

TRADOC Lessons 809-ORLCA208

Threat OE Defense

Approved 9 June 2022

TIME

- **Prep time:** 2 Hours
- **Teach time:** 3 Hours

AGENDA

1. Introduction to Threat Operational Environment Defense
2. How China organizes for the Defense
3. Additional Terms and graphics for the Chinese in the Defense

LINKS

“CHINA’S NEW ARMORED BRIGADES” VIDEO:
[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=5D5_65NM1TY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5D5_65NM1TY)

OUTCOMES

- Students understand Chinese Heavy Combined Arms Brigade, Heavy Combined Arms Battalion, and company-level formations
- Students understand the context for how and why the Chinese execute defensive operations
- Introduction to Positional Defense
- Students understand what the Cover Group is, the tasks it can perform, and how it fights within the enemy’s frontal blocking zone differently from our own reconnaissance forces.

REFERENCES

- ATP 7-100.3
- Odin.tradoc.army.mil
- MCCC Threat Workbook
- "China's New Armored Brigade" video

Board Drill – Chinese Equipment

No Concrete Experience provided prior to lesson; Students will execute board drills to identify the symbols, weapon systems, and key characteristics for the following threat equipment:

Type 99 (ZTZ-99A2)

ZBD-04A IFV/Recon/AT Variants

EQ2050 w/ QLZ-87

PF-89

SA-14

PLZ-05

PLZ-05A

Type 89 (PLZ-89)

Key points of discussion is how the enemy will position his vehicles within 2/3rds of their max effective range in order to maximize their pK when defending his linear obstacle. Points of discussion also include if the ZTZ-99A2s will use ATGMs in the defense (they won't), and the differences between OPFOR ATGMs and US ATGMs (OPFOR takes approximately 12 seconds to impact at max effective range, US takes approximately 22 seconds with the TOW.)

Students will gain an understanding of the capabilities and limitations of the threat's equipment during this drill.

Board 1 – Chinese Defense and Task Organization

Concrete Experience: "China's new Armored Brigades" video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5d5_65NM1tY

The Instructor will begin by focusing on what is different between US forces and the Threat in regards with how we prefer to fix (fires) and destroy (maneuver) , versus how the fixes (with maneuver) and destroys (with fires.) This is primarily due to the threat's acknowledged inferiority in training and small-unit initiative. Show how the enemy prefers the defense as it is the stronger form of maneuver and thus allows them to further offset maneuver disadvantages; paint the picture that the enemy will traditionally have a 3:1 ratio for fires, and desires to attain a 5:1 ratio. Various points in the ATP reference the Chinese reliance on fires as the "backbone of operations," such as PG 8-35 to 8-36.

- Fixing with maneuver and destroying with fires is an important distinction, because it means they will use IDF on halted USF rather than attempting to use them to shape USF into kill zones. Direct fire will turn, disrupt, and fix, and massed IDF will destroy when finally fixed.
- Historically-minded students and instructors can bring up the Chinese and Russian experiences in WW2 versus the "western" experience. Western armies (US, UK, Germany) experienced victory through decisive offensive maneuver and quality of forces, while Chinese and Russian armies achieved victory through protracted defensive operations and massed amounts of artillery which, over time, degraded the higher-quality troops they faced and enabled them to finally transition to the offense for decision.

Discuss the defensive principles out of the ATP in Chapter 8. Discuss with students the difference between US principles and Chinese principles. Highlight the fact that Chinese depth emphasizes allowing USF to overextend and show their flanks at which point a counterattack occurs, and that

the counterattack is the decisive point. This is reiterated throughout the doctrine, and is a major difference between US and Chinese tactics.

- The decisive moment is a “gotcha” in which the enemy has sucked USF into their “trap” of a defense, and they reveal a critical asset or capability. This should lead into the later discussion of keeping some elements in their hide sites until USF commit their breach assets. This is tied to the consolidation principle, and highlighting that they will keep armor dispersed and concealed until the time for it to be committed (CATK/DP).

The Instructor will next show how the Chinese threat is organized at the Heavy Combined Arms Brigade (HCA-BDE) level. This is the recommended time to show the video, as it will explain the board entirely. Highlight the number of maneuver vehicles, highlight the sheer number of IDF assets (27 tubes and 6 rockets). At the bottom, discuss the use of slants to describe enemy formations.

This board will be finalized by showcasing how the threat organizes in the defense. The top half of the board goes over the definitions, general tasks, and composition of the five Chinese groups in the defense.

The Cover Group is somewhat analogous to USF security forces, although the instructor will go more in detail on the next board.

Frontier Defense Groups fulfill the role of occupying the main battle positions; a major point to bring out is that the Chinese make a decision about a Main vs Secondary avenues of approach and weight the main one heavier, normally with tanks within the BN.

The Combat Reserve Group is not a traditional reserve in the USF sense; while they do have a task to reinforce the FDGs if necessary, their main purpose is to secure the rear area of the formation, and is normally troops on rest cycle.

The Firepower Group is IDF, ADA, AT, and air assets. While commonly described as the backbone of operations, they are not, in fact, the decisive operation nor do they achieve the decisive point.

Depth Defense Group is always a mobile, normally armor, formation tasked primarily to conduct the CATK (decisive point) as well as reinforcing the frontier defense groups.

The bottom section of the board breaks out a Heavy Combined Arms Battalion HCA-BN's possible task organization in a Positional Defense. It is fairly straightforward.

Students should understand:

- The difference between US and Threat in regard to fix, destroy, and which type of operation the threat prefers.
- The threat will ALWAYS plan to conduct a counterattack as the decisive point against an overextended or vulnerable USF.
- The threat's task organization.
- Use of slants versus depiction of individual weapon systems and when to use one or the other.

- How the enemy will organize his elements for the defense.

Board 2 – Cover Group and Positional Defense

No Concrete Experience provided prior to lesson; Students will understand how the Cover Group is employed and how they will fight. Students will understand the difference between a Positional Defense and a Mobile Defense. Students will see how a SITTEMP is developed for how the enemy will defend in a positional defense, and will understand how the enemy arrays his elements by zone.

Students will identify the Cover Group's principles and tasks and will discuss as facilitated by the Instructor. The Instructor will lead a discussion on the differences between a Cover Group and an OP (Cover Group will conduct far more fighting than an OP will), that the Cover Group will be employed in the frontal blocking zone, that the Cover Group will serve to disrupt US Forces prior to reaching the Frontier Defense Zone, what size it is based on the element it is augmenting (Section from the Recon Platoon in this case), and that it will seek to achieve a specific destruction metric prior to retrograding (1x ABV and 1x M2A3, as an example.) It is also important to discuss that the ATP only gives two possible tasks: Screen and Cover, and they are too small of a formation to execute a Cover. However, the screen is far more robust and kinetic than a USF screen would be. It is worth discussing with students that a different USF doctrinal task could better explain the intent of the Cover Group based on the intent they are trying to achieve, for example ambush, fix, disrupt, destroy, delay, or attack by fire.

- It is important to reiterate that the Cover Group is a reconnaissance force, but that they will conduct far more aggressive actions than a US reconnaissance force would conduct. They will attempt to force a premature commitment of USF critical assets through the use of deception (such as deception obstacles) and direct fire engagements at maximum range with ATGMs. They have a direct fire task. Foot stomp that they will stand and fight. Discuss with students the risk of the Cover Group: it can be isolated and destroyed. What payoff is the enemy commander attempting to achieve for that possible loss? Just attempting to destroy maneuver forces is a bad tradeoff. Students should brief the destruction of USF maneuver vehicles is a last resort if no other high payoff targets are identified. Discuss how the Cover Group will attempt to get those HPTs to show themselves: obstacles in the case of engineers.

The Instructor will draw out the Cover Group, showing how they will establish annihilation zones (AZs) (primary and supplementary), emplace limited obstacles, establish TRPs, establish indirect fire targets, and will engage at maximum range. Show how the Cover Group will achieve their destruction metric before retrograding; they will NOT retrograde based solely on indirect fire impacting their element.

- Enemy retrograde should be based on terrain, friendly, or enemy triggers, any of which can trigger the retrograde. For example:
 - Terrain: More than 1x USF platoon has crossed a certain phase line
 - Enemy: Cover Group has achieved a certain destruction metric on USF
 - Friendly: Cover Group has taken a certain amount of casualties.

The instructor now moves to the full SITTEMP of the positional defense. Focus initial discussion on the definitions and differences between a Positional vs Mobile Defense out of the ATP; Students should know that they both exist, but focus on gaining full understanding in regards to the positional defense. The Instructor will then depict an enemy SITTEMP on how they will fight

within the simple battle position; emphasize the use of Table B-1 in ATP 3-21.10 as a checklist for ensuring that all details are covered by Students when creating this product.

- This is another opportunity to reinforce lessons from A1. Remind students about AGADAP and walk them through the steps. Remind them to array forces at the decisive point for the DO, then working backwards through shaping operations. Remember that the ATP is clear that the Counterattack is the decisive point.
- It is critical to discuss with students HOW the enemy will echelon his fight through the engagement area, against a thinking US force. Ask students what are the basic building blocks of a USF breach? The answer is: support by fire, breach, and assault; leading with IDF on battle positions, use of attack aviation, and use of obsuration are additional considerations. This should help students understand what is a realistic enemy. If the enemy expects IDF and AAA, they will not all be up in their battle positions just waiting to be attrited by IDF and AAA. Their first element to move forward to occupy will be triggered by something specific, such as the first volley of USF IDF, or the retrograde of the Cover Group. Use this time to reinforce the Defensive Principles from Board 1 as well. The tanks should be the DO, a pure platoon since the platoon leaders are not trained in combined arms, they simply execute battle drills. They should remain in a well-concealed hide site. When positioning battle positions, have the discussion with students about their BPs being 2/3 of their max effective range from the obstacle, to give the best tradeoff between protection and probability of kill for their own weapons. For the ZBD-04, they need to pick 2/3 max range of the 30mm cannon, not of the ATGM, since placing the BPs at 2/3 range of the ATGM will put the obstacles outside the max effective range of the 30mm cannon.
- Then discuss with students what enemy elements will occupy their BPs when. The entire enemy company occupying based on the first trigger is not realistic. The enemy understands that we will establish a SBF position, and attempt to attrite and obscure his forces before USF commit engineer assets, which will likely trigger the counterattack against fixed USF. Therefore, the enemy will likely keep his DO in their hide positions until the identification of the USF engineers crossing into the KZ. In this way, he attempts to **deceive** USF as to the size of his force, and the amount of suppression USF has achieved, before moving his DO into position to destroy the engineers when they are vulnerable. It is important that the enemy does not mass enough of their effects on the USF SBF to destroy it, as this will lead simply to the USF committing more combat power to suppress the BP, and never commit their engineers. Tie this back to the first board: this is the enemy's "gotcha" moment.
- All of these discussions will help students build more realistic echelonments for their DO and SOs, and discuss how the fight looks. As a wavetops example:
 - As the USF fires IDF on the BPs, that will trigger SO1 and SO2 to move forward into their BPs. SO2 is tasked to neutralize the USF SBF to prevent the massing of combat power on the Company DO, and will focus all direct fires on the SBF position. SO1 is tasked to fix the USF breach force to enable their destruction by the Company DO, and will primarily only engage intermediate SBF positions until the DO arrives. The enemy expects SO2 to take 2/3 to 3/4 casualties, at which point the USF will commit his breach force. As the breach force crosses into the KZ, that will trigger the Company DO (the tank platoon) to occupy their BP. SO2 and SO1 will then shift all direct fires onto the maneuver forces in the breach force (engagement priority tanks, Bradleys, then engineer assets), to fix them while the DO engages and destroys the engineer assets in the breach force with direct and indirect fire. The enemy will mass all indirect fires assets at the decisive point to maximize the destruction of USF.

Students should understand:

- What a Cover Group is, the tasks it can conduct, and how it will fight.
- How the enemy will conduct a Positional Defense

- How to develop the SITTEMP to depict how the enemy will fight in a realistic manner.

Conclusion / Check on Learning

Questions to ask for check on learning:

How does the enemy organize for a positional defense?

What is a Cover Group? What tasks can they accomplish? How will they fight and what will cause them to retrograde?

What are the differences between the five enemy Groups? How will the enemy array his elements within them?

At what range will the enemy engage with direct fire?

What is an example of the threat's decisive point in the defense?

How will the threat employ his counterattack?

