

Decision Point Tactics and the Meeting Battle

Fighting the Enemy, Not the Plan



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In June 1996 the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California, began executing full-time brigade operations. This significant change in training focus was accompanied by an even more revolutionary change in the fighting doctrine of the opposing force (OPFOR).

Field Manual 100-2-1, *Soviet Army Tactics and Doctrine*; FM 100-2-2, *Soviet Army Specialized Warfare*; and FM 100-2-3, *Soviet Army Organization and Equipment*, were replaced by DA Pamphlet 350-1, *Heavy OPFOR Organization*; DA Pamphlet 350-14, *OPFOR Operational Art*, and DA Pamphlet 350-16, *OPFOR Tactical Handbook*.

Much of the equipment, organization, and basic formation remains similar to the old Soviet model. The truly revolutionary change involves the application of these assets

on the NTC battlefield. Instead of applying brute force and a strict timeline, the OPFOR now maneuvers forces in accordance with the factors of METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time) involved with the operation. In essence, OPFOR commanders are no longer tied to executing rote doctrinal tenets but are free to practice maneuver warfare more in line with the U.S. way of fighting.

Besides operations and training systems, upgrades have further changed the way the OPFOR executes its operations. The OPFOR regiment is manned and equipped to train battalion-size forces. Increasing to brigade-size operations has significantly affected force ratios and sector sizes. For example, the average force ratio for a regimental

attack against a brigade in a prepared defense is now 1.3:1 instead of the doctrinal 3:1. For a motorized rifle battalion (MRB) defense, the average force ratio is 1:3 in favor of the Blue Force (BLUFOR), but the more significant factor is the sector size. Instead of defending a doctrinal frontage of 3 to 5 kilometers, today's MRB defends a frontage of 10 to 15 kilometers.

System upgrades have also changed the battlefield environment. Some of the more significant upgrades are the MILES II and simulated area weapons effect (SAWE) systems. The MILES II upgrade has significantly changed the performance roles of most of the direct-fire systems. For example, the BMPs are now less effective while other systems are more effective. The SAWE system has decreased the role of artillery destructive fires.

As the OPFOR studied its new doctrine and learned the nuances of the system upgrades, it became apparent that the old way of doing things would no longer work. Extensive planning, experimentation, and simple trial and error became the focus of OPFOR training. This process led to tactics that relied more on maneuver and finesse than on firepower. It was through this training and learning process that the concept of decision point tactics for the OPFOR was developed.

Decision Point Tactics

Although not specifically titled decision point tactics, the basic concept and technique of using decision points is embodied in our current doctrine. The OPFOR defines decision point tactics as *the art and science of employing available means at a specific point in space and/or time where the commander anticipates making a decision concerning a specific friendly course of action (COA). This decision is directly associated with threat force activity (action/reaction) and/or the battlefield environment.*

Decision point style tactics, like any other tactical technique, still require effective troop leading procedures and proper execution. From the OPFOR perspective, four imperatives ensure the success of decision point tactics:

- ♦ Battlefield vision.
- ♦ Successful reconnaissance and counterreconnaissance operations.
- ♦ Well-trained crews and platoons.
- ♦ Effective deception operations.

Battlefield Vision

The commander and his staff must have a shared vision of the battlefield and its many permutations throughout an engagement. Besides the inherent experience factor, the primary means of gaining battlefield vision is through the use of the deliberate decision making process (DDMP).

From an OPFOR perspective, the DDMP is absolutely necessary to understanding and visualizing the battlefield. Through the process, and especially the wargaming portion of the process, the OPFOR attempts to visualize all possible situations and subsequent reactions during an upcoming battle. To gain a shared vision at all levels, all commanders

and battlefield operating system (BOS) representatives (or as many of them as possible) must be included in the process. Because the OPFOR gets to practice the DDMP repetitively in its numerous rotations, it has been able to go beyond the science and into the art of planning.

The key point is that the OPFOR always does the DDMP in full and considers it the primary means of gaining shared battlefield vision. Summarized below are some of the more critical aspects of DDMP:

METT-T Analysis. Although a full intelligence preparation of the battlefield process is necessary to fully appreciate decision point tactics, the relatively simple tool of METT-T analysis can summarize many of the important OPFOR considerations for decision point tactics. This analysis is critical in determining the basic conditions and norms used in the wargaming process. Obviously, an inaccurate analysis leads to invalid results. Analysis should therefore include several alternatives and options, all of which should include the enemy perspective.

♦ **Mission** Since the meeting battle is force oriented, decision points are developed to fix and destroy the enemy force. All maneuver options are specifically geared to enemy formations and their maneuver options.

♦ **Enemy** The enemy is the most important factor and during the meeting battle one of the easier ones to analyze. Like the OPFOR, the BLUFOR has a set doctrine that advocates leading with the smallest possible force to facilitate maneuver options for the main body. The OPFOR knows that during a movement to contact the BLUFOR will normally move with an advance guard company or team, with one task force up and one back. (Some units attack with two task forces abreast, normally in an attempt to assume a hasty defense. This formation is easy to identify and, from the OPFOR perspective, easier to defeat. By coming two abreast, the BLUFOR units are easily fixed and lose their maneuver options, thus surrendering the initiative to the OPFOR).

♦ **Terrain** Although the terrain at the NTC does not change (Figure 1), its effects on the battle, especially in terms of time and space, should be completely reviewed. Time and space are especially important for the meeting battle. Critical to success is the identification of when and where initial contact will take place and the location of the subsequent main battle area. The OPFOR will attempt to visualize these areas and then determine how to make the best use of the terrain to destroy the enemy. Some of the more significant terrain factors the OPFOR examines during the meeting battle include identifying all possible maneuver routes, choke points, and intervisibility lines; the effect of weather on the employment of special munitions (smoke and chemical agents); and most important, key terrain features that could help in fixing and then enveloping enemy forces. The way the enemy will use this same terrain is always considered as well.

♦ **Troops** Like other units, OPFOR units go through changes in personnel, training levels, and equipment; the OPFOR is also augmented by many different types of units

that vary in training level and expertise. Consequently, every battle has to take into consideration the capabilities and limitations of the units involved. Upgrades to OPFOR and BLUFOR battlefield systems are in a state of flux, and units are still trying to determine the capabilities and limitations of these new systems. Since future training system upgrades will continue to change the analysis, units must fully understand the systems they are fighting. They must also remember that these new system upgrades do not fully replicate the actual systems' capabilities and limitations.

- ♦ **Time** An analysis of different aspects of time is absolutely critical in determining proper decision points. Some key considerations for the OPFOR include movement times for both enemy and friendly forces on specific routes; the effects of time of day and weather on the employment of special munitions such as smoke and chemical agents; and most important, a realization of how long it takes to conduct a battle. For example, most meeting battles take five to eight hours, giving units more than enough time for deliberate envelopment options. Tactical patience is a key concept for the OPFOR.

Wargaming. Wargaming is the most important step of the DDMP. Regardless of the number of battles the OPFOR fights, the next one will always be different, and extensive time and effort are invested in wargaming.

The wargaming process places the METT-T analysis in a situation that fully incorporates enemy actions. The most significant aspect of wargaming is that it gives the players involved a better vision of the upcoming battlefield.

Instead of applying brute force and a strict timeline, the OPFOR now maneuvers forces in accordance with the factors of METT-T (mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time) involved with the operation.

For this reason, OPFOR wargames include commanders and special platoon leaders. This enables commanders at all levels to relate battlefield events to some aspect of the wargame and understand their commander's intent for subsequent actions.

This process builds on itself. The more battles you fight the better able you are to contribute to the wargaming process, and consequently the better you are at visualizing the battlefield. It is important to note that the wargaming and planning process continues through the preparation and execution of the battles as more information becomes available.

For example, during one operation, OPFOR reconnaissance determined that the enemy's defense was completely different from any of the wargaming scenarios. The command group and tactical operations center (TOC) personnel conducted a hasty wargame to determine the effect of these new dispositions on current COAs and decision

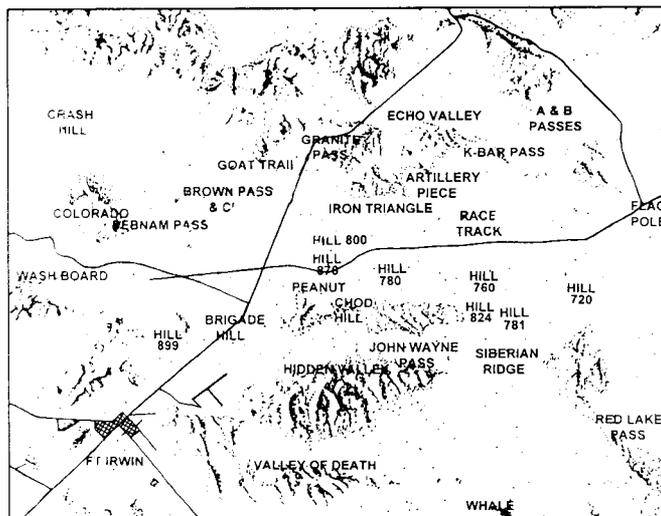


Figure 1. NTC Terrain Features

points. Once the changes were identified, it was easy to communicate them because the participating commanders had an initial point of reference from which to adjust their plans. The battle was highly successful because of these adjustments and also because the subordinate commanders fully understood the changed battlefield and had a shared vision of it.

Basic OPFOR wargaming techniques include the following:

- ♦ The commander provides planning guidance and initial acceptable risks to serve as a point of departure for the wargaming process--for example, preferred maneuver routes, use of special munitions, use of deception and commitment of forces to achieve it, the risk of placing artillery forward to reach a specific target, and the risk of going through a specific choke point. The wargame examines the initial guidance and risks and determines whether they need to be changed or rejected.

- ♦ The S-2 develops in advance three or four potential enemy COAs and all IPB products and overlays (for example, route overlay with time and distance factors, and intervisibility line overlay).

- ♦ The belt wargame technique is the most common. The commander or S-3 determines two to four areas in which a battle might be fought or zones of penetration the enemy might employ, and then wargames these areas in detail.

- ♦ The wargame analyzes action/reaction with emphasis on determining ways to make the enemy react in the manner that will best support OPFOR maneuver options: for example, using artillery scattered mines (FASCAM) or persistent chemical agents to shape the battlefield or sending a fixing force that can free the main effort to maneuver.

- ♦ The OPFOR harmonizes other BOSs with the maneuver plan. Given all the potentially different COAs, branches, and sequels, it is difficult to synchronize all BOS options. Instead, the wargaming process attempts to maximize the use of other BOSs to cover more than one option; for example, placing the persistent chemical to

isolate two maneuver corridors supports options in both corridors. That way, if the OPFOR attacks down one or the other, the forces on either side will be isolated. In some cases, several BOSs may not be used because the risk would outweigh their benefits for that particular COA.

♦ The staff determines decision points for each COA, branch, and sequel along with the conditions that must exist to execute that option. Conditions for executing the option are essentially the criteria for choosing a particular decision point.

A meeting battle, by definition, involves two moving forces; therefore, identifying the exact location where the battle will be fought is critical. To compensate for this uncertainty, the OPFOR wargames using the belt technique and uses movement timelines to determine three likely zones of battle--base (the expected zone), deep, and short. METT-T analysis assists in this process. The initial decision point is based on the zone where the battle is most likely to take place.

Products of the Planning Process. From an OPFOR perspective, operations orders, synchronization matrices, decision matrices (including decision point conditions), and other staff tools are necessary evils. They capture the wargaming data and put it into a recognizable form that can be communicated to those who do not attend the wargaming session. These tools are also useful in the rehearsal process. OPFOR orders, in matrix form, are one or two pages long with a cartoon sketch. Unit standing operating procedures cover most of the other administrative and operational areas.

At the command post level, the most significant piece of information is the conditions identified for executing each COA. These are annotated on the TOC data boards and checked off as conditions are met. The tactical command post and command group also maintain this data. Synchronization and decision matrices are more detailed but are primarily used to assist other BOS representatives who need detailed information to support maneuver operations. These matrices must be as flexible as the maneuver plan itself.

Rehearsals. More emphasis is placed on rehearsals than on the actual order because more of the participants have derived a complete vision of the battle from the wargame. As a decision point is reached during the rehearsal, the commander checks the conditions and makes a decision that generates the next phase of the rehearsal. The process is repeated for each COA. This ensures that all commanders and staffs completely understand the conditions, as well as the subsequent actions.

Rehearsals ensure that each soldier understands his role in the plan and the critical decision points. Unit staff and commanders rehearse each potential zone of battle in preparation for a meeting battle.

Successful Reconnaissance Operations

It is impossible to execute decision point tactics without good reconnaissance, and conducting counterreconnaissance operations helps keep a capable opponent

from effectively employing the same tactics. OPFOR reconnaissance uses named areas of interest, targeted areas of interest, and all the other standard Army doctrine planning techniques to produce the reconnaissance collection plan and counterreconnaissance plan. What is more important is that OPFOR scouts, who also participate in the wargaming process, know the operational concept, the decision point criteria for their named areas of interest, and the commander's overall intent. If the battlefield doesn't look like the wargame, the scouts make sure they communicate the differences to the commander. OPFOR scouts are also given the latitude to recommend changes in

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their tactical employment. The OPFOR scouts and S-2s who collect the information can help the commander's decision process by deciphering what is important and what is not.

Since many of the decision points occur late in the actual execution of the battle, the OPFOR reconnaissance reporting process must be continuous. Because both forces are maneuvering in a meeting battle, it is absolutely critical that reconnaissance assets identify the enemy forces' reaction either to the OPFOR's maneuver or to its deception operations. This process will trigger subsequent decision point maneuver options. Counterreconnaissance operations by regimental reconnaissance are also necessary to hinder the enemy's decision process and further enhance deception operations.

Well-Trained Crews and Platoons

Since decision point tactics require decentralized execution, crews and platoons must be able to react on short notice and execute simple battle drills. Most BLUFOR units have excellent commanders and staff members who develop plans that match or even rival those of the OPFOR. The key difference is in training. If BLUFOR platoons are not trained, no plan will succeed, and it will be impossible to execute decision point tactics. As in the reconnaissance effort, full understanding of the options and the commander's intent is critical at the company and platoon levels. Through the orders process and, more important, the rehearsal process, OPFOR platoons gain full understanding of their role in each of the different maneuver options.

To achieve decentralized execution, every unit must have crews and platoons that can react on short notice and execute simple battle drills, terrain navigate, and report accurately. The OPFOR's success in executing meeting battle maneuver doctrine is based primarily on its well-trained crews and platoons.

Effective Deception Operations

Given the scenarios, sectors, and combat ratios, most

BLUFOR units should be able to react to any OPFOR maneuver, assuming they understand what the OPFOR is really doing. A number of OPFOR defeats have shown this to be true. The OPFOR must maximize its use of deception to gain that slight tactical edge necessary to success. Like a head fake in basketball, or a brush block in football, the OPFOR needs to deceive the enemy commander as to its real intentions just long enough to gain that tactical advantage.

The OPFOR achieves its deception goals primarily by reinforcing the BLUFOR S-2's most likely template and conducting good counterreconnaissance. To achieve this, the OPFOR is willing to commit up to an MRB maneuver force, artillery, close air support, electronic warfare, and smoke assets. During the wargaming process, OPFOR S-2s highlight the way BLUFOR dispositions correspond to possible OPFOR maneuver options. During offensive operations, OPFOR reconnaissance confirms or denies BLUFOR dispositions and consequently what the BLUFOR thinks is the most likely OPFOR COA. All OPFOR offensive COAs have options designed specifically to reinforce possible BLUFOR perceptions on OPFOR COAs. During defensive operations, false positions are placed to portray an S-2's possible BLUFOR COA. The OPFOR then establishes an alternate defense. In some cases, deception also causes the BLUFOR commander to commit his BOS assets against unimportant targets. In summary, deception operations are essential to the success of decision point tactics because they cause an opposing commander to surrender the initiative, waste BOS assets, and react to OPFOR maneuver.

Although deception is critical for all battles, during the meeting battle, it only needs to be maintained for a short period of time. In the fluidity of the meeting battle, a deception of five to ten minutes can be important to an opposing commander's decision cycle.

Risks are always inherent in operations against a potentially superior force. The most significant of these risks include:

- ♦ Poor decentralized execution.
- ♦ Poor BOS synchronization.
- ♦ The enemy's failure to react as planned.
- ♦ Invalid decision point conditions.
- ♦ Rapid and flexible BLUFOR reaction.
- ♦ Well-trained BLUFOR crews and platoons.

Although decision point tactics may increase these risks substantially, they improve the chances of success at the same time. Training and battlefield experience can reduce the risks, but the enemy is always the unknown factor and the most difficult one to anticipate.

Sample Battle

The following is a sample decision point battle (meeting battle scenario):

Mission: 32d Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment (MRR) attacks from the march 090700XXX96 to destroy enemy forces and secure MRR objective vicinity NK5815 to facilitate the passage of follow-on divisional forces.

Enemy Courses of Action (COAs): The wargame templated three basic BLUFOR COAs:

COA 1—Brigade attacks with one task force leading; second task force follows and maneuvers north or south of the lead task force.

COA 2—Brigade attacks with one task force leading; second task force commits along the same avenue as the lead task force.

COA 3—Brigade attacks with two task forces abreast.

Concept: The basic maneuver concept is simple. The MRR attacks in the advance guard formation. The forward support element (FSE) moves, finds and destroys the advance guard company/team. The advance guard main body (AGMB) moves, finds and defeats the lead task force. Upon commitment of the second task force, the main body MRBs maneuver to the opposite flank to envelop and destroy the second task force and the forces remaining in the first task force. The second echelon MRB (minus) can reinforce the FSE, AGMB, main body, or continue the attack to secure the regimental objective. Decision points are developed to facilitate these maneuver options.

OPFOR Courses of Action:

COA 1 (Base Plan—Zone 2):

Advance Guard MRB attacks (Figure 2) through Brown Pass (NK337162) with an attack orientation Hill 780/Iron Triangle (NK423162) to fix and destroy the lead task force. On order, facilitates passage of the main body and assists in the destruction of the second task force. Assists deception effort by dispersing and portraying the main body.

Main Body:

Option North: MRBs attack abreast through Brown Pass (NK337162) with an attack orientation to Iron Triangle (NK423162), Artillery Piece (NK443173), and Race Track (NK463141) echeloned right. Right side (south) MRB (supporting effort) guards left side (north) MRB (main effort) southern flank by seizing firing lines and reducing the second task force. Main effort MRB envelops and destroys second task force/brigade reserve. On order, continues attack to secure MRR objective.

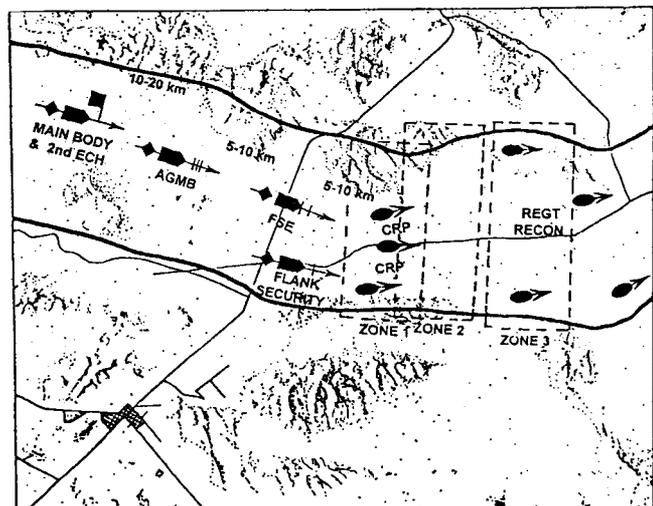


Figure 2. Course of Action 1

Option South: MRBs attack abreast through Debnam Pass (NK302151) with an attack orientation to Peanut/Chod/Hill 876, Hill 780, Hill 760, echeloned left. Left side (north) MRB (supporting effort) guards right side MRB (main effort) northern flank by seizing firing lines and degrading second task force. Main effort MRB envelops and destroys second task force/brigade reserve. On order, continues attack to secure MRR objective.

Antitank Battalion (ATB)

Option North: Guards MRR southern flank.

Option South: Guards MRR northern flank.

2d Echelon MRB follows and assumes main effort or reinforces FSE or AGMB. On order, exploits main effort success.

Decision Point Conditions for COA 1:

♦ Battle zone will be vicinity Hill 876, Hill 780, and Iron Triangle.

♦ Option North: Second task force attacks along the south wall

♦ Option South: Second task force attacks along the north wall.

COA 2 (Deep--Zone 3):

Advance Guard MRB attacks through Brown Pass (NK337162) with an attack orientation Hill 780/Artillery Piece (NK443173) to fix and destroy the lead task force. On order, facilitates passage of the main body and assists in the destruction of the second task force. Assists deception effort by dispersing and portraying main body.

Main Body:

Option North: MRBs attack abreast through Brown Pass (NK337162) with an attack orientation to Iron Triangle (NK423162), Artillery Piece (NK443173), and Race Track (NK463141), echeloned right. Right side (south) MRB (supporting effort) guards left side MRB (main effort) southern flank by seizing firing lines and reducing second task force. Main effort MRB envelops and destroys second task force/brigade reserve. On order, continues attack to secure MRR objective.

Option South: MRBs attack abreast through Debnam Pass (NK302151) with an attack orientation to Peanut/Chod/Hill 876, Hill 780, Hill 760, Hill 720, echeloned left. Left side (north) MRB (supporting effort) guards right side MRB (main effort) northern flank by seizing firing lines and reducing second task force. Main effort MRB envelops and destroys second task force/brigade reserve. On order, continues attack to secure MRR objective.

ATB:

Option North: Guards MRR southern flank.

Option South: Guards MRR northern flank.

2d Echelon MRB follows and assumes main effort or reinforces FSE or AGMB. On order, exploits main effort success.

Decision Point Conditions for COA 2:

♦ Battle zone will occur vicinity Hill 760 and Race Track. Option North: Second task force attacks along the south wall.

♦ Option South: Second task force attacks along the north wall.

COA 3 (Short-- Zone 1):

Advance Guard MRB attacks through Brown Pass (NK337162) with an attack orientation Brigade Hill (NK353086), Chod Hill (NK411104), 114 Wadi to fix and destroy lead task force. On order, facilitates passage of main body and assists in the destruction of the second task force. Assists deception effort by dispersing and portraying the main body.

Main Body:

Option North: MRBs attack abreast through Brown Pass (NK337162) with an attack orientation to 114 Wadi, Iron Triangle (NK423162), Artillery Piece (NK443173), and Race Track (NK463141), echeloned right. Right side (south) MRB (supporting effort) guard left side MRB (main effort) southern flank by seizing firing lines and reducing second task force. Main effort MRB envelops and destroys second task force/brigade reserve. On order, continues attack to secure MRR objective.

Option South: MRBs attack abreast through Debnam Pass (NK302151) with an attack orientation to Brigade Hill, Peanut/Chod/Hill 876, Hill 780, Hill 760, echeloned left. Left side (north) MRB (supporting effort) guards right MRB (main effort) northern flank by seizing firing lines and reducing second task force. Main effort MRB envelops and destroys second task force/brigade reserve. On order, continues attack to secure MRR objective.

ATB:

Option North: Guards MRR southern flank.

Option South: Guards MRR northern flank.

2d Echelon MRB follows and assumes main effort or reinforces FSE or AGMB. On order, exploits main effort success.

Decision Point Conditions for COA 3:

♦ Battle zone will be vicinity Brigade Hill, Hill 876, and Iron Triangle.

♦ Option North: Second task force attacks along the south wall.

♦ Option South: Second task force attacks along the north wall.

Execution of Decision Point Tactics

First Decision Point (Figure 3). Division reconnaissance reported that the advance guard company/team and lead task force moved west centered in axis of advance and would make contact with the FSE in the vicinity of zone 1. Given the rate of march, they could reach Hill 876/Iron Triangle before the FSE. Based on this information, the regimental commander made the decision to execute COA 1. Additionally, the regimental commander fired persistent chemical agents, non-persistent chemical agents, smoke, and FASCAM to delay the lead task force and allow the FSE to secure initial firing lines in the vicinity of Hill 876/Iron Triangle. The special munitions forced the brigade to commit either north or south, giving an early indication of its intentions. Regimental reconnaissance then focused on

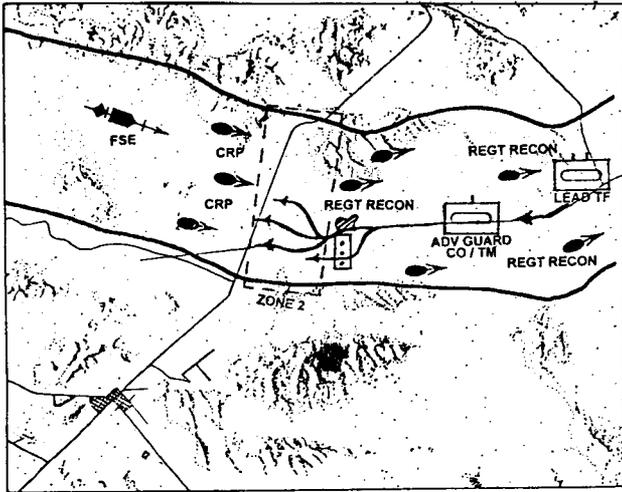


Figure 3. First Decision Point

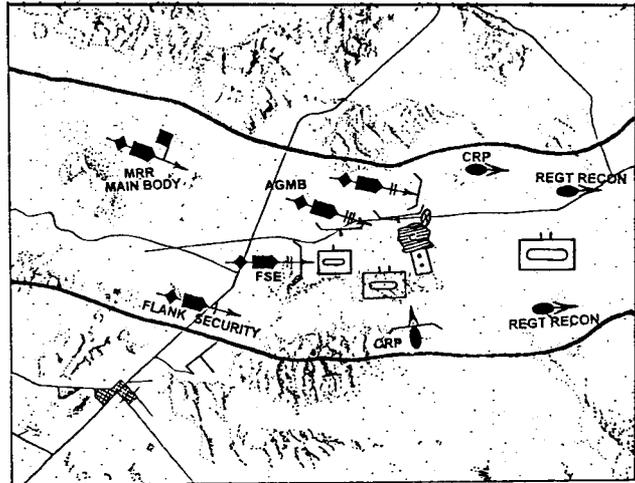


Figure 5. Third Decision Point

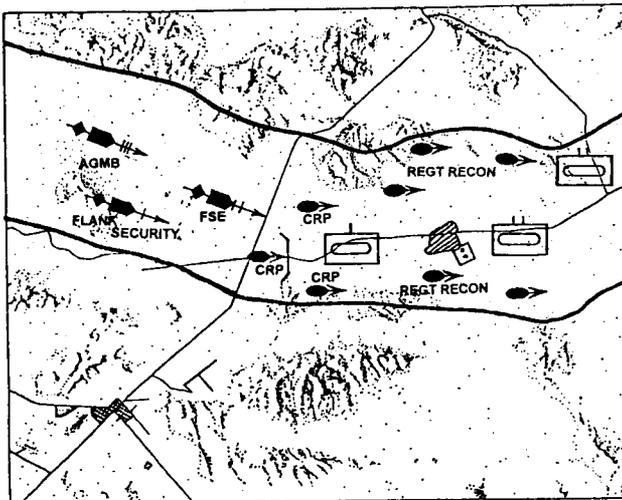


Figure 4. Second Decision Point

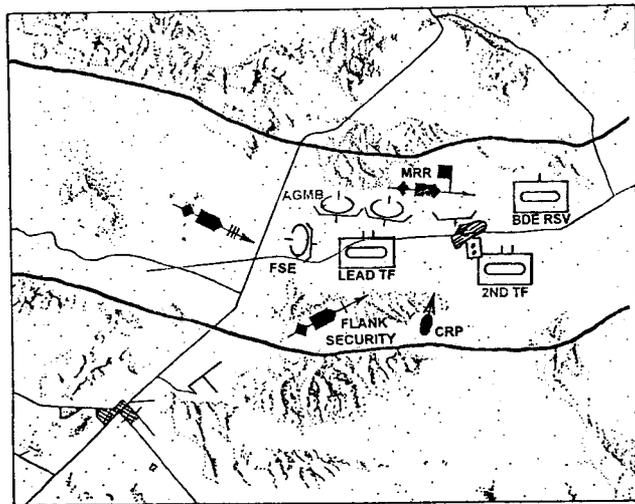


Figure 6. Fourth Decision Point

confirming or denying the northern or southern option criteria.

Second Decision point (MRB Level) (Figure 4): Regimental reconnaissance reported the lead tank-heavy team had committed south toward Hill 780/876. The advance guard's center combat reconnaissance patrol (CRP) made contact with the BLUFOR advance guard team vicinity Hill 780/876. The center CRP then established firing lines vicinity Hill 876 and attempted to fix the lead team. The northern and southern CRPs continued to maneuver along the north and south walls to find the flanks of the lead team and the remainder of the first task force. The MRB commander then committed his FSE to Hill 876 and oriented the AGMB to Hill 800 and the Iron triangle.

Third Decision Point (MRB Level) (Figure 5): The regimental reconnaissance reported that the lead task force (which was delayed by the special munitions) had committed south to reinforce its advance guard team. The second task force was north of Hill 720, still centered up, had not committed north or south. The FSE had defeated the lead team and was fixing the lead task force. The MRB

commander then committed the AGMB to envelop the lead task force from the north, in the vicinity of Hill 800 and the Iron Triangle. The MRB commander also committed an MRC to the vicinity of the Artillery Piece to secure his northern flank in case the second task force committed north. The regimental commander slowed the main body forces to prevent their early commitment before the BLUFOR committed the second task force.

Fourth and Final Decision Point (MRR Level) (Figure 6): The regimental reconnaissance reported commitment of the second task force south toward Hill 760/780 to reinforce the lead task force. The AGMB had defeated the lead task force and forced the second task force to assume a hasty defense in the vicinity of Hill 780. The regimental commander then committed his main body to the northern option. Additionally, the regimental commander directed the second echelon to reinforce the FSE, which had suffered severe attrition from the lead task force.

MRB Execution (Figure 7). At this point, the regimental commander turned over the execution of the operation to the MRB commanders; the regimental CP

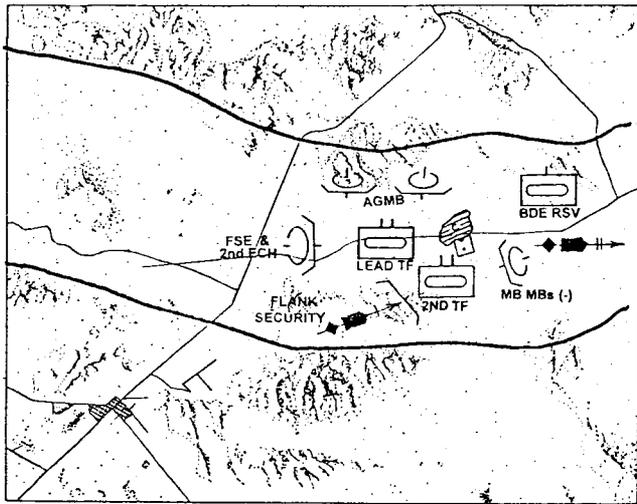


Figure 7. MRB Execution.

continued to support the MRB commanders with fires and other combat multipliers. Seeing the commitment of the main body, the brigade committed its reserve in an attempt to block the OPFOR attack north of the Race Track. Main body forces destroyed the brigade reserve and continued to envelop and destroy the lead task force. Main body forces destroyed the brigade reserve and continued to envelop and destroy the lead task force. The 2d Echelon attacked through the FSE, completing the destruction of the lead task force and assisting in the destruction of the second task force in the vicinity of Hill 760. End state: The regiment successfully destroyed both task forces and moved to its objective with two MRBs (plus) remaining.

Decision point tactics are essential to fighting the fluid battlefield conditions that exist during the meeting

battle. From the OPFOR perspective, however, they are the primary means of achieving success on a rapidly changing battlefield. The essence of decision point tactics is a flexible plan that focuses on enemy actions and reactions, along with the four imperatives:

- ♦ A unit must have good battlefield vision to clearly identify the conditions necessary to execute a specific course of action. The simplicity of the meeting battle maneuver plan, coupled with a solid wargame and rehearsal process, helps the commander achieve such a battlefield vision.

- ♦ Successful reconnaissance and counterreconnaissance efforts by both regimental and CRPs are essential to identifying the decision point conditions and denying the same to the enemy.

- ♦ The OPFOR's highly trained crews and platoons are the foundation for the execution of decision point tactics.

- ♦ Deception operations in support of the meeting battle, although not as resource-intensive as other operations, are essential to gaining the time needed to get inside the enemy commanders' decision cycle.

Although decision point tactics are neither new nor unique, they form the foundation for successful execution during the meeting battle.

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