Chapter 7: Fire Support

This page is a section of FM 7-100.1 Opposing Forces Operations.

The integration of air, artillery, and missile assets into a unified fire support plan is a major task for the combined arms commander. Integration is a decisive element, fundamental to the success of any operation on the modern battlefield. The OPFOR does not consider itself to be an â artillerycentricâ army. Rather, it views itself as using various forms of fire support to achieve success during offensive and defensive operations. In the offense, fire support is important to the success of any attack. It can destroy key systems; disrupt, immobilize, or destroy enemy groupings; and repel counterattacks. Fire support is also the cornerstone of any defense, blunting attacks at the crucial point in the battle. It disrupts enemy preparations for the attack, causes attrition as he approaches, and repels forces.

Fire Support Concepts

Fire support is the collective and coordinated use of target acquisition, indirect fire weapons, aircraft, and other lethal and nonlethal means in support of operational or tactical objectives. The goal is to synchronize all available fire support systems to achieve the most effective results, thereby maximizing combat power. Effective fire support enables OPFOR ground forces to attack successfully and quickly to exploit weaknesses. Commanders try to accomplish their missions using a combination of maneuver and fire. The OPFOR continues to expand and upgrade fire support systems to achieve a qualitative edge over its regional opponents. However, it realizes that it may be at a qualitative disadvantage compared to a modern extraregional force.

The OPFOR stresses that fire support should integrate air assets, surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs), and artillery to attack enemy targets throughout the area of responsibility (AOR). The combined arms commander always seeks to increase the effectiveness of air and missile attacks and artillery fire to destroy enemy formations, weapon systems, or key components of an enemy combat system. (See Systems Warfare later in this chapter and in Chapter 1.) This ensures continuous fire support for maneuver units throughout the AOR.

The OPFOR considers information warfare (IW) an essential element of fire support. It provides a nonlethal alternative or supplement to attack by fire and maneuver. It is integrated into the overall concept of the operation, to confuse, deceive, delay, and disorganize the enemy.

Fire Support Principles

The principles of fire support are the framework for a thought process that ensures the most effective use of fire support assets. These principles apply at all levels of command, regardless of the specific fire support assets available:

- Plan early and continuously.
- ExploitÂ all Â availableÂ reconnaissance, Â intelligence, Â surveillance,Â and target acquisition (RISTA) assets.
- Consider airspace management and the use of all fire support (lethal and nonlethal) means.
- Use the lowest echelon capable of furnishing effective support.
- Avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.
- Use the most effective means to accomplish the mission.
- Provide rapid and effective coordination.
- Provide for flexibility of employment.
- Provide for safeguarding and survivability of OPFOR fire support assets.
- Attempt to achieve surprise when possible.
- Deliver highly accurate and effective fire.

Systems Warfare

The foundation of OPFOR planning is the systems warfare approach to combat. Thus, the OPFOR analyzes its own combat system and how it can use the combined effects of this â system of systemsâ to degrade or destroy the enemyâ s combat system. In systems warfare, the subsystems or components of a combat system are targeted and destroyed individually. Once a favorable combat situation has developed, the targeted enemy subsystem is quickly destroyed in high-intensity operations, thus making the enemyâ s overall combat system vulnerable to destruction or at least degrading its effectiveness. (See Systems Warfare in Chapter 1 for further information.)

Within the systems warfare approach, the OPFOR employs a fire support concept centered on a phased-cycle of finding a critical component of the enemy combat system and determining its location with RISTA assets; engaging it with precision fires, maneuver, or other means; and recovering to support the fight against another part of the enemy force. The primary reason for attacking an enemy with fires is to degrade or destroy one or more key components of the enemyâ s combat system and/or to create favorable conditions for degrading or destroying other parts of his combat system.

Techniques to Exploit Enemy Vulnerabilities

The OPFOR seeks to avoid enemy strengths and exploit his vulnerabilities. In conflicts with extraregional powers, the OPFOR typically would be operating from relative strategic weakness. Therefore, it seeksÂ to operationally outmaneuver, overwhelm, and outpace the enemy. It also seeks to deny him any sanctuary on the battlefield, as well as in the local theater or in his strategic depth. (See Strategic Context later in this chapter.)

The OPFOR will also leverage the effects of its available fire support means by integrating them into an integrated fires command (IFC) in organizations down to division or division tactical group (DTG) level. The IFC (described in detail in Chapter 2) synchronizes and focuses the efforts of RISTA and fire to destroy key enemy formations or systemsâ or key components of an enemy combat system. Destroying such targets can not only shift the balance of power in the region in the OPFORâ s favor, but also undermine enemy morale and resolve.

Target Damage Criteria

Target damage is the effect of fires on a given military target. It results in total, partial, or temporary loss of the targetâ s combat effectiveness. The OPFOR categories of target damage are annihilation, demolition, neutralization, and harassment.[1]Â Of these categories, the first three fall under the general term destruction.

Annihilation

Annihilation fires render targets completely combat-ineffective and incapable of reconstruction or token resistance. For a point target such as an antitank guided missile launcher, the OPFOR mustÂ expendÂ enough munitions to ensure a 70 to 90 percent probability of kill. For area targets such as platoon strongpoints or nuclear artillery assets, the OPFOR must fire enough rounds to destroy from 50 to 60 percent of the targets within a group. These fires result in the group ceasing to exist as a viable fighting force.

Demolition

The OPFOR uses the term demolition in reference to the destruction of buildings and engineer works (such as bridges, fortifications, or roads). Demolition requires enough munitions to make such material objects unfit for further use.

Neutralization

Fire for neutralization inflicts enough losses on a target toâ

- Cause it to temporarily lose its combat effectiveness, or
- Restrict or prohibit its maneuver, or
- Disrupt its command and control (C2) capability.

To achieve neutralization, the OPFOR must deliver enough munitions to destroy 30 percent of a group of unobserved targets. The expectation is that the target is severely damaged but could again become capable of coordinated resistance after the fire is lifted. The term neutralization applies only in an artillery context.

Harassment

The OPFOR uses a limited number of fire supportÂ systemsÂ and munitions within a prescribed time to deliver harassment fires. The goal of these fires is to put psychological pressure on enemy personnel in locations such as defensive positions, command posts (CPs), and logistics installations. Successful harassment fire inhibits maneuver, lowers morale, Â interrupts rest, and weakens enemy combat readiness.

Command and Control

The nature of fire support units, with assets capable of long ranges and their potential wide influence and flexibility on the battlefield, requires that C2 be more complex than for maneuver units. The ability to engage and destroy targets at longer ranges has generally resulted in C2Â being retained at a high level of command in order to maximize overall effectiveness. However, the requirement for a rapid response between the detection of targets and their subsequent engagement requires C2Â to be exercised at a low level of command. Low-level C2Â facilitates accurate judgement in both the timing of engagements and the fire support adjustments as the combat situation develops. The OPFOR instituted the IFC as the principal fire support C2Â structure to ensure flexibility of C2Â and response in meeting the fire support challenges on future battlefields.

Chief of Integrated Fires

Within the operations section of the operational-strategic command (OSC) staff, there is a chief of integrated fires. This officer is responsible for coordinating and advising the commander on the effective integration of C2Â and RISTA means with fire support means (including precision fires) to support the overall operation plan. He controls, but does not command, the fire support units subordinate to or supporting the OSC. He advises the OSC commander on how best to use available fire support assets.

Integrated Fires Command

The IFC is a combination of a standing C2Â structure and task organization of constituent and dedicated fire support units. All division-level and above OPFOR organizations possess an IFC C2Â structureâ staff, CPs, communications and intelligence architecture, and automated fire control system. The IFC exercises C2Â of all constituent and dedicated fire support assets retained by its level of command. This can include Air Force, army aviation, artillery, and SSM units. It also exercises C2 over all RISTA assets constituent or dedicated to it. There is one IFC per OSC.

An OSC-level IFC is capable of engaging designated operational and strategic targets. However, there are circumstances where an IFC may be formed at the theater level. For example, the theater could have two separate campaigns, requiring a centralization of critical fire support

assets at theater level to achieve the strategic or theater campaign objectives. When this occurs, the theater commander forms a theater-level IFC commanded by the deputy theater commander. This IFC exercises C2 over all fire support assets retained at the theater level of command.

The mission of the IFC is to execute all fire support tasks required to accomplish the mission of the command to which the IFC belongs. The IFC is designed toâ

- Exploit the combat power inherent in carefully integrated ground and air fire support actions.
- Reduce to the absolute minimum the amount of time from target acquisition to engagement.
- Permit fire support assets to mass their effects without having to operate in concentrated formations.
- Ensure the optimal fire support asset(s) are assigned any given mission.
- Ensure the commanderâ s priorities for fire support are adhered to.
- Act, if necessary, as the organizationâ s alternate command structure.
- Integrate the effects of fires from units placed in support of the organization.

The number and type of fire support and RISTA units allocated to an IFC is mission dependent. The IFC is not organized according to a table of organization and equipment, but is task organized to accomplish the missions assigned.

In addition to constituent or dedicated assets that become part of its IFC, an OSC can receive fire support and/or RISTA assets allocated to it from national or theater level in a supporting relationship. In that case, the OSC or its IFC commander can position those assets and give them mission priorities, but the supporting assets would still be commanded by their parent organization.

Fire Support Coordination Center

A fire support coordination center (FSCC) is established at each organizational level (maneuver battalion to IFC). The FSCC is the staff element responsible for the planning and coordination of fires to support the respective maneuver unit. It performs the following coordination functions:

- Acquire and identify high-payoff targets (HPTs).
- Recommend targets.
- Use target value analysis to identify target priorities.
- Determine fire support needs.
- Expedite fire support.
- Assess fire support effects.
- Change fire support plans.
- Coordinate the timing of fire support attacks (to include IW).
- Recommend the use of aviation.

Supporting Maneuver Commanders' Fire Requests

Requests for supporting fires may originate at any organizational level. They are initiated when constituent or dedicated fire support means at that level are fully engaged, when the range of the target exceeds the constituent or dedicated fire support means, or when the constituent or dedicated fire support means have suffered combat loss. There are two methods of requesting supporting fires. The preferred method is for the request to be forwarded from the division or DTG commander to the integrated fires subsection in the OSC headquarters. An alternate method is for the division or DTG commander to request supporting fires from the OSC commander. TheÂ OSC commander either approves or denies the request. If the request is approved, the OSC commander tasks the IFC to provide the requested support.

Naval Fire Support

Naval fire support, when available, gives the ground maneuver commander long-range indirect fires. Naval fire support includes shipborne gunfire and sea-launched cruise missiles. Depending

on the hydrography and the orientation of the ground operation, naval fire support may provide deep indirect fire attacks on enemy formations and installations.

Naval fire support assets allocated to a theater or OSC in a constituent or dedicated relationship are under the command of the theater- or OSC-level IFC. Another option is for naval fire support assets to remain under the command of the Navy but to provide support for ground operations. During the course of such a supporting relationship, if enemy actions threaten naval operations, the target attack priorities of the ship may cause it to suspend or cancel land fire missions until the other threats subside. Once the threats have subsided, the fire support assets resume their support of the ground maneuver force.

A naval fire support liaison team augments the operations section of the IFC staff when naval fire support is required to support the ground maneuver force, whether in a constituent, dedicated, or supporting relationship. The liaison team provides special staff representation and advice on naval fire support to the IFC commander. Additionally, it coordinates requests for naval fire support and operates the naval fire support nets in the IFCâ FSCC.

Fire Support Planning

Fire support planning is the determination of the content, manner, and sequence of delivery of fire on the enemy in an operation. The OPFOR accomplishes fire support planning at the highest possible levels. The fire support plan also includes input from subordinate units. The fire support planning process includesâ

- Target acquisition.
- Organization of forces for combat.
- Assignment of fire support missions.
- Determination of ammunition requirements.
- Formulation of a detailed fire support plan.

Fire support planning includes consideration of the following:

- The scheme of maneuver of the supported forces.
- The enemy force to receive fire.
- The location and character of individual targets within the designated enemy force.
- The required or desired level of target damage.
- Fire support assets available, both delivery systems and ordnance.
- RequirementsÂ forÂ allocation Â of Â weapons Â and Â unitsÂ (organization Â of forces for combat).
- Missions assigned to IFCs, units, and weapons.
- The manner and procedure of delivery of fire during the performance of missions.
- Requirements and distribution of ammunition by missions.
- Organization of coordination and command and control.
- Preparation of appropriately detailed fire support plans at various levels.

In the OPFORâ â top-downâ approach to the planning and allocation of fire support, fire support planning occurs at the highest level possible. The IFC commander at the OSC or theater level plans and coordinates fire support, always under the direction of the maneuver commander. The highest level of participating units coordinates and approves the fire support plan, with input from subordinate units. The OSC headquarters performs general fire support planning. Detailed planning occurs in maneuver units, IFCs, and fire support units. The fires of all indirect fire support units within a brigade or brigade tactical group (BTG) are incorporated into the brigade or BTG fire support plan. In turn, brigade or BTG fire support plans become part of division or DTG fire support plans. Division or DTG fire support plans become part of OSC fire support plans.

In its simplest form, fire support planning is the process of determining the best way to engage all of the enemyâ units with firesâ ensuring that the required level of damage is inflicted in a manner consistent with the commanderâ concept of the operation. Above all else, this means

that the fire support plan must match his concept for the sequence with which the operation will develop. The focus of fire support planning is on establishing and maintaining fire superiority over the enemy. Therefore, timing is critical.

Estimate of Situation

The planning process begins with an estimate of the situation. This estimate includes the following:

- Scheme of maneuver of supported forces.
- Locations and type of enemy targets.
- Required level of damage.
- Delivery means and ordnance available.

The OSC commander, his IFC commander, and other staff members establish the basis for fire support planning during the commanderâ reconnaissance of the area of anticipated action. During this reconnaissance, the commander refines the organization of forces for combat andÂ the means of coordination. The OSC commander gives the IFC commander the information base to determine the following:

- Targets for fire support weapons to engage and fire upon.
- Priority of each target.
- Sequence in which to attack targets.
- Time to attack each target.

The commander of a fire support unit at any level coordinates the fires under his control. He determines new requirements and missions and, with the IFC commander, makes suggestions to the maneuver commander about adjustments in organization of forces as the situation develops.

IFC Planning

An IFC commander and members of his staff conduct their planning in coordination with the rest of the OSC staff, concurrently with the OSC staff developing the operation plan. The IFC has targets for each phase of the battle. Planning considerations include target type, dimensions, degree of fortification, mobility, and depth into the enemyâ defense.

Allocation Procedures

The OPFOR carefully calculates fire support requirements in terms of weapons and munitions needed to produce a required effect on enemy targets. If insufficient fire support or ammunition is available to achieve the necessary result, the OPFOR does not fire less and hope for the best. Rather, if necessary, it engages fewer targets, adjusting the fire support plan and the operation plan.

The priority of allocation of fire support assets to the OSC from the administrative force structure is normally to the OSCâ IFC. Fire support assets that are allocated to the OSC and not used in the IFC are allocated, normally in a constituent or dedicated relationship, to maneuver units such as DTGs. Fire support units remaining under IFC command may provide fires for tactical maneuver units in a supporting relationship. The supporting relationship allows the IFC commander the flexibility to task fire support assets to engage key enemy targets throughout the AOR.

Synchronization

The IFC is synchronized at two levels. First, the OSC commander and his staff are responsible for synchronizing fire support with ground maneuver. The key element is to ensure that all fire support occurs at the right place and time to produce the desired effect. The OSC commanderâ maneuver plan forms the basis for the synchronization of the IFC.

The commanders of the individual fire support components accomplish the second level of synchronization when they plan and execute the fire support operations. They must synchronize the supporting fire components to produce the concentration of combat power at the decisive point. For example, the priority of initial attack helicopter fires may be to suppress enemy air defense systems to protect attacking fixed-wing aircraft. The artillery may be assigned missions to attack targets to assist the attacking ingress and egress of aircraft.

Fire Support Coordination Measures

Fires from mortars, cannon artillery, multiple rocket launchers (MRLs), and SSMs pose a potential hazard to friendly maneuver forces and aircraft activities. The highest probability of conflict between aircraft and indirect fire weapons occurs at relatively low altitudes in the immediate vicinity of firing positions and targeted areas. (See Chapter 8 for more information on air and artillery coordination measures.) To reduce potential conflicts between indirect fires and maneuver forces or aircraft, information pertaining to firing positions, targeted areas, and fire support plans is distributed to all involved

commanders and their staffs. The fire support plan includes a map with graphics outlining the following control lines:

- Coordinated Fire Line. A line beyond which indirect fire systems can fire at any time within the AOR of the establishing headquarters without additional coordination.
- Final Coordination Line. A line established by the appropriate maneuver commander to ensure coordination of fire of converging friendly forces. It can be used to prohibit fires or the effects of fires across the line without coordination with the affected force. For example, this line may be used during link-up operations between an airborne or heliborne insertion and converging ground forces.
- Joint Fire Line. A line established by the appropriate OSC-level and above commander to ensure coordination of fire not under his control but which may affect his operations. The joint fire line is used to coordinate fires of air, ground, or sea weapons systems using various types of ammunition against surface targets.
- Safety Line. A line that denotes the fragmentation footprint of indirect fire munitions or bombs/rockets released fromÂ aircraft. This indicates the minimum distance between the impact area and the nearest friendly troops.

Assigning Fire Missions

When assigning missions, indirect fire support commanders and planners consider several variables, depending on the situation. These variables includeâ

- Type of target (for example, equipment or personnel, deliberate Â or hasty defensive positions, hard- or soft-skinned vehicles, point or area targets).
- Deployment of target (dug-in or in the open).
- Whether the target is stationary or moving.
- Whether the target is under direct observation during the artillery attack.
- Range to the target.
- Type, caliber, and number of weapons engaging the target.
- Types of ammunition available.
- Time available to prepare for firing.

Precision Munitions

The OPFOR defines a precision weapon as one capable of delivering guided conventional munitions with a high probability of destroying enemy targets with a first-round hit (within range of the weapon delivery system). The presence of the precision munition transforms a weapon into a precision weapon. However, a precision weapon system must also incorporate a target acquisition and tracking subsystem and a missile or projectile guidance sub-system. Some of

these subsystems may be combined. Precision munitions are primarily designed to effectively defeat armored vehicles; self-propelled artillery systems; MRLs; C2Â and RISTA centers; defensive fortifications; and bridges.

Precision weapons have enabled the OPFOR to mass firepower at critical points on the battlefield and simultaneously reduce ammunition expenditure and mission time. Reconnaissance fire (definedÂ laterÂ inÂ this chapter) is an effective form of precision weapon engagement. It is sometimes called a â unifiedprecision weapon system,â because it links Â the highly accurate weapon to an automated reconnaissance and control system.

Precision munitions delivered by mortars, artillery, missiles, and aircraft can includeâ

- Homing and guided SSMs (some delivering advanced submunitions).
- Semiactive laser-guided artillery projectiles and bombs.
- Sensor-fuzed artillery submunitions.
- Terminally homing cannon and mortar projectiles.
- Terminally homing submunitions.

Air-delivered precision munitions include homing and guided air-to-surface missiles (including radar-seeking antiradiation missiles); guided bombs and cluster bombs containing homing elements; and air-launched cruise missiles.

Not all OPFOR artillery units have precision munitions, making it necessary to allocate those rounds available against high-value targets (HVTs). Even the units that do receive them do not distribute them evenly among all delivery means, but typically designate one particular unit to fire them.

NBC Weapons

The OPFOR might use nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapons either to deter aggression or as a response to an enemy attack on the State. The State considers the employment of NBC weapons as a responsibility of the National Command Authority. Delivery means such as long-range missiles and rockets are political tools, first and foremost. The OPFOR has SSMs capable of carrying nuclear, chemical, or biological warheads. Additionally, it can employ aircraft systems and cruise missiles to deliver an NBC attack.

OPFOR military doctrine distinguishes between fire support and an NBC attack. However, the two are closely related. Strategic and operational fire support units must plan and deliver the attacks. They must also adjust the fire support plan to account for the effects of NBC attacks on the enemy. Such attacks greatly affect the tempo of combat activity. This, in turn, influences the type of fire support required. It also influences the kind of logistics support needed, such as fuel or ammunition.

If needed, the majority of OPFOR artillery (152-mm and above) is capable of firing nuclear or chemical munitions. However, continued improvements in conventional munitions, especially precision munitions, increase the likelihood that the OPFOR can achieve operational- or tactical-level fire superiority at the desired location and time without resorting to NBC weapons.

Targeting

Targeting is the process of selecting targets and matching the appropriate response, taking into account operational requirements and OPFOR capabilities. Targeting requires constant interaction between maneuver, reconnaissance, fire support, and IW, at all levels. Target value analysis is an analytical tool that is used in the targeting process by which the supported maneuver commanderâ

- Provides focus for his target acquisition effort.
- Identifies priorities for the engagement of enemy targets that will facilitate the success of his mission.

- Identifies the target damage criteria.
- Permits planning for identified contingencies based on enemy options available when the enemy operation fails.

High-Value Targets

HVTs are targets deemed important to the enemy commander for the successful accomplishment of his mission. The loss of HVTs can be expected to contribute to a substantial degradation of an important battlefield function.

High-Payoff Targets

HPTs are HVTs that must be successfully acquired and attacked to contribute substantially to the success of OPFOR operations. They are developed on the basis of factors such as enemy situation, unit mission, terrain, and the time and resources available. They are not dependent on the ability of the fire support unit to acquire or attack them. If an HPT is beyond the capability of the target acquisition or reconnaissance unit to acquire, it should be passed to the next-higher headquarters as a priority intelligence requirement.

Based on a battlefield analysis, the OSC commander, with advice from his IFC commander, selects HPTs and establishes a prioritized list of them. The HPT list identifies the HPTs for a specific point in the operation in the order of their priority for acquisition and attack. While their target value is usually the greatest factor contributing to the target payoff, other considerations include the following:

- Sequence or order of occurrence.
- Ability to locate and identify the target.
- Degree of accuracy and identification available from the acquisition system.
- Ability to engage and defeat the target in accordance with the established target damage criteria.
- Resource requirements necessary to accomplish all of the above.

Time-Sensitive Targets

Time-sensitive targets are those targets requiring an immediate response. The reason for this urgency is that they either pose (or will soon pose) a clear and present danger to the OPFOR or are highly lucrative, fleeting targets of opportunity.

Target Attack Methodology

The vast array of targets anticipated on the battlefield can generate competing demands for fire support. These demands could exceed the capability of fire support assets to adequately respond to all requirements. Therefore, the OPFOR uses the target attack methodology of plan, detect, deliver, and assess.

Plan

The plan phase provides the focus and priorities for the reconnaissance collection management and fire planning process. It employs an estimate of enemy intent, capabilities, and vulnerabilities in conjunction with an understanding of the OPFOR mission and concept of operations. During the plan phase, the OSC commander, with advice from his IFC commander, makes a determination of what HPTs to look for, when and where they are likely to appear on the battlefield, who (reconnaissance or target acquisition assets) can locate them, and how the targets should be attacked.

Detect

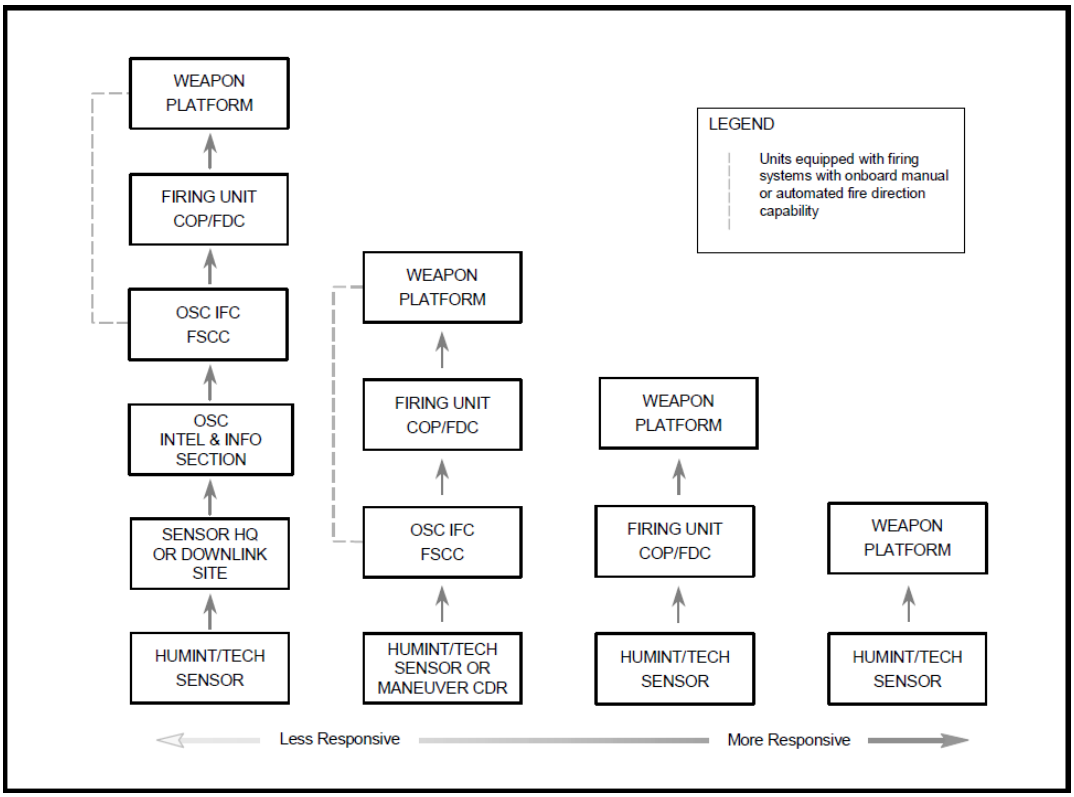

Figure 7-1. Target Report Flow

During the detect phase, the reconnaissance plan is executed. As specified targets are located, the appropriate command observation post (COP) or delivery system is notified to initiate the attack of the target. Figure 7-1 illustrates the varying methods of reporting targets for attack from the point of detection by a sensor through delivery. The figure displays the methods along a range from the least to the most responsive.

Deliver

Timely, accurate delivery is the culmination of synchronization of fire support. The delivery is rapidly executed by having designated attack systems respond to the maneuver commanderâ s guidance when the HPTs are observed.

Assess

Following the attack of the target, the RISTA assets are cued to determine if the target has been defeated in accordance with the established target damage criteria. If it is determined that the target damage criteria are not achieved, delivery assets re-engage the target until the desired target damage has been achieved.

Methods of Fire

Critical to the success of OPFOR operations is the ability to plan, detect, deliver, and assess fire (in accordance with the commanderâ s target damage criteria) against enemy C2 and RISTA and weapons systems throughout the AOR. The focus is a systems warfare approach to combat, where the objective of the combat action is to deny the enemyâ s combat system its synergistic capabilities. Thus, the OPFOR is able to compel enemy forces into multiple and rapid tactical transitions and to create opportunity by keeping them off balance, breaking their momentum, and slowing movement. The OPFOR uses various types of fires against the enemy. The methods of fire may have different purposes in the offense and defense.

Fire Support to a Strike

At the operational level, a strike involves the employment of a combination of strategic- and operational-level RISTA systems with fire support, SPF, and maneuver forces to conduct precision strike operations that can result in a decisive operational victory. The strike can be employed in both defensive and offensive operations.

Fire support to a strike involves the employment of a wide variety of ammunition types (such as standard, course-corrected, advanced, and precision munitions) to destroy an enemy formation after typically setting the conditions for its destruction through reconnaissance fire. IFC fire support units are assigned interdiction fire missions to support the maneuver component throughout the strike. Constituent and dedicated indirect fire support units (allocated to the maneuver component) provide close support fire throughout the operation. Thus, fire support to a strike incorporates other methods of fire.

Reconnaissance Fire

Reconnaissance fire is the integration of RISTA, fire control, and weapon systems into a closed-loop, automated fire support system that detects, identifies, and destroys critical targets in minutes. This integration capability normally exists only within an IFC. One reason for this requirement for accelerated engagement is that high-value targets may expose themselves for only fleeting periods. Reconnaissance fire is primarily designed to attack and destroy key enemy capabilities and/or set the conditions for a strike (see Chapter 3).

Reconnaissance fire enables the OPFOR to deliver fixed- and rotary- wing air, SSM, cruise missile, and artillery fires (including precision munitions) on enemy targets within a very short time after acquisition. The OPFOR can use reconnaissance fire in offensive and defensive phases of combat. Assets designated for reconnaissance fire use are under control of the IFC commander, and control remains centralized for planning, analysis, and evaluation of reconnaissance data, and for execution of the reconnaissance fire mission. This type of arrangement allows the assets to execute other missions or taskings until the desired HPTs are detected. The IFC commander may establish a window of time for assets tasked to support reconnaissance fire (based on an intelligence assessment of when the enemy targets should be in designated kill zones).

The OSC commander selects and establishes the target priority and target damage criteria of the combat system component or components to be attacked in order to force the favorable condition to conduct a strike. The IFC staff and fire support component commanders develop the fire support plan designed to conduct reconnaissance fire necessary to create the favorable condition. The IFC commander then briefs the fire support plan to the OSC commander to ensure compliance with the overall operation plan. The IFC executes reconnaissance fire in accordance with the approved fire support plan.

Close Support Fire

Close support fire is fire used to support maneuver forces and attack targets of immediate concern to units such as battalions and BTGs. The requirement is to provide a quick response time and accurate fires capable of either neutralizing or destroying all types of targets.

Interdiction Fire

Interdiction fire is fire designed to attack targets in depth (such as logistics sites or assembly areas) and to prevent enemy follow-on or reserve forces from reinforcing or influencing a battle or situation. Generally, interdiction fire (when compared to close fire) has a slower response time, especially for stationary targets; accuracy may be lower; and the targets are generally not as well protected. However, technological improvements such as course-corrected rockets, projectiles, and fuzes facilitate long-range precision targeting.

The OPFOR employs long-range fire systems (operating from dispersed areas) to continuously

engage targeted forces and systems. Operational and tactical RISTA systems direct them.

Counterfire

Counterfire is fire designed to destroy the enemy fire support infrastructure throughout the battlefield. The fire support infrastructure includes mortars, cannon, rockets, missiles, fire support C2Â and RISTA, and logistics assets. Counterfire enables the ground forces to achieve effective fire support on the battlefield. It is especially important for the early destruction of the enemyâ long-range and precision weapons.

Counterbattery Fire

Counterbattery fire is fire that accomplishes the annihilation or neutralization of enemy artillery batteries. It enables ground forces to maneuver on the battlefield with little to no suppression by enemy artillery. However, combat with enemy artillery requires more than counterbattery fire.

Fire Support of Maneuver Operations

The fire support of maneuver operations is characterized by the use of all available fire support to carry out the commanderâ plan. The OPFOR believes that fire support must be flexible to meet all contingencies during combat operations. The OPFOR masses fires against an enemy objective with available fire support assets, with the goal of achieving the OSC commanderâ s specified target damage criteria in the shortest time possible.

Offense

Fire support considerations for the offense apply to all types of offensive action discussed in Chapter 3. The OPFOR plans and executes fires to support the offensive action and complete the destruction of the enemy. The use of selected lines or zones controls the shifting of fires, and the displacement of fire support units reflects changes in command and support relationships between fire support units and maneuver units. Fires are planned toâ

- Suppress enemy troop activity and weapon systems.
- Deny the enemy information about friendly forces.
- Prevent the enemy from restoring fire support, C2, and RISTA systems neutralized during previous fire support missions.
- Deny the enemy the ability to use reserve forces to conduct a counter-attack.
- If necessary, create favorable conditions for the conduct of a strike.
- Support the exploitation force.

Defense

Fire support considerations for the defense apply to all types of defensive action discussed in Chapter 4. Key is the application of fire support as early as possible throughout the AOR in support of the defensive operation plan. Emphasis is placed on RISTA assets locating enemy formations and attack positions, with the goal of determining the direction and composition of the enemy main attack. Carefully analyzing the terrain over which the enemy will advance and canalizing his movement into kill zones can create conditions for fires in the defense. Fires are planned toâ

- Deny the enemy information about friendly forces.
- Develop the situation early by forcing the enemy to deploy early and thus reveal the location of his main effort.
- Maximize the effect of obstacles as combat multipliers.
- Create favorable conditions for the conduct of a strike or counterattack.

Strategic Context

During all strategic-level courses of action, the OPFOR may use various fire support assets to attack the most vulnerable parts of the enemyâ s combat system. These attacks are coordinated with perception management efforts to convey a message of political and military dominance to the regional civilian populace as well as to convey an adverse view of an intervening extraregional opponent.

The OPFOR is able to employ all of its methods of fire in regional and transition operations. However, it is unable or finds it difficult to employ the counterbattery method of fire during adaptive operations due to an extraregional forceâ s technological advantage in ability to target OPFOR fire support assets.

Regional Operations

During regional operations, the OPFOR can use fire support means (primarily aviation, SSMs, and long-range rockets) to attack targets in the homeland of a regional opponent. The OPFOR generally possesses an overmatch in military capability against its regional neighbor and is able to control the airspace, thus allowing it freedom of maneuver. However, the OPFOR is concerned about the intervention of an extraregional force during a strategic campaign against a regional neighbor.

The OPFOR realizes that its regional opponent may receive RISTA support (such as satellite and fixed-wing signals intelligence and imagery) from an extraregional power. OPFOR fire support planners also develop contingency plans to preserve their fire support assets during transition and adaptive operations, if necessary. Common countermeasures are to disperse fire support assets and to use decoys and camouflage.

Transition Operations

During transition operations, the OPFOR is concernedÂ about the extraregional forceâ s military capabilities arriving or being established before the OPFOR can completely achieve its strategic objectives. Therefore, the overall focus is on the disaggregation of the enemyâ s combat system (see Systems Warfare earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 1).

Starting with transition operations, the OPFOR may use various fire support assets in access-control operations and attack of the enemyâ s SOCs and rear. It attacks the most vulnerable parts of the enemyâ s combat system. This may include attacks on the infrastructure or even civilian targets. The OPFOR coordinates such attacks with perception management efforts to convey the view that these terror tactics are no worse than enemy bombing campaigns.

The goal of the OPFOR is to disrupt the deployment tempo of the extraregional force by attacking unique or key targets in aerial and sea ports of debarkation. These targets include key C2Â nodes, contractors and contractor- operated facilities, logistics operating bases, and ground and airborne RISTA platforms. For example, the OPFOR can greatly reduce an extraregional forceâ s combat power by attacking a logistics system that depends on â just-in- timeâ or â reach backâ delivery. The OPFOR would also seek to conduct these attacks in concert with the perception management portion of the IW plan to leverage the world media to report adverse perceptions of the extraregional force.

During transition operations, the OPFOR begins to disperse its fire support assets and emphasize the use of fire and decoy tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP). The OPFOR employs the fire and decoy TTP to increase survivability as well as to deceive the enemy as to the actual firing unit location.

Adaptive Operations

An extraregional force must maintain a degree of information dominance that enables it to use information systems to achieve an operational advantage, while denying that capability to the

OPFOR. Such systems provide battlefield visualization, situational awareness, combat identification, spectrum supremacy, and C2 attack and protection. Therefore, the OPFOR primarily shifts its emphasis to force preservation and seeks opportunities to attack and destroy key components of the enemyâ s combat system, including his information systems.

The extraregional force may have the perception that the tempo of OPFOR continuous fire support has substantially decreased, since the OPFOR no longer possess the advantage of information dominance nor the ability to control its airspace. However, the OPFOR mindset is that the tempo has been adjusted to attack targets (using reconnaissance fire) at critical times in order to preserve the force. For example, during adaptive operations, fire support is centrally planned and executed. The OSC commander can establish both the firing and target damage criteria and exercise C2Â of units conducting fire support. The IFC headquarters develops the firing orders and firing data computation and transmits this information in a coded format to the firing unit. Because the OPFORâ s communications are particularly vulnerable to attacks, transmission may have to be via a civilian telephone system (to include cellular phone), messenger, or even newspaper.

The OPFOR continues to emphasize the use of the fire and decoy TTP. While using such TTP, it seeks to colocate its fire support assets with the civilian populace, especially in urban areas to create a moral sanctuary. If the extraregional force attacks the fire support assets colocated with the civilian populace, the OPFOR will seek to leverage the world media to report adverse perceptions of the extraregional force through the perception management portion of the IW plan.

References

1. The use of precision weapons may render such target damage criteria obsolete, since precision weapons are always supposed to â annihilateâ the targets completely, not just destroying a certain percentage of them.