MCDP 1-0

Marine Corps Operations

US Marine Corps

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PCN 142 000014 00

The joint force may have to perform limited local governance and to coordinate activities of multinational and interagency organizations and nongovernmental organizations. This phase concludes with the transfer of regional authority to a legitimate civil entity.

- *Phase 5: Enable civil authority.* The joint force will enable the legitimate civil authority and its provision of essential services to the populace. This action includes coordinating joint force activities with those of multinational, nongovernmental, and interagency organizations and promoting a favorable attitude among the population toward US and host nation objectives.

While these numbered phases reflect a likely sequence, activities from one phase will normally overlap with other phases and may occur simultaneously. Commanders may omit some phases or expand others based on mission needs.

The significance of this phasing construct is that it describes the applicability of military capabilities broader than simply defeating an adversary's military forces. It gives greater visibility to sustaining continuous forward operations, working with numerous and diverse partner organizations, responding quickly to a variety of emergencies, conducting wide ranging and often simultaneous activities, effectively dealing with changing operational situations, and quickly transitioning from one mission to the next.

Multinational Operations, Alliances, and Coalitions

Although the United States may act unilaterally when the situation requires, it pursues its national interests through alliances and coalitions when possible. Alliances and coalitions can provide larger and more capable forces, share the costs of the operation, and enhance the legitimacy of the operation in world and US public opinion. Multinational operations are usually conducted within the structure of an alliance or coalition. Alliances normally have established agreements for long term objectives and have developed contingency plans and some standardized equipment and procedures to ease interoperability. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is an example of a standing military alliance. Coalitions are normally established for shorter periods or for specific multinational operations and normally do not have established procedures or standardized equipment. The multinational force formed for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and disbanded after the war is an example of a coalition.

However organized, multinational operations normally involve complex cultural issues, interoperability challenges, conflicting national command and control procedures, intelligence sharing, and other support problems.

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Even long-established alliances, to some degree, share in these challenges. Since unity of command can be difficult to achieve in multinational operations, commanders concentrate on obtaining unity of effort among the participating national forces. Consensus-building and cross-cultural competence are key elements to unity of effort within multinational operations.

Multinational operations' command and control processes normally involve either parallel or lead nation command and control structures. Parallel command requires coordinated political and senior military leadership to make decisions and transmit their decisions through existing chains of command to their deployed forces. Though this method is the simplest to establish, it limits tempo. Lead nation command and control requires one nation (usually the one providing the preponderance of forces or capabilities) to provide the multinational force commander and uses that nation's command and control system. Other nations' forces are then assigned as subordinate forces. Normally, this structure requires some integration of national staffs.

Multinational commanders must be prepared to accommodate differences in operational and tactical capabilities by nations within the combined force. The commander must clearly articulate his intentions, guidance, and plans to avoid confusion that might occur due to differences in language, culture, doctrine, and terminology. Detailed planning, wargaming, exchange of standing operating procedures and liaison officers, and rehearsals help overcome procedural difficulties among nations. Finally, the commander should ensure the missions assigned to nations within the multinational force reflect the specific capabilities and limitations of each national contingent. Mission success should not be jeopardized because of unrealistic expectations of the capabilities or political will of member forces. Similarly, one of the biggest dangers to multinational operations is mission creep—member nations could be placed in an untenable situation due to either their limited capabilities or their political caveats.

Roles and Functions of the Marine Corps

Roles are the broad and enduring purposes Congress established by law for the Services and for USSOCOM. *Functions* are specific responsibilities assigned to the Services by the President and Secretary of Defense to enable the Services to fulfill their legally established roles. Various laws, directives, and manuals establish the roles and functions of the Marine Corps and describe its general composition and responsibilities. The key sources are United States Code, Title 10; Department of Defense Directive 5100.1, *Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components* (1987, updated in 2002 and 2010); and *Marine Corps Manual* (1980 with changes in 1982, 1984, and 1986).

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There are two components of counterreconnaissance—the detection of enemy reconnaissance forces and the targeting, destruction, or suppression of those reconnaissance forces so they cannot report friendly unit positions or activities. Counterreconnaissance consists of—

- Developing named areas of interest and target areas of interest for likely enemy reconnaissance forces.
- Conducting continuous surveillance of designated named areas of interest and target areas of interest.
- Executing a targeting plan against enemy reconnaissance forces.
- Recovering forward security elements.

Reconnaissance operations support counterreconnaissance by collecting information on enemy reconnaissance forces, assets, and activities. Counterreconnaissance supports security operations by protecting the MAGTF from enemy collection.

SECURITY OPERATIONS

Security is the measures taken by a military unit, activity, or installation to protect itself against all acts designed to, or which may, impair its effectiveness. Local security is an inherent responsibility of command at every echelon. Additionally, Marine Corps forces may conduct specific security operations designed to aggressively and continuously seek the enemy and reconnoiter key terrain. The forces assigned to conduct security operations are generically referred to as a "security force." Security forces conduct active reconnaissance to detect enemy movement or preparations for action and to learn as much as possible about the terrain. The ultimate goal is to determine the enemy's COA and assist the main body in countering it. Security forces may employ a combination of ground patrols, observation posts, electronic warfare, and aviation assets.

Note

"Security forces" in this context should not be confused with those Marine Corps units that perform security duties as a primary mission in support of fleet commanders and Department of State, as identified in chapter 1. Similarly, it should not be confused with the broader Department of Defense definiton of security forces being composed of the duly constituted military, paramilitary, police, and constabulary forces of a state.

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Security in offensive operations employs security elements to protect the MAGTF from unexpected attack, long-range fires, and observation by the enemy. The MAGTF commander can employ a wide range of forces and capabilities to conduct security operations, which can include—

- Aviation forces to screen the main force from enemy interference.
- Ground forces to control, seize, or retain terrain to prevent enemy observation.
- Detection devices, such as unmanned aircraft systems, radar, and seismic sensors, to discover the enemy or his long-range fires.

There are three types of security missions—screen, guard, and cover. Each varies in the degree of security provided, the forces and capabilities required, and the degree of engagement with the enemy the commander desires. The forces conducting these security missions are called a screening, a guarding, or a covering force. These forces may be further identified by the establishing headquarters and the location of the security force, such as a MEF covering force, division advance guard, or regimental flank screen. Security forces may consist of existing units, reinforced units, or task-organized forces.

Screening Force

A screening force observes, identifies, and reports information. It only fights in self-protection. A screening force—

- Provides early warning of enemy approach.
- Gains and maintains enemy contact and reports enemy activity.
- Conducts counterreconnaissance within capabilities.
- Impedes and harasses the enemy within capabilities.

A screening force provides surveillance and early warning of enemy action, not physical protection. It can employ as an economy of force measure in a low-risk area because it provides security on a broad frontage with limited assets. A screening force provides the least amount of protection of any security mission, lacking the combat power to develop the situation. Aviation combat forces may be used to screen large, open areas. Terrain, weather, and the duration of the screen are critical considerations when assigning screening missions to aviation forces. The screening force may operate within range of friendly artillery positioned with the ground forces because of its immediate availability. The ACE can also provide this fire support capability, but the cost in resources versus time

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is a factor. For example, one on-station of F/A-18s may require an entire squadron for 24-hour coverage.

Guarding Force

A guarding force protects the main force from attack, direct fire, and ground observation by fighting to gain time, while also observing and reporting information. A guarding force—

- Provides early warning of enemy approach.
- Provides maneuver space to the front, flanks, and rear of the force.
- Screens, attacks, defends, or delays within its capabilities to protect the force.

A guarding force differs from a screening force in that a guarding force contains sufficient combat power to defeat, repel, or fix the lead elements of an enemy ground force before they can engage the main body with direct fire.

Covering Force

A covering force operates apart from the main force to intercept, engage, delay, disorganize, and deceive the enemy before he can attack the main body. It prevents surprise during the advance. A covering force—

- Gains and maintains contact with the enemy.
- Denies the enemy information about the size, strength, composition, and intention of the main force.
- Conducts counterreconnaissance and destroys enemy security forces.
- Develops the situation to determine enemy dispositions, strengths, and weaknesses.

A covering force is a self-contained maneuver force that screens, guards, attacks, defends, and delays. In order to operate independently, a covering force may task-organize to include aviation, artillery, tank reconnaissance, and combat service support. The covering mission may operate in terms of time or friendly and enemy disposition. One example of a covering mssion is engaging enemy forces until our main body deploys for attack.

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