Chapter 6: Other Combined Arms Actions

This page is a section of TC 7-100.2 Opposing Force Tactics.

The OPFOR's basic combined arms unit is the maneuver brigade. Brigades, divisions, and tactical groups conduct or organize combined arms actions other than the basic types of offensive and defensive action outlined in chapters 3 and 4. The tactics described in this chapter are employed in combat actions that could be either offensive or defensive in nature.

Actions of the Disruptive Force

The purpose of the disruption force is to significantly degrade the enemy's combat capability and to prevent the enemy from conducting an effective operation. The primary task of the disruption force is to initiate the attack against one or more key components of the enemy's combat system. (See Systems Warfare in chapter 1.) Successful attack of designated components or subsystems begins the disaggregation of the enemy's combat system and creates vulnerabilities for exploitation in the battle zone. Skillfully conducted disruption operations will effectively deny the enemy the synergy of effects of his combat system. In addition, the disruption force—

- Destroys enemy reconnaissance.
- Forces the enemy to deploy early or disrupts his offensive preparations.
- Gains and maintains reconnaissance contact with key enemy elements.
- Deceives the enemy as to the disposition of OPFOR units.

The disruption force may be given any offensive, defensive, or security mission that best suits the disruption of the particular enemy force. To accomplish these missions, the disruption force executes a combination of tactical tasks designed to set the conditions for OPFOR success. These tasks include one or more of the following:

- Cover.
- Delay.
- Disrupt.
- Fix.
- Ambush.
- Contain.
- Canalize.
- Isolate.
- Neutralize.
- Interdict.

Organizing the Disruption Zone

The disruption zone is essentially the area of responsibility (AOR) of the disruption force. It may contain subordinate unit battle positions, kill zones, axes, objectives, and attack zones based on the disruption force commander's intent.

Organizing the Disruption Force

The size and composition of the disruption force depends on the level of command involved, the commander's concept of the battle, and terrain and enemy involved. A commander will also always make maximum use of stay-behind forces and affiliated forces existing within his AOR. A disruption force has no set order of battle. It may contain—

- Ambush teams (ground and air defense).
- Long-range reconnaissance patrols and/or special-purpose forces (SPF) teams.
- Reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition (RISTA) assets and forces.

- Counterreconnaissance detachments.
- Artillery systems.
- Target designation teams.
- Elements of affiliated forces (such as insurgents, guerrillas, or criminals) or local sympathizers.
- Antilanding reserves.

Planning Disruption

The disruption force headquarters plans disruption. Key planning considerations for disruption are⬚⬚

- Identifying components or subsystems of the enemy⬚⬚s combat system that are priority for attack.
- Identifying priority intelligence tasks to be accomplished by the disruption force.
- Determining the disruption force role in the overall information warfare plan.
- Determining critical OPFOR elements that must be protected from enemy reconnaissance efforts.

Executing Disruption

The disruption force fixes enemy forces and places long-range fire on key enemy units. It also strips away the enemy⬚⬚s reconnaissance assets while denying him the ability to acquire and engage OPFOR targets with deep fires. This includes an air defense effort to deny aerial attack and reconnaissance platforms from targeting OPFOR elements. The disruption force seeks to conduct highly damaging local attacks.

Typical systems, units, or facilities to be attacked by the disruption force are⬚⁻

- Command and control (C2) systems.
- RISTA assets.
- Attack helicopter forward arming and refueling points.
- Airfields.
- Precision fire systems.
- Logistics support areas.
- Lines of communication.
- Mobility and countermobility assets.
- Casualty evacuation routes and means.

Counterreconnaissance

The OPFOR defines counterreconnaissance (CR) as a continuous combined arms action to locate, track, and destroy all enemy reconnaissance operating in a given AOR. The OPFOR conducts CR at all times and during all types of operations. The OPFOR understands the role of situational awareness in battle and will spare no effort or resource to hunt down and eliminate enemy reconnaissance troops and systems.

Organizing the Battlefield for Counterreconnaissance

Control measures key to CR action are those that assist in locating, tracking, and destroying enemy reconnaissance elements. These involve counterreconnaissance zones, reference zones, predicted enemy locations, and kill zones.

Counterreconnaissance Zones

The AOR will be divided into one or more counterreconnaissance zones (CRZs). There are many ways to do this depending upon the situation. For example, a division tactical group (DTG) could execute CR at its level and make the entire AOR the only CRZ. It could instead give the disruption

force the CR mission in the disruption zone and each brigade or brigade tactical group (BTG) responsibility for its own CRZ. A CRZ is the AOR for one counterreconnaissance detachment (CRD, see below). See figure 6-2 on page 6-6 for an example in which a BTG's CRZ equates to the BGT's AOR.

Reference Zones

Reference zones (RZs) are subdivisions of the CRZ that assist in rapid orientation on the ground and direction of killing forces or systems to enemy reconnaissance elements. RZs may take the form of a grid pattern with individual grids given code names, letters or numbers. RZs may also include target reference points whether for orientation purposes only or also as artillery targets.

Predicted Enemy Locations

Predicted enemy locations (PELs) are those areas in the AOR where enemy activity, troops, or systems are anticipated. Although not limited to CR, PELs identify specific locations where enemy reconnaissance is expected. PELs are determined by using a wide range of reconnaissance, logic, intelligence, and analytical tools. Whenever possible, all PEL are corroborated by several sources of data.

Kill Zones

Kill zones are discussed in chapter 2. However, the counterreconnaissance detachment (CRD) commander will often identify his own set of kill zones associated with where he intends to kill enemy reconnaissance on the ground.

Organizing Forces for Counterreconnaissance

Counterreconnaissance is a combined arms task. Commanders will select the units best suited to locate, track, and kill enemy reconnaissance given the nature of the overall mission and the AOR.

Counterreconnaissance Detachment

A CRD is a detachment (see chapter 2) task-organized to be able to locate, track, and destroy enemy reconnaissance throughout its CRZ. Each CRZ is the responsibility of one CRD.

Command and Support Relationships

As a detachment, the CRD is primarily composed of constituent and dedicated units. However, the supporting command and support relationship may be necessary to bring specialized capabilities to bear for limited periods of time. For example, the CRD might receive a precision-capable artillery unit in support in order to destroy enemy mounted reconnaissance targets. In another case, the CRD might receive a night- capable helicopter unit for use during a period of limited visibility.

CRD and the Security Force

If created, the security force is charged with the force protection of the unit from all threats. A CRD is specifically designed to locate and destroy enemy reconnaissance and intelligence collecting elements. When both exist, the commander has two basic options regarding their relationship. One is that the CRD may be a component of the security force. Alternately, the commander may give the CRD additional security responsibilities and resources and charge the CRD with performing the security mission in its AOR, leaving the security force to execute missions in other parts of the higher unit's AOR.

CRD Components

The CRD is a task organization created specifically for the CR mission. It is a combined arms organization, with various combinations of the following components. See figure 6-1 for an example of a CRD organization with some of these components.
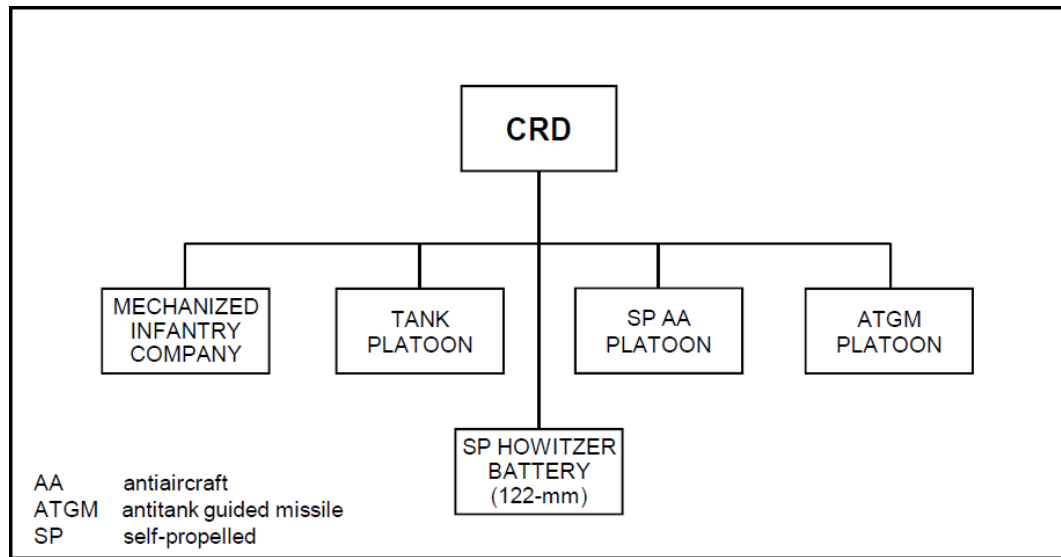

Figure 6-1. Counterreconnaissance detachment (example)

Reconnaissance

Perhaps the most essential component of a CRD is its reconnaissance elements. If the CRD cannot locate and track enemy reconnaissance elements, it cannot perform its mission. CRD reconnaissance elements take many forms: long-range reconnaissance units, mounted and dismounted (combat) reconnaissance units, signals reconnaissance, aerial reconnaissance, or SPF.

Air Defense

Air defense assets in the CRD might be used defensively to protect elements of the CRD. They might also be used offensively to destroy enemy aerial reconnaissance systems—unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), reconnaissance aircraft, or reconnaissance helicopters.

Aviation

Aviation assets can play a number of roles in a CRD. They transport infantry rapidly to already located enemy reconnaissance targets. They perform armed and unarmed reconnaissance to locate enemy reconnaissance. Since the CRZ is generally a large area for the forces in the corresponding CRD to cover, aviation assets may be used to resupply dispersed elements of the CRD.

Artillery

Artillery and other indirect fire systems provide an excellent means of killing enemy reconnaissance without involving direct fire engagements. The challenge is to employ artillery against enemy targets within the battle and support zones without endangering other OPFOR forces. Precision systems are uniquely suited to the CR task, and the OPFOR considers the expenditure of limited precision resources against enemy reconnaissance targets to be well worth it.

Infantry

Enemy reconnaissance units often seek concealment in complex terrain. Infantry units in the CRD attack and destroy such targets. Normally, other elements of the CRD locate these targets, but infantry may also be called upon to conduct reconnaissance missions in complex terrain in support of the CR effort.

Engineers

Typically a CRD does not have significant engineer resources. When present, they execute standard engineer tasks when and where necessary. Combat engineer units also accompany infantry in actions on complex terrain.

Signal

CRDs often operate over relatively large geographic areas. The CRD will be organized with appropriate signal assets to allow it to transmit and manipulate information securely over large distances.

Electronic Warfare

CRDs may contain electronic warfare assets. Such assets permit them to block enemy reconnaissance elements from communicating their observations to their higher headquarters and other enemy units.

Armor

If the enemy has a strong mounted reconnaissance capability, or when terrain conditions are favorable, the CRD may contain armor elements. Armored units can move rapidly to engage and destroy located reconnaissance targets.

Planning Counterreconnaissance

The CR plan is written by the staff of the unit forming the basis of the CRD with guidance from the higher command's staff. CR is treated as an ongoing offensive action no matter what type action is being undertaken by the higher unit. The CR plan is the battle plan of the CRD.

Executing Counterreconnaissance

The CRD headquarters interacts with the reconnaissance section of the DTG or BTG staff to maintain a clear picture of enemy locations with an emphasis on his reconnaissance systems. As enemy reconnaissance assets are identified, they are tracked by the CRD headquarters, and this information is provided to the CRD elements given the mission to destroy those assets. If other OPFOR combat units in the AOR are closer and/or better suited to find or destroy critical enemy reconnaissance elements, the CRD commander will recommend this action to the higher commander and, if approved, coordinate this effort. See figure 6-2 for an example of CR execution within a BTG's AOR.
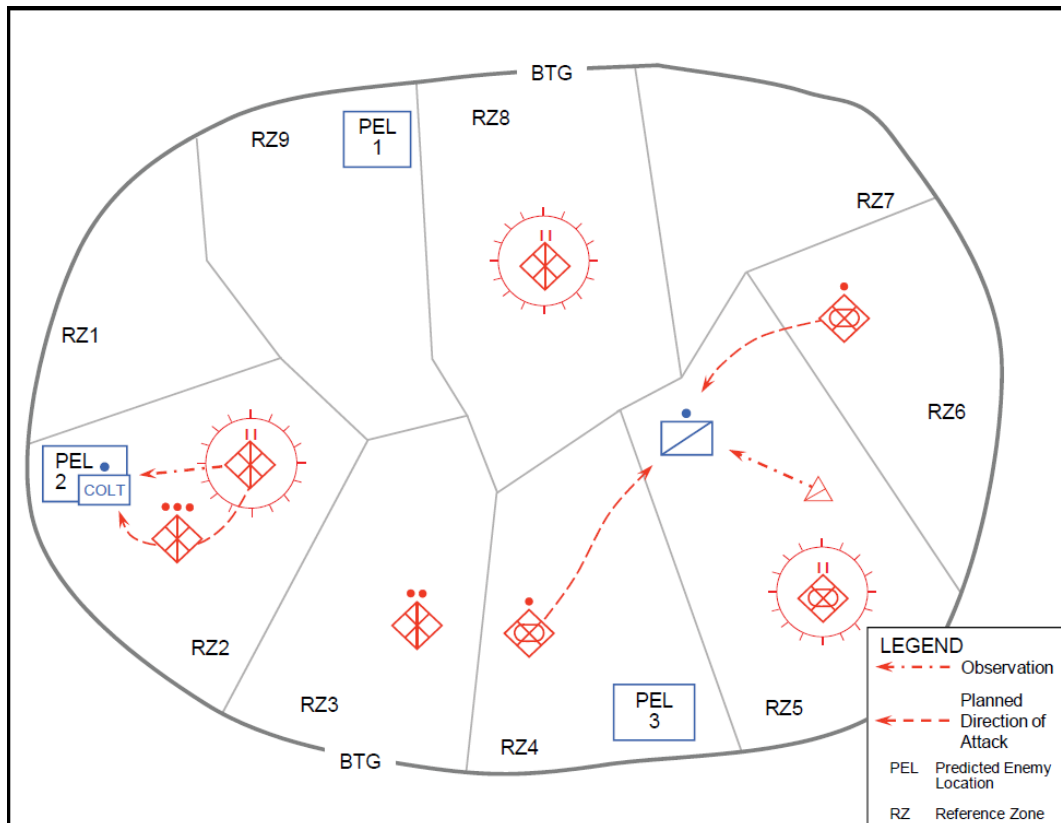
Figure 6-2. Execution of counterreconnaissance (example)

The CRD commander determines which enemy reconnaissance assets are to be destroyed in accordance with the higher commander's guidance. He assigns missions to attack and destroy those assets to appropriate subordinate elements. The CRD headquarters guides the action element in on the enemy reconnaissance asset until contact is made.

Antilanding Actions

The OPFOR prefers to prevent landings by enemy airborne or heliborne troops through the destruction of the troop transport aircraft in flight. Failing that, it will take significant actions to destroy landing forces on the ground as soon after landing as possible. Antilanding actions can and will be executed by any force or element with the capability to affect the aircraft or the landing forces, but an antilanding action is a combined arms action that primarily falls to the antilanding reserve (ALR) for execution.

Organizing the Battlefield Antilanding Actions

Antilanding forces or elements are given their own attack zone to control their actions against landing forces. Such an attack zone may only be activated for the duration of an antilanding action or may be assigned to the ALR permanently. Kill zones are used to control both ground and air defense engagements. Anticipated enemy landing or drop zones (LZs or DZs) are included in the listing of PELs.

Organizing Forces for Antilanding Actions

Commanders form one or more antilanding reserves to conduct antilanding actions during or after an enemy landing operation. ALRs can consist of any units the commander and staff's forces analysis determines necessary to destroy an enemy airborne or heliborne landing. Typical ALRs may include as subelements—

- Gun and missile air defense units.
- Infantry with antitank weapons.

- Armor.
- Smoke units.
- Engineers.
- Aviation.
- Artillery.

ALRs are typically detachments. In that case, the detachment commander can organize his force into⬚ ⬚

- Disruption element(s) to disrupt the enemy and prevent detection of action element(s).
- Security element(s) to maneuver and fire to ensure the decisive point is isolated and that additional enemy forces do not join the battle unexpectedly.
- Support element(s) to conduct actions to set conditions for action elements⬚ ⬚success.
- Action element(s) to destroy the enemy landing force.

However, an ALR for an anticipated major enemy landing operation may be a BTG or even a DTG, should the situation warrant. In that case, the ALR would consist of functional forces rather than elements.

Planning Antilanding Actions

The ALR plans actions to attack enemy transport aircraft en route to and in the vicinity of the LZ or DZ. This may require the assistance of other air defense units not in the ALR. The force protection subsection of the BTG or DTG staff performs this coordination.

The ALR plans and rehearses actions in the vicinity of the LZs or DZs. It also plans and rehearses movement between assembly areas, hide positions, and attack positions and between LZs or DZs.

Executing Antilanding Actions

Early warning is transmitted from the DTG or BTG main command post to the ALR. The ALR moves to positions in the attack zone from which it can engage transport aircraft and destroy landing forces on the ground.

Urban Combat

The OPFOR sees urban combat as a vital subcomponent of its tactical actions. Complex urban terrain provides significant advantages to the side that is ready to make use of them. OPFOR units train extensively in urban combat and expect to make maximum use of complex urban terrain and to act to deny such use to the enemy.

Fighting in towns and cities slows the rate of advance, requiring a high consumption of manpower and materiel. In the offense, the OPFOR may prefer to avoid combat in cities, either by bypassing defended localities or by seizing towns from the march before the enemy can erect defenses. When there is no alternative, units reorganize their combat formations to attack a city by assault. The attackers can exploit undefended towns by using them as avenues of approach or assembly areas.

Organizing the Battlefield for Urban Combat

AORs in urban combat use the same types of zones as in other actions. However, the OPFOR will place great emphasis in defining and using the third dimension that urban areas create. See figure 6-3 for an example of a multidimensional battlefield.

All zones will be defined both in terms of horizontal dimensions as well as the vertical. It may well be for example, that the upper floors of a building are a kill zone while the lower floors are still in the battle or disruption zone and contain friendly forces. Urban detachments (UDs) are

often given an attack zone in which to operate. Support zones are often located in sanctuary areas inside battle positions.

The OPFOR prefers to attack multidimensionally— from basements or sewers to upper stories or on the tops of buildings. The targets are engaged simultaneously to maximize effectiveness and confusion.
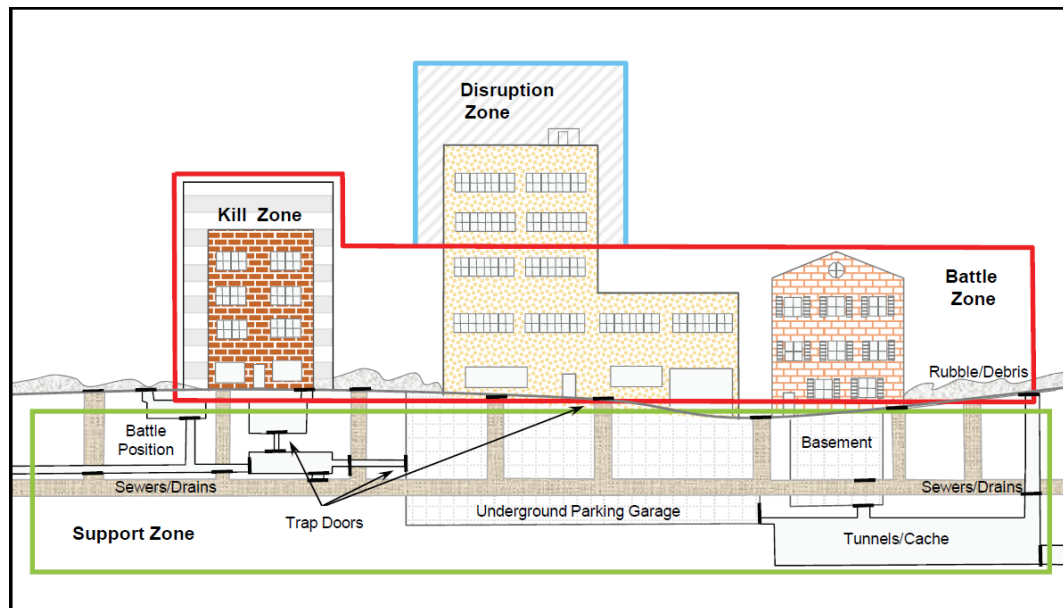

Figure 6-3. Multidimensional battlefield

Organizing Forces for Urban Combat

A brigade or BTG operating in an urban area would typically organize one or more urban detachments (UDs). The UD is the primary organization used by the OPFOR for urban combat.

Urban Detachments

A UD is not a specific, standing organization. It is a task-organized battalion or company given the mission to attack and seize selected portions of an urban area. The composition of UDs is mission dependent. The UD attacking along one street may be similar to the detachment on the next street, or it may differ significantly in the number and types of augmenting units. The UD is dissolved when the mission is complete.

Urban combat consumes ammunition at a much higher rate than some other types of combat. Therefore, detachment personnel are issued increased quantities of certain weapons, especially grenades and flame weapons. Ammunition, specialized equipment, such as grapples, ropes, and ladders, is provided or acquired locally.

Functional Elements

UDs typically consist of the following functional elements:

- Security element.
- Clearing element.
- Action element.
- Support element.

The security element of a UD provides local tactical security for the detachment and prevents the enemy from influencing mission accomplishment. The clearing element ensures the action element has an avenue of approach that is clear of obstacles, debris, and rubble that would disrupt its movement. The action element moves from a covered and concealed position and accomplishes the UD's tactical task. The support element provides combat and combat

service support and C2 for the detachment.

Augmentation

UDs are task-organized for specific missions and conditions. Therefore, there is no fixed template for a UD organization. A typical UD may be augmented with the following:

Tanks

Tank units are often employed in a decentralized manner, with one or two tanks or a tank platoon allocated to an infantry platoon, or individual tanks allocated to infantry squads. Depending on the circumstances, the tanks may be retained as a unit to serve as a security or support element.

Antitank and Antiarmor

The UD may receive additional (constituent or dedicated) antitank and/or antiarmor assets. The UD may also be organized into infantry antiarmor hunter-killer teams.

Artillery

The UD may gain constituent indirect fire support (possibly in the form of 120-mm mortars or 122-mm howitzers). It may also be provided dedicated artillery support.

Air Defense

The typical purpose of air defense support to urban combat is to prevent enemy air power from influencing the action of the action element. Air defense systems in the security element provide early warning and defeat enemy aerial response to the mission. Such systems also target enemy aerial reconnaissance such as UAVs to prevent the enemy from having a clear picture of the OPFOR action.

Air defense systems in the support element provide overwatch of the action element and the objective. Some air defense systems may prove useful in close combat in urban areas. Air defense guns usually have a very high angle of fire, allowing them to target the upper stories of buildings. Their high- explosive rounds allow the weapons to shoot through the bottom floor of the top story, successfully engaging enemy troops and/or equipment located on rooftops. The accuracy and lethality of air defense weapons also facilitates their role as a devastating ground weapon when used against personnel, equipment, buildings, and lightly armored vehicles.

Engineers

Combat in urban terrain always faces the possibility of obstacles restricting movement to the objective. Obstacles in urban terrain—manmade or not—are virtually a certainty. Typically then, UDs include a specialist element made up of sappers and other supporting arms, known as a clearing element, designed to execute mobility and/or shaping, tasks in support of the action element.

Depending on the mission the engineers may be equipped with obstacle-crossing equipment. They may also have additional flame weapons and CBRN specialists.

Planning Urban Combat

The OPFOR sees certain aspects of urban combat as critical to success and addresses them in the plan for every action on complex urban terrain. The populace of a given urban area may be a key consideration: the side that manages it best has a distinct advantage. This is especially true if large segments of the populace remain in place in the urban area. The OPFOR can use the

population to provide camouflage, concealment, cover, and deception (C3D) for its operations, enhancing its mobility in proximity to enemy positions. The OPFOR can take advantage of enemy moral responsibilities and attempt to make the civil population a burden on enemy forces' logistics and force protection resources. It may herd refugees into enemy-controlled sectors, steal from local nationals, and hide among civilians during enemy offensive operations.

The civil population may also serve as a key intelligence source for the OPFOR. Local hires serving among enemy soldiers, civilians with access to enemy-controlled areas, and refugees moving through enemy-controlled sectors can all be manipulated by the OPFOR to provide information on enemy dispositions, readiness, and intent. Also, OPFOR SPF and reconnaissance assets may infiltrate and move among civilian groups.

OPFOR planning for urban combat will also include INFOWAR. This may be as important as directly opposing enemy action or perhaps more so. Portable video cameras, Internet access, commercial radios, and cellular phones are all tools that permit the OPFOR to tell its story. This can influence the local population and/or affect the national wills of countries other than the State. The OPFOR may stage and broadcast enemy "atrocities." It may use electronic mail to influence sympathetic groups or undermine enemy resolve. OPFOR-sponsored hackers may gain access to enemy web sites to manipulate information to the OPFOR's advantage.

The OPFOR plan for urban combat will always address the need for continuous combat. The plan includes a methodology for cycling soldiers out of positions in contact to reduce the effects of combat stress.

Executing Urban Combat

The OPFOR will identify and quickly seize control of critical components of the urban environment to help shape the battlefield to its own ends. Phone exchanges provide simple and reliable communications that can be easily secured with off-the-shelf technologies. Sewage treatment plants and flood control machinery can be used to implement weapons of mass destruction strategies or to make sections of the urban area uninhabitable. Gaining control of media stations can significantly improve the OPFOR's information warfare capabilities. Power generation and transmission sites provide means to control significant aspects of civilian society over a large area.

The OPFOR will think of an urban environment in terms of three dimensions. Upper floors and roofs provide the OPFOR excellent observation points and battle positions above many weapons' maximum elevations. Shots from upper floors can strike armored vehicles in vulnerable points. Basements also provide firing points below many weapons' minimum depressions and allow strike at weaker armor. Sewers and subways provide covered and concealed access throughout the AOR. Conventional lateral unit boundaries will often not apply where the OPFOR controls some stories of a building while enemy forces control others. See figure 6-4 for an example of a UD attacking an enemy-controlled building complex.
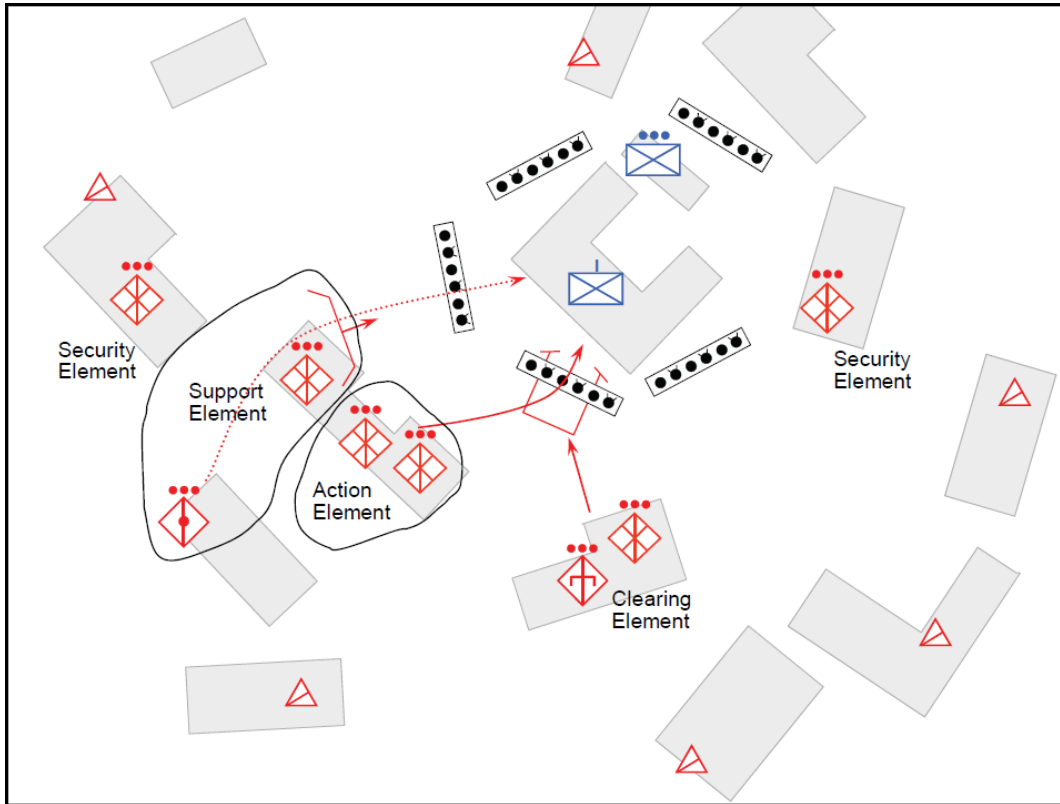
Figure 6-4. Urban detachment attacking enemy-controlled building complex (example)

Whether they are purpose-built or adapted, many weapons will have greater than normal utility in an urban environment, while others will have significant disadvantages. The following are examples of weapons favored by the OPFOR in urban combat:

- Weapons with no minimum depression or maximum elevation.
- Grenade launchers (automatic and rifle-mounted).
- Antitank grenade launchers and shoulder-fired antitank guided missiles. Some warheads can be removed and dropped from the tops of buildings and overpasses.
- Shoulder-fired â bunker busters.â
- Weapons with reduced backblast (such as gas metered or soft launch).
- Mortars.
- Sniper rifles.
- Machineguns.
- Grenades (including antitank, smoke, and incendiary grenades).
- Flame and incendiary weapons.
- Riot control and tranquilizer gases.
- Mines and booby traps.
- Minefield breaching explosive line charge systems (especially effective when used in narrow streets and/or alleys with high buildings on both sides).
- Artillery pieces used in direct fire mode.

The OPFOR will â hugâ high-technology conventional enemy forces in an urban environment to avoid the effects of high-firepower standoff weapon systems. Additionally, it will attempt to keep all or significant portions of enemy forces engaged in continuous operations to increase their susceptibility to stress-induced illnesses. Urban combat, by its nature, produces an inordinate amount of combat-stress casualties, and continuous operations exacerbate this problem. The OPFOR will maintain a large reserve to minimize the impact of this on its own forces.

The OPFOR will prey on soldiers untrained in basic infantry skills. Ambushes will focus on such soldiers conducting resupply operations or moving in poorly guarded convoys. Urban combat is characterized by the isolation of small groups and navigational challenges. The OPFOR can use

the separation this creates to inflict maximum casualties even when there is no other direct military benefit from the action.