

# ADP/ADRP 3-90: *Offense and Defense*

by Douglas A. Darling

The recently published Army Doctrine Publication 3-90 and Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-90 are updates of Field Manual 3-90, *Tactics*, 2001 edition.

Tactics are the employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other, according to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 5120.02B. Through tactics, commanders use combat power to accomplish missions. The tactical-level commander uses combat power in battles, engagements and small-unit actions.

ADRP 3-90 is the introductory reference for all Army students of tactical art and science. ADRP 3-90 maintains the traditional tactical taxonomy, upon which its two subordinate publications (FM 3-90, Volume 1, *Offense and Defense*, and FM 3-90, Volume 2, *Reconnaissance, Security and Tactical Enabling Tasks*) will be built. ADRP 3-90 is also the source document for almost a hundred offensive and defensive tactical terms from *actions on contact* to *zone reconnaissance*.

ADP 3-90 is an executive summary of the information contained in ADRP 3-90.

Most of the terminology changes in ADRP 3-90 reflect changes made in other manuals. The most important of these are:

- Calculated risk and military gamble are no longer approved military terms.
- ADRP 3-90 now mentions the other operational frameworks (deep-close-security and main and supporting efforts) mentioned in ADP 3-0.
- ADRP 3-90 changes the definition of the division echelon.
- ADRP 3-90 changes reconnaissance and surveillance where appropriate to information collection.
- ADRP 3-90 changes the discussion of protection tasks and

other warfighting functions to reflect the list in ADRP 3-0.

- ADRP 3-90 changes terminology from heavy to armored, motorized to Stryker and light to infantry for Army forces.

ADRP 3-90 has five chapters. Chapter 1, "Tactical Fundamentals," introduces the art and science of tactical operations. The key points contained in Chapter 1 sum up as:

- Your opponent is always thinking and wants to beat you.
- Mastering the art and science of tactics requires constant study and training.
- There are no checklists; doctrine merely provides a set of tools that the tactician must adapt to meet the needs and conditions associated with a specific situation.

Chapter 2 defines basic tactical concepts commonly associated with the conduct of both offensive and defensive tasks. It provides a figure that illustrates the doctrinal taxonomy established in ADRP 3-0. That doctrinal taxonomy is the basis for not only how Chapters 3-5 are organized but also the organization of the soon-to-be-published FM 3-90, Volumes 1 and 2. Chapter 2 also defines tactical echelons from the fire team to the division.

Chapter 3 provides the basics of the offense. It discusses the purposes and characteristics of the offense. It addresses common offensive control measures and defines the forms of maneuver. Further, it discusses common offensive planning considerations by warfighting function. The chapter closes out with a discussion of the transition to an emphasis on the conduct of either defensive tasks or stability tasks.

What Chapter 3 does for the offense, Chapter 4 does for the defense.

Chapter 5 addresses those tactical enabling tasks that are not the subject of

their own manual. Tactical enabling tasks are usually employed by commanders as shaping operations or supporting efforts during the conduct of decisive action but are not primary offensive, defensive, stability or defense-support-of-civil-authorities tasks. Thus Chapter 5 does introduce reconnaissance, security operations, troop movement, relief in place, passage of lines and encirclement operations, but not mobility operations, which is the subject of its own manual.

The topic of operations in an urban environment is included in Chapter 5, even though it is an environment and not a tactical enabling task, because under Doctrine 2015 urban operations is not allocated its own field manual.



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## ACRONYM QUICK-SCAN

**ADP** – Army doctrine publication  
**ADRP** – Army doctrine reference publication  
**FM** – field manual