

Transition to Defense

Out of Direct Contact

A defense **Out Of Direct Contact** with the enemy is the preferred situation for the OPFOR. This occurs when the commander is not currently engaged with enemy units. This situation offers the commander more security and time, and allows him to make better use of the terrain when planning his defense.

In Direct Contact

The less-preferred situation is a defense **In Direct Contact** with the enemy. This normally occurs as a result of a failed or stalled attack, when the OPFOR is currently engaged with enemy units. This is less preferred because the commander must assume the defense in a short period of time, not always on a favorable line, often without engineer preparation, and often under enemy fire. Also, troop, ammunition, fuel, and supply shortages suffered during a preceding attack could complicate the situation. This can also occur during an attack when repelling counterattacks, consolidating captured lines, and securing flanks of attacking troops. The main goal when transitioning to a defense **In Direct Contact** is to transition back to the offense as quickly as possible or to hold a line pending commitment of follow-on forces.

Differences

Clearly, the OPFOR commander prefers to assume the defense **Out Of Direct Contact** with the enemy. Since he has time to prepare, he will be able to: use the terrain to his advantage when planning his defense; utilize engineer assets to assist with defensive positions and obstacles; and deploy a series of covering-force units. Thus, the most obvious difference between the two transitions to defense is the existence of a security zone.

Combat Security Forces

Security Zone

Size: Regiment (for divisions / armies) or Battalion (for divisions)
Protected Unit: Divisions or Armies

A **Security Zone** is established **ONLY** in a defense **Out Of Direct Contact**.

The OPFOR will establish a Security Zone 15-50 Km in front of the Main Defensive Line (MDL) of a defending Division or Army. The depth varies with the general combat situation and terrain, but will always be at least deep enough to keep the 1st-echelon units out of range of enemy direct-fire weapons. The Security Zone is held by a Forward Detachment (FD), which is usually a MRB+ (division FD) or a MRR+ (army FD) from the 2nd-echelon. The mission of the FD is to delay, disrupt, or destroy the advancing enemy. It deploys on the best defensible terrain and makes extensive use of obstacles and barriers (as preparation time permits). Because it must cover such a broad frontage, a FD normally deploys in a single echelon with a strong Combined Arms Reserve (up to a company).

The FD establishes several positions within the Security Zone. The initial position is at the forward edge of Security Zone, and subsequent positions to the rear are far enough apart to preclude the enemy from engaging one and then the other without displacing his indirect-fire weapons. The separation of the FD from the MDL requires the division commander to place artillery and ADA subunits in the Security Zone to support the FD's mission. The FD will engage advancing enemy units first with the supporting indirect-fire weapons and then with organic direct fire weapons as he closes. The object of this is to strip away the enemy's recon and force him to deploy to attack the position and to expend indirect fires; this can slow and disorganize him.

Prior to decisive engagement by enemy forces, the Security Zone forces will withdraw to subsequent positions and repeat the actions, hopefully exhausting and disorganizing the enemy prior to reaching the MDL.

Combat Security Forces

Forward Positions

SIZE: Reinforced Company (MRC or TC)
PROTECTED UNIT: Regiment (MRR or TR)

Forward Positions are positions created to mislead the enemy about the location of the forward edge of the main defense. Forward Positions are ordered by division but planned in detail by the 1st-echelon regiment. Each 1st-echelon regiment creates a Forward Position (a MRC or TC) from a 2nd-echelon battalion

In Direct Contact

When created in this situation, Forward Positions are held on the line of contact while the main body of the regiment withdraws to a more favorable line of defense.

Out of Direct Contact

Each regiment will establish a Forward Position 4-6 Km in front of the Main Defensive Line (MDL). Used with a Security Zone, it is intended to imitate the main defense, cause the enemy to conduct premature artillery preparations, and aid in the withdrawal of the Security Zone FD. The OPFOR may also form Forward Positions in rare cases where the separation between the OPFOR and the enemy is not great enough to create a Security Zone.

Combat Security Outposts (CSOPs)

SIZE: Reinforced Platoon (MRP or TP)
PROTECTED UNIT: Battalion (MRB or TB)

Combat Security Outposts (CSOPs) are established **ONLY** in a defense **Out Of Direct Contact**.

1st-Echelon Regiments on main avenues of approach often form CSOPs, and each forward battalion can form such an outpost. A battalion CSOP is normally a reinforced platoon, occupying a position 2-3 Km forward of the main defenses. The mission of a CSOP is to delay, inflict losses on, and to deceive the enemy about the true location of the main defenses. Additionally, the outposts attempt to prevent enemy recon and small groups from penetrating to the parent battalion's position. The CSOPs take over the mission to delay the enemy's main effort when the FD shifts to a secondary axis. Ideally, a CSOP forces the enemy to deploy in a position short of the MDL, believing that it actually is the MDL. A CSOP will be supported by its parent battalion's mortars, as well as any available artillery and direct-fire weapons from the forward edge of the defense. Once the enemy begins to deploy for a major attack, the CSOPs withdraws, usually under cover of smoke and artillery fire.

Main Defensive Line

Single-Echelon Defense

A defense established with a single echelon gives the commander maximum firepower forward, but no depth. The OPFOR commander might pick this formation if his unit is defending on a secondary axis or if he has suffered heavy losses. When using a single-echelon defense, the commander always establishes a Combined Arms Reserve (CAR), which allows him to still influence the battle and react to unforeseen developments in the fight.

Subunits can have different echelonment than the parent unit, based on the combat situation (i.e., a regiment within a two-echelon division may be formed in 1 or 2 echelons).

Two-Echelon Defense

A defense established with two echelons gives up some forward firepower, but it gives the commander more depth (and therefore flexibility). A second echelon allows the commander to react to sudden changes in the tactical situation, and in an unclear battlefield environment, the larger the counterattack / reaction force, the better. The OPFOR commander would probably choose a two-echelon formation if his unit was on a primary enemy avenue of approach or if the tactical situation is vague or unclear.

The second-echelon can be used for the following tasks:

- To hold their main position against an enemy penetration
- To reinforce 1st-echelon units where the enemy threatens a penetration
- To maneuver to firing lines or to launch a counterattack
- To destroy enemy airborne or heliborne assaults.

Subunits can have different echelonment than the parent unit, based on the combat situation (i.e., a regiment within a two-echelon division may be formed in 1 or 2 echelons)

Combined Arms Reserve (CAR)

Forces deployed in one echelon always retain a Combined Arms Reserve (CAR). Unlike the offensive combat formation, a defending division or regiment can form both a second echelon and a small reserve. A CAR is normally 1/9 of the combat power of the defending unit, but can increase to 1/3 or more if the situation warrants (such as in very vague situations). Missions include counterattacks, counterpenetrations, or filling gaps in the defense.

Anti-Tank Reserve

Antitank Reserves are kept at every level from battalion upwards. They are generally built around an antitank subunit and operate in conjunction with a Mobile Obstacle Detachment (MOD)

Distances in the Defense

Combat Security Forces

	Width	Distance (from Forward Edge of Main Defense)
Security Zone (Regiment)	Width of supported Division, or MRR width + for Armies	15 - 50 km
Security Zone (Battalion)	MRB width + (5 - 10 km)	15 - 50 km
Forward Positions	MRC width + (1.5 - 3 km)	4 - 6 km
CSOPs	Platoon width + (Up to 500 m)	2 - 3 km

Because of unit width constraints, Combat Security units will normally only deploy along the most likely enemy Avenue of Approach. For example, a Forward Position MRC can not defend along the entire frontage of its supported regiment, so it must pick one area (the best approach).

REMEMBER: A defense established **Out Of Direct Contact** with the enemy would probably have time to deploy a Security Zone, Forward Positions, and CSOPs. A defense established **In Direct Contact** with the enemy would not deploy a Security Zone nor CSOPs, and depending on the situation may or may not have time and/or resources to deploy Forward Positions

Maneuver Units

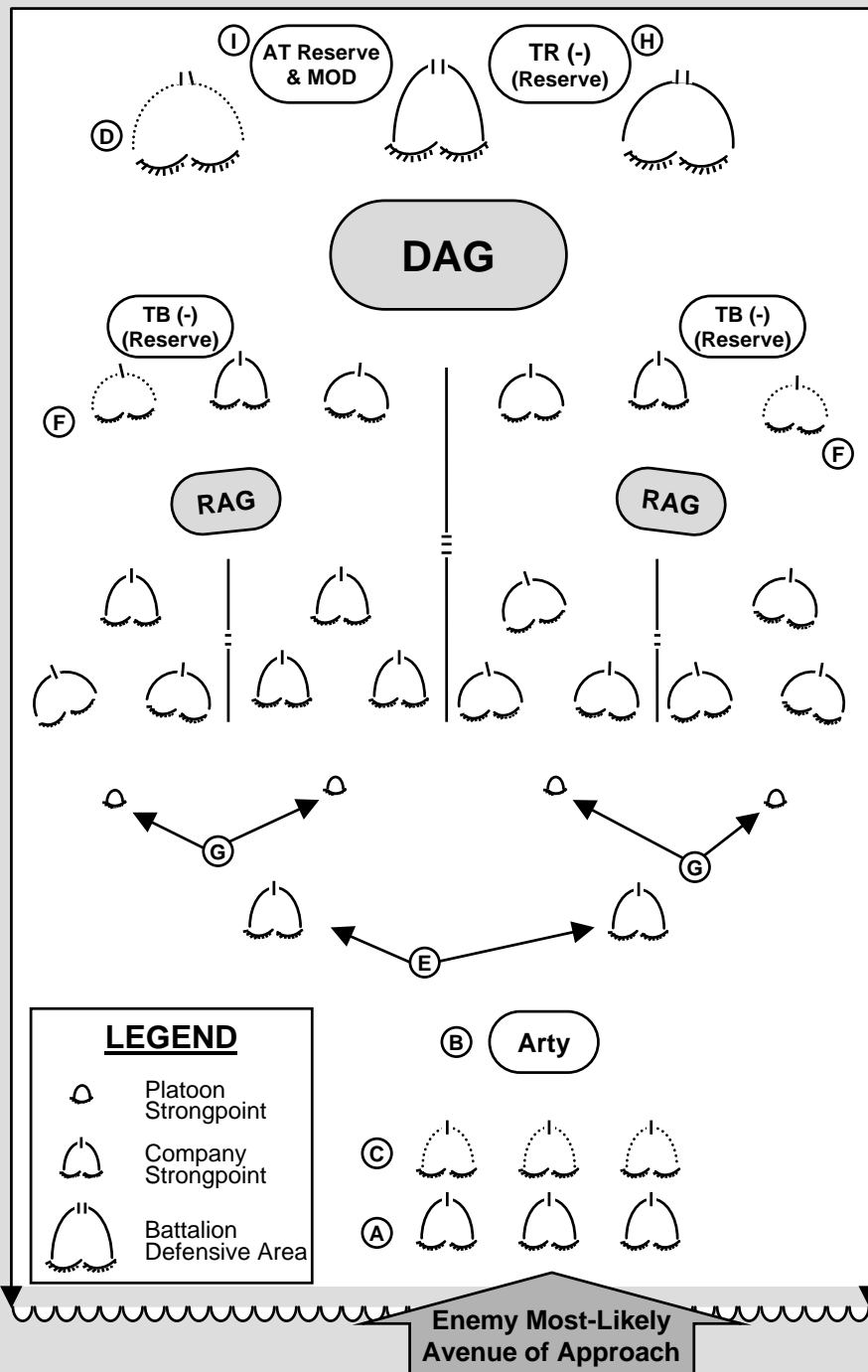
	Width	Depth
Division	20 - 30 km	15 - 20 km
Regiment	7 - 15 km	7 - 10 km
Battalion	3 - 5 km	2 - 2.5 km
Company	1000 - 1500 m	up to 1000 m
Platoon	300 - 400 m	up to 300 m

Note that the dimensions listed here are for a unit establishing a defense **Out Of Direct Contact** with the enemy.

A defense **In Direct Contact** generally occurs as a result of a stalled offensive. The frontage that a now-defending unit occupies is initially equal to its zone of attack. As defense preparation continues, the unit gradually develops the defensive frontage and depth listed above.

MRD in the Defense

Example Illustration



MRD in the Defense

Example Explanation

In this example, a MRD is assuming a defense **Out Of Direct Contact** with the enemy. Since the entire division is on a main enemy avenue of approach, the division commander has organized his regiments in a two-echelon formation. This gives his defense depth which allows him to react to penetrations of the forward defenses. The commander has arrayed his forces with two MRRs forward and a MRR and a TR back. This is a good idea if the commander thinks the enemy attack forces are very strong, or if the situation is very vague (otherwise he could have organized it with three MRRs forward and the TR back).

Since the division commander has had time to prepare the defense, he has established a Security Zone. This consists of a Forward Detachment (FD) MRB+ (A) from the 2nd-echelon MRR. The FD is reinforced with tanks, anti-tank weapons, and one artillery bn (B) also from the 2nd echelon. This FD is too small to cover the entire division zone so it has set up on the most-likely Avenue of Approach into the division defense. The FD will engage from its initial position first, and will move to its fall-back positions (C) as the situation dictates. Once enemy maneuver forces fully commit to the attack, the Security Zone FD will reposition back to its original location in the division 2nd echelon. (D)

Each 1st-echelon regiment had also deployed a Forward Position (E) 4-6 km forward of the main defense. Each Forward Position consists of a MRC+ from the 2nd-echelon MRB. Once decisively engaged, they may be ordered to withdraw to original locations in the regimental 2nd echelon. (F)

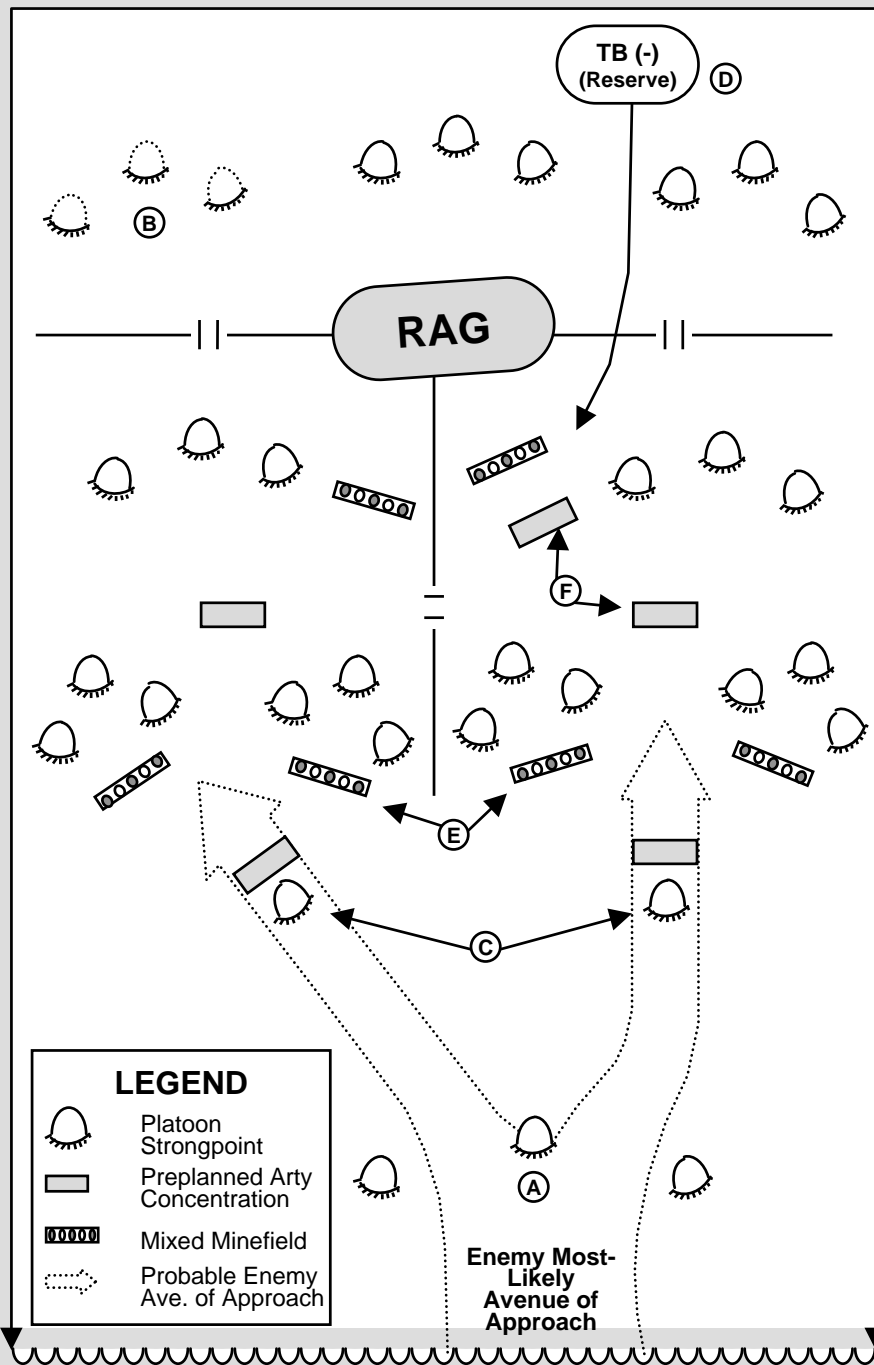
Also, each 1st-echelon battalion has formed a Combat Security Outpost (CSOP) (G) 2-3 km forward of the main defense. Each CSOP consists of a MRP+ from a 2nd-echelon MRC.

The commander has formed a Combined Arms Reserve (CAR) (H) which consists of a TR (-) to act as his contingency force.

He has also formed an Anti-Tank (AT) reserve (I) consisting of his AT battalion and an engineer Mobile Obstacle Detachment (MOD). He uses this force to block penetrations of the 1st echelon and support the counterattack with fire.

MRR in the Defense

Example Illustration



MRR in the Defense

Example Explanation

In this example, a MRR is assuming a defense **Out Of Direct Contact** with the enemy. This is a 1st-echelon regiment on a main enemy avenue of approach. The regimental commander has organized his battalions in a two-echelon formation. This gives his defense depth which allows him to react to penetrations of the forward defenses. The commander has arrayed his forces with two MRBs forward and one back. This is a good idea if the enemy attack forces are very strong or if the situation is very vague. The TB is normally broken up. In this case, the commander has allocated one TC to each 1st-echelon MRB, and has kept the other TC directly subordinate to him as part of his Combined Armes Reserve (CAR).

The regimental commander has deployed a **A** Forward Position 4-6 km forward of the main defense. Its mission is to mislead the enemy as to the actual location of the Main Defensive Line (MDL), and to aid in the withdrawal of the Security Zone FD. The Forward Position consists of a MRC+ from the 2nd-echelon MRB, deployed in platoon strongpoints. Once decisively engaged, they may be ordered to withdraw to original locations in the regimental 2nd echelon. **B**

Also, each 1st-echelon battalion has formed a Combat Security Outpost (CSOP) **C** 2-3 km forward of the main defense. Each CSOP consists of a MRP+ from a 2nd-echelon MRC.

The commander has formed a Combined Armes Reserve (CAR) **D** which consists of a TB (-) and units from his Anti-tank battalion to act as his contingency force.

The division commander has deployed his engineer units to assist in the defensive preparations. These units, along with the regimental commander's organic assets, have created a complex series of minefields, ditches, and other obstacles. **E**

The commander has also had enough time to develop a fire plan. He has designed preplanned artillery concentrations **F** that integrate RAG assets, mortar fire from the battalion mortar batteries, anti-tank fires, and direct fire weapons. Obstacles (above) will attempt to channel attacking units into these fire sacks.

	Offense	
	Note	
	The below information applies only to divisions, regiments and battalions. In normal terrain, companies and platoons always attack in a single echelon (on line), without a reserve. Only in severely restricted terrain would a company or platoon form more than one echelon (out of sheer lack of maneuver room and to avoid the entire unit being destroyed in a choke point).	
	Enemy Defense Preparedness	
	<p>The OPFOR classifies enemy defenses as follows:</p> <p><u>Unprepared Defense</u> Any defense with less than 8 hours of preparation time. In this case, the enemy has had time to emplace only part of his covering force, and preparation is probably limited to basic primary fighting positions for individual soldiers, crew-served weapons, fighting vehicles, and artillery.</p> <p><u>Partially-Prepared Defense</u> Any defense between 8 hours and 48 hours of preparation time. Preparation level is normally somewhere between unprepared and prepared defenses.</p> <p><u>Prepared Defense</u> Any defense with more than 48 hours of preparation time. In this stage of preparation, all defenses are in place and fully engineered. This can include: Completion of trench lines, including commo trenches; Construction of overhead cover for portions of the trench line, especially for weapons positions; Improved fighting positions for vehicles and artillery, normally by the units themselves rather than engineers; and construction of alternate fighting positions.</p>	
	Attack Zones and Strike Sectors	
	<p><u>Attack Zone</u> Attack zones are simply the frontage distance, or width, of the attacking unit. This varies with the mission, enemy defense, and general combat situation. For example, a MRD attacking an unprepared defense on a supporting axis would have a much wider attack zone than a similar unit attacking a prepared defense on a main axis (since the former unit is deployed with 4 regiments in the 1st echelon instead of 2)</p> <p><u>Strike Sector</u> A strike sector is an avenue of main effort. This is the sector that the commander masses his forces and provides more armor and artillery support for the main attack. A unit in a strike sector normally has a narrower frontage than that of a supporting unit because the units are massed and are generally in a two-echelon formation.</p>	