

OPERATIONS

Planning for movement should be coordinated with military units along routes of movement and should consider - -

COMMUNICATIONS. Communications are vital to the success of movements. Radio communication must be planned and be available between convoy serials and march units, with artillery forward observers and air controllers, and with units and population centers in the areas along the route of movement. Visual and sound signals, which include colored smoke, identification panels, and whistle or horn signals, should be prearranged. While limited in scope these communication means are effective when prearranged meanings and responses are understood and rehearsed.

ARTILLERY AND MORTAR SUPPORT. Artillery and mortar support may be provided by units within range of the route of movement or by artillery and mortars which may be positioned within range of the proposed route. Movements requiring artillery and mortar support should have observers either with them or in supporting observation aircraft. Strip maps marked with planned concentrations will enable personnel other than forward observers to request fires. Coordination with fire direction centers (FDC) capable of providing fire along the route of movement must arrange for the forward observer to enter the FDC net, make routine location reports, and request and adjust fires. Call signs, frequencies, authentications, areas of possible employment, schedules of movement, and concentration numbers must be coordinated.

AIRCRAFT. Since experience has shown the presence of aircraft deters ambushes, column cover by traveling overwatch or bounding overwatch by attack helicopters in conjunction with a route reconnaissance by scout helicopters or fixed-wing strike aircraft may be requested. Planning includes the type, number, and method of employment of aircraft. Methods of employment include column cover, air alert, and ground alert. Column cover by fighter aircraft is expensive in terms of crew fatigue and equipment maintenance; therefore, light observation-type aircraft that can direct on-call air support are used for short movements over frequently used routes in more secure areas. When air support is planned, communications information concerning radio frequencies, call signs, and identification procedures must be provided to all who may need to use them. In addition, the supporting air unit must know the maneuver intentions of the ground element in case of ambush.

ROUTE CLEARING. Route clearing operations may be conducted before certain critical movements. The use of route clearing operations will depend upon the availability of troops, the importance of the movement, and the guerrilla threat within the area. Normally the units responsible for the area through which the movement will pass will be used in route-clearing operations. These route-clearing forces will normally include both mounted and dismounted elements. In addition to a thorough reconnaissance of the main route of movement, critical terrain near the route must be secured. This may be done by placing pickets along critical stretches of the route or by selective placement of tactical units.

RESERVES. Reserves (ready forces) are vital to countering ambushes. The guerrilla must be convinced that ambushes will inevitably produce a fast, relentless, hard-hitting response by counter guerrilla supporting forces, to include airstrikes and