

STAFF STUDY

COVERING AND CONTROLLING THE AREAS BETWEEN
STRONG POINTS IN THE MOBILE DEFENSE

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SUBJECT: Covering and Controlling the Areas Between Strong Points in the Mobile Defense

1. PROBLEM. - To determine ways and means of covering and controlling the areas between strong points in the mobile defense.
2. ASSUMPTIONS.
 - a. The initial stages of war with an enemy, who has numerically superior ground and air forces with an atomic capability, will force us to defend on a wide front.
 - b. That guerrilla, partisan, saboteur or other clandestine activities will be conducted by the enemy.
3. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM.
 - a. The discussion is limited to the areas of surveillance within a triangular regiments sector. (Annex A)
 - b. A commander must have the means at his disposal to cover his assigned area between strong points.
4. DISCUSSION.
 - a. The unit providing the surveillance needs mobility, long range communication, and fire power. (Annex B)
 - b. The infantry regiment lacks the organic means to provide adequate cover and control of the area. (Annex B)
 - c. A reconnaissance company must either be attached or made organic to the regiment. (Annex B)
 - d. A reconnaissance company could augment the air surveillance, observation posts, listening posts, and barrier plan. (Annex B)
 - e. Development of improved army aircraft, radios, weapons and light reconnaissance vehicles need constant attention. (Annex B)
 - f. As technological advances are made they must be considered for military usage. (Annex B)
5. CONCLUSIONS.
 - a. The regiment is not organically capable of covering and controlling the area.
 - b. A reconnaissance company in conjunction with the other means available would cover and control the areas between strong points in the mobile

defense.

- c. Improved weapons, radios, reconnaissance vehicles and aircraft are needed.

6. PUBLIC RELATIONS ASPECTS.

- a. Proposed action is of current interest; its publication will not violate security and the release will have no adverse effect on troop or public relations. (Annex C)
- b. Recommend that information on proposed action be released to troops and public.

7. ACTION RECOMMENDED.

- a. That the proposed reconnaissance company be further studied and tested. (Annex D)
- b. That aircraft be developed that would be suitable transport for the reconnaissance company.
- c. That the requirements for new radios, weapons, and reconnaissance vehicles be studied and submitted to higher headquarters.

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ANNEXES: A - Mobile Defence
 B - Discussion
 C - Public Relations Aspects
 D - Proposed T/O&E Reconnaissance Company
 X - Bibliography

CONCURRENCES:
NONCONCURRENCES:
CONSIDERATION OF NONCURRENCES:
ANNEXES ADDED:
ACTION BY APPROVING AUTHORITY:

Date:

Approved (disapproved), including (excluding) exceptions.

Signature

ANNEX A - Mobile Defense

1. GENERAL. The objective of mobile defense is the defeat of the enemy by a combination of defensive and offensive actions. The enemy is canalized into an area of the defender's choice and is attacked by fires available both from within and without a series of strong points. Where such action does not repel or stop the enemy, his destruction is accomplished by offensive action, utilizing reserves and other non-committed forces that may be available.

2. DISPOSITION OF TROOPS. In organizing a mobile defense, troops are disposed so that: a portion of the force is used in security missions to warn of impending attack and to delay and disorganize the enemy; a portion of the force is used in the occupation of strong points in the forward area to canalize the attacking forces into terrain favorable to the defender, or to repel, slow down or stop the attacker by the application of firepower; and the remainder of the force occupies strong points in the mobile reserve area to be used alone or with other noncommitted portions of the force to destroy the enemy by a combination of firepower and offensive maneuver. (Tab A)

a. Security Echelon.

As in position defense, the security forces may include aviation, a covering force, and a general outpost. In place of a combat outpost, the strong points establish detached observation posts with the following missions:

(1) Furnish the strong points early warning of enemy advance through maintenance of surveillance within the area assigned to the battalion.

(2) Prevent close observation of the positions by the interception of enemy patrols.

(3) Delay, deceive, and disorganize the enemy, to the maximum extent possible, by long range artillery and mortar fires as he approaches the line of OPs.

(4) Assist units which engage in raids and spoiling attacks by furnishing guides and observation throughout their area of surveillance.

Security forces must have detailed plans and adequate communications so that they can be withdrawn into or through the strong points when the enemy attacks in force.

b. Forward Area.

(1) The forward area consists of a series of a strong points located on terrain features dominating enemy avenues of approach. Their function is to repel, slow down, or stop the advancing enemy. They should be located so that they canalize the enemy into areas of the defender's choice. These strong points may serve as pivots of maneuver for offensive action or as bases for reconnaissance forces. Since strong points may not be mutually supporting, they must be prepared to continue resistance when by-passed or surrounded.

(2) The smallest infantry unit given the mission of organizing and holding a strong point in a mobile defense is normally a reinforced battalion. Units smaller than a battalion lack the combat power required to defend a strong point

long enough to permit effective offensive counteraction. The battalion is considered to be the smallest unit that can control an area large enough for air supply and evacuation facilities.

(3) When the location of dominant terrain features does not permit adequate coverage of an area, or when the frontage is so extended that small units operating between organized defensive positions may be cut off and destroyed by enemy infiltration, platoon-sized patrol bases may be sent out from the strong points to furnish security for patrols, forward observers, and air control teams. Patrol bases are withdrawn into the strong points in the event of a strong enemy attack.

(4) In organizing for a mobile defense, evacuation and resupply by air are planned in the event routes to the rear are denied to the defender.

c. Mobile Reserve Area.

The mobile reserve consists of strong points located in the mobile reserve area. These strong points are similar in size and may perform the same missions as forward area strong points. The mobile reserve is augmented whenever necessary in performing its offensive task by forces occupying strong points or otherwise disposed, provided these other forces are not under attack nor occupying vital terrain features. The reserve can be employed on an offensive mission in front of, within, or behind the forward area. It may also be used to extricate a strong point which has been bypassed or surrounded. It should be employed at such a place and time as will best insure destruction of the enemy forces. Ideally, it is used following an atomic strike against enemy forces previously canalized by the strong points. (Tab B)

3. SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance of intervals between units is a matter of vital importance in the mobile defense. The higher commander must assure himself that intervals are covered so that the enemy cannot infiltrate in these intervals in sufficient numbers to threaten the integrity of strong points or critical installations.

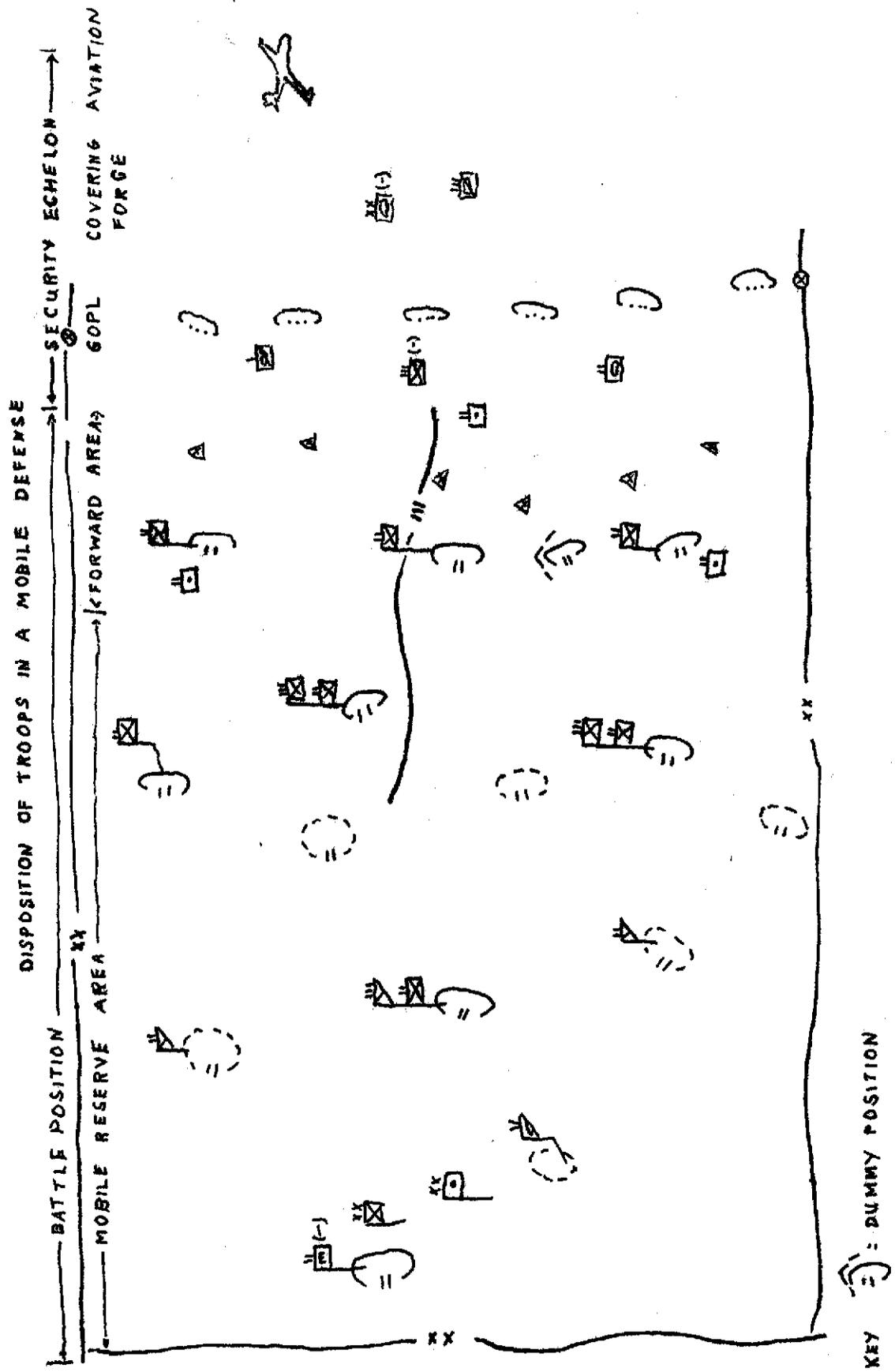
The commander develops a detailed plan of surveillance, which expands on the plan of surveillance of the higher commander. Each regiment and battalion is assigned a sector which delineates responsibility for surveillance consistent with the means available to that unit to accomplish this mission. A battalion occupying a strong point is assigned an area of surveillance surrounding the strong point. The area assigned is within the capabilities of the units assigned to the battalion, or additional units such as the intelligence and reconnaissance platoon are attached to the battalion. Areas not assigned to battalions are kept under control of the regimental commander. He may assign these areas to attached reconnaissance units. Armored cavalry units and the reconnaissance company are especially suited for this mission.

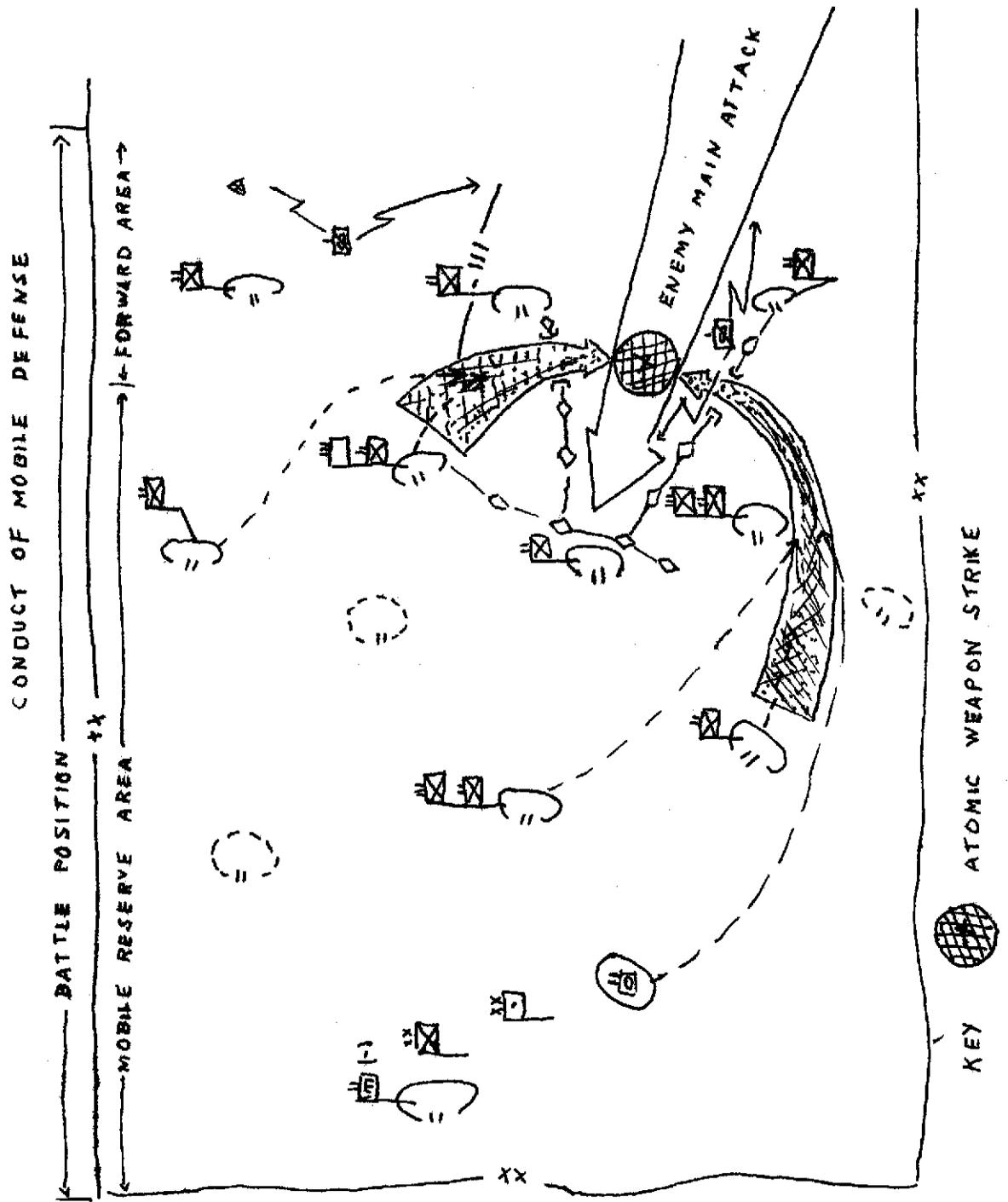
Except for strong point areas, responsibility for surveillance of the division rear area may be retained under division control.

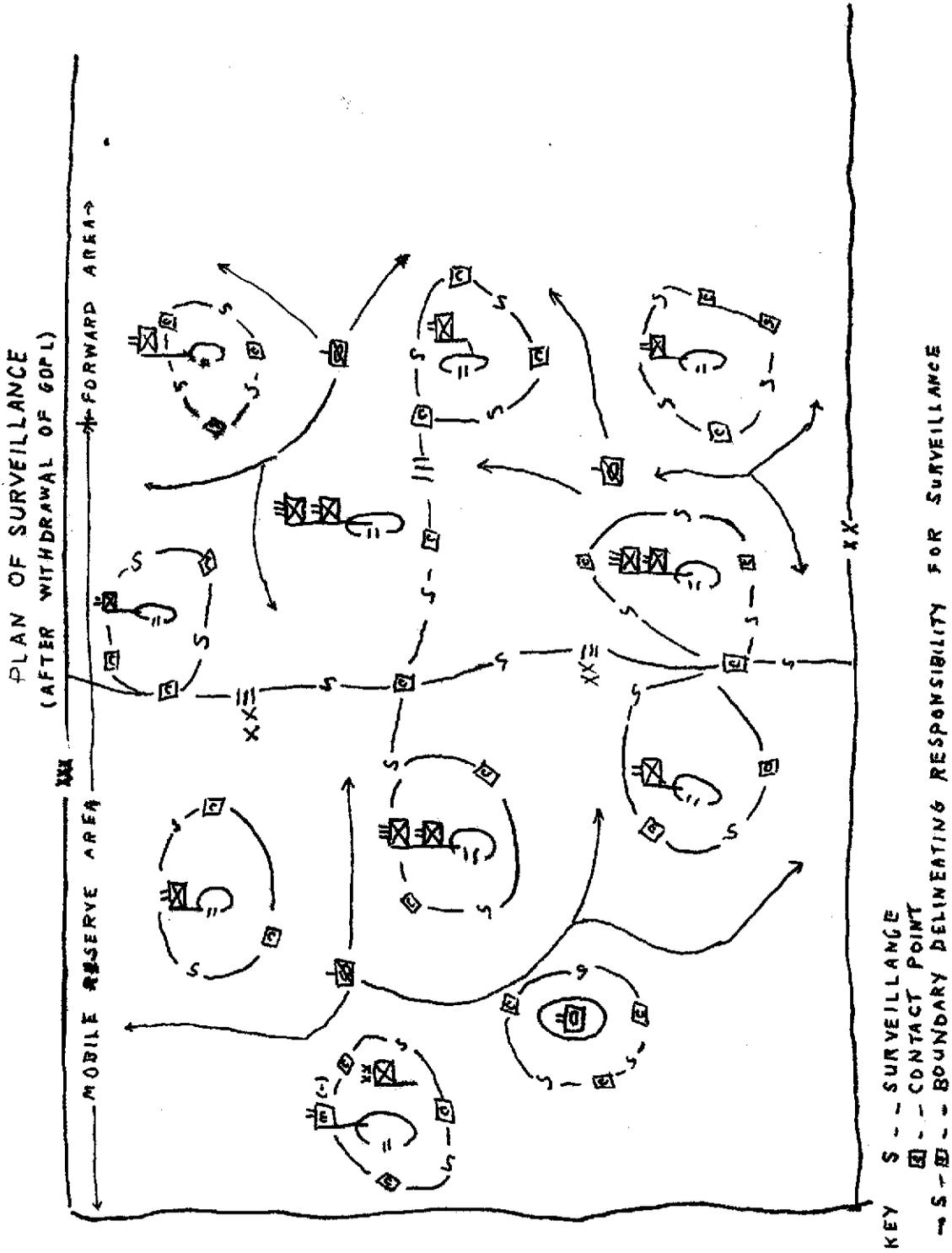
The intervals between strong points may be kept under surveillance by a combination of mobile reconnaissance units,

outguards, detached posts, patrols, and reconnaissance aviation. Tab C represents a plan of surveillance which may be in effect after withdrawal of the general outpost. (Tab C) (5:17,18)

TAB A, ANNEX A







ANNEX B - DISCUSSION

1. Under our present system of government and the foreign policy being carried out, a war would find the United States on the defensive. The main battle front may well extend from the Baltic Sea, south to the Mediterranean Sea, east across North Africa, Turkey and Iran. A defense line of that length would find the forces of the United States and her allies stretched very thin. Units will find themselves responsible for such wide areas, that a mobile defense is the only hope of survival.

2. In the mobile defense a regiment may be responsible for an area from fifteen to eighteen miles square. (Annex A) The battalions organized into a strongpoint position of from one to two miles would leave intervals between the strongpoints extending far beyond mutually supporting distance. Each battalion must assume the responsibility for an area up to four miles square surrounding it to provide its own local security. (Annex A) Regiment must assume the responsibility for the remainder of the area.

3. If left unguarded the area of regimental responsibility would provide easy avenues of approach into our positions and installations for enemy saboteurs, partisans, and guerrilla bands, as well as regular forces, both ground and airborne.

4. The enemy must be prevented from moving through these gaps at will, and forced to move in the canalized direction our forces desire. To accomplish this the area must be kept under constant surveillance by a portion of the regiment.

5. The unit, or units, providing the surveillance must supply the regimental commander with timely intelligence, and early warning of the enemy location, disposition and strength. To accomplish this mission the unit, or units, need mobility, long-range communications and fire power.

6. The unit requires rapid mobility if it is to adequately cover the area, maintain contact with the enemy, and withdraw just prior to our use of an atomic device. Long range communications are needed to relay information to the commander in time. To determine the enemy disposition and strength the covering unit must have a "fighting reconnaissance" ability. Sufficient fire power must be provided to enable the unit to keep close contact with the enemy force, and destroy patrols, or guerrilla bands attempting to ambush the unit.

7. A unit with mobility, communication and fire power will furnish the regiment with the added dividends of harassing and deceiving the enemy.

8. Under our present T/O&E a rifle company lacks the desired mobility, communication and fire power. The I&R platoon and the tank company are organic units in the regiment which have the desired mobility, communications and fire power necessary to accomplish the mission. A regimental commander would be reluctant to utilize the tank company on the surveillance mission. The tank company would be of more value on one of the strongpoints, or used with the mobile reserves.

9. The I&R platoon is mobile, and has the means of long range communications. However, the platoon is lacking in the fire power needed to fight to gain information and maintain contact with the enemy. The platoon is also too small to cover and control the large area of the regiment's responsibility.

10. The other T/O&E unit that can be utilized is the regimental air section. The air section cannot handle the mission alone. The present section of two aircraft is too small to provide constant cover. Bad weather and darkness will keep the aircraft grounded much of the time. Required maintenance and pilot fatigue will also keep the aircraft on the ground. The possibility of enemy air superiority might reduce the efficiency of air surveillance. Nevertheless, the air section can provide a valuable means of supplementing the surveillance of the area, and should be used to the fullest extent possible.

11. Since the regiment does not have sufficient means under the present T/O&E additional forces must be made available. This can be done by attaching the division reconnaissance company to the regiment. The reconnaissance company has the mobility to cover the entire area. It is also capable of moving quickly from one portion of the area to another as the need may arise. It can also withdraw quickly prior to our use of atomic devices.

12. The reconnaissance company has the radio equipment necessary to relay information to the regiment, call for air strikes, artillery fire and provide early warning to the regiment. The company also has adequate fire power to destroy small patrols, guerrilla bands, or groups of partisans. The company is also capable of keeping contact with larger forces of the enemy to keep them under constant surveillance.

13. The biggest disadvantage of the reconnaissance company is that there is only one in the division, and at the same time there are three regiments which need a unit to cover and control the area between the battalion strongpoints. Therefore, a regiment cannot count on receiving a unit from the division unless the corps commander has attached a reconnaissance battalion from an armored cavalry regiment to the division. The same disadvantage exists with the reconnaissance battalion as with the division reconnaissance company. The corps commander may have more divisions needing additional units than he has reconnaissance units.

14. One solution to the problem would be a change in the T/O&E by adding a reconnaissance battalion to the division. The division commander would then have sufficient units to give one to each regiment. However, the division commander might decide to use the entire battalion as a strongpoint, or give it some other equally important mission such as screening the division flank. Another disadvantage of the reconnaissance unit being organic to the division is the lack of team work that could be developed with an organic unit in the regiment.

15. Another solution would be a change in the T/O&E of the regiment by replacing the I&R platoon with a reconnaissance company. This would give the regimental commander the tools with which to accomplish his mission. Under the present concept of defense it is the regiment which has the area to control. (Annex A) It would also have the advantage of the unit being part of the team, and would make for a

better performance than with an attached unit. Under the direction of the S2 it would also be a big asset during offensive as well as defensive action.

16. By adding a unit similar to our present division reconnaissance company to the regiment we utilize equipment that is already in production. It is a solution that could be put into effect without waiting for new equipment to be developed.

17. The mere addition of a reconnaissance unit to the regiment will not in itself solve the entire problem. The reconnaissance company must be used in conjunction with observation posts, lightening posts and a barrier plan. (1:3)

18. "All possible measures must be used to deceive the enemy as to the location and size of strongpoints.***** Dummy strongpoints may be organized to draw the enemy's attention and fire. Such positions must be located on terrain which might logically be organized to achieve a realistic appearance. It may be necessary to have a few troops operate in the dummy area to simulate normal activity." (1:2) The company should use one of the dummy strongpoints as a patrol base. To make the company more effective at night the tanks would be equipped with tank searchlights with infra red filters to aid in night surveillance.

19. If the reconnaissance companies mobility were increased it would be able to cover the area faster. It would also be able to quickly come to the aid of a check point or OP that was under attack by a small unit.

20. By using helicopters to increase the mobility of the reconnaissance company we remove any limitations the terrain places on our movement. The terrain can be utilized fully in our barrier plan to canalize the enemy. Through the use of radar and infra red complete coverage can be maintained during the critical hours of darkness to pick up any movement by the enemy. Helicopters enable us to cover a larger area faster with a smaller force. Two men in a helicopter can cover an area more thoroughly in much less time than a twelve man patrol carried in three 1/4 ton vehicles or in armored personnel carriers.

21. Helicopters in the reconnaissance company will also improve the communications. Air to ground transmission can usually be conducted at greater ranges than ground to ground transmission with the same radio sets.

22. As progress is made in the development of lighter more effective weapons, better radios and the helicopter is improved we must be ready to incorporate the improvements into the reconnaissance unit.

23. Our need for a light, fast moving, hard hitting unit has been well summed up by General Gavin when he asked, "Where was Walker's Cavalry on November 26, 1950, when his handful of divisions was struck with complete and overwhelming surprise by thirty Chinese division? Unit after unit stumbled into ambush and suffered the worst defeat in the history of American arms.

Where was the cavalry? It was, and still is, in the minds of military planners and his-

torians. And I don't mean horses. I mean helicopters and light aircraft, to lift soldiers armed with automatic weapons and hand-carried antitank weapons, and also lightweight reconnaissance vehicles, mounting antitank weapons the equal (or better) of the Russian T-34s.

Technologically we could have had them. Because of our deification of heavy equipment and the combat practices of late World War II, which deluded us into believing that heavy armor is cavalry when we mounted it in weighty tanks and trucks, all of which move (if the terrain will allow them to move at all) at exactly the same speed as motorized infantry, if not slower.

Since dispersion-individual and unit-will characterize the defense, the greatest need of all will be for the means of concentrating rapidly in the area, and at the time, of decision. Major reserves will have to move by air, and in the tactical zone smaller units will have to be mutually supporting by air as well as land.

Cavalry-type screening missions will have to be conducted at much greater distances, and with much greater rapidity, than have hitherto been considered acceptable. The mobility differential to make this possible must be achieved. It is within our grasp, fortunately, in the air vehicles now being developed--assault transports, light utility planes, helicopters, and convertiplanes.

Forces so organized and equipped will have a predominant influence on future warfare. Their readiness at the very outset of combat is essential, yet unfortunately they cannot be produced, Aladdin-like, overnight. The lead time to their availability could be measured in years while the lead time to disaster could be zero, and this could happen while we relied almost exclusively on the concept of mass retaliation--a concept which finds no justification in human experience as an exclusive and self-sufficient means to victory." (4:23,27)

ANNEX G - Public Relations Aspects

- Question. - Will publication of the proposed action violate security?
- Discussion. - Publication of the recommended action will not violate security.
- Question. - What adverse effects is the proposed action likely to produce?
- Discussion. - The recommended action will produce no adverse effects.
- Question. - Will explanation within and outside the Army remove or minimize these effects?
- Discussion. - The recommended action should require no explanation.
- Question. - Will it be feasible and desirable to change the proposal without sacrifice of principle? (Care must be exercised to assure that basic principles are not sacrificed for the sole purpose of gaining favorable troop or public reaction.)
- Discussion. - The recommended action does not need changing to gain favorable troop or public reaction.
- Question. - Is the end sought worth the probable cost in terms of impact?
- Discussion. - There should be no impact.
- Question. - Has full consideration of all factors involved led to the conviction that the proposal is correct and that the course of action should be recommended without hesitation?
- Discussion. - The recommended action is a correct solution to the problem and should be adopted.
- Question. - What are your recommendations as to the advisability of releasing information on the proposed action?
- Discussion. - There is no reason for not releasing information on the recommended action.

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