Battalion-Level Execution of Operations for Combined-Arms Maneuver and Wide-Area Security in a Decisive-Action Environment

The Challenge: Balancing CAM and WAS in a Hybrid-Threat Environment

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Battalions routinely struggle with establishing balance in the synchronized execution of combined-arms maneuver (CAM) and wide-area security (WAS). We will discuss how units can better accomplish both of these core competencies simultaneously and effectively, proposing the concept of employing Mission Analysis (MA) 1 and 2.

We will also examine the manning and training required to accomplish those tasks and maintain running estimates. To do this, the unit must ask itself a multitude of questions. Paramount among those questions are:

- How does a battalion team establish a planning balance in a decisive-action environment to produce detailed plans?
- How does a battalion team establish the balance between CAM and WAS in accomplishment of its purpose assigned by the brigade team?

"The Army's two core competencies — [CAM] and [WAS] — provide the means for balancing the application of Army warfighting functions [WfF] within the tactical actions and tasks inherent in offensive, defensive and stability operations," according to Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3.[1]

Balance is the challenge. How does a battalion team establish balance among offensive, defensive and stability operations in a decisive-action environment, producing appropriately detailed plans through use of the operations process and a battle rhythm?

Our doctrine establishes CAM and the use of defeat mechanisms as our method to defeat enemies and seize terrain. Doctrine further describes WAS and the use of stability-and-security mechanisms as our way to protect populations and consolidate gains. Only through synchronization of these two techniques can we achieve success in a decisive-action environment since neither is sufficient in isolation. In effect, we must train to achieve the tasks accomplished in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) while, at the same time, completing tasks normally associated with OIF and Operation Enduring Freedom rotations after 2006.

Routinely, units training in a decisive-action environment focus on CAM or WAS but struggle to combine the two to accomplish their purpose and achieve the desired endstate. The complexities of combining offensive, defensive and stability operations overwhelm most staffs, leading to friction and difficulty in synchronizing operations. We have counted on our experience in stability operations as a crutch to overlook the planning required for success in WAS, which normally generates friction with local civilians and leaves gaps in our security.

The application of combat power should come as a result of a deliberate execution of the operations process where the battalion plans, prepares, executes and then assesses its application of combat power. The challenge of this combat-power application in both training and warfighting is the hybrid threat (HT) and execution of operations across the spectrum of conflict from unstable peace to general war. Army Doctrinal Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-90 defines an HT as "the diverse and dynamic combination of regular forces, irregular forces and/or criminal elements unified to achieve mutually benefitting effects."[2]

These multiple components force us to consider both the human and land domains while operating in an austere environment.

Effective employment

The goal of the operations process is to allow the team to identify a way to synchronize its means to accomplish the desired endstate – or to put it another way, solve tactical problems. As ADRP 3-90 states, "Success in tactical problem-solving results from the aggressive, intelligent and decisive use of combat power in an environment of

uncertainty, disorder, violence and danger. A commander wins by maintaining the initiative and forcing the enemy to react to friendly operations."[3]

In Field Manual (FM) 6-0 we are reminded that "the commander and staff perform mission analysis to better understand the situation and problem, and identify what the command must accomplish, when and where it must be done, and most importantly why — the purpose of the operation."[4]

The start point is the commander as he or she works to understand the environment, visualize the endstate, describe how to achieve the endstate and direct the actions to achieve the endstate while conducting continuous assessment. The commander understands the environment first through personal analysis, normally conducted before receipt of the mission-analysis brief. This careful review of the problem(s), combined with experience, begins to inform the commander's understanding. The staff then improves the commander's understanding by proper mission analysis and framing the situational template.

The commander's staff consists of many junior leaders working hard to bring to bear the science required to understand and control the execution of military operations. The commander also gains insights from subordinate company-command teams through constant communication and face-to-face meetings. The commander drives this operations process and develops the junior staff with the battalion executive officer through constant dialogue and by training the staff during execution of the military decision-making process (MDMP). These efforts, in turn, drive the organization to account for the eight forms of contact: visual; direct; indirect; non-hostile; obstacles; aircraft; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear; and electronic warfare[5] while organizing the six WfF[6] to mass at the decisive place and time.

Mission analysis

As we work to understand our environment, applying the technique of MA 1 and 2 will help. In MA 1, the staff analyzes the operating environment (OE), first through the lens of the operational variables listed as political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, information, physical environment and time (PMESII-PT). Then the staff analyzes mission variables (mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, time available, civil considerations (METT-TC)) as part of MA 2.

These two executions of the MA step (and the resultant briefings) of our MDMP provide the team with a shared understanding of both the OE and mission variables, enabling them to visualize conceptual plans to achieve the desired endstate. The battalion then executes the remaining steps of the MDMP to produce a detailed plan for subordinate units to execute initial-entry operations. However, before this occurs, the battalion must develop a battle rhythm that is not only understood throughout the battalion formation but is tied into the brigade as well.

The battalion's execution of a battle rhythm is the center of gravity for bringing balance to the application of combat power through CAM and WAS. The incorporation of intelligence collection allows the team to identify variances in the environment and then seize opportunities while mitigating risk. A technique to accomplish this is through the blending of a targeting cycle focused on the human domain, supported by updates to MA 1, with the simultaneous execution of the operations cycle focused on the land domain. This is further supported by updates from MA 2.

In practice, the staff continues to update its running estimates for both offensive and defensive operations in MA 2 while continuing to refine running estimates for stability operations in MA 1. MA 1 updates are highlighted in the battle rhythm daily update; MA 2 updates are highlighted in each planning cycle or when significant enough to warrant attention in the daily update brief.

This battle rhythm, focused on the targeting cycle, results in a daily fragmentary order (frago) that consolidates adjustments to stability operations to achieve the desired endstate, focused primarily on civilian aspects with a touch on enemy and terrain for security purposes. As the situation develops and variances are identified through the operations process, the unit conducts another session of MDMP with a focus on enemy and terrain components of the endstate. The key element here is the assessment, measured against the endstate described by both the battalion and brigade commanders. This focus allows the staff to quickly conduct assessments that measure accomplishment of the endstate.

In a decisive-action training environment (DATE) rotation, this process does not need to be complicated; it typically focuses on civil security and support of basic needs. During a typical DATE rotation, the battalion is in contact with a near-peer competitor, insurgents and criminal organizations – sometimes all at once. The historical models of targeting and assessment have become so complex that to use them would overwhelm the staff and result in slow execution of the operations process. A simple quad chart that drives the unit through the *decide, detect, deliver* and *assess* steps of targeting allows the staff to identify the variances that demonstrate accomplishment of the endstate – or, conversely, have put accomplishment of the end state at risk.

Achieving balance

So, how does a battalion team establish balance in a decisive-action environment to produce detailed plans? It is through disciplined execution of the daily battle rhythm, combined with the required execution of the operations process.

The battle rhythm and the operations process are separate-but-linked systems that allow the team to drive operations; they must be separate but synchronized to allow successful execution of CAM and WAS. Outputs from the daily battle rhythm should increase coordination during the steps of the MDMP. Simply focusing on the desired endstate should help guide the staff to key assessments measured by information collected through updates, intelligence collection and debriefs following operations.

The staff maintains its focus through the identification of the endstate and by developing sub-objectives that maintain the staff's azimuth throughout the process. We can discipline this process by ensuring the commander's guidance clearly lays out expectations for information required to make decisions. Combined with the simple quad chart, well-organized meetings and running staff estimates that allow the team to efficiently identify variances across friendly, enemy, terrain and civilian considerations keep the process on track.

There are two key outputs of the daily battle rhythm and the execution of the operations process. They are:

- The daily frago that helps organize unit efforts with a focus on the human domain through stability mechanisms; and
- The operations frago focused on the land domain through defeat mechanisms.

This is where the battalion team achieves the ability to execute both WAS and CAM, accomplished through detailed planning in an austere and time constrained environment.

The various charts (Figures 1a through 1f) with this article illustrate the complexities of unified land operations across the spectrum of conflict as the commander drives the operations process through *understand*, *visualize*, *describe*, *direct* and *assess* activities. The commander, supported by the staff, accounts for the forms of contact while organizing all WfF to develop operations that have flexibility and synchronize unit actions.

Figure 1a describes MA 1, the assessment of the operational variables through execution of the targeting cycle as part of the battle rhythm. These feed the deductions that drive action for WAS with a concentration on the human domain. The goal here is to provide a secure environment to meet critical needs of the population. The battalion has some capability to accomplish this but must identify the resource shortfalls that require support from brigade, other agencies or host-nation forces. Once identified, these requests are submitted as part of the battalion's participation in the brigade's operations synchronization meeting. This is a continuous process that starts with MA 1 and continues through the use of updated staff running estimates.

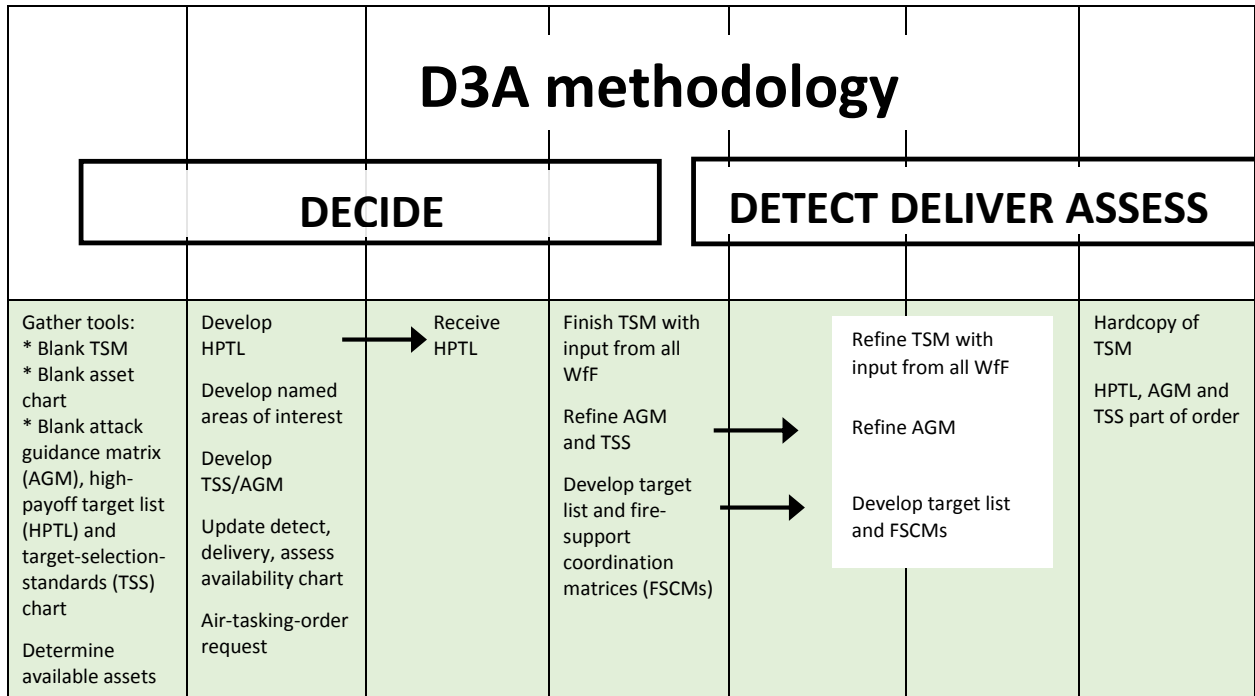| Integration of the targeting process into MDMP						
Receipt of mission	Mission analysis	CoA development	CoA analysis (wargame)	CoA comparison	CoA approval	Orders production
Warning order					Warning order	

D3A methodology

	DECIDE		DETECT DELIVER ASSESS		
Gather tools: * Blank TSM * Blank asset chart * Blank attack guidance matrix (AGM), high-payoff target list (HPTL) and target-selection-standards (TSS) chart Determine available assets	Develop HPTL Develop named areas of interest Develop TSS/AGM Update detect, delivery, assess availability chart Air-tasking-order request	Receive HPTL	Finish TSM with input from all WfF Refine AGM and TSS Develop target list and fire-support coordination matrices (FSCMs)	Refine TSM with input from all WfF Refine AGM Develop target list and FSCMs	Hardcopy of TSM HPTL, AGM and TSS part of order

Figure 1a. Integration of the targeting process into the MDMP. MA 1 is focused on operational variables (PMESII-PT). These deductions form the basis of the staff running estimate and allow the commander to visualize the OE endstate. Continuous use of targeting cycle as part of the battle rhythm allows the unit to synchronize efforts as WAS variances are identified.
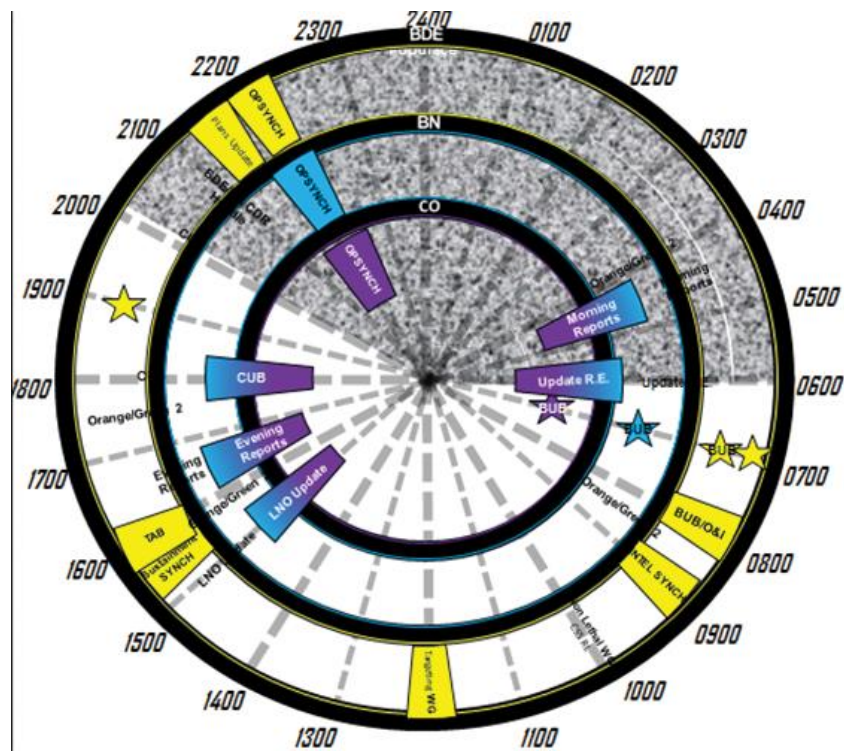

Figure 1b. Circular battle rhythm. WAS is the application of the elements of combat power in unified action to protect populations, forces, infrastructure and activities; to deny the enemy positions of advantage; and to consolidate gains to retain the initiative. *(Original from FM 6-0, Chapter 1)*
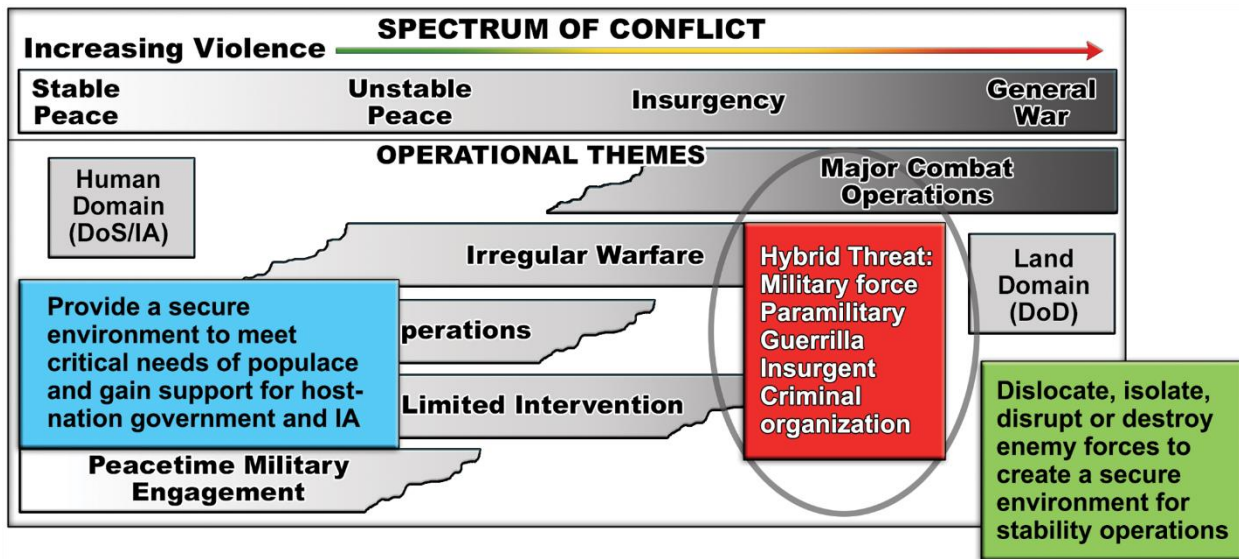
SPECTRUM OF CONFLICT

Increasing Violence

| Stable Peace | Unstable Peace | Insurgency | General War |

OPERATIONAL THEMES

Human Domain (DoS/IA)

Major Combat Operations

Irregular Warfare

Hybrid Threat: Military force Paramilitary Guerrilla Insurgent Criminal organization

Land Domain (DoD)

Provide a secure environment to meet critical needs of populace and gain support for host-nation government and IA

...erations

Limited Intervention

Dislocate, isolate, disrupt or destroy enemy forces to create a secure environment for stability operations

Peacetime Military Engagement

Figure 1c. Unified land operations are executed through decisive action (offense/ defense / stability / defense support of civil authorities) by means of Army core competencies (WAS and CAM). Per ADP 3-0, Paragraph 22, offensive, defensive and stability operations each require a combination of CAM and WAS; neither core competency is adequate in isolation.
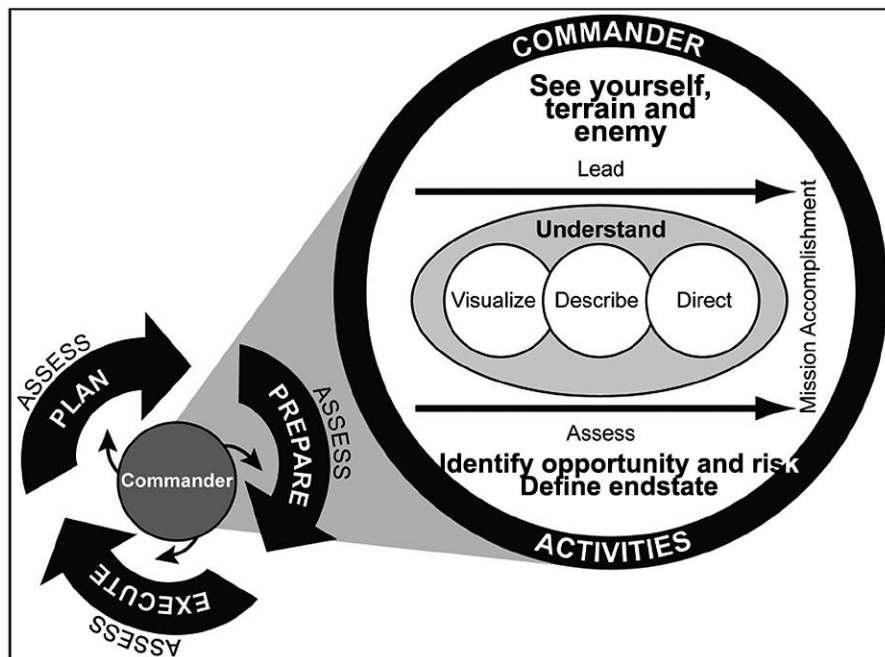
Figure 1d. The commander accounts for the forms of contact, organizes all WfF and develops operations that have flexibility, integration, lethality, adaptability, depth and synchronization.

Figure 1e is where we see MA 2 and its focus on the mission variables. These deductions drive actions through the operations process with a focus on CAM. We include key deductions from MA 1 and the running updates of MA 1 to account for WAS. Here, we execute the operations process through use of the MDMP. This allows the unit to visualize and execute along the contact continuum where we find, fix and finish the HT in the unit's OE. Again, the unit measures the results of its operations against the HT as it executes the defeat mechanisms to accomplish the assigned purpose. This is the process to facilitate mission command.

	MDMP	
Guidance and intent		**Estimates and assumptions**
Key inputs	**Steps**	**Key outputs**
• Higher headquarters plan or order or new mission anticipated by the commander	Step 1: **Receipt of mission**	• **Commander's initial guidance** • Initial allocation of time
• Higher headquarters plan or order • Higher headquarters knowledge and intelligence products • Knowledge products from other organizations	Step 2: **Mission analysis**	• Problem statement • Mission statement • **Initial commander's intent** • **Initial planning guidance** • **Initial CCIRs and EEFI** • **Updated in-progress review and running estimates** • Assumptions
• Mission statement • **Initial commander's intent, planning guidance, CCIRs and EEFI** • **Updated in-progress review and running estimates** • **Assumptions**	Step 3: **CoA development**	• CoA statements and sketches • Tentative task organization • Broad concept of operations • **Revised planning guidance** • **Updated assumptions**
• **Updated running estimates** • **Revised planning guidance** • CoA statements and sketches • **Updated assumptions**	Step 4: **CoA analysis** (wargame)	• Refined CoAs • Potential decision points • Wargame results • Initial assessment measures • **Updated assumptions**
• **Updated running estimates** • Refined CoAs • Evaluation criteria • Wargame results • **Updated assumptions**	Step 5: **CoA comparison**	• Evaluated CoAs • Recommended CoAs • **Updated running estimates** • **Updated assumptions**
• **Updated running estimates** • Evaluated CoAs • Recommended CoA • **Updated assumptions**	Step 6: **CoA approval**	• Commander selected CoA with any modifications • **Refined commander's intent, CCIR and EEFI** • **Updated assumptions**
• Commander selected CoA with any modifications • **Refined commander's intent, CCIR and EEFI** • **Updated assumptions**	Step 7: **Orders production, dissemination and transmission**	• Approved operation plan or order • Subordinates understand the plan or order

Figure 1e. MA 2 is focused on mission variables (METT-TC). These deductions center on a specific mission and typically focus the unit on a CAM operation. Inclusion of MA 1 and target outputs allow the unit to account for WAS as they focus on CAM.
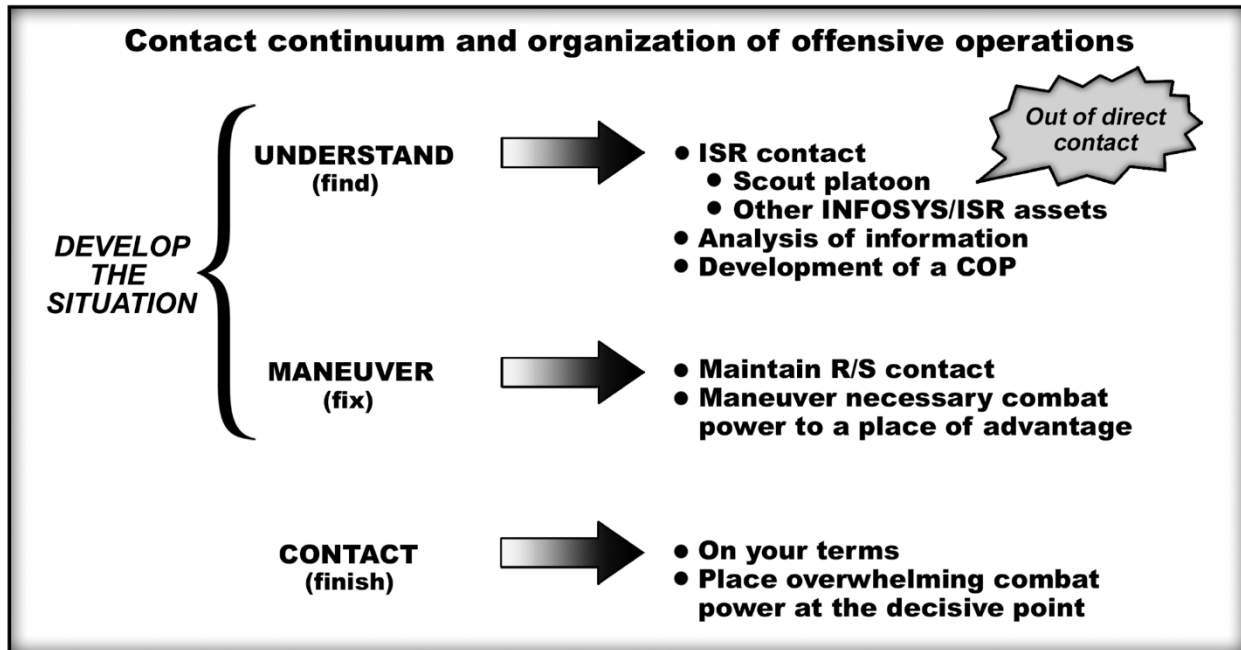
Figure 1f. Contact continuum and organizations of offensive operations. CAM is the application of the elements of combat power in unified action to defeat enemy ground forces; to seize, occupy and defend land areas; and to achieve physical, temporal and psychological advantages over the enemy to seize and exploit the initiative.

Organizing, manning, training

Networks, information systems and facilities are already established by the tactical-operations center as the battalion executes WAS/CAM. The hard part of staff organization and operations is the manning component. For this to work, it must be executable day and night across the battalion staff. Here is where we should treat our staff's organization and manning like a battle roster for a platoon, vehicle crew or gun crew. Each staff member has assigned primary and alternate duties and is trained to execute those duties.

Organization and training incorporates officers and noncommissioned officers with Soldiers. The battalion commander and command sergeant major should oversee this training, with the executive officer and operations officer as the primary trainers of the staff. The battalion commander and executive officer should review and exercise the team with the same diligence they do a maneuver platoon or gun crew. It is imperative the executive officer be involved in this process due to the multitude of outside requirements the battalion commander must focus on. This careful attention to organization and training, along with a detailed manning plan, allows the team to build the capacity to support the battle rhythm with its targeting cycle, run daily operations and execute the operations process for the next offensive or defensive mission.

While execution of CAM and WAS in a decisive action is difficult – especially against an HT skilled at attacking with all eight forms of contact across the OE's depth – it can be done. It is important to note that these skills and capabilities must be trained at the unit's home station. The DATE provides little time to develop new and unproven systems, but it does give the unit time to refine its existing capabilities and processes.

Getting better

Our skills in the execution of the science of offensive and defensive operations on the major-combat-operations side of the spectrum of conflict are improving. With that said, we still need to retain the skills that have contributed to our success in stability operations as we operated from the peace-operations and irregular-warfare side of the conflict spectrum. With these two critical skills in our formations, we can successfully execute unified land operations and accomplish our missions in both the land and human domains.

This begins with the commander's understanding and visualization, supported by the staff through the daily execution of a battle rhythm and the operations process. The results are detailed daily fragos or mission orders

that organize the battalion team for combat, concentrate combat power at the decisive place and time, and provide the details required to achieve the desired endstate in regard to the enemy, friendly, terrain and civilian population.

This article started with two key questions:

- How does a battalion team establish a planning balance in a decisive-action environment to produce detailed plans?
- How does a battalion team establish the balance between CAM and WAS in accomplishment of its purpose assigned by the brigade team?

We have described "a way" that uses the concept of MA 1 and MA 2, and discussed the manning and training required to accomplish those tasks, including maintaining running estimates. A well-organized and trained staff, using the MA 1 and MA 2 concept, provides the deductions that inform the commander's decision-making and drive the operations process.

Critical to the success of this process is the commander's involvement. The commander ensures that the staff is on track with the intent and that concepts develop into executable plans which achieve the envisioned endstate. We use the MDMP to assist us with the production of detailed plans to accomplish our purpose in the land domain through defeat mechanisms.

We use the targeting cycle to assist us in production of detailed plans that accomplish our purpose in the human domain through stability mechanisms. We synchronize the two through execution of our core competencies of CAM and WAS. The commander drives both processes and ensures the staff's energy is focused on development of plans that accomplish the purpose and achieve the endstate.

This article provides a different paradigm to assist commanders in their visualization and provides a framework to direct the team's planning efforts. In the end, this framework allows the unit to provide detailed plans in time for subordinates to plan and execute successfully under conditions set by the battalion with synchronized WfF that overwhelm the enemy.

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Notes

[1] ADP-3, **Unified Land Operations**, Washington, DC, October 2011.
[2] FM 3-0, **Operations**, Washington, DC, February 2008, with Change 1, February 2011.
[3] ADRP 3-90, **Offense and Defense**, Washington, DC, August 2012.
[4] FM 6-0, **Commander and Staff Organization and Operations**, Washington, DC, May 2014.

[5] ADRP 3-90.

[6] ADRP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, lists six warfighting functions – Paragraph 1-56 and Paragraphs 3-6 through 3-26 – as mission command, movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment and protection.