

## Chapter 8: Reconnaissance

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

To the OPFOR, the single most important component of military action is reconnaissance. Reconnaissance represents all measures associated with organizing, collecting, and studying information on the operational environment associated with the area of upcoming battles. Aggressive, continuous reconnaissance allows the timely accomplishment of combat missions with minimum losses. Poor reconnaissance can lead directly to failure. The OPFOR commits significant resources to any reconnaissance mission.

Note: Reconnaissance is part of the OPFOR military function called reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition (RISTA). RISTA is the combination of capabilities, operations, and activities using all available means to obtain information concerning foreign nations; areas of actual or potential operations; and/or the strength, capabilities, location, status, nature of operations, and intentions of hostile or potentially hostile forces or elements. It includes production of intelligence resulting from the collection, evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of such information. It also includes detection, identification, and location of a target in sufficient detail to permit the effective employment of weapons.

### Combined Arms Mission

Reconnaissance is a combined arms mission, not solely the business of reconnaissance troops. It involves the integrated efforts of troops from several branches. OPFOR reconnaissance actions often include the use of affiliated irregular forces and/or friendly civilians. Reconnaissance elements that are defeated before or during the accomplishment of their mission are reconstituted from any appropriate source.

Note. The term reconnaissance unit refers to a unit composed of specialized reconnaissance troops. In contrast, the term reconnaissance element refers to any unit or task organization given a specific reconnaissance mission, regardless of the type(s) of troops involved. The latter is a functional designation that describes the function an organization is performing. This chapter focuses primarily on the reconnaissance activities of ground maneuver forces and specialized ground reconnaissance troops. However, there are also specialized reconnaissance assets in other arms, which other chapters in this manual discuss in more detail:

- Signals reconnaissance (chapter 7).
- Artillery target acquisition (chapter 9).
- Aerial reconnaissance (chapter 10).
- Air defense reconnaissance, early warning, and target acquisition (chapter 11).
- Engineer reconnaissance (chapter 12).
- Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) reconnaissance (chapter 13).
- Special reconnaissance (chapter 15).

The integrated efforts of any or all of these reconnaissance means may be necessary to support specific missions. Efficient and accurate reconnaissance is also crucial to ensuring the success of information warfare (INFOWAR) activities.

### Concept

For the OPFOR, reconnaissance is a critical element of combat support. In modern combat, the battlefield develops unevenly. Therefore, units cannot rely on the security of their flanks or rear. In fact there may not even be flanks or rear. Friendly and enemy forces can become intermingled, with the combat situation developing and changing quickly. Reconnaissance elements must warn commanders of developing threats and identify enemy strengths and vulnerabilities. The OPFOR organizes reconnaissance to acquire continuous,

timely, and accurate information on the operational environment. This includes information about

- The enemy's CBRN and precision weapons, force disposition, and intentions.
- Terrain and weather.

This information is vital to the OPFOR decisionmaking and planning process. Reconnaissance can decisively influence the outcome of a battle.

The OPFOR treats reconnaissance as an offensive action, since the enemy typically defends vital information with security actions and camouflage, concealment, cover, and deception (C3D) measures. Thus, reconnaissance plans must always have a provision for defeating the enemy's efforts to protect himself.

## Principles

The speed and potential nonlinearity of modern combat have increased the importance of reconnaissance. Without decisive actions of reconnaissance elements and assets, it is impossible to preempt the enemy, seize the initiative, and conduct a successful battle. The OPFOR uses the following set of interrelated principles to guide its reconnaissance activities:

### Focus

Reconnaissance action must serve the commander's needs and focus on elements and objectives critical to the execution of combat missions. Each unit develops a comprehensive reconnaissance plan in accordance with the organization's mission. This plan must coordinate the integration of all available assets.

The OPFOR understands that information is not the same thing as knowledge. With the number of sensors available to the tactical commander, the danger exists that analysts and decisionmakers could become overwhelmed with raw data. Therefore, all reconnaissance activities should focus on answering specific information requirements.

### Continuity

The modern, fluid battlefield demands continuous reconnaissance to provide an uninterrupted flow of information under all conditions. Reconnaissance provides constant coverage of the enemy situation, using a wide variety of redundant assets. Not only must reconnaissance units answer specific requests for information; they also must continuously collect information on all aspects of the operational environment to fully meet future requirements. The variety of overlapping assets ensures greater validity of collected information. Continuous reconnaissance decreases the likelihood that the enemy could carry out successful deception.

Reconnaissance units attempt to maintain contact with the enemy at all times. They conduct reconnaissance in all directions, in order to prevent surprise. They collect information during all battle phases, 24 hours a day, in all weather conditions.

To ensure this continuity, units conducting reconnaissance must maintain a high state of combat readiness. They must be able to sustain themselves wherever they deploy, without relying on others for transport or subsistence. If a specialized reconnaissance unit is destroyed or becomes combat ineffective, commanders reassign the mission to appropriate forces.

### Aggressiveness

Aggressiveness is the vigorous search for information, including the willingness to fight for it if necessary. Reconnaissance troops must collect information creatively and make maximum use of all assets and methods to ensure success on the battlefield. The OPFOR vigorously employs all available collection resources and adheres carefully to the reconnaissance plan. However, it

will alter the plan when its own initiatives or enemy actions dictate.

Although reconnaissance is the primary mission, all reconnaissance units train to defend themselves. Reconnaissance troops penetrate enemy defenses, avoiding contact if possible. When required, they can ambush and raid enemy forces. They do what is necessary to fulfill the commander's information needs.

The information requirement determines the techniques used. Reconnaissance patrols by mechanized forces are not always the best means. Ambushes and raids are fruitful sources of information from captured prisoners, documents, and equipment. Such information-gathering actions are generally more important than any associated damage, but there are exceptions. Reconnaissance elements are often called upon to destroy high-value targets they find.

## Timeliness

Timely information is critical on the modern battlefield. Because of the high mobility of modern forces, there are frequent and sharp changes in the battlefield situation. As a result, information quickly becomes outdated. The best intelligence is useless if it is not received in time. Timely reporting enables the commander to exploit temporary enemy vulnerabilities and windows of opportunity. He can adjust plans to fit a dynamic battlefield. The OPFOR achieves timeliness through

- Increased automation for command and control (C2) and processing of information.
- Real-time or near-real-time aerial downlinks.
- Satellite downlinks.

This timeliness is especially critical for the success of integrated fires commands (IFCs).

## Camouflage, Concealment, Cover, and Deception

The OPFOR is aware that the enemy may learn a great deal about its intentions by discovering its reconnaissance plan. Commanders understand it is often not possible to completely hide the fact that reconnaissance is being conducted. However, they make every effort to conceal the scale, missions, targets, and nature of reconnaissance missions. Specific measures can include

- Conducting reconnaissance across a broad range of targets.
- Concealing the actions of reconnaissance elements.
- Covering and concealing assembly areas of reconnaissance elements and assets.

The OPFOR can also use C3D to paint a picture that confirms the enemy's stereotyped views of how the OPFOR fights. By showing the enemy what he expects to see, the reconnaissance effort can help to establish the conditions for success during ensuing combat. This is a critical part of INFOWAR (see chapter 7).

## Accuracy and Reliability

The OPFOR uses all available reconnaissance means to verify the accuracy and reliability of reported information. A commander must base his decisions on reconnaissance information. So, the more accurate and complete the information, the better the decision. To maximize results, the commander's battle plan requires accurate information on the enemy's size, location, equipment, and combat readiness. The accuracy and reliability of reconnaissance information are critical to the destruction of high-value targets such as enemy weapons of mass destruction (WMD), precision weapons, attack aviation, logistics centers, C2, and communications. The OPFOR achieves accuracy through the creation of overlapping coverage and the use of improved technology.

Reconnaissance must reliably clarify the true enemy situation in spite of enemy C3D and counterreconnaissance activities. The first step is to tailor reconnaissance efforts to the tactical

situation. Commanders must select and allocate reconnaissance elements in accordance with their capabilities in terms of missions and targets.

The next step is to compare, cross-check, recheck, and integrate reconnaissance reports from multiple means of acquisition. The study and integration of reconnaissance information collected by multiple sources can help in identifying and assessing false targets and other false indicators of enemy actions or intentions.

## Assets

Tactical reconnaissance supports divisions or division tactical groups (DTGs) and below. It provides reconnaissance needed to plan and carry out tactical actions within each commander's area of responsibility (AOR). Divisions, DTGs, and below perform tactical reconnaissance using specially trained reconnaissance resources and combat troops from maneuver units. Figure 8-1 summarizes the range capabilities of the reconnaissance assets that can support tactical commanders.

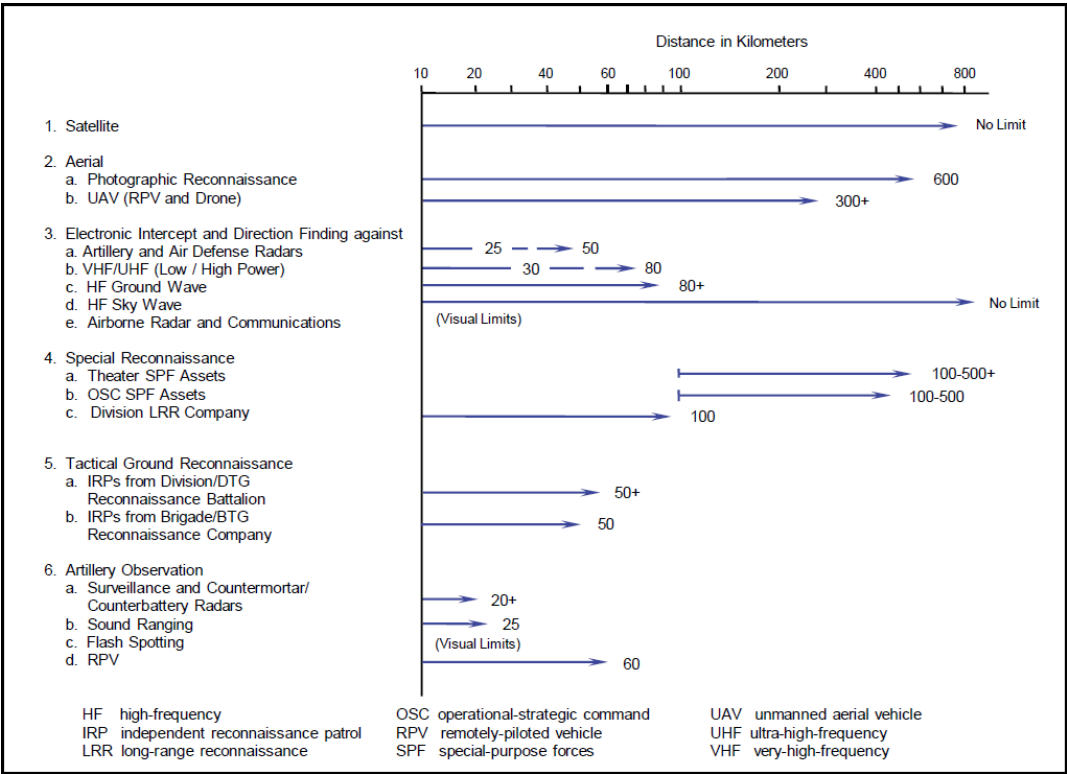


Figure 8-1. Effective ranges of example reconnaissance assets

## Ground Reconnaissance

Tactical units may send out independent reconnaissance patrols (IRPs) to perform ground reconnaissance. The size of such patrols can vary, but is usually an augmented reconnaissance or combat arms platoon.

Long-range reconnaissance (LRR) units may form additional IRPs, or their personnel and vehicles can supplement patrols formed by the other reconnaissance or combined arms units. However, LRR personnel are specially trained for insertion in small reconnaissance teams at distances up to 100 km beyond the battle line.

A DTG may receive a special-purpose forces (SPF) unit to support its IFC or to perform other special reconnaissance and direct action missions. A brigade tactical group (BTG) can also be allocated an SPF unit. The SPF operate in small teams or as several teams grouped into a detachment. They can perform some of the same types of reconnaissance tasks as the LRR teams. However, the SPF receive special training and equipment that allows them to operate

farther out and for longer periods. See chapter 15 for more information on SPF.

Note. Most references to SPF in this chapter also include commando units that are part of the OPFOR's SPF Command. Commandos can perform various reconnaissance missions in the disruption zone or deep in enemy territory. Commandos usually conduct reconnaissance as small teams or squads. Signals reconnaissance assets include radio intercept and direction-finding (DF) and radar intercept and DF systems. They can also include equipment designed to exploit signals from cellular, digital, satellite, fiber-optic, and computer network systems. See chapter 7 for more detail on signals reconnaissance.

Engineer units can also dispatch one or more engineer reconnaissance patrols. This type of patrol consists of a squad or a platoon of engineer specialists sent out to obtain engineer intelligence on the enemy and the terrain. In enemy territory, it deploys as part of another ground reconnaissance element. See chapter 12 for more detail on engineer reconnaissance.

Chemical defense units establish CBRN observation posts as well as CBRN reconnaissance patrols. Chemical defense units can also attach individual chemical and radiological specialists to reconnaissance, security, or reserve elements. Their role is to

- Identify and mark areas of CBRN contamination.
- Determine the extent and nature of any contamination.
- Find routes around contaminated areas.
- Find the shortest route through an area with low levels of contamination and select certain areas for decontamination.
- Monitor the effects of chemical or nuclear weapons and provide warning of downwind hazards. See chapter 13 for more detail on CBRN reconnaissance.

Artillery units often have their own reconnaissance assets. These include

- Artillery command and reconnaissance vehicles.
- Mobile reconnaissance posts.
- Battlefield surveillance radars.
- Target acquisition radars.
- Counterfire radars.
- Sound- and flash-ranging equipment.

In addition, artillery reconnaissance assets may be made available from operational-strategic command (OSC) level. (See chapter 9 for more detail on artillery target acquisition.) Artillery units can also conduct reconnaissance by fire.

Affiliated irregular forces can employ a wide range of reconnaissance techniques, often quite sophisticated. Their primary ground reconnaissance means is surveillance by teams that blend carefully and completely into the local population.

## Reconnaissance by Fire

Reconnaissance by fire is a method of reconnaissance in which fire is placed on a suspected enemy position to cause the enemy to disclose his presence by movement or return fire. It is used to provoke a reaction. The OPFOR also uses a similar tactic in which individuals may brandish weapons or purposely draw suspicion in order to learn more about the enemy's rules of engagement.

At the platoon and squad level, reconnaissance by fire may also be called cover or drake shooting. This is a technique employed to quickly reveal and kill concealed enemy riflemen. Several shots are placed directly into (and through) the suspected cover. Using two- to three-round bursts, the OPFOR riflemen deliberately aim and fire low on the ground immediately to the front of the cover, raking it with fire from the left to the right. Ricochets, fragments, earth, rocks, and wood either injure the hidden enemy soldiers and/or force them to react.

## Aerial Reconnaissance

Aerial reconnaissance includes visual observation, imagery, and signals reconnaissance from airborne platforms. These platforms may be either piloted aircraft or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

## Rotary- and Fixed-Wing Aircraft

Attack helicopter crews report any unexpected enemy activity observed during their missions. They can report such perishable information immediately by radio to a ground command post (CP) unless such reporting would interfere with successful completion of their assigned mission. In the latter case, they report this information during post-mission debriefing. Dedicated reconnaissance helicopters, depending on equipment, can conduct visual, thermal imaging, photographic, infrared, and signals reconnaissance. Transport helicopters or fixed-wing aircraft can insert LRR elements to distances not practicable with armored reconnaissance vehicles. See chapter 10 for more information on aerial reconnaissance.

## Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

The military application of UAVs has become standard practice in armies worldwide. The OPFOR is no exception. It operates UAVs at all levels, from the strategic level down through division, brigade, maneuver battalion, and some companies, as well as in specialized units (such as SPF teams). The techniques and employment of the larger and more capable operational- and strategic-level UAV platforms used by the OPFOR are similar to those employed worldwide.

Note. There are two types of UAV: the remotely piloted vehicle (RPV) and the drone. An RPV, on the one hand, can be flown by remote control from a ground station, over a flight path of the controller's choosing. A drone, on the other hand, flies a set course programmed into its onboard flight control system prior to launch. UAV missions are planned by the chief of reconnaissance (COR) and support combat operations anywhere on the battlefield. When equipped with the proper sensors, UAVs provide imagery day and night and in all weather conditions (depending on the size and capability of the platform). UAVs are an excellent imagery asset, providing the commander with near-real-time (NRT) reconnaissance and battlefield surveillance without the possibility of risk to a manned aircraft. They provide OPFOR commanders a dedicated and rapidly taskable asset that can look wide as well as deep. The commander selects the appropriate UAV based on what is available, current mission configuration, operating range, operating radius, and endurance (flight time). During a preplanned UAV mission, changes in mission priorities or identification of new targets may occur. The OPFOR commander can then direct a UAV to support a different mission or area. Note. The size, ease of operation, and simple design of many smaller UAVs lend them to field-expedient modification. Converting these UAVs into a munitions delivery system (improvised attack UAV) is not difficult and offers several tactical advantages. Off-the-shelf remote controlled aircraft can also provide this capability. UAVs can provide NRT combat information about:

- Terrain.
- Disposition of enemy units.
- Battle damage assessment.
- Target recognition and detection (after which they can provide target designation and illumination).

They can assist in route, area, and zone reconnaissance.

Information gathered via UAV may be immediately acted upon, or it may be integrated with other sources to:

- Support or shape the immediate combat mission.
- Plan future operations.

- Reallocate intelligence assets.

The data may be integrated with that from ground reconnaissance, ground surveillance radar, intelligence assets, or any other information.

Units such as air defense, antitank, artillery, or logistic units, and those with stationary facilities requiring security patrols routinely use UAVs in the reconnaissance role. This allows such units to execute their missions while reducing personnel and vehicle requirements. SPF and some irregular forces can also use UAVs. See chapter 10 for more information on other UAV missions. For additional information on the capabilities and characteristics of UAVs, see the Worldwide Equipment Guide.

## Reconnaissance Planning

The purpose of reconnaissance planning is to thoroughly coordinate the actions of all reconnaissance organizations and levels of command. Ultimately, the planning must ensure that missions, targets, times, forms of action, zones of reconnaissance responsibility (ZORRs), and the exchange of information are fully coordinated.

## Zones of Reconnaissance Responsibility

Each tactical-level unit, down to battalion or detachment, has one or more ZORRs. This zone is the combination of the unit's AOR and the area outside of the AOR that can be observed by the unit's technical sensors. (See figure 8-2.)

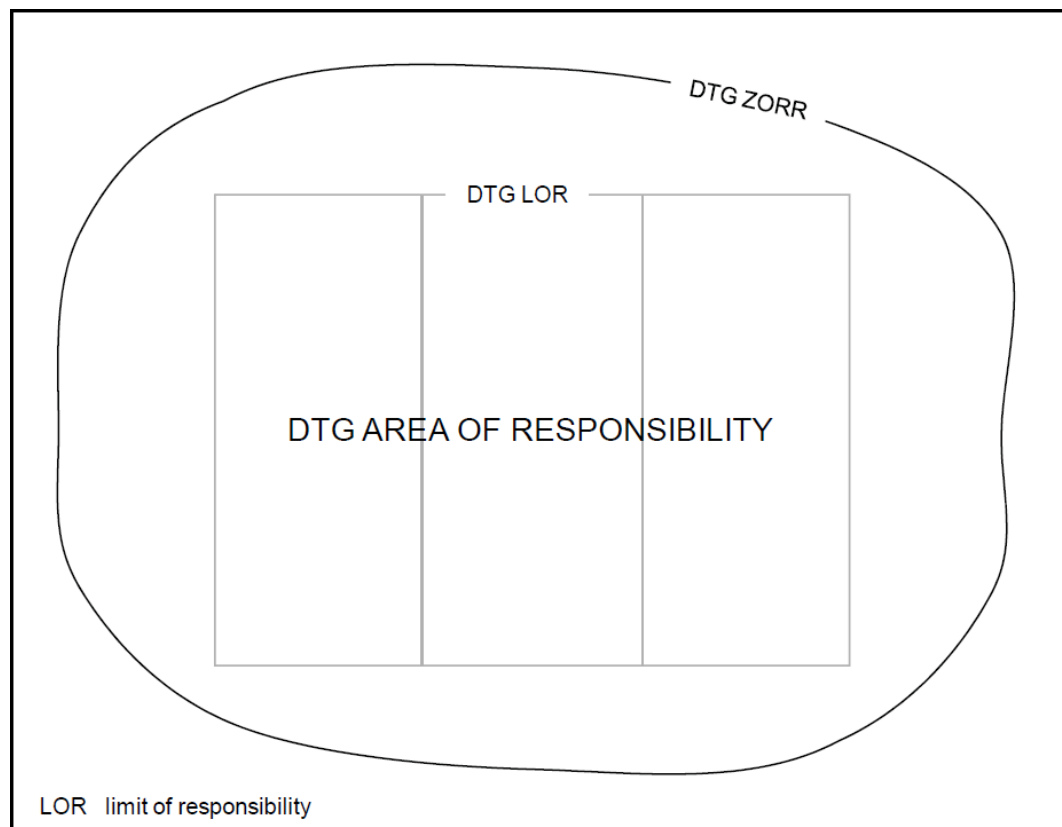


Figure 8-2. Zone of reconnaissance responsibility (example)

By definition, the ZORR extends into adjacent unit AORs. This results in overlapping coverage, which can prevent surprise and the enemy's exploitation of seams between AORs. Within this zone, the OPFOR unit must be able to monitor enemy activity sufficiently to ensure that unexpected enemy moves do not disrupt its own plans. Reconnaissance in this zone should provide early warning of potential enemy movement into the AOR from any direction.

## Commander

Reconnaissance planning begins with the commander. Following the receipt of a combat order from higher command, the maneuver unit commander determines what additional information is necessary to conduct his mission. To fight the battle properly, the tactical commander typically needs information onâ€

- Enemy positions, boundaries, and strong and weak points.
- The location of key enemy systems and installations (such as forward arming and refueling points, counterfire radars, C2 nodes, or logistics centers).
- The location and movement of enemy reserves.
- Possible axes for enemy counterattacks.
- Terrain trafficability and cover.
- The location of and approaches to obstacles.

There are several pieces of information that can be of great interest before and during the battle. General aims that guide the reconnaissance process prior to the initiation of combat are the timely detection or determination ofâ€

- Enemy preparations for an attack with conventional or precision weapons, or WMD.
- Indications of the enemyâ€™s concept for upcoming action.
- Groupings of enemy forces and their preparation for combat.
- Changes in the grouping or composition of these forces.

After combat begins, general information requirements can includeâ€

- The effects of precision weapons and WMD.
- Further changes in the grouping or composition of enemy forces.
- Activities and composition of enemy reserves.
- Enemy preparations to prevent the deployment of friendly troops.
- Enemy preparations to launch amphibious, airmobile, or airborne assaults.

The commander analyzes his requirements for information and determines the reconnaissance needed. At battalion and above, the commander then states broad reconnaissance instructions to his chief of staff (COS) and his intelligence officer. The intelligence officer would relay these instructions to a secondary staff officer, the COR, who actually develops the reconnaissance plan. The amount of time available for conducting reconnaissance determines the amount of detail contained in the commanderâ€™s instructions. If little time is available, the commanderâ€™s instructions may be very short and simple.

The commanderâ€™s instructions to the intelligence officer and COR outline the overall aim or goal of reconnaissance and the priorities of the reconnaissance mission. This can include specific reconnaissance tasks assigned by the commander or by higher headquarters. The commander can also assign specific objectives, sectors, areas, or axes for concentrating the main reconnaissance effort. His instructions may specify which reconnaissance assets may or may not be used prior to combat. He defines the type of information he wants and when he needs it.

## Chief of Staff

The COS interprets the commanderâ€™s instructions and converts them into specific tasks. At this point, if not before, the general aims of the reconnaissance effort become specific information requirements and taskings to reconnaissance units.

The COS has overall responsibility for providing the necessary information for the commander to make decisions. At the tactical level, he has a more clearly defined role in structuring the reconnaissance effort than at higher levels.

Because reconnaissance is a combined arms task, the COS must coordinate the overall



reconnaissance effort. Aside from reconnaissance troops, various other combat, combat support, and combat service support branches have reconnaissance tasks and capabilities. Thus, coordination involves not only ground reconnaissance, but also the efforts of target acquisition elements and CBRN, engineer, and signals reconnaissance, as well as any aerial reconnaissance assets allocated to support the maneuver unit's mission. The COS can ensure that the various branches report the results of all these reconnaissance efforts through the COR and the intelligence officer to the commander.

Upon receipt of the commander's reconnaissance instructions, the COS refines the requirements and passes them to the intelligence officer for the detailed development of the reconnaissance plan. The COS provides any other information available on targets and areas for concentration of the reconnaissance effort.

## Intelligence Officer

The intelligence officer's instructions to the COR specify details of the missions identified by the commander and the method of execution. He determines the sequence for performing these tasks and the manpower and equipment necessary to complete them. He specifies the reconnaissance assets to be used for the priority reconnaissance tasks. He determines the principal means of preparing and supporting reconnaissance elements, and ensuring their interaction and coordination. He then specifies to the COR the times for preparing the reconnaissance plan and issuing combat orders to reconnaissance units.

The intelligence officer is responsible for the coordination between reconnaissance, INFOWAR, and communications requirements. He reviews the efforts of all three areas and resolves conflicts. For example, if the INFOWAR plan recommended a particular enemy C2 center for destruction, but the reconnaissance plan sought to collect vital information from it, the intelligence officer would choose the course of action that best supported the commander's intent.

## Chief of Reconnaissance

In division, brigade, or tactical group headquarters, the intelligence officer heads the intelligence and information section of the staff, which includes a reconnaissance subsection headed by the COR. At battalion level, the platoon leader of the reconnaissance platoon serves as the COR. This staff officer is responsible for organizing reconnaissance in accordance with the commander's general plan. The COR works for and reports to the intelligence officer. Along with or through the intelligence officer, he reports to the commander concerning the organization of reconnaissance planning.

Like other section and subsection chiefs on the division and brigade staff, the COR has a dual reporting chain. He is responsible to the commander and COS in whose headquarters he serves. However, he also receives additional instructions and guidance from his COR counterpart at the next-higher level. For example, a DTG COR coordinates with the OSC COR and with the CORs of subordinate BTGs. Through these channels, he can request reconnaissance support from higher levels or task reconnaissance elements of subordinate BTGs to perform missions for the DTG. Thus, a tactical-level COR can have access to information collected by means not directly available to him, such as aerial reconnaissance. He is also responsible for passing the results of reconnaissance both up and down the chain of command.

To the reconnaissance missions he receives from the COS, the COR adds specific instructions to complete the reconnaissance plan. His knowledge of enemy doctrine and his access to current intelligence enable him to assign precise missions to reconnaissance assets at his level of command. He establishes time constraints, reporting schedules, and reporting methods. He also establishes measures for interaction and coordination of reconnaissance actions to ensure accomplishment of all missions and objectives. He organizes and continuously monitors

communications with all maneuver units and with the headquarters of subordinate reconnaissance units. He can also provide guidance to immediately subordinate maneuver units regarding their contribution to the higher unit's reconnaissance effort.

## Reconnaissance Plan

The COR at division, brigade, or tactical group level develops a reconnaissance plan within the framework of the higher headquarters' mission and the higher commander's decision for combat. He combines this information with:

- The higher headquarters' instructions on conduct of the reconnaissance mission.
- Information currently available on the enemy.
- The status of reconnaissance assets.

Depending on the situation, the reconnaissance plan may include:

- The AORs of friendly units.
- The commander's concept and mission.
- All available information regarding known and suspected enemy groupings and intentions.
- A list of tasks (including obtaining new information, confirming previously available information, battle damage assessment, and calling for fire on targets of opportunity).
- A list of priority targets for reconnaissance.
- The deployment of reconnaissance assets in terms of these tasks and targets.
- The time and sequence for executing the tasks.
- Restrictions on reconnaissance actions during specific times or in certain areas.
- The method and time for reporting.

The content of reconnaissance missions depends on the commander's information requirements. These, in turn, depend on the nature of the unit's combat missions.

In the offense, reconnaissance must establish the enemy's effective combat strength, affiliation, combat effectiveness, and whether or not he has CBRN or precision weapons. It must discover firing positions for weapons, strong points, gaps, and the nature of engineer preparation of defensive positions. It is also important to locate and track enemy reserves and possible axes for counterattacks. Reconnaissance must identify terrain that may present trafficability problems for advancing OPFOR units.

In the defense, reconnaissance must cover enemy preparation for an attack and determine the possible time of the attack. It must establish the makeup of the enemy grouping and identify the axis of his main attack and the nature of his maneuver. It is especially important to determine the locations of firing positions of artillery and other weapons, locations of C2 facilities, the combat effectiveness of enemy troops, and their affiliation. The plan should include reconnaissance tasks for the entire course of defensive actions, as well as tasks that support an eventual transition to the offense.

## Information Flow and Communication

The commander's instructions, the reconnaissance plan, and combat orders to reconnaissance elements identify information requirements and specify how and when to report this information. To minimize radio traffic on command nets, the flow of information both up and down the chain of command normally is through reconnaissance channels. Commanders determine how frequently they wish to receive various types of situational data.

A reconnaissance element typically reports to the commander of its parent reconnaissance unit or to the COR (or COS) of the maneuver unit that dispatched it. In exceptional cases, however, the capability for skip-echelon communications allows the leader of a reconnaissance unit to report to a higher level if so directed in specific instructions.

## Reporting

Standard procedures for reconnaissance reporting seek to ensure that the supported commander receives critical information he requires to make a decision. To reduce the likelihood of information overload, there are two different reporting categories:

- Periodic (reports submitted at a set time).
- Aperiodic (reports submitted on the staff's own initiative resulting from significant changes in the situation).

Under the direction of the COR, the reconnaissance subsection on a division, brigade, or tactical group staff evaluates and summarizes incoming information for the commander. It disseminates this information to those command and staff elements that require it, including higher headquarters and adjacent units. It is important to study information from all sources before reaching conclusions. This includes even information believed to be false because it contradicts information from other sources and does not correspond to the developing situation. The study of this false information can reveal the methods the enemy is using for deception.

## Reconnaissance Report

Commanders and staffs receive reports from reconnaissance elements and/or CORs. Depending on the situation, these reports may be in the form of briefings, radio communications, or written reports.

The term reconnaissance report also applies to a specific document prepared by the headquarters of a brigade, division, or tactical group for reporting information about the enemy to a higher headquarters. It may be a periodic reconnaissance report forwarded every few hours at set times specified in instructions. It may also be an aperiodic report prepared at the initiative of the subordinate commander or by special request from the higher commander. In either case, it includes, at a minimum, the following:

- The general nature of enemy activities throughout the reporting unit's entire ZORR.
- The disposition and grouping of enemy forces in each area or axis within the ZORR.
- Significant changes that have occurred since the previous report.
- The reporting unit's conclusions about possible enemy actions based on these indications.
- The source of the data and the time received.

## Reconnaissance Summary

The reconnaissance summary is a report, prepared by the headquarters of a division, brigade, or tactical group, that contains information about the enemy covering a given period of time. The reporting unit sends this summary to the higher headquarters at times established in instructions. It is normally provided once a day as a brief narrative of the highlights of the past 24 hours. It is also sent to adjacent and subordinate headquarters for information purposes. It typically includes the following:

- The general nature of enemy activities in the ZORR.
- Data about the enemy's precision weapons and WMD and their employment.
- The positions of enemy forces at the time of preparation of the summary.
- Information about the enemy's air (and naval) forces, air defense, CPs, radar equipment, logistics installations, obstacles, and field fortifications. The reporting unit's general assessment of the disposition, activities, and condition of enemy forces and the nature of forthcoming enemy activities.
- Information gaps to be addressed during further reconnaissance.

The summary may include the significant results of prisoner interrogation or exploitation of captured documents or equipment.

## Reconnaissance Elements

The general term reconnaissance element applies to any unit given a specific reconnaissance mission. (This is in keeping with the OPFOR practice of designating functional elements and functional forces. On those relatively rare occasions when the unit performing the reconnaissance function is as large as a battalion, it could be called a reconnaissance force.) Some reconnaissance elements are formed on the basis of a reconnaissance unit, but others come from maneuver units or other sources.

At the tactical level, the ground forces employ a variety of reconnaissance elements, tasked and tailored to fit the specific needs of the tactical commander in a particular situation. These elements vary in size and composition from a few scouts to a battalion.

Reconnaissance units at the tactical level may either operate independently or be task-organized with personnel from maneuver units into special types of reconnaissance elements. They may or may not have augmentation such as mechanized infantry troops, tanks, artillery, engineers, CBRN reconnaissance personnel, and other specialists.

### Commander's Reconnaissance Group

Tactical commanders conduct a personal commander's reconnaissance, where possible, as part of the planning process. The commander goes to a field site in the vicinity of planned combat actions to conduct a visual study of the enemy and terrain. He takes with him his subordinate maneuver commanders, the commanders of dedicated and supporting units, and staff officers. The purpose of this reconnaissance is to refine and verify, on the terrain, and add details to the general plan already made on a map and missions already assigned to the troops. However, it can also occur prior to making battle plans. During the reconnaissance, the commander issues an oral combat order and organizes coordination. The OPFOR takes elaborate measures to disguise the conduct of this reconnaissance and the ranks of the participants in the commander's reconnaissance group.

Prior to departure for the field site, time permitting, a commander's reconnaissance plan is drawn up. It specifies

- The purpose and objective of the commander's personal reconnaissance.
- Principal tasks.
- The composition of the reconnaissance group.
- Routes and means of transportation.
- Halt points for reconnaissance activity.
- The principal items to be covered at each halt point.

### Observer

Within a squad, platoon, or company, an individual can be assigned as an observer. This observer can

- Reconnoiter the ground and airspace, enemy and terrain.
- Observe the actions and position of his own unit, its subordinate units, and adjacent units.

### Observation Post

An observation post (OP) is position within which a team is assigned the mission of conducting surveillance of enemy in a given zone or location. An OP can have literally any organization and can be drawn from any type force. Typically, OPs are kept small. An OP usually owns and/or receives sensor and communications capability that permits stealthy and rapid movement and provides the ability to locate, track, and report on its reconnaissance targets.

OPs typically operate in or near enemy-controlled areas. The reconnaissance plan includes the

method by which the OP penetrates enemy security forces, eludes detection, and observes and reports on the enemy. OPs are often called upon to perform the infiltration tactical task. The INFOWAR plan often includes C3D measures that assist in preventing enemy detection of OPs. This C3D effort may include employing cover from the local population or affiliated forces.

## Patrol Squad

A patrol squad is a single squad sent out with a reconnaissance mission. It can be a single vehicle (patrol vehicle or tank) or a reconnaissance or infantry squad on foot. Patrol squads may be the only reconnaissance element deployed when the risk of meeting the enemy is low. However, they can also be deployed from a larger reconnaissance element, such as any platoon-size patrol. Any maneuver company or battalion operating in isolation from the main force can send out a patrol squad, even when not performing reconnaissance missions. This occurs chiefly when the maneuver unit is on the move or when occupying an assembly area.

As a rule, the patrol squad operates off-road, moving from one suitable observation point to another. It typically reconnoiters places where an enemy unit could be concealed, such as hills, woods, or built-up areas. If it sights the enemy, the patrol squad immediately reports this to the commander or platoon leader who dispatched it, and then continues to carry out observation. In the event of a sudden meeting with the enemy, the patrol squad can open fire on him.

## Reconnaissance Team

A reconnaissance team is an element, usually at squad strength, formed from specially trained personnel (for example, from an LRR company). It conducts independent actions in enemy-held territory to discover precision weapons, WMD, C2 facilities, reserves, airfields, and other priority targets. A reconnaissance team may be inserted on foot or in an armored reconnaissance vehicle. If the team leaves its vehicle behind, insertion could also be by helicopter or by parachute landing from fixed-wing aircraft.

## Reconnaissance Patrol

A reconnaissance patrol (RP) is generally a platoon-size tactical reconnaissance element with the mission of acquiring information about the enemy and the terrain. While the RP is generally platoon-sized, it can be smaller or larger depending on the commander's requirements, forces available, and the operational environment. The OPFOR distinguishes among various types of patrols that fit under the general descriptive term reconnaissance patrol. These specific types of reconnaissance include the independent reconnaissance patrol (IRP), officer reconnaissance patrol, and fighting patrol (FP). The generic term also includes engineer reconnaissance patrols and CBRN reconnaissance patrols (see chapters 12 and 13, respectively).

Other than as a generic descriptor for these specific types, the OPFOR also uses the term reconnaissance patrol to describe a tactical reconnaissance element dispatched from a reconnaissance detachment in the process of accomplishing its mission. This type of RP is not independent, because it is a subordinate of a larger reconnaissance element.

It is difficult to distinguish among the various types of RP by their strength, composition, or position on the battlefield. The size of each patrol is up to a platoon, augmented when necessary. A patrol in this configuration could be an RP, FP, or IRP. They all accomplish their missions through observation, ambushes, raids, and, when necessary, combat.

In the event of unexpected contact with the enemy, all types of RP try to break contact and then reach a position from which to identify and report the strength, composition, and location of the enemy force. If the patrol discovers the enemy in an unexpected position, the patrol leader immediately executes the actions on contact battle drill (see chapter 5).

If a patrol observes enemy reconnaissance or security elements, its task is to avoid contact and

continue on to locate the main force as rapidly as possible. In the event of a surprise encounter with a small enemy force, when evasion is impossible, the patrol acts decisively to destroy the enemy, capture prisoners, if possible, and continue its mission.

## Independent Reconnaissance Patrol

A tactical-level command, battalion or larger, may send out independent reconnaissance patrols (IRPs) with a specific mission to conduct reconnaissance of the enemy and terrain. Each IRP is usually a reconnaissance or combat arms platoon, often augmented with engineers and CBRN specialists. The size of each patrol depends on several factors including the terrain, forces available, enemy strength, the operational environment, and the importance of the axis or objective. IRPs often move on multiple axes, although the main axis receives the primary reconnaissance effort.

In the offense, an IRP is assigned either an axis or an objective. In defensive situations, the IRPs are used to scout enemy reserves moving toward the battle zone or attacking on an open flank. An IRP can also support antilanding defense during an airborne or amphibious landing by the enemy.

As with other types of RP, the IRP accomplishes its missions through observation, ambushes, or raids. It may conduct reconnaissance by fire, if necessary, but becomes engaged in battle only if one of the following conditions exists:

- It cannot carry out its mission by any other method.
- It suddenly encounters the enemy.
- It detects enemy precision weapons or other high-priority targets.

Both the RP and the IRP can dispatch patrol squads to examine terrain features, detect enemy forces, or provide security.

An IRP operates at a greater distance from the parent organization than the RP and may stay out longer. The distance from the parent unit depends on:

- The nature of the mission.
- The terrain.
- The composition of the patrol.
- The ability to maintain communications with the unit that dispatched it.

## Officer Reconnaissance Patrol

A maneuver unit can send out an officer reconnaissance patrol when there has been an abrupt, unexpected situation change. The purpose of this patrol can be to:

- Update information on the enemy and terrain in the AOR.
- Determine the position of friendly troops.
- Check contradictory situation data.

Depending on assigned missions, this patrol can consist of one to three officers with communications equipment, and possibly two to five soldiers assigned for security. This patrol can move by helicopter, tank, IFV, APC, or other vehicle. The officer reconnaissance patrol allows the commander to oversee and maintain tight control over the maneuver of his subordinate forces or elements. These patrols usually do not go outside the area under the immediate control of that commander's unit.

## Fighting Patrol

A fighting patrol (FP) is a platoon-size element, normally composed of combat troops, dispatched from maneuver battalions (and sometimes companies) or detachments. When necessary, engineer and CBRN reconnaissance troops and other specialists can be allocated to the patrol. An FP normally moves in such a way that its parent unit can provide it indirect fire

support. Units dispatch one or more FPs depending on the tactical situation. This may beâ€”

- When conducting tactical movement.
- During battle in the absence of direct contact with the enemy.
- In other cases where it is difficult for the unit to directly observe the enemyâ€™s actions.

An FP is generally deployed to reconnoiter and provide security. The main missions of the FP areâ€”

- Timely detection of an advancing enemy.
- Locating enemy direct-fire weapons (especially antitank weapons).
- Locating minefields.

An FP employs the same techniques as other reconnaissance patrols. Because of its security function, however, it is harder for the FP to avoid becoming engaged in combat with the enemy. It may engage a weaker enemy force using an ambush, or it may avoid contact altogether, taking up a concealed observation point or maneuvering around superior enemy forces. If it encounters what it considers to be enemy scouts or security elements, it attempts to penetrate them to locate the enemyâ€™s main force. Often FPs are also called upon to fix enemy forces they encounter, to permit other security elements to maneuver to destroy them.

## Reconnaissance Detachment

The largest element the OPFOR employs at the tactical level to supplement specialized reconnaissance is the reconnaissance detachment (RD). It is typically a task-organized combat arms company or battalion. The detachment often receives such assets as tanks (if it is not a tank unit), air defense, artillery, engineers, or CBRN specialists. The RD dispatches platoon-size RPs to reconnoiter specific objectives along the detachmentâ€™s axis.

Although an RD typically consists of combat troops, its primary mission is reconnaissance. If it does encounter a weak enemy force, it may engage that force and take prisoners. When the detachment encounters the enemyâ€™s main forces, itâ€™

- Assumes an observation mission.
- Attempts to determine the composition and disposition of those forces.
- Reports to the commander who sent it out.
- Then continues its mission.

The RD is employed primarily in the offense. Its mission is to acquire information on the terrain and the enemyâ€™s location or gaps in his defenses. It can also reconnoiter key objectives. It conducts reconnaissance by observation, terrain inspection, ambushes, raids, andâ€”only when necessaryâ€”by combat.

In the defense, in the absence of close contact with the enemy, a division, brigade, or tactical group may send out an RD into the disruption zone to determine the enemyâ€™s composition and main avenue of attack. The role of the RD is to establish contact with an advancing enemy force and monitor its progress. An RD can also reconnoiter enemy airborne or amphibious landing forces in support of an antilanding reserve.

## Reconnaissance Methods

Reconnaissance elements collect information by various methods. For example, RPs can gather information using a number of standard methods, includingâ€”

- Observation.
- Raids.
- Ambushes.
- Reconnaissance attack (see chapter 3).

Other tactical reconnaissance elements may use some of the same techniques, as well asâ€”

- Listening (eavesdropping).

- Imaging.
- Interception of transmissions and DF of electronic resources.
- Questioning of local inhabitants.
- Interrogation of prisoners of war and defectors.
- Study of documents and equipment captured from the enemy.

Information is also acquired during combat by maneuver units. Tactical units may also receive information on the enemy from higher headquarters and adjacent units.

## Observation

Observation is the coordinated inspection of the enemy, terrain, weather, obstacles, and adjacent friendly forces during all types of combat activity. This type of reconnaissance, performed by troops conducting direct observation of the objective, is the most common method of gathering reconnaissance information. It is also one of the most reliable and accurate methods. In many cases, it is the only source of information.

The OPFOR has great confidence in the utility of observation, but it also recognizes the limitations. It is often difficult to determine enemy intentions through observation alone. To supplement observation, the OPFOR conducts raids and ambushes to capture information that can give a clearer picture of enemy strengths and intentions.

## Raids

The raid is more aggressive than most methods of reconnaissance because it involves the active search for and engagement of selected enemy targets. A raid can occur in any terrain, in any season, at any time of day or night, and under various weather conditions. However, it is generally conducted at night or under conditions of limited visibility. Reconnaissance tactics involve two methods of conducting raids. The difference is in the purpose of the raid, the depth of the target, and the type of reconnaissance element performing it.

## Reconnaissance Raid

The primary goal of a reconnaissance raid is to obtain information. Any damage or destruction of enemy installations is incidental. The raiding element is usually a reconnaissance or maneuver unit up to platoon size, with some augmentation. The reconnaissance raid consists of

- The covert approach of the raiding element to a preplanned and previously studied target (objective).
- A surprise attack to capture prisoners, documents, and equipment.
- A swift withdrawal to friendly positions.

The reconnaissance raid normally takes place in enemy-held terrain, typically during preparation for an attack. The depth of the raid is limited to the enemy's forward edge or his immediate tactical depth. Typical targets are individual soldiers or small groups of soldiers. These might be

- Isolated firing positions, OPs, and observers.
- Isolated sentries and guard posts.
- Couriers.
- Small, isolated work details.
- Staff elements.
- Communications centers.

## Other Raids

Most raids are conducted for the purpose of capturing, destroying, or disabling a high-value target or possibly just confusing or deceiving the enemy. In contrast to a reconnaissance raid,



which is conducted silently where possible, the basis for this type of raid is a skillful combination of surprise, firepower, and violence. However, a secondary or incidental result may be the securing of reconnaissance information by taking prisoners, documents, and combat equipment. The raiding element or force could be as large as a combat arms detachment that has penetrated the enemy's forward edge. However, it could also be an SPF team or a dedicated reconnaissance element inserted deep into enemy territory. See chapter 3 for information on the execution of raids in general.

## Ambush

Reconnaissance by ambush (reconnaissance ambush) is a method of reconnaissance accomplished by surprise attack, from cover, for the purpose of seizing prisoners, documents, and samples of weapons or equipment. The ambush is similar to the raid, but is more of a passive tactic. The ambushing unit selects a concealed position along a probable route of enemy travel and attacks enemy units when the situation is favorable. The ambushing unit can consist of a specialized reconnaissance patrol or infantry unit.

Typical targets for ambush are solitary enemy soldiers or small groups moving on foot or in vehicles. The most favorable conditions for finding such isolated targets are when the enemy is preparing for an attack or when he is regrouping or relieving his forces. In preparing for an attack, the enemy sends out reconnaissance elements and small groups of engineers looking for passages in obstacles. There is also increased movement within the enemy position. During regrouping or relief, newly assigned enemy personnel who are unfamiliar with the terrain and situation may become isolated.

Information collection is the most common purpose of an ambush conducted by reconnaissance patrols. However, patrols also may execute an ambush to delay reserves or to inflict damage on a target of opportunity. Reconnaissance ambushes can occur in all kinds of battle, on any terrain, at any time of year or day, and under various weather conditions. For information on the execution of ambushes, see chapter 3.

## Reconnaissance Attack

A reconnaissance attack is a tactical offensive action that locates moving, dispersed, or concealed enemy elements and either fixes or destroys them. The purpose of the reconnaissance attack can be to find the enemy and to attack him (sometimes referred to as a search and attack). However, the purpose can be to find the enemy but not attack him. Instead of attacking, the OPFOR may use this opportunity to gain information that answers important questions about the enemy's location, dispositions, military capabilities, and quite possibly his intentions.

The use of the term reconnaissance in the title of this method reflects the emphasis on the use of reconnaissance assets inherent in the organization's mission. Even if the reconnaissance attack is executed by a battalion, company or detachment, that organization may dispatch platoon-size patrols or squad-size reconnaissance teams to capture prisoners, documents, and equipment. However, a platoon- or squad-size element is not well suited for attacking the enemy.

The reconnaissance attack is the most ambitious and least preferred method to gain information. When other means of gaining information have failed, a reconnaissance detachment (or any detachment) can undertake a reconnaissance attack. The reconnaissance objectives may be force-, terrain-, or facility-oriented, but the overall objective of a reconnaissance attack is force-oriented.

The OPFOR recognizes that an enemy will take significant measures to prevent the OPFOR from gaining critical intelligence. Therefore, quite often the OPFOR will have to fight for information, using an offensive operation to penetrate or circumvent the enemy's security forces to

determine who and/or what is located where or doing what. (See chapter 3 for additional information on the reconnaissance attack.)