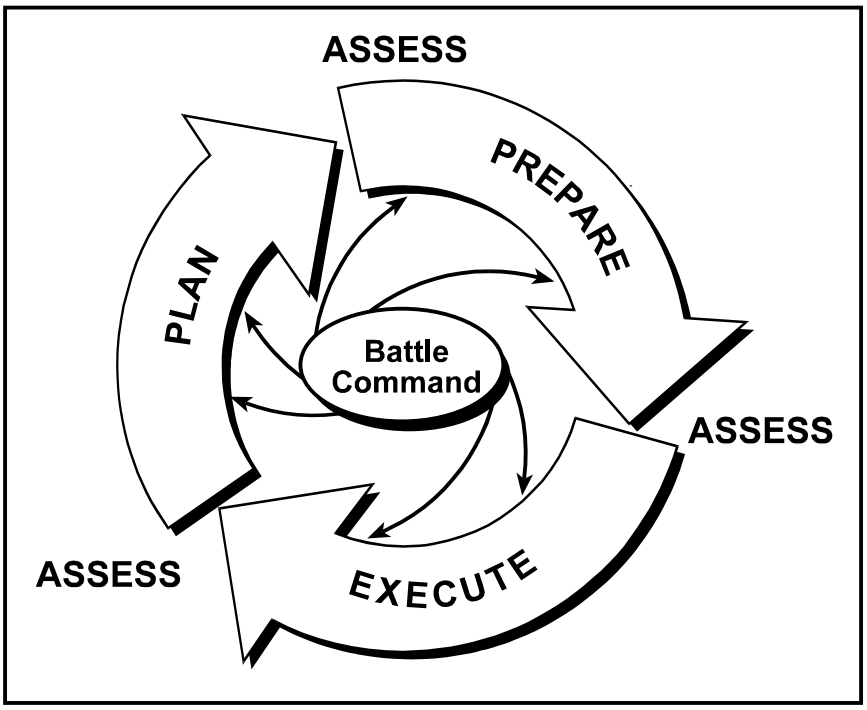

Figure 6-1. The Operations Process

6-4. Scope, complexity, and length of planning horizons differ between operational and tactical planning. Campaign planning coordinates major actions across significant periods. Planners mesh service capabilities with those of joint and multinational formations as well as interagency and nongovernmental organizations. Tactical planning has the same clarity of purpose as operational planning, but has a shorter planning horizon. Comprehensive, continuous, and adaptive planning characterizes successful operations at both the operational and tactical levels.

6-5. Plans specify what commanders will decide personally. In the offense, for example, commanders normally decide when to commit the reserve. In a tense stability operation, the commander may decide the exact positions of tactical elements. Regardless of echelon, commanders identify those information requirements they consider most important to their decisions—the commander's critical information requirements (CCIR). These are typically information requirements that help them confirm their vision of the battlefield or identify significant deviations from it. The staff incorporates CCIR into the appropriate parts of the plan and passes them to subordinate units.

6-6. Plans give subordinates the latitude and guidance to exercise disciplined initiative within the bounds of the commander's intent. For example, aviation and ground maneuver elements might attack enemy missiles capable of

delivering weapons of mass destruction (WMD) wherever located, no matter what their mission at the time. Some operations require tight control over subordinate elements. However, commanders ensure that plans remain as flexible as possible and impose the minimum control required for mission success. Commanders encourage subordinates to seize the initiative through plans and directions that provide guidance concerning opportunity.

6-7. German Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke (victor in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870) observed that "no plan…extends with any degree of certainty beyond the first encounter with the main enemy force." This is as true today as it was more than a century ago. Moltke's dictum, rather than condemning the value of planning, reminds commanders and staffs of the relationship between planning and execution during operations. The purpose of any plan is to establish the conceptual basis for action. The plan provides a reasonably accurate forecast of execution. However, it remains a starting point, not the centerpiece of the operation. As GEN George S. Patton Jr. cautioned, "…one makes plans to fit circumstances and does not try to create circumstances to fit plans. That way danger lies."

OPERATIONAL AND TACTICAL PLANNING

6-8. Planning is dynamic and continuous (see JP 5-0). Operational-level planning focuses on developing plans for campaigns, subordinate campaigns, and major operations. Combatant commanders develop theater campaign plans to accomplish multinational, national, and theater strategic objectives. Subordinate unified commands typically develop subordinate campaign plans or operation plans that accomplish theater strategic objectives. Joint task force (JTF) commanders may develop subordinate campaign plans if the mission requires military operations of sufficient scope, size, complexity, and duration. Land component commanders normally develop plans for major operations that support the campaign plan.

6-9. In major operations, Army force commanders choose to accept or decline battle, decide what use to make of tactical successes and failures, and advise joint force commanders (JFCs) on the long-term needs and prospects of their operations. Since campaign plans generally set a series of long-term objectives, they often require phases. Therefore, a campaign plan normally provides a general concept of operations for the entire campaign and a specific operation order for the campaign's initial phase. Planning for major operations mirrors planning for the overall campaign but is reduced in scope. Even if a major operation is not the initial phase of a campaign, planning for it as a branch or a sequel may begin long before actual execution.

6-10. Operational and tactical planning complement each other but have different aims. Operational planning prepares the way for tactical activity on favorable terms; it continually seeks to foster and exploit tactical success. Major operations depend on creatively using tactical actions to accomplish strategic or operational purposes in specific contexts against adaptive opponents. Tactical planning emphasizes flexibility and options. Planning horizons for tactical actions are relatively short. Comprehensive planning may be feasible only for the first engagement or phase of a battle; succeeding actions depend on enemy responses and circumstances. The art of tactical planning lies in anticipating and developing sound branches and sequels.

6-11. Brevity is essential; so is speed. Staffs must avoid consuming too much time developing lengthy plans that contain irrelevant details. When plans arrive late, subordinate units can only react. To save time and shorten plans, commanders and staffs anticipate support requirements and forecast options. Headquarters at each level plan in parallel with higher and lower headquarters. Parallel planning expedites the exchange of information among headquarters and should be used as much as possible. Commanders exploit technology to increase situational understanding and speed of planning.

Change of Plans at Normandy

On 6 June 1944, Army forces executed Operation Overlord, an air and sea invasion of Western Europe. VII Corps planned an assault on Utah Beach by the 4th Infantry Division along with predawn airborne drops by the 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions. Like most D-Day operations, events proceeded differently than planned.

Upon execution, the airborne units were scattered across the French countryside with some units forming quickly while others grouped into small, isolated pockets. Regardless, airborne troops pressed on to their objectives or fought where they were, creating disorder among the defenders.

The 4th Infantry Division landed at Utah Beach where, of four beach control vessels guiding the force, one broke down and two others were sunk. The remaining vessel guided the landing force to the beaches, but they arrived south of their designated areas. BG Theodore Roosevelt Jr., the assistant division commander, made a personal reconnaissance and realized that the original plan must change. He returned to the landing site and ordered the two infantry battalions to advance inland instead of realigning onto the original amphibious landing sites, a decision that was executed without confusion. Changing plans fit the circumstances, and the 4th Infantry Division successfully pressed the fight inland.

6-12. There are two doctrinal planning procedures (see FM 5-0). In units with a formally organized staff, the military decision making process helps commanders and staffs develop estimates, plans, and orders. It provides a logical sequence of decision and interaction between the commander and staff. The military decision making process provides a common framework for all staffs that supports the maximum use of parallel planning. At the lowest tactical echelons, commanders do not have a staff. Consequently, commanders and leaders follow the troop leading procedures. Both procedures hinge on the commander's ability to visualize and describe the operation. Both are means to an end: their value lies in the result, not the process.

PHASING

6-13. **A *phase* is a specific part of an operation that is different from those that precede or follow. A change in phase usually involves a change of task.** Phasing assists in planning and controlling. Considerations of time, distance, terrain, resources, and important events contribute to the decision to phase an operation.

6-14. If Army forces lack the means to overwhelm an enemy in a single simultaneous operation, then commanders normally phase the operation. A phase is a period when a large portion of the force conducts similar or mutually supporting activities. Operations link successive phases. Individual phases gain significance only in the larger context of the campaign or major operation. Each phase should strive for simultaneity in time, space, and purpose. In this way, commanders combine simultaneous operations within phases while sequencing operations to achieve the end state.

6-15. Links between phases and the requirement to transition between phases are critically important. Commanders establish clear conditions for how and when these transitions occur. Although phases are distinguishable to friendly forces, the operational design conceals these distinctions from opponents through concurrent, complementary joint and Army actions.

BRANCHES AND SEQUELS

6-16. Operations never proceed exactly as planned. An effective design places a premium on flexibility. Commanders incorporate branches and sequels into the operational design to gain flexibility. Visualizing and planning branches and sequels are important because they involve transition—changes in mission, in type of operation, and often in forces required for execution. Unless planned and executed efficiently, transitions can reduce the tempo of the operation, slow its momentum, and cede the initiative to the adversary.

6-17. **A *branch* is a contingency plan or course of action (an option built into the basic plan or course of action) for changing the mission, disposition, orientation, or direction of movement of the force to aid success of the current operation, based on anticipated events, opportunities, or disruptions caused by enemy actions. Army forces prepare branches to exploit success and opportunities, or to counter disruptions caused by enemy actions.** Commanders anticipate and devise counters to enemy actions. Although anticipating every possible threat action is impossible, branches anticipate the most likely ones. Commanders execute branches to rapidly respond to changing conditions.

6-18. ***Sequels* are operations that follow the current operation. They are future operations that anticipate the possible outcomes—success, failure, or stalemate—of the current operation.** A counteroffensive, for example, is a logical sequel to a defense; exploitation and pursuit follow successful attacks. Executing a sequel normally begins another phase of an operation, if not a new operation. Commanders consider sequels early and revisit them throughout an operation. Without such planning, current operations leave forces poorly positioned for future opportunities, and leaders are unprepared to retain the initiative. Both branches and sequels should have execution criteria, carefully reviewed before their implementation and updated based on assessment of current operations.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

6-19. **The *concept of operations* describes how commanders see the actions of subordinate units fitting together to accomplish the mission. As a minimum, the description includes the scheme of**

maneuver and concept of fires. The concept of operations expands the commander's selected course of action and expresses how each element of the force will cooperate to accomplish the mission. Where the commander's intent focuses on the end state, the concept of operations focuses on the method by which the operation uses and synchronizes the battlefield operating systems (BOS) to translate vision and end state into action. Commanders ensure that the concept of operations is consistent with both their intent and that of the next two higher commanders.

RISK MANAGEMENT

6-20. ***Risk management*** **is the process of identifying, assessing, and controlling risk arising from operational factors, and making an informed decision that balances risk cost with mission benefits.** It provides leaders with a systematic mechanism to identify risk associated with a course of action during planning (see FM 3-100.14; FM 5-0). Commanders integrate risk management into all aspects of the operations process. During planning, commanders identify, assess, and weigh risks. They convey risk considerations as guidance. Risk guidance affects course of action development. It also affects application of some elements of operational design, such as end state, designation of objectives, and lines of operation. Risk management also influences task organization; control measures; and the concepts of operations, fires, and CSS. During execution, assessment of risk assists commanders in making informed decisions regarding changes to task organization, shifting priorities of effort and support, and shaping future operations. Effective risk management results in mission accomplishment at least cost.

ORDERS

6-21. Orders translate plans into execution. When possible, commanders issue them personally, face-to-face. If this is not possible, a video teleconference or other communication means can substitute. Commanders allow their subordinates maximum freedom of action, providing mission-type orders whenever practical. Mission-type orders specify what to do and the purpose for doing it, without prescribing how to do it (see FM 6-0). Control measures should aid cooperation among forces without imposing needless restrictions on their freedom of action.

PREPARE

6-22. ***Preparation*** **consists of activities by the unit before execution to improve its ability to conduct the operation including, but not limited to, the following: plan refinement, rehearsals, reconnaissance, coordination, inspections, and movement.** It requires staff, unit, and soldier actions. The complexity of operations imposes significant challenges. The nature of land operations differs tremendously from situation to situation. Mission success depends as much on preparation as planning. Rehearsals help staffs, units, and individuals to prepare for full spectrum operations. Preparation includes a range of activities. These include mission rehearsals, brief-backs, equipment and communications checks, standing operating procedure (SOP) reviews, load plan verification, soldier readiness preparation, and weapons test-firing.

STAFF PREPARATION

6-23. Each staff section and element conducts activities to maximize the operational effectiveness of the force. Coordination between echelons and preparation that precedes execution are just as important, if not more important, than developing the plan. Staff preparation includes assembling and continuously updating estimates. For example, continuous intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) provides accurate situational updates for commanders when needed. Whether incorporated into a formal process or not, the preparatory activities of staff sections and force elements inform planning and continue throughout preparation and execution. Updated estimates form the basis for staff recommendations; the value of current, reasonably accurate estimates increases exponentially with tempo.

UNIT PREPARATION

6-24. Warfighting skills developed and honed in training form the base of mission success. Without the Army's ability to fight and win, commitment of its units to a theater would entail unacceptable risks. Combat-ready units can adapt readily to noncombat situations; units not trained to standard cannot survive in combat situations. The knowledge, discipline, cohesion, and technical skill necessary to defeat an enemy are also fundamental for success in environments that seem far removed from the battlefield. The combat capability of Army forces is the basis for all it does. In a stability operation, the threat of force may deter escalation. In a support operation, it may preempt violence and lawlessness.

6-25. The tempo may not allow commanders to withdraw entire formations for extensive reorganization and training. However, Army unit modularity lets commanders designate some elements for training while the rest of the force continues the mission. This concurrent training may take place in theater-designated training areas, where units receive intensified maintenance support while conducting individual and collective training. The creation of training areas is both necessary and a challenge for Army commanders.

INDIVIDUAL PREPARATION

6-26. Before the force deploys, soldiers prepare for overseas action. Army units frequently receive augmentation and replacements during preparation for deployment. Commanders pay special attention to the reception and preparation of these soldiers and to integrating their families into support groups. In addition to preparing replacements for deployment, commanders ensure that gaining units rapidly assimilate them as team members.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

6-27. Operational requirements, policy, and law define rules of engagement (ROE). ROE always recognize the right of self-defense, the commander's right and obligation to protect assigned personnel, and the national right to defend US forces, allies, and coalition participants against armed attack. The Joint Chiefs of Staff standing ROE provide baseline guidance (see CJCSI 3121.01A). The standing ROE may be tailored and supplemented for specific operations to meet commanders' needs. Effective ROE are enforceable, understandable, tactically sound, and legally sufficient. Further,

effective ROE are responsive to the mission and permit subordinate commanders to exercise initiative when confronted by opportunity or unforeseen circumstances.

6-28. In all operations, whether using lethal or nonlethal force, ROE may impose political, practical, operational, and legal limitations upon commanders. Commanders factor these constraints into planning and preparation as early as possible. Withholding employment of particular classes of weapons and exempting the territory of certain nations from attack are examples of such limitations. Tactically, ROE may extend to criteria for initiating engagements with certain weapons systems (for example, unobserved fires) or reacting to an attack. ROE never justify illegal actions. In all situations, soldiers and commanders use the degree of force that is militarily necessary, proportional to the threat, and prudent for future operations.

6-29. ROE do not assign specific tasks or require specific tactical solutions; they allow commanders to quickly and clearly convey to subordinates a desired posture regarding the use of force. In passing orders to subordinates, commanders act within the ROE received. However, ROE never relieve commanders from the responsibility to formulate an operational design. The end state, objectives, and mission must be clear. Commanders at all levels continually review the ROE to ensure their effectiveness in light of current and projected conditions. Such considerations may include ROE for computer network attack. Soldiers who thoroughly understand ROE are better prepared to apply the proper balance of initiative and restraint.

Home Station, Predeployment, and Deployment Training

In 1995, the 1st Armored Division changed its mission essential task list (METL) to prepare for peace enforcement operations in Bosnia. The nature of ongoing diplomatic negotiations created difficult circumstances for commanders trying to determine when they would deploy. Regardless, the on-again, off-again nature of diplomatic negotiations allowed the 1st Armored Division to transition from a wartime to a peacekeeping METL. The division made maximum use of the available time, undergoing a two-month intensive training and certification process at home station and the Combat Maneuver Training Center, Hohenfels, Germany. Commanders and staff participated in command post exercises designed to match Balkan political-military realities, while leaders and soldiers engaged in situational training exercises and cold weather training. Upon deployment, observers from the Center for Army Lessons Learned accompanied the division and observed ongoing operations. Center for Army Lessons Learned members sent reports to Combat Maneuver Training Center trainers, who updated existing training scenarios to match changing operational conditions in the theater. The division also continued training after deployment to keep a warfighting edge during the peace enforcement operation. 1st Armored Division maneuver battalion soldiers rotated from Bosnia to Taborfalva Training Area in Hungary once during their tour. There they underwent gunnery qualification. The soldiers then returned to Bosnia and resumed their mission.

EXECUTE

6-30. Execution is concerted action to seize and retain the initiative, build and maintain momentum, and exploit success. The tenet of initiative is fundamental to success in any operation, yet simply seizing the initiative is not enough. A sudden barrage of precision munitions may surprise and disorganize the enemy, but if not followed by swift and relentless action, the advantage diminishes and disappears. Successful operations maintain the momentum generated by initiative and exploit successes within the commander's intent.

SEIZE AND RETAIN THE INITIATIVE

6-31. Initiative gives all operations the spirit, if not the form, of the offense. Operationally, seizing the initiative requires leaders to anticipate events so their forces can see and exploit opportunities faster than the enemy. Once they seize the initiative, Army forces exploit opportunities it creates. Initiative requires constant effort to force an enemy to conform to friendly purposes and tempo while retaining friendly freedom of action. From the leader's perspective, commanders place a premium on audacity and making reasoned decisions under uncertain conditions. The commander's intent and aggressiveness of subordinates create conditions for exercising disciplined initiative.

6-32. Enemies who gain and maintain the initiative compel Army forces to react to their strengths and asymmetric capabilities. Ways enemies may try to do this include attempting to neutralize US technological and organizational superiority, adapting the tempo to their capabilities, and outlasting Army forces. Therefore, Army forces seize the initiative as soon as possible and dictate the terms of action throughout the operation. Army forces compel the adversary to accept action on terms established by friendly forces. Provoked to react to US actions, the adversary cedes the initiative and opens himself to exploitation when he errs or fails to react quickly enough.

Take Action

6-33. 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 the uncertainty. However, waiting and gathering information might reduce uncertainty, but will 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. When the immediate situation is unclear, commanders clarify it by action, not sitting and gathering information.

6-34. Commanders identify times and places where they can mass the effects of combat power to relative advantage. To compel a reaction, they threaten something the enemy cares about—his center of gravity or decisive points leading to it. By forcing the enemy to react, commanders initiate an action-to-reaction sequence that ultimately reduces enemy options to zero. Each action develops the situation further and reduces the number of possibilities to be considered, thereby reducing friendly uncertainty. Each time the enemy must react, his uncertainty increases. Developing the situation by forcing the enemy to react is the essence of seizing and retaining the initiative.

6-35. Action is not solely offensive. Force projection may initiate enemy reactions. Movement of forces, together with military deception, often triggers an enemy response. Commanders may deter or induce a desired enemy action by beginning defensive preparations. Aggressive reconnaissance, in particular, allows commanders at every level to gain and maintain contact with enemy forces. Reconnaissance develops the situation, protects friendly forces from surprise, and retains the initiative. Action includes force protection activities that preclude or reduce specific enemy threats.

Create and Exploit Opportunities

6-36. Events that offer better ways to success are opportunities. The key to recognizing them is continuous monitoring of the battlespace in light of the objectives and the commander's intent. Failure to understand the opportunities inherent in an enemy's action surrenders the initiative. CCIR must include elements that support seizing and retaining the initiative so soldiers can recognize opportunities as they develop.

6-37. Commanders encourage subordinates to act within their intent as opportunities occur. Vision, clear communication of intent, and the command climate create an atmosphere conducive to the exercise of subordinate initiative. Digitized information processes, the common operational picture (COP), and situational understanding enhance commanders' ability to recognize possibilities, visualize opportunities, and share them with others.

Assess and Take Risk

6-38. Uncertainty and risk are inherent in all military operations. Recognizing and acting on opportunity means taking risks. Reasonably estimating and intentionally accepting risk is not gambling. Carefully determining the risks, analyzing and minimizing as many hazards as possible, and executing a supervised plan that accounts for those hazards contributes to successfully applying military force. Gambling, in contrast, is imprudently staking the success of an entire action on a single, improbable event. Commanders assess risk in ascending orders of magnitude by answering three questions:

- Am I minimizing the risk of losses?
- Am I risking the success of the operation?
- Am I risking the destruction of the force itself?

6-39. When commanders embrace opportunity, they accept risk. Audacity is a catalyst that can reverse a situation through its influence on enemy perception. It is counterproductive to wait for perfect preparation and synchronization. The time taken to issue complete orders across successive nets could mean an opportunity lost. It is far better to quickly summarize the essentials, get things moving, and send the details later. Leaders optimize the use of time with warning orders, fragmentary orders, and routine COP updates. Too great a desire for orderliness leads to overdetailed orders, overcontrol, and failure to seize and retain the initiative.

BUILD AND MAINTAIN MOMENTUM

6-40. Army forces fight thinking, adaptive enemies. Presented with consistent patterns of activity, enemies devise countermeasures. The benefits of

seizing the initiative do not last long, given enemy determination to overthrow the friendly design. Momentum retains and complements initiative.

6-41. Momentum derives from seizing the initiative and executing shaping, sustaining, and decisive operations at a high tempo. Momentum allows commanders to create opportunities to engage the enemy from unexpected directions with unanticipated capabilities. Having seized the initiative, commanders continue to control the relative momentum by maintaining focus and pressure, and controlling the tempo. They ensure that they maintain momentum by anticipating transitions and moving rapidly between types of operations. When the opportunity presents itself to exploit, commanders push all available forces to the limit to build on momentum gained.

Maintain Focus

6-42. In the stress of combat, a commander's instinct may be to focus on the dangers enemy activity poses. That concern is valid, but it must not cloud the commander's primary focus: achieving his own purpose and objectives. Commanders assess enemy activity in terms of the end state and concentrate on what their forces can do to attain it. Further, commanders assess the situation to determine how they can best attack enemy decisive points and protect friendly ones. Commanders evaluate the current situation, seeking opportunities to turn enemy activity to their immediate advantage.

> *…I am heartily tired of hearing about what Lee is going to do. Some of you always seem to think he is suddenly going to turn a double somersault and land in our rear and on both flanks at the same time. Go back to your command and try to think what we are going to do ourselves, instead of what Lee is going to do.*
>
> Lieutenant General U.S. Grant
> Battle of the Wilderness, 1864

Pressure the Enemy

6-43. Pressure derives from the uninterrupted pace, level, and intensity of activity applied to an enemy. Once Army forces gain contact, they maintain it. Constant pressure and prompt transition to an exploitation deny the enemy time to regain balance and react. Operational pauses, even if intentional and designed to improve a combat service support (CSS) posture or restore order, may carry real dangers—to include potential loss of the hard-won benefits of the offensive. Army forces press relentlessly without hesitation and are ruthlessly opportunistic.

6-44. Adept commanders anticipate the need to maintain appropriate forces suitably positioned for exploitation and continuity of action. As maneuver forces slow and approach culmination, commanders consider the best way to maintain tempo and continue to press the enemy. Commanders can replace the leading units with fresh forces, reinforce the lead units, or apply precision fires against targets in depth. As long as the force in contact can maintain pressure and is not approaching a culminating point, reinforcement is generally preferable to battle handover. Operational fires may also create new opportunities for pressing the enemy by complementing maneuver.

Control the Tempo

6-45. Speed promotes surprise and can compensate for lack of forces. It magnifies the impact of success in seizing the initiative. By executing at a rapid tempo, Army forces present enemies with new problems before they can solve current ones. Rapid tempo should not degenerate into haste. Ill-informed and hasty action usually precludes effective combinations of combat power; it may lead to unnecessary casualties. The condition of the enemy force dictates the degree of synchronization necessary. When confronted by a coherent and disciplined enemy, commanders may slow the tempo to deliver synchronized blows. As the enemy force loses cohesion, commanders increase the tempo, seeking to accelerate the enemy's moral and physical collapse.

EXPLOIT SUCCESS

6-46. Ultimately, only successes that achieve the end state count. To determine how to exploit tactical and operational successes, commanders assess them in terms of the higher commander's intent. An operational design links objectives along lines of operations. However, success will likely occur in ways unanticipated in the plan. Commanders may gain an objective in an unexpected way. Success signals a rapid assessment to answer these questions:

- Does the success generate opportunities that more easily accomplish the objectives?
- Does it suggest other lines of operations?
- Does it cause commanders to change their overall intent?
- Should the force transition to a sequel?
- Should the force accelerate the phasing of the operation?

6-47. Operationally, success may signal a transition to the next phase of the campaign or major operation. Ideally, an appropriate sequel is ready. However, even a prepared sequel requires rapid refinement to reflect the realities of the actual success. Commanders see beyond the requirements of the moment. They employ every available asset to extend their operations in time and space to make the success permanent. Commanders understand that they must maintain momentum and initiative to win rapidly and decisively.

6-48. Exploitation demands assessment and understanding of the impact of sustaining operations. CSS provides the means to exploit success and convert it into decisive results. Sustainment preserves the freedom of action necessary to take advantage of opportunity. Commanders remain fully aware of the status of units and anticipate CSS requirements, recognizing that CSS often determines the depth to which Army forces exploit success.

6-49. Rapid tempo and repeated success always disorganize units to some extent. To exploit success and maintain momentum, reorganization occurs concurrently with other operations rather than as a separate phase. Prolonged reorganization can jeopardize momentum and require committing reserves. Enhanced situational understanding gives commanders an accurate description of unit status and expedites reorganization. Successful reorganization depends on CSS. Force commanders provide timely reorganization guidance and priorities to the CSS commanders. Doing this allows CSS commanders to anticipate requirements and position resources.

COMBINE DECISIVE, SHAPING, AND SUSTAINING OPERATIONS

6-50. During execution, commanders combine and direct decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations. Ideally, the decisive operation occurs approximately as planned. However, opportunity and circumstances often alter the sequence and details of the decisive operation. Commanders create or preserve opportunities through shaping operations. Shaping operations precede and occur concurrently with the decisive operation. Sustaining operations ensure freedom of action to maintain momentum and exploit success.

6-51. Ideally, decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations occur at the same time. Simultaneous operations allow commanders to seize and retain the initiative. However, they require overwhelming combat power and information superiority. Commanders determine if they can accomplish the mission with a single, simultaneous operation; if they cannot, they phase it. In making this decision, they consider the skill and size of the opponent, the size of the area of operations (AO), operational reach, available joint support, and the scope of the mission. The crucial consideration is the success of the decisive operation, which must have enough combat power to conclusively determine the outcome. If that combat power is not available, commanders phase the operation to achieve the maximum possible simultaneous action within each phase.

Maneuver and Fires

6-52. Through maneuver, Army forces seek to defeat the enemy decisively. Maneuver directly engages the enemy center of gravity if feasible; if not, it concentrates against decisive points. Maneuver implies more than the use of fire and movement to secure an objective; it aims at the complete overthrow of the enemy's operational design. It requires audacious concepts and ruthless execution.

6-53. Maneuver avoids those enemy forces best prepared to fight; it engages them at a time or place or in a manner that maximizes relative friendly force advantages. Maneuver creates and exposes enemy vulnerabilities to the massed effects of friendly combat power.

6-54. Operations may include periods of extremely fluid, nonlinear operations, alternating with linear operations (see Figure 6-2, page 6-14). A commander may start an operation with a compact arrangement of forces and quickly transition into nonlinear maneuver against an array of objectives throughout the AO. In different circumstances, the commander might direct multiple attacks in depth to disorganize the enemy and seize key terrain; the attacking force would then consolidate, defend, and prepare to resume the offensive. Another example: A joint land force seizes a lodgment using airborne, air assault, and amphibious operations, while special operations forces attack important facilities distributed across a portion of the AO. The airborne and amphibious units then establish a defense around the lodgment to defend against enemy reaction. When additional forces arrive, the land forces conduct nonlinear operations to end the conflict.

6-55. In some cases, multinational considerations may limit the commander's ability to conduct operations throughout the AO. Multinational partners may lack the information systems, precision attack capabilities, and maneuverability of US forces. Commanders adapt their concept of operations

accordingly, blending multinational and US capabilities. The multinational participants might conduct linear operations, while US Army forces conducted simultaneous nonlinear maneuver in depth. Such an operational design would employ each force according to its capabilities and complement linear operations with nonlinear operations.

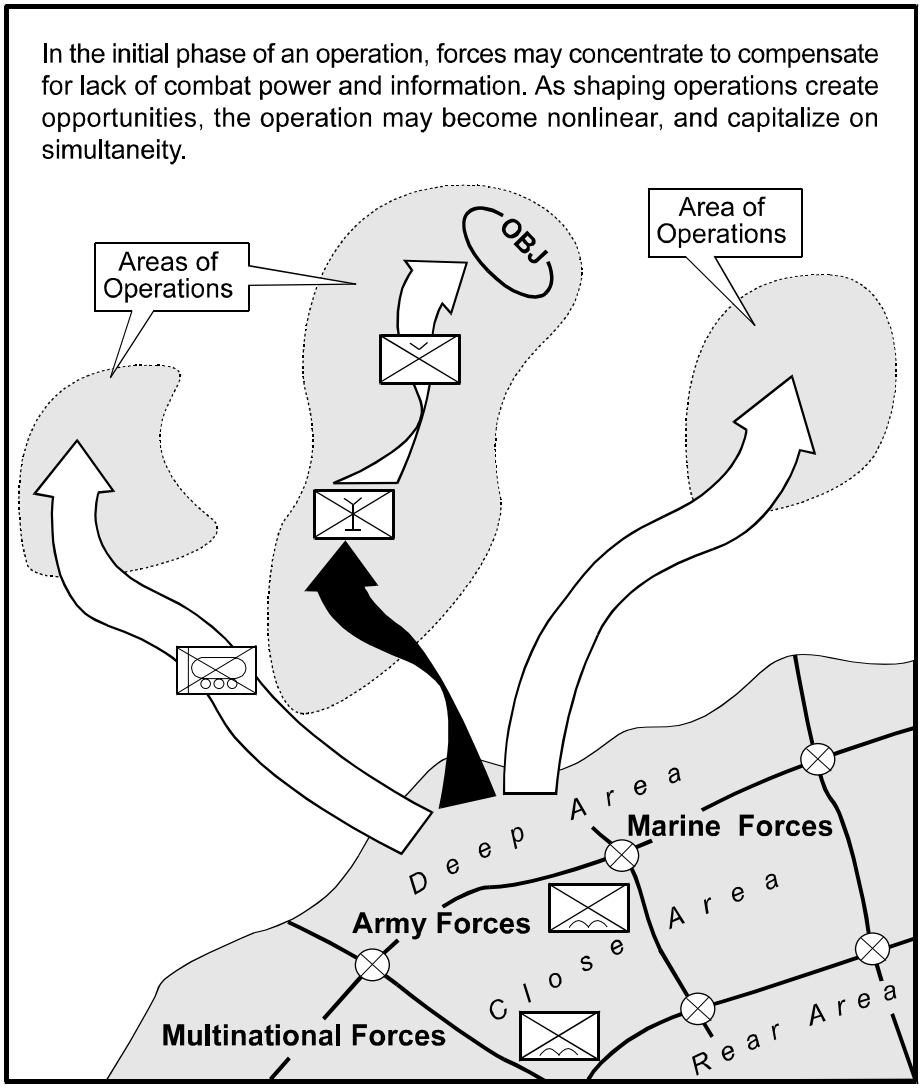

Figure 6-2. Linear and Nonlinear Combinations

6-56. More than ever, precision fires can shape the situation and create conditions for operational and tactical maneuver. Modern weapons are accurate enough for attacks to become very selective. Advanced systems—land, sea, and air—create effects that only complete saturation with fires could achieve in the past. Modern military forces are still assimilating the full consequences of this technological revolution. However, today's weapons allow commanders to avoid lengthy and costly periods of shaping operations to "set the conditions" with fires and other means. Avoiding a lengthy prelude to decisive operations preempts the enemy's chance to seize the initiative.

Commanders determine the appropriate combination of shaping operations needed to ensure success of the decisive operation, recognizing that the effects of fire are transitory.

6-57. The integration of operational fires with operational maneuver requires careful design and effective coordination with the joint force headquarters. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) identify specific enemy capabilities whose loss significantly degrades enemy coherence. Army forces attack the targets with organic lethal and nonlethal means or pass the mission to a supporting joint element. Ideally, the attacks are simultaneous. Simultaneity shocks enemy command and control (C2) systems and often induces paralysis. When the means are insufficient for simultaneous action, commanders plan sequential attacks.

Create Overmatch

6-58. Decisive operations synchronize the BOS to create overmatch at decisive points in the AO. Overmatch is a quantitative or qualitative disparity of such magnitude that the stronger force overwhelms the weaker. Overmatch may apply to one or all of the elements of combat power in combination. Rapid tempo, offensive information operations (IO), and lethal fires combine to disrupt enemy C2 and create a condition of information superiority. Fire support, force protection capabilities, and maneuver neutralize enemy fire support. Supported by indirect and joint fires, maneuver forces close with the enemy and complete his destruction with close combat.

Sustain Combat Power

6-59. Commanders develop a keen understanding of the effects of sustainment on operations. They balance audacity and prudence in terms of CSS and the other BOS. To a significant degree, sustainment determines operational reach and approach. Sustaining operations establish the staying power of Army forces and the depth of operations. They enable commanders to mass the effects of combat power repeatedly and maintain freedom of action.

Use Adaptive Combinations

6-60. As they visualize their battlefield framework and operational design, commanders consider incorporating combinations of contiguous and noncontiguous AOs with linear and nonlinear operations. They choose the combination that fits the situation and the purpose of the operation. Association of contiguous and noncontiguous AOs with linear and nonlinear operations creates the four combinations in Figure 6-3, page 6-16).

6-61. **Linear Operations in Contiguous AOs**. Linear operations in contiguous AOs (upper left in Figure 6-3) typify sustained offensive and defensive operations against powerful, echeloned, and symmetrically organized forces. The contiguous areas and continuous forward line of own troops (FLOT) focus combat power and protect sustaining operations. Commanders normally shape in the deep area, conduct the decisive operation in the close area, and sustain in the rear area.

6-62. **Linear Operations in Noncontiguous AOs**. The upper right box depicts a headquarters with subordinate units conducting linear operations in

noncontiguous AOs. In this case, the higher headquarters retains responsibility for the portion of its AO outside the subordinate unit AOs. The higher headquarters operational design uses nonlinear operations. The subordinate units are conducting linear operations. The subordinate units' battlefield organizations have close, deep, and rear areas; the higher headquarters battlefield organization does not. This combination might be appropriate when the higher headquarters is conducting widely separated simultaneous operations, for example, a vertical envelopment against a decisive point (the decisive operation) from a lodgment (shaping and sustaining operations).

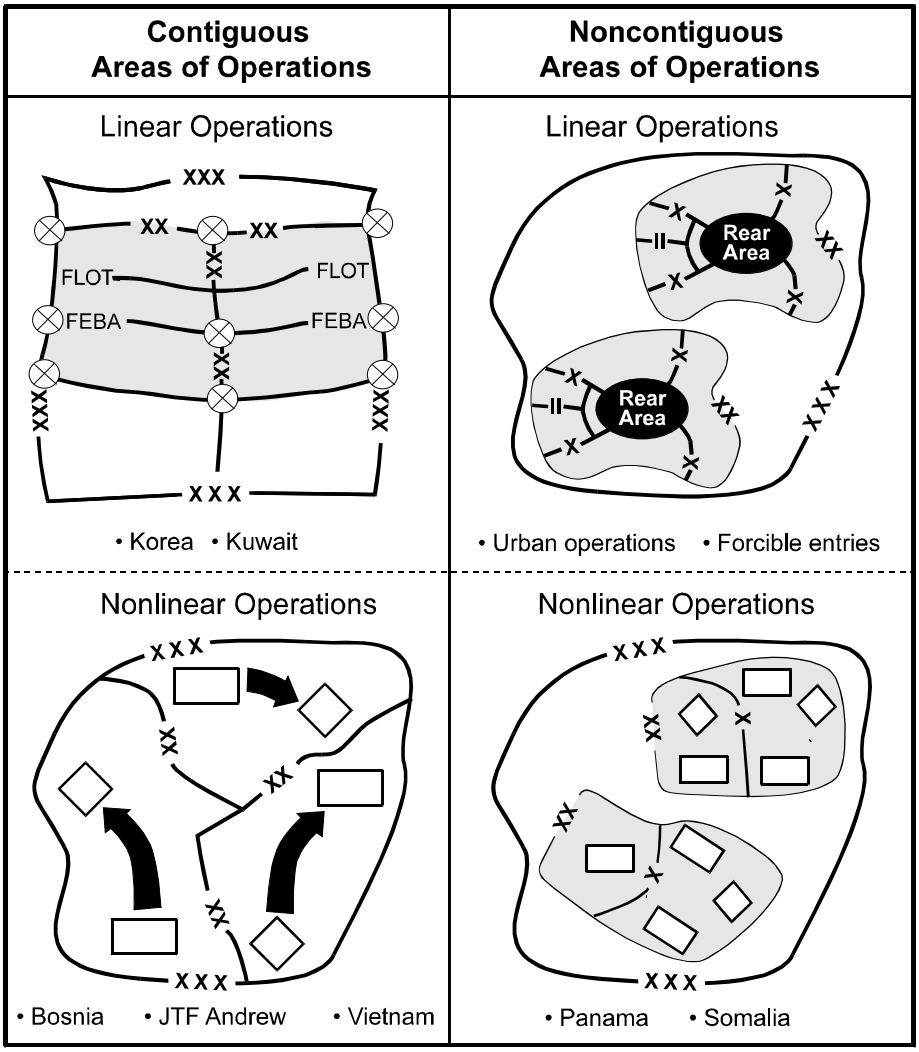

Figure 6-3. Combinations of Contiguous and Noncontiguous Areas of Operations with Linear and Nonlinear Operations

6-63. **Nonlinear Operations in Contiguous AOs**. The lower left box illustrates nonlinear operations being conducted in contiguous AOs. This combination typifies stability operations, such as those in Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Hurricane Andrew support operations also followed this design. The higher headquarters assigns the responsibility for its entire AO to

subordinate units. Within the subordinate AOs, operations are nonlinear, with the subordinate headquarters receiving support and resources from the higher headquarters. On a tactical scale, search and attack operations are often nonlinear operations conducted in contiguous AOs.

6-64. **Nonlinear Operations in Noncontiguous AOs**. The lower right box depicts units conducting nonlinear operations in noncontiguous AOs. The operations of both higher and subordinate units are nonlinear. The size of the land AO, composition and distribution of enemy forces, and capabilities of friendly forces are important considerations in deciding whether to use this battlefield organization and operational design. In Somalia in 1992, for example, Army forces conducted nonlinear stability operations and support operations in widely separated AOs around Kismayu and Mogadishu.

COMPLEX OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

6-65. Army forces execute full spectrum operations in environments that contain complex operational considerations. All operations include challenges. However these complex operational considerations require special attention by commanders and staffs:

- Nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) environments.
- Local populace and displaced persons.
- Unconventional threats.
- Urban operations.

Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Environments

6-66. The threat of WMD profoundly changes theater conditions and imposes major force protection requirements. A major JFC objective is to deter WMD deployment, and if deterrence fails, to find and destroy enemy WMD before they are used. The potential for destruction or contamination of infrastructure by NBC weapons increases the requirement for Army forces that can operate effectively in and around contaminated environments. To a significant degree, the readiness of Army forces to operate in NBC environments deters enemies from using WMD and encourages them to seek solutions that avoid the risk of strategic retaliation.

6-67. Operations in NBC environments demand careful preparation (see JP 3-11; FM 3-11). Vaccines protect soldiers against some biological weapons, but inoculations may need weeks to fully protect recipients. Therefore, protection against these weapons becomes part of the continuous process of keeping units ready. In similar fashion, soldiers may receive medical countermeasures, such as pretreatment before the operation or antidotes during the operation. Medical surveillance programs provide tactical commanders with a tool to develop a baseline of disease threats in the AO. This baseline aids in detecting when the enemy begins biological warfare.

6-68. Units require equipment specifically designed for operations in an NBC environment. Specially trained units may be required to mitigate its effects. NBC operations are CSS-intensive; therefore, sustaining operations require careful planning.

6-69. Commanders at all echelons recognize that the WMD threat is also psychological. Every soldier fears these weapons and has doubts concerning countermeasure and antidote effectiveness. In many cases, the actual threat is less than soldiers imagine, but only realistic individual training will minimize their fear. Training gives soldiers confidence in their equipment and their ability to use it.

6-70. The psychological impact of NBC use goes beyond individual soldiers. Commanders and staffs must be prepared to conduct operations in an NBC environment. Failure to exercise command and staff procedures in scenarios featuring realistic use of NBC weapons can lead to a mentality that NBC hazards present insurmountable obstacles. Only tough command post exercises that force commanders and staffs to work through the problems NBC hazards pose can overcome this attitude. Realistic training demonstrates that NBC hazards, like any other condition, are simply obstacles to overcome.

6-71. Successful US operations may increase the likelihood of enemy WMD use. If the enemy believes that only WMD will retrieve victory, he may resort to using them. Army forces adjust operations accordingly. Rapid maneuver places Army forces near the enemy, compelling him to risk employing WMD on his own forces. Army forces disperse as much as possible and concentrate swiftly, and only as necessary to mass effects. Nonlinear operations position Army forces deep within the enemy AO, complicating his targeting decisions. Precision attacks destroy enemy C2 and CSS systems. Commanders emphasize active and passive force protection. They disperse assembly areas and CSS units. ISR focuses on locating and identifying WMD-capable enemy forces. Reconnaissance units detect and mark hazardous and contaminated areas. Planning also considers US retaliatory or preemptive strikes. Other active measures include theater missile defense, counterair operations, precision fires against enemy WMD systems, and offensive IO.

Local Populace and Displaced Persons

6-72. Army forces create opportunities for success by enlisting the support of the local populace and displaced persons. Frequently, Army forces operate in AOs characterized by chaos and disorder. They may encounter populations with diverse cultures and political orientations that may support, oppose, or remain ambivalent to US presence. In any operation, Army forces will likely encounter displaced civilians or persons of unknown status. Commanders identify these people and design operations with their protection in mind.

6-73. Commanders depend on accurate knowledge of group locations and beliefs to ensure actions taken are consistent with achieving JFC goals and objectives. IO, especially psychological operations, and its related activities (public affairs, and civil-military operations) help commanders influence perceptions and attitudes of the local population. In some operations, IO and its related activities may constitute the decisive operation. The importance of influencing civilians varies, depending on the mission and force objectives.

6-74. The cornerstone of successful action with local populace and displaced persons is discipline. When Army forces operate with the local populace, discipline cements the relationship. In circumstances where the populace is ambivalent or unfriendly, discipline prevents tension from flaring into open

hostility and fosters respect. ROE guide the use of lethal force, not to inhibit action and initiative but to channel it within acceptable limits. The disciplined application of force is more than a moral issue; it is a critical contributor to operational success.

Unconventional Threats

6-75. Commanders protect the force from unconventional threats in four ways. First, they train units and soldiers to protect themselves against terrorist tactics and intrusion. They complement self-defense capabilities by enforcing security policies, such as movement procedures, appropriate to the situation. Second, commanders consider the threat posed by unconventional elements and act to fill gaps in protective capabilities. Actions may include requesting additional combat forces. Third, commanders use all available information resources (including host nation, theater, national, and organic assets) to understand unconventional threats to the force. Commanders at major headquarters may form a national intelligence support team with a total focus on unconventional threats. Finally, by example and constant attention, commanders dispel any sense of complacency toward unconventional threats.

Urban Operations

6-76. ***Urban operations*** **include offense, defense, stability, and support operations conducted in a topographical complex and adjacent natural terrain where manmade construction and high population density are the dominant features.** The world is largely urban in terms of population concentration. Army forces conduct urban operations in large, densely populated areas that present distinct problems in clearing enemy forces, restoring services, and managing major concentrations of people. The topography and proximity of noncombatants degrade the effectiveness of technically advanced sensors and weapons. Thus, cities are likely battlegrounds where weaker enemies attempt to negate the advantages Army forces have in more open terrain.

6-77. From a planning perspective, commanders view cities not just as a topographic feature but as dynamic entities that include hostile forces, local population, and infrastructure. Planning for urban operations requires careful IPB, with particular emphasis on the three-dimensional nature of the topography and the intricate social structure of the population. CSS planning accounts for increased consumption, increased threats to lines of communications, and anticipated support to noncombatants. Commanders develop ROE carefully, adapting them to a variety of circumstances, and ensuring soldiers thoroughly understand them.

6-78. Urban operations compress the spatial scale of tactical operations and require combined arms integration at small unit level. Units require careful preparation and thorough rehearsal to master using combined arms techniques in very close quarters. Urban operations place a premium on closely coordinated, combined arms teams and carefully protected CSS. Urban operations are CSS-intensive, demanding large quantities of materiel and support for military forces and noncombatants displaced by operations.

FOLLOW-ON OPERATIONS

6-79. All operations evolve in terms of nature, purpose, and type. Successful operations create new conditions that lead to significant changes in the situation. A new or fundamentally altered center of gravity may emerge. Typically, new conditions initiate sequels.

Transition

6-80. Transitions mark the intervals between the ongoing operation and full execution of branches and sequels. Transitions often mark the change from one dominant type of operations, such as offense, to another such as stability. At lower echelons, transitions occur when one formation passes through another, for example, or when units must breach an obstacle belt. Commanders consider transitions from the current operation to future operations early in the planning process. Command arrangements, for example, often change. Typically, the command structure evolves to meet changing situations. A JTF, for example, may dissolve, and forces revert to their parent components. The operational requirements for Army forces may pass to a new commander, who continues postconflict missions even as some Army forces prepare to redeploy. Frequently, US forces transition from a US-led coalition to a multinational United Nations structure supported by US troops. This occurred at the end of Operation Restore Democracy in Haiti, as US combat forces withdrew.

6-81. Changes in the strategic situation require adjusting the strength and composition of deployed forces. When the dominant type of operation changes—from offense to stability, for example—the types of units originally deployed may no longer be appropriate. As each new force prepares for operations, the JFC and the commander of the Army service component command tailor the Army force to meet mission requirements and theater constraints. The force that initiated the operation may only superficially resemble the force in theater when the operation concludes.

6-82. Transitions are the sequels that occur between types of operations. Commanders anticipate and plan for them as part of any future operation. Transitions between operations are difficult and during execution may create unexpected opportunities for Army forces, enemies, or adversaries. Such opportunities must be recognized quickly, developed as branches to the transition operation, and acted upon immediately. Transition between operations may be the most difficult follow-on operation to accomplish.

Reconstitution

6-83. Prolonged combat or intensive engagements diminish unit combat effectiveness. When a unit is no longer combat effective, commanders consider reconstituting it (see FM 4-100.9). *Reconstitution* consists of those actions that commanders plan and implement to restore units to a desired level of combat effectiveness commensurate with mission requirements and available resources. Reconstitution operations include regeneration and reorganization. *Regeneration* consists of rebuilding a unit through large-scale replacement of personnel, equipment, and supplies. This includes the reestablishment or replacement of essential C2 and training for the newly rebuilt unit.

Reorganization is that action taken to shift internal resources within a degraded unit to increase its level of combat effectiveness.

6-84. The headquarters two echelons up normally controls reconstitution. Commanders and staffs plan reconstitution to fit mission priorities and support the higher commander's intent. The reconstitution plan takes into account follow-on missions. The final decision on whether to reconstitute a depleted unit depends on the situation. Commanders remain flexible. Mission requirements and available resources (including time) determine appropriate reconstitution actions.

6-85. Reconstitution planning is part of course of action development. Units with roles in reconstitution train to perform it. Commanders, staffs, and executing units plan and prepare for reconstitution before they confront it. Any combat, combat support, or CSS unit may require reconstitution. In particular, operations in an NBC environment increase the likelihood that some units will require reconstitution after decontamination.

6-86. Reconstitution requires aggressive application of the tenets of Army operations. Reconstitution actions must regenerate units that allow commanders to continue to set the terms of battle. These actions are necessary to maintain the agility of the force. Quickly recognizing the need for and executing reconstitution help provide the combat effective forces needed to retain the initiative. Commanders visualize reconstitution in terms of depth of time, space, and resources just as they do other operations. They look ahead, consider the resources required and available, and direct the extensive synchronization required.

Conflict Termination

6-87. Conflict termination describes the point at which the principal means of conflict shifts from the use or threat of force to other means of persuasion. Conflict termination may take several forms: for example, the adversary may surrender, withdraw, or negotiate an end to the conflict. Commanders and staffs consider conflict termination requirements when developing campaign plans. If the end state is a situation that promotes economic growth, for example, commanders consider the effects of destroying the economic infrastructure. Regardless of how the conflict ends, it often changes into less violent, but persistent, forms of confrontation.

6-88. Conflict termination is more than the achievement of a military end state: it is the military contribution to broader success criteria. As the policy governing the conflict evolves, so does the end state at both joint and Army levels. Effective campaign plans account for more than military objectives; they specify end states that support national policy. They are also careful to distinguish between the military and other instruments of national power.

6-89. A period of postconflict activities exists between the end of a conflict and redeployment of the last US soldier. Army forces are vital in this period. As a sequel to decisive major operations, Army forces conduct stability operations and support operations to sustain the results achieved by the campaign. These operations ensure that the threat does not resurrect itself and that the conditions that generated the conflict do not recur. Postconflict stability

operations and support operations—conducted by Army forces—transform temporary battlefield successes into lasting strategic results.

ASSESS

6-90. Commanders, assisted by the staff, continuously assess the situation and the progress of the operation, and compare it with the initial vision. ***Assessment* is the continuous monitoring—throughout planning, preparation, and execution—of the current situation and progress of an operation, and the evaluation of it against criteria of success to make decisions and adjustments**. Commanders direct adjustments to ensure that operations remain aligned with the commander's intent. Subordinates assess their unit's progress by comparing it with the senior commander's intent and adjusting their actions to achieve the envisioned end state, particularly in the absence of orders.

6-91. Assessment precedes and guides every activity within the operations process and concludes each operation or phase of an operation. Assessment entails two distinct tasks: continuously monitoring the situation and the progress of the operation, and evaluating the operation against measures of effectiveness. Together, the two tasks compare reality to expectations.

6-92. Not all operations proceed smoothly toward the desired end state. Commanders examine instances of unexpected success or failure, unanticipated enemy actions, or operations that simply do not go as planned. They assess the causes of success, friction, and failure, and their overall impact on the force and the operation. In assessing the cause of failure or substandard performance, commanders address immediate causes while retaining the intellectual flexibility to look for related or hidden contributors. For example, a commander may replace an ineffective leader after an engagement in which Army forces suffer severe losses. In another instance, the commander may retain subordinate commanders within a defeated force. In both instances, the commander seeks answers to larger questions concerning operations security, enemy doctrine, leadership, equipment, and the state of training of friendly and enemy forces. Commanders also learn from their mistakes and allow subordinates to learn from theirs.

6-93. The American way of war has historically included rapid adaptation to unexpected challenges and situations. A tactical or operational success may prove the worth of a significant technological or procedural innovation. Conversely, Army forces may discover a dangerous vulnerability during the operation. Leaders continuously identify, assess, and disseminate lessons learned throughout the force.

6-94. Formal, postoperational assessments combine the after-action reports prepared by the units involved with the observations compiled by observers. These assessments become the basis for changes to doctrine, training, leader development, organization, and materiel that support soldiers. They typically include interviews with commanders and staffs as well as with small unit leaders and soldiers. Just as commanders encourage and accept initiative on the part of subordinates during the operation, commanders encourage and accept complete candor during the postoperational assessment.