

Partner Operations in North Burma: Assessing By, With, and Through

A Monograph

by

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2019

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved</i> <i>OMB No. 0704-0188</i>		
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 23-05-2019		2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) JUNE 18-MAY 19	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Partner Operations in North Burma: Assessing By, With, and Through			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) MAJ Michael C. Haith, US Army			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301			8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT <p>To be an effective operational approach, by, with, and through (BWT) must address the entire spectrum of conflict to successfully employ and maximize the capacity and unique capabilities of surrogate forces. Partner operations are not the only means to shape the theater or address contingency operations. The use of surrogate forces provides unique capabilities and the means to provide access and depth while also preserving strategic flexibility, building legitimacy, and extending operational reach. However, to succeed, partner operations and the use of surrogate forces require the careful alignment of interests; unity of command balanced with the need to preserve partner agency; the careful employment of surrogate forces within their capabilities; the necessary resources and enabler support to sustain operations; and unity of effort toward a common objective. Most importantly, however, partnerships are maintained and continued through personal relationships, leadership, and mutual trust.</p> <p>Using the North Burma Campaign of 1943-1944, the paper will examine the use of the Chinese Army in India and Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Detachment (DET) 101 to assess the relative effectiveness of surrogate forces and the components of partner operations that enabled the achievement of operational and strategic objectives.</p>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Partner Operations, China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater, World War Two, By-With-Through, Large-Scale Combat Operations, Surrogate Warfare, Advanced Military Studies Program					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 55	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT (U)	b. ABSTRACT (U)	c. THIS PAGE (U)			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code)

Monograph Approval Page

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Monograph Title: Partner Operations in North Burma: Assessing By, With, and Through

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Abstract

Partner Operations in North Burma: Assessing By, With, and Through, by MAJ Michael C. Haith, US Army, 61 pages.

To be an effective operational approach, *by, with, and through* (BWT) must address the entire spectrum of conflict to successfully employ and maximize the capacity and unique capabilities of surrogate forces. Partner operations are not the only means to shape the theater or address contingency operations. With the return of great power competition, current adversaries possess the ability to contest the US military in multiple domains through layers of strategic and operational stand-off. The use of surrogate forces provides unique capabilities and the means to provide access and depth while also preserving strategic flexibility, building legitimacy, and extending operational reach. However, to succeed, partner operations and the use of surrogate forces require the careful alignment of interests; unity of command balanced with the need to preserve partner agency; the careful employment of surrogate forces within their capabilities; the necessary resources and enabler support to sustain operations; and unity of effort toward a common objective. Most importantly, however, partnerships are maintained and continued through personal relationships, leadership, and mutual trust.

To validate this thesis, this paper is divided into four sections. The first section establishes the framework for analysis by providing a description of BWT, an overview of current doctrine and appropriate terminology, and a discussion of partner operations as a component unified action, unified land operations, and multi-domain operations. Using the North Burma Campaign of 1943-1944, the paper will examine the use of the Chinese Army in India and Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Detachment (DET) 101 to assess the relative effectiveness of surrogate forces and the components of partner operations that enabled the achievement of operational and strategic objectives. The final section addresses the benefits of partnered operations and how surrogate forces provide multidimensional solutions to enable armed conflict.

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Acknowledgement

There are a few of people I would like to thank. First, my wife and three daughters, Lauren, Caroline, and Mackenzie. I very much appreciate their love, patience, and support while I finished this monograph—even if I probably did not deserve it. Second, I would like to thank my father, COL (Retired) Michael E. Haith. As a former SAMS graduate, my dad provided encouragement, perspective, and sound advice. I should probably also thank my seminar leader, COL Yannick Michaud, and monograph director, Dr. Jacob Stoil. They both demonstrated extreme patience and a firm nudge in the right direction. Lastly, I would like to thank my friend, Captain Daniel P. Whitten. Dan died in Afghanistan leading his soldiers in 2010. It is in his memory that I dedicate this monograph.

Acronyms

BWT	By, With, and Through
CAI	Chinese Army in India
CBI	China Burma India Theater
DET	Detachment
FDR	Franklin Delano Roosevelt
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
LOC	Lines of Communication
NCAC	Northern Combat Area Command
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
SFA	Security Force Assistance
US	United States

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Introduction

However changed and strange the new conditions of war may be, not only generals, but politicians and ordinary citizens, may find there is much to be learned from the past that can be applied to the future and, in their search for it, that some campaigns have more than others foreshadowed the coming of a new pattern of modern war. I believe that ours in Burma was one of these.

— Field Marshal Viscount Slim, *Defeat in Victory*

While the term *by, with, and through* (BWT) is a relatively new convention, the US and British militaries employed a similar framework in several instances over the last century. During World War Two, the combined US and British strategy in South East Asia employed elements of a BWT framework to equip, train, and employ indigenous forces to defeat Japanese armed forces in Burma. The US forces, under the command of General Joseph W. Stilwell, provided material, training, advisory, and enabler support to raise an indigenous army as an economy of force effort to support China. While historians continue debating the ultimate effectiveness and utility of the partner operations in the campaigns in China and Southeast Asia, the North Burma Campaign nonetheless provides an excellent example of partnered operations to assess the BWT framework. The China Burma India Theater (CBI) case study provides valuable insights into the use of indigenous forces as a strategy to balance commitments and build shared responsibility with unified action partners. While US leaders encountered challenges unique to the period and theater of operations, the CBI case study nonetheless foreshadows some of the advantages and challenges presented by a BWT approach in today's operating environment.

To be an effective operational approach, BWT must address the spectrum of conflict that includes large-scale conflict to successfully employ and maximize the capacity and unique capabilities of surrogate forces. Partner operations are not the only means to shape the theater or address contingency operations. Current adversaries possess the ability to contest the US military

in multiple domains through layers of strategic and operational stand-off.¹ The use of surrogate forces provides unique capabilities and the means to provide access and depth while also preserving strategic flexibility, building legitimacy, and extending operational reach. To succeed, partner operations and the use of surrogate forces require the careful alignment of interests; unity of command balanced with the need to preserve partner agency; the careful employment of surrogate forces within their capabilities; the necessary resources and enabler support to sustain operations; and unity of effort toward a common objective. Most importantly, partnerships are maintained and continued through personal relationships, leadership, and mutual trust.

To validate this thesis, this paper is divided into four sections. The first section establishes the framework for analysis by providing a description of *by, with, and through*, an overview of current doctrine and appropriate terminology, and a discussion of partner operations as a component *unified action, unified land operations, and multi-domain operations*. Using the North Burma Campaign of 1943 to 1944, the paper will examine the use of the Chinese Army in India (CAI) and Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Detachment (DET) 101 to assess the relative effectiveness of surrogate forces and the components of partner operations that enabled the achievement of operational and strategic objectives. The final section addresses the benefits of partnered operations and how surrogate forces provide multidimensional solutions to enable armed conflict.

¹ US Department of the Army, *Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-3-1, The US Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028* (Fort Eustis, VA: Training and Doctrine Command, 2018), iii.

By, With, and Through Overview

The term *through, with, or by* emerged as a coherent structure within the US Army Special Forces community through a series of academic articles published in the 1990s.² Used to describe the employment of indigenous forces, the phrase *through, with, or by* described a partnered approach to building capacity and capability in support of unconventional operations.³ While the term formally entered doctrine in 2001 with the publication of *Field Manual 3-05.20, Special Forces Operations*, the use of the term *through, with, or by* remained limited to the special forces community until the mid-2000s.⁴ As the US military executed large-scale stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, conventional forces adopted the concept of *through, with, or by* and reordered the terms into its current structure as *by, with, and through*. Leaders in both Iraq and Afghanistan employed the phrase to describe efforts by US forces to train, equip, and operate with host nation security forces.

Following the rise of the Islamic State in 2014, the concept of *by, with, and through* continued to evolve to describe operations principally executed by host nation forces supported by US resources and a small cadre of trainers and advisors. As pressure increased to reduce the human cost associated with deploying large numbers of US troops, the US military increasingly used the term *by, with, and through* to classify operations led and conducted solely by partner forces with the support of US enablers and troops in a limited advisory role.⁵

² Mark D. Boyatt, "Special Forces: Who Are We and What Are We?," *Special Warfare* 11, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 36-37; J. H. Crerar, "Special Forces Core Purpose: A Second Opinion," *Special Warfare* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 14-18.

³ Boyatt, "Special Forces," 37.

⁴ US Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 3-05.20, Special Forces Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 2-1.

⁵ Diana I. Dalponse, Chris Townsend, and Matthew W. Weaver, "Shifting Landscape: The Evolution of By, With, and Through," *Strategy Bridge*, 1 August 2018, accessed 14 November 2018, <https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2018/8/1/shifting-landscape-the-evolution-of-by-with-and-through>.

Evolving significantly since the 1990s, the term *by, with, and through* lacks a coherent and accepted definition. While several authors provide possible interpretations, current doctrine and the Joint community continues to apply *by, with, and through* inconsistently.⁶ Outside its original use to define unconventional operations, the attempts to define *by, with, through* fall into two categories: one articulating a graduated method to develop partnered force capacity and the other describing an approach to leverage host nation forces to execute unilateral operations using US resources and assistance. While both provide coherent and logical definitions, they express two distinctly different concepts for partnered operations—one focused on tactical methods for partnering and the other a strategic framework for a theater or combatant commander.⁷

While the semantic evolution of *by, with, and through* is not the purpose of this paper, describing its development demonstrates the absence of a coherent framework to capture the manner and methods by which US forces employ surrogate forces. Although the concept of *by, with, and through* has changed over the last two decades, the US military continues to primarily associate *by, with, and through* with security cooperation activities and limited contingency operations. This may provide a useful tool for the current operating environment, but the prevailing concepts of *by, with, and through* do not adequately address partner operations in the context of major combat operations. Given the increased threat of great power competition, the existing doctrinal and non-doctrinal models for partnered operations provide an inadequate framework to generate and integrate surrogate forces to prevail in large-scale armed conflict.

For the purposes of analysis, this paper defines BWT using a modified version of the definition provided by General Joseph L. Votel and Colonel Eero R. Keravuori in a 2018 article

⁶ Michael X. Garrett, *The “By, With, and Through” Approach: An Army Service Component Command Perspective* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, 2017), 14-15.

⁷ Dalponse, Townsend, and Weaver, “Shifting Landscape.”

published in *Joint Force Quarterly* entitled “The By-With-Through Operational Approach.”⁸

While General Votel and Colonel Keravuori emphasize partner *led* operations, the following differs significantly employing the term BWT more broadly to describe partner force operations conducted *by* surrogate forces, state or non-state, in conjunction *with* US forces and enabling support *through* existing legal authorities, treaties, and agreements.⁹

In addition to this definition, BWT refers to an operational approach guided by a series of best practices.¹⁰ First, fundamental to any cooperative relationship is the alignment of interests between parties. Cooperation results when two or more actors identify a common problem and share a desire to resolve the problem through collective action. The alignment of interests builds a mutual commitment and engenders operational ownership.¹¹ Second, successful partner operations leverage existing partner force capability, capacity, and will. These qualities form the foundations for successful partnership. While capacity and capability entail the aptitude and ability to conduct operations, *will* implies the resolve or commitment to employ forces and resources to achieve shared objectives.¹² Third, partnered forces must be allowed to retain an element of control and decision authority over their formations consistent with their national

⁸ “The US Central Command (USCENTCOM) definition of the by-with-through (BWT) operational approach is that operations are led by our partners, state or non-state, with enabling support from the United States or US led coalitions, and through US authorities and partner agreements.” Colonel Eero R. Keravuori and General Joseph L. Votel, “The By-With-Through Operational Approach,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 89, no. 2 (April 2018): 40.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ The six principles listed above are a distillation of joint doctrine covering unified action and multinational operations as well as the writings by Dr. Jacob A. Stoil, Travis L. Homiak, John B. Richardson, and John Q. Bolton cited in the footnotes below.

¹¹ Jacob Stoil, “Beyond Traffic Lights: Towards a More Complex Human Terrain,” *The Journal of Military Operations* 2, no. 4 (November 2014): 19.

¹² Jacob A. Stoil, “‘Friends’ and ‘Patriots’: A Comparative Study of Indigenous Force Cooperation in the Second World War” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2015), 265, 269; John B. Richardson IV, and John Q. Bolton. “Sacrifice, Ownership, Legitimacy: Winning Wars By, With, and Through Host-Nation Security Forces,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 89, no. 2 (April 2018): 64; Travis L. Homiak, “Expanding the American Way of War: Working ‘Through, With, or By’ Non-U.S. Actors,” in *Contemporary Security Challenges: Irregular Warfare and Indirect Approaches*, ed. James D. Anderson (Hurlburt Field, FL: Joint Special Operations University, 2009), 20.

identity and culture.¹³ This requires building trust and confidence in partner capabilities. Agency is balanced with the necessity to employ combined formations under a unified authority, empowered to make decisions and direct their organizations in a common direction. Fourth, successful partner operations employ partner forces in a manner consistent with their strengths and limitations. Using partner forces outside their existing capabilities and capacity reduces effectiveness and threatens the viability of the cooperative relationship.¹⁴ Fifth, effective coordination and integration of the partner force achieves unity of effort, optimizes partner capabilities, and minimizes vulnerabilities. Coordination and integration create mutual trust, strengthens resolve, and achieves maximum effect on the enemy.¹⁵ Sixth, the nature of partner operation implies a dependency on the sponsor force for resources, training, and enabler support. By providing the necessary means to sustain operations, the sponsor force builds confidence and provides tangible evidence of their commitment to the partner force.¹⁶

Definitions

Given the variety of potential partnered agents (state and non-state), it is important to draw a distinction between various partnered entities and their corresponding associations. While US doctrine provides the foundation for this paper, existing doctrinal terms lack sufficient clarity to describe the various types of cooperative relationships. To establish a clear framework, this paper uses the following definitions to provide a precise vocabulary that clarifies key terms and concepts relevant to BWT.

¹³ Stoil, “Friends’ and ‘Patriots,” 264, 269; US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Publication (JP) 3-16, Multinational Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), II-1 - II-4.

¹⁴ Stoil, “Friends’ and ‘Patriots,” 261-62, 268; US Joint Staff, *JP 3-16* (2013), I-2, II-16, III-37.

¹⁵ Stoil, “Friends’ and ‘Patriots,” 147-49; US Joint Staff, *JP 3-16* (2013), I-6, 11-15 - II-16.

¹⁶ Stoil, “Friends’ and ‘Patriots,” 259, 268.

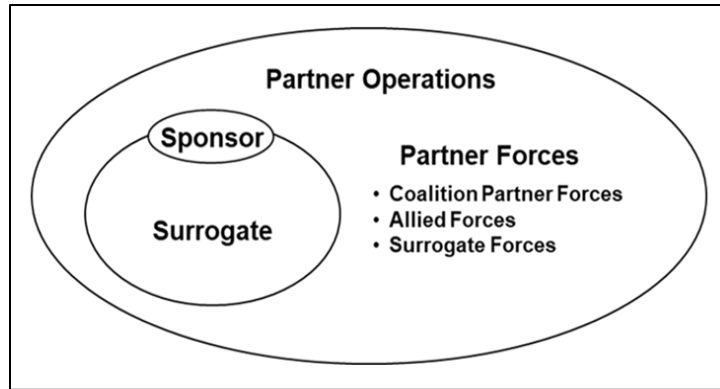


Figure 1. Partner Operations. Created by Author.

Partner force and partner force operations: Although not explicitly defined in doctrine or the wider professional community, the term *partner force* generically refers to any military or paramilitary entity working in conjunction with US armed forces oriented on a common threat to achieve a shared set of strategic or operational objectives. This encompasses forces provided by a host nation, indigenous resistance movement, coalition or allied nation, multinational organization, or any state or non-state third party. Subsequently, the term *partner force operations* denote any unified military operations conducted with *partner forces* in support of a wider conventional or unconventional campaign. As a means of classification, *partner operations* include the use of *surrogate forces*.

Surrogate forces and surrogate warfare: While the term *surrogate force* is often used differently, this paper uses the definition provided by Kelly Smith in his monograph, *Surrogate Warfare for the 21st Century*. Smith defines a *surrogate force* as any partner force that “performs specific functions that assist in the accomplishment of . . . military objectives by taking the place of capabilities that the [sponsor] either does not have or does not desire to employ.”¹⁷ *Surrogate warfare* or *surrogate operations* implies the use of partner forces to perform a particular function

¹⁷ Kelly H. Smith, “Surrogate Warfare for the 21st Century,” in *Contemporary Security Challenges: Irregular Warfare and Indirect Approaches*, ed. James D. Anderson (Hurlburt Field, FL: Joint Special Operations University, 2009), 41.

or set of functions as a substitute or supplement for *sponsor* forces. The defining characteristic of a *surrogate* is the inability to conduct independent operations without the support of a *sponsor*.¹⁸

Sponsor: The author defines a *sponsor* as an external power (state or non-state) that serves as the benefactor to a *surrogate force*.¹⁹ Providing assistance in the form of training, advisors, enablers, or material assistance; the *sponsor* employs the capabilities or leverages the capacity of a third party to conduct clandestine or overt operations to achieve strategic or operational objectives. The nature of cooperation between the *sponsor* and the surrogate force is predicated on aligned interests and mutual benefit.

Current Doctrine Governing Partner Operations

Joint and service doctrine does not explicitly define the term *by, with, and through* or its multiple derivations. However, the term is frequently associated with the variety of defense related activities associated with and in support of state and non-state actors. The related concepts of *security cooperation, security force assistance, foreign internal defense (FID), and special warfare* include a range of activities, authorities, and resources that define the contributions of the US military and intergovernmental agencies toward developing capacity, relationships, and access with partnered nations and other non-state actors.²⁰ With the exception of *special warfare*, the concepts of security force assistance and FID fall underneath the auspices of security cooperation.²¹ According to the 2017 edition of *Joint Publication 3-20, Security Cooperation*, the purpose of security cooperation is to deter adversaries, prevent conflict, and enhance partnered nation stability and security.²²

¹⁸ Stoil, “Friends’ and ‘Patriots,” 261.

¹⁹ Smith, “Surrogate Warfare for the 21st Century,” 42.

²⁰ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Publication (JP) 3-20, Security Cooperation* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), II-3-II-4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, vii-viii.

²² *Ibid.*, vi-vii.

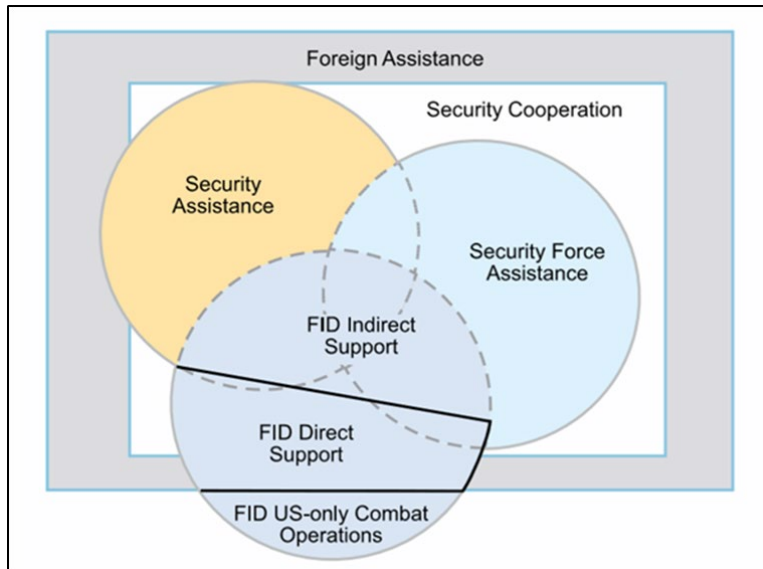


Figure 2. Functional differences between Security Cooperation, Security Forces Assistance, and FID. US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2018), 1-15.

Along with its subordinate programs, security cooperation pursues a preventive strategy intended to *build partnered capacity* (BPC) and capability to shape and deter armed conflict.²³ While security force assistance doctrine, for example, addresses support to partner forces during contingency operations and large-scale combat, the preponderance of security force assistance doctrine is devoted to reinforcing deterrence under the canopy of security cooperation.²⁴ Moreover, unless specified by congressional or executive authorizations, cooperation with indigenous resistance forces and other non-state paramilitary forces, for example, traditionally resides under the classification of *special warfare* and is executed under the direction of special operations forces.²⁵

²³ US Joint Staff, *JP 3-20* (2017), 3-20.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, B-1-B-17. The annex devoted to security force assistance in *JP 3-20, Security Cooperation* makes only two references to major combat operations. The preponderance of the annex is devoted to small scale contingency operations, stability operations, and deterrence.

²⁵ US Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 3-05, Army Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 1-10; US Joint Staff, *JP 3-20* (2017), B-1-B-2, B-12.

The use of partnered forces, both state and non-state, is a key fixture with the current Joint and Army operating concepts. Both *unified action* and *unified land operations* highlight the importance of multinational partnerships as a key component of a strategy to deter conflict and ensure global access.²⁶ The supporting Joint and US Army doctrine for partner operations place a disproportionate emphasis on the use of partnered forces as a means to address conflict short of major combat operations; focusing primarily on deterrence and limited contingency operations. Additionally, as a core mission within *special warfare*, the concept of employing partnered forces also carries a strong association with special operations forces.²⁷

This creates a dichotomy within doctrine by dividing the prevailing concepts for leveraging partnered forces into a series of separate structures. Kelly Smith echoes this sentiment. Identifying a conceptual gap in existing doctrine, Smith argues that terms such as *FID*, *unconventional warfare*, and *multinational operations* describe “narrow sets of circumstances” and therefore are “distinct operations without a conceptual link between them.”²⁸ Within the context of large-scale combat operations, existing concepts within Joint and US Army doctrine neglect the use of partner forces as a force multiplier to enable and extend operations. While doctrine briefly discusses the need to integrate multinational partners, doctrine omits a deeper discussion into the use of partner forces as means to address capability gaps with the Joint force and generate positions of relative advantage.²⁹

²⁶ US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 3; US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Publication (JP) 1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), II-8, II-21-II-25.

²⁷ US Army, *FM 3-05 (2104)*, 1-10.

²⁸ Smith, “Surrogate Warfare for the 21st Century,” 50.

²⁹ “When large-scale combat operations commence, the joint force commander (JFC) immediately exploits friendly capabilities across multiple domains and the information environment to gain the initiative.” US Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 1-6. Statements like the one above are typical within Joint and US Army doctrinal publications. Aside from specifying the need to integrate and employ partner forces,

Defining the Operational Problem

In the context of recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the focus of partner operations and security force assistance is to build partner forces capable independent action to address internal security threats. However, these operations represent a narrow band of the wider spectrum of partner operations referenced in the Joint and US Army concepts of *unified action* and *unified land operations*.³⁰ According to *Joint Publication 1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, “unified action synchronizes, coordinates, and/or integrates joint, single-service, and multinational operations with the operations of other [United States Government] departments and agencies, nongovernmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and the private sector to achieve unity of effort.”³¹ The concept of *unified action* applies to a range of military operations across the spectrum of conflict and requires integration and interoperability with a host of *unified action partners*.³²

Existing joint concepts for *integrated campaigning*, *forcible entry*, *rapid aggregation*, *major combat operations*, and *operational access* emphasize the concept of multinational and partner operations.³³ Additionally, the US Army also emphasizes the importance of partner forces as a required capability in its concept for *multi-domain operations*.³⁴ Each of these concepts

doctrine lacks a sufficient discussion on the need to synergize and exploit the unique capabilities of partner forces that may not be resident within the formation.

³⁰ US Army, *ADP 3-0* (2017), 3; US Joint Staff, *JP 1* (2017), II-8, II-21-II-25.

³¹ US Joint Staff, *JP 1* (2017), II-8.

³² *Ibid.*, II-13.

³³ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2018), 2; US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Concept for Rapid Aggregation* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 1; US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Operational Access Concept* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 7-8; US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Major Combat Operations Joint Operating Concept* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 4.

³⁴ “To conduct MDO in a highly contested environment, Army forces require the ability to prepare the operational environment by building partner capacity and interoperability and setting the theater through such activities as establishing basing and access rights, prepositioning equipment and supplies,

address the need to build capacity, integrate capabilities, and increase interoperability and collaboration with partner forces.³⁵

What is not explicit within these current doctrinal concepts are the underlying assumptions that potentially reveal vulnerabilities, both in terms of missing capabilities and the realities of the evolving operational environment. Critical to the current joint concepts and *multi-domain operations*, is the necessity to achieve access, project combat power, and converge capabilities to achieve positions of relative advantage.³⁶ In a potentially contested environment, the US military's technological advantages are challenged with the rise of revisionist powers like Russia and China. As General Mark Milley states in *US Army Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-3-1, The US Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028*, "Strategic competitors like Russia and China are synthesizing emerging technologies with their analysis of military doctrine and operations. They are deploying capabilities to fight the [United States] through multiple layers of stand-off in all domains—space, cyber, air, sea, and land."³⁷

The challenges of access and reach extend beyond technology and include the friction imposed by geography, topography, climate, policy, and culture (to name a few).³⁸ In light of these limitations, a fundamental challenge to US military operations is the ability to project, build, and sustain mass while also controlling the tempo of operations across the depth of the battlefield.³⁹ However, success within these parameters requires multi-dimensional solutions that

conducting preparatory intelligence activities, and mapping EMS and computer networks." US Army, *TRADOC PAM 525-3-1*, B-1; US Army, *FM 3-0* (2017), 1-6.

³⁵ "Combat power includes all capabilities provided by unified action partners that are integrated, synchronized, and converged with the commander's objectives to achieve unity of effort in sustained operations." US Army, *FM 3-0* (2017), 2-21.

³⁶ US Army, *TRADOC PAM 525-3-1*, vii.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Forward.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

are either still in development or simply not feasible with US military forces alone.⁴⁰

Furthermore, fiscal limitations and other competing operational requirements may further frustrate the US military's ability to achieve the force ratios sufficient to sustain a large-scale combat operation.⁴¹ Previous historical examples demonstrate that the scope and scale of a large-scale conflict may extend globally involving multiple theaters of operation.

Acknowledging the complexities of the current and future operating environments, Joint and US Army doctrinal concepts attempt to resolve the following questions: (1) how does the US military generate, project, and converge the necessary capabilities to counter a peer or near-peer competitor in a physically denied and austere environment? (2) how does the US military achieve the freedom of action and maneuver to defeat an enemy protected by political, legal, and physical boundaries that lie beyond the reach of existing capabilities or authorities? and (3) how does the US military achieve positions of relative advantage and create multiple dilemmas in depth against adversaries with equal or superior capabilities?⁴²

Technology or material solutions alone cannot resolve the answers to these questions. Inherently, there are limits to the capabilities of the US military. However, the use of partner forces, both conventional and unconventional, provide a range of multidimensional options to

⁴⁰ US Army, *TRADOC PAM 525-3-1*, 16. *TRADOC PAM 525-3-1* highlights a number of programs and capabilities that are currently not resident within the force or are considered obsolete in comparison to current rival technologies. This publication highlights four specific modernization priorities: long-range precision fires, next generation combat vehicles, future vertical lift, and soldier lethality.

⁴¹ General Mark A. Milley, testifying on the posture of the Department of the Army, on 12 April 2018, to the Senate Committee on Armed Services, 115th Cong. 2nd sess., Cong. Rec. 164, no. 59: D382; Heritage Foundation, "2019 Index of US Military Strength," last modified 4 October 2018, accessed 12 January 2019, <https://www.heritage.org/military-strength/assessment-us-military-power/us-army>. Heritage Foundation's "2019 Index of US Military Strength," cites a shortage of 15 BCTs with the Army and assessed the current US Army's capacity as "weak." General Mark Milley echoed this assessment in his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in April 2018.

⁴² US Army, *TRADOC PAM 525-3-1*, 15-16; US Joint Staff, *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* (2018), 5-6; US Joint Staff, *Joint Concept for Rapid Aggregation* (2015), 6; US Joint Staff, *Joint Operational Access Concept* (2012), 14; US Joint Staff, *Major Combat Operations Joint Operating Concept* (2006), 10. The questions posed in this paper are a distillation of the central problems posed in *TRADOC PAM 525-3-1* and the Joint concepts for *integrated campaigning*, *forcible entry*, *rapid aggregation*, *major combat operations*, and *operational access*.

address capability gaps within the Joint force. Specifically, partner forces provide depth, operational reach, legitimacy, and unique capabilities not resident within the Joint force while also alleviating manpower and resource shortages.

CBI Theater Overview

The US dominated strategy and operations in the Asia Pacific Theater during World War Two and the China, Burma, and India (CBI) Theater represents the only truly combined Allied effort. Within that effort, the North Burma Campaign provides an informative case study to examine partner operations and the elements of the *by, with, and through* framework. As the first successful counterstroke against Japan in the CBI, the campaign is an excellent example of the difficulties encountered in joint, combined, and multinational operations due to conflicts between national aims, culture, and capabilities.⁴³ North Burma was remote, and involved one the harshest environments and some of the most restrictive terrain in the world. Above all, success depended on successful partner operations and multinational cooperation. As an economy of force operation, the campaign illustrates the importance of synchronizing conventional and unconventional partner forces to achieve positions of relative advantage and overmatch. Without the cooperation of US sponsored indigenous forces, Chinese conventional formations, and British supporting operations, the campaign to reopen a land route to China would have failed.

Evolution of Allied Strategy in the CBI

Before Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Allied planners generally agreed that support to China was essential in the Germany first global strategy. Supporting Chinese resistance would occupy Japanese forces on the Asian mainland and deter Japanese expansion into the Pacific and European colonial possessions in Southeast Asia. Led by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt

⁴³ Barbara W. Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945* (New York: The McMillan Company, 1970), 506.

(FDR), popular opinion inaccurately viewed China and its leader Chiang Kai-shek as heroically resisting Japanese aggression since 1937.⁴⁴ The reality was far different. No major combat had occurred since 1938. Plagued by corruption and lacking adequate leadership, organization, training, and equipment; Chiang's forces were uninterested in offensive action.⁴⁵ US Lend Lease supplies and equipment flowed into China through Rangoon beginning in May 1941 for transport up the Burma Road to China. The United States also established a military mission to China to manage Lend Lease.

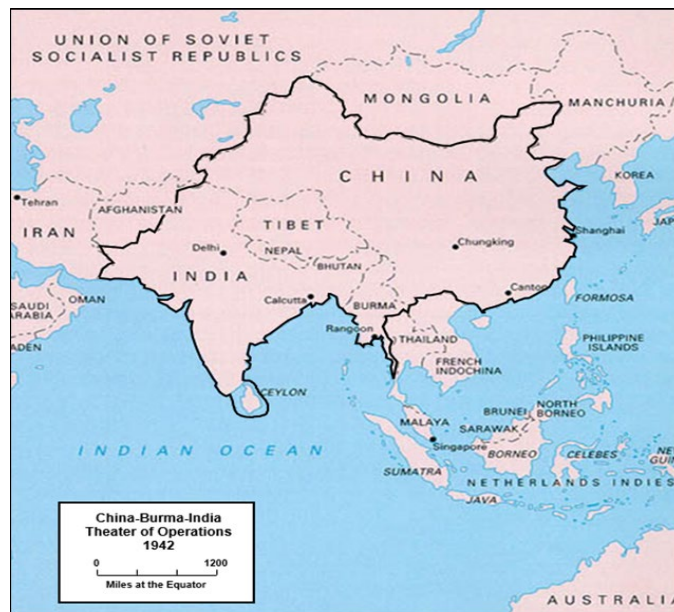


Figure 3. China-Burma-India Theater of Operations. Clayton R. Newell, *Burma, 1942: The US Army Campaigns of World War II* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1995), 3.

Japanese forces capitalized on their successful offensives in Southeast Asia and invaded Burma in January 1942, eventually seizing Rangoon in early March and successfully severing the Burma Road. Cutting this vital ground line of communication effectively isolated China. The crisis in Burma revealed the divergent strategic aims of the United States, Great Britain, and

⁴⁴ Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: the American War with Japan* (New York: Free Press, 1985), 324-326.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 326.

China. While each agreed on the goal of defeating Japan and defending Burma, they disagreed on China's and Burma's role in accomplishing that goal.

The US planners continued to view China as an important though lower priority within the larger Asia Pacific Strategy. In addition to tying down Japanese forces, planners initially considered China as the likely base of operations for the final assault on Japan. Also, FDR's unrealistic vision for the postwar security in Asia required China be treated as an equal to the other great powers. To achieve these objectives, the United States sent Major General Joseph W. Stilwell with the mission to support China and improve the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army.⁴⁶ However, Burma provided the key to achieving these goals.⁴⁷

Great Britain and especially Prime Minister Winston Churchill did not share these aims. Churchill had no faith in Chiang or China's military capabilities believing aid to China was a waste of resources and effort. Britain would defend their empire but not China, viewing Burma as the last barrier to India. The British were likewise reluctant to accept Chinese troops in Burma fearing the Chinese would weaken British legitimacy and prove hard to dislodge.⁴⁸ These views colored British strategic thinking throughout the war.

China distrusted the British after a century of colonial exploitation. Chiang like Churchill believed US entry into the war would ultimately lead to Japan's defeat. He was therefore unwilling to engage the Japanese in decisive combat. Chiang welcomed US military aid, training, and especially airpower, preferring to assume a defensive posture while conserving his forces for the postwar internal confrontation with the communists. Chiang only reluctantly offered Chinese troops when Japan threatened his lifeline. British setbacks overcame their initial reluctance and

⁴⁶ Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems, United States Army in World War II: China-Burma-India Theater* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1956), 3-4, 124.

⁴⁷ Clayton R. Newell, *Burma, 1942: The US Army Campaigns of World War II* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1995), 5.

⁴⁸ Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, 326.

invited Chiang to send all the troops he could spare.⁴⁹ At Stilwell’s insistence, Chiang also agreed to place these forces under US command. However, unwilling to lose his best units in a doomed effort, he secretly interfered with Stilwell’s instructions to Chinese commanders throughout the campaign.

These conflicting goals combined with British halfhearted efforts undermined allied defensive efforts. The campaign ended in May 1942 with the British retreating to India, and Chinese forces withdrawing into China and India—the latter forming the nucleus of forces Stilwell would later employ to retake north Burma. China’s isolation was now complete. The only avenue of resupply was a dangerous air line of communication (LOC) over that Himalayas soon to be known as the “Hump” that never sustained the support China required. These same conflicting interests, as well as the significant impact of logistics and geography, plagued subsequent Allied planning and preparations for the next campaign in the CBI.⁵⁰

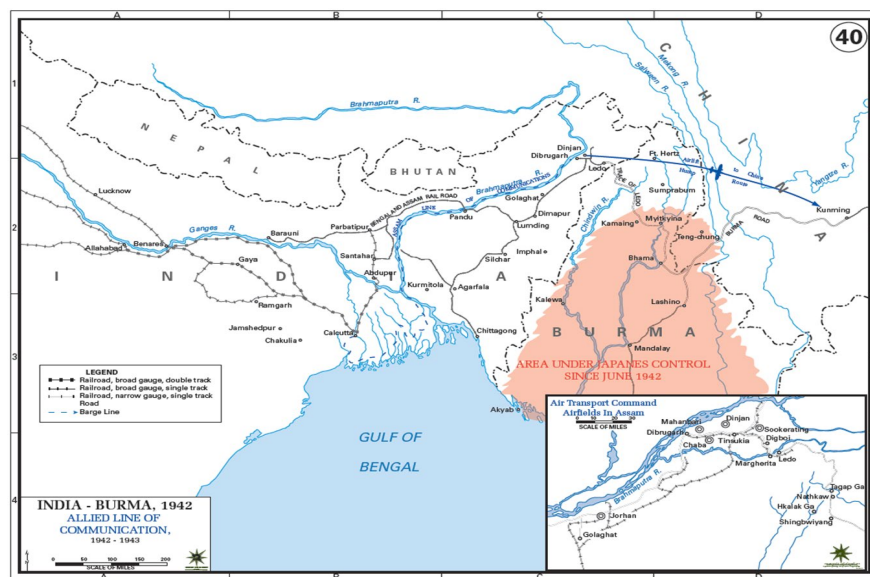


Figure 4. India-Burma, 1942. Thomas E. Griess, ed., *Atlas for the Second World War: Asia and the Pacific* (Wayne, NJ: Avery Publishing Group, 1985), 40.

⁴⁹ Newell, *Burma, 1942*, 10.

⁵⁰ Newell, *Burma, 1942*, 10; Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, 332-333.

In the months following the collapse in Burma, US planners consistently argued at the coalition war conferences in 1943 that reestablishing the land lines of communication with China remain an Allied priority. While agreeing in principle to retaking Burma to ensure China could fulfill its role in Allied Strategy, both the British and Chinese devoted considerable effort to minimizing their role, delaying execution, or outright renegeing on their commitments.⁵¹ In Casablanca, the British committed to a campaign to retake Burma in late 1943. However, soon after, the British claimed Burma was the worst place to commit allied forces. As they lacked the resources for major operations preferring to conduct operations elsewhere in Southeast Asia.⁵²

Citing British duplicity, Chiang now preferred greater emphasis placed on increasing support to air operations as a more effective way to attack the Japanese and preserving his Army. Consequently, at the Trident Conference in Washington, DC in May, the Allies limited the campaign to northern Burma in order to open the land route to China. Priority of “Hump” tonnage went to support air operations with the remainder to Stilwell to prepare Chinese forces for the more limited campaign. The only positive news from Burma was the employment of British long-range penetration groups, the “Chindits,” under the charismatic Brigadier General Orde Wingate that demonstrated the Allied forces could fight effectively in the jungle and defeat the Japanese. Wingate’s limited successes nevertheless led to further expansion of long-range penetration groups and the unit became the model for the only US combat unit sent to Burma, the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), better known as “Merrill’s Marauders”—code named Galahad. Both forces played significant roles in the success of the North Burma Campaign.⁵³

By mid-1943, US successes in the twin Pacific drives made it increasingly clear that China was unlikely to fulfill its role except perhaps as a base for long-range bombing of Japan. The Quadrant conference in August 1943 and the Sextant conference in November confirmed and

⁵¹ Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, 340.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 346.

⁵³ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell’s Command Problems*, 34-36; Newell, *Burma, 1942*, 10-12.

then approved a limited campaign plan for Burma, code named Champion. To better control operations and improve logistical support, Quadrant established Southeast Asia Command, appointing Vice Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten as Supreme Allied Commander and Stilwell as his deputy.

The Combined Chiefs of Staff tasked Southeast Asia Command to capture northern Burma to establish overland communications with China, improve the air route, and increase supplies to China.⁵⁴ Despite general agreement, the British and Chinese continued to clash over details. Chiang would not fully commit to Champion and the British convinced the Combined Chiefs of Staff to cancel Champion's amphibious component. On the eve of the campaign, Chiang retaliated by limiting Chinese participation to only those troops under Stilwell's command in India. These tensions in the coalition significantly impacted the conduct of the North Burma Campaign.

It was in this challenging strategic and operational environment of conflicting Allied objectives, inadequate resources, imposing terrain and climate, and complex command relationships that Stilwell labored for eighteen months to fulfill his mission to support China and improve the combat efficiency of the Chinese Army. He developed the framework for the campaign soon after his humiliating withdrawal out of Burma which consisted of a drive by the British into southern Burma, a second drive by his US-trained Chinese divisions in northwest India later called "X Force," and a third by the US-trained Chinese forces in Yunnan, called the "Y Force." Stilwell never wavered from this concept dedicating his efforts to rebuilding and preparing the Chinese divisions while arguing for the British and Chinese to fulfill their commitments.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 13.

⁵⁵ Joseph W. Stilwell, *The Stilwell Papers*, ed. Theodore White (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1948), 107-9.

The Campaign Plan

Achievement of the Southeast Asia Command's objectives depended on capturing Myitkyina and its airfield before the Monsoon. Seizing Myitkyina would eliminate the Japanese fighter threat allowing air transports to follow a safer southerly route, avoiding the Himalayas and increasing tonnage. From Myitkyina, the follow on Ledo road construction effort could then link up with the existing Burma Road establishing an overland supply route to China.

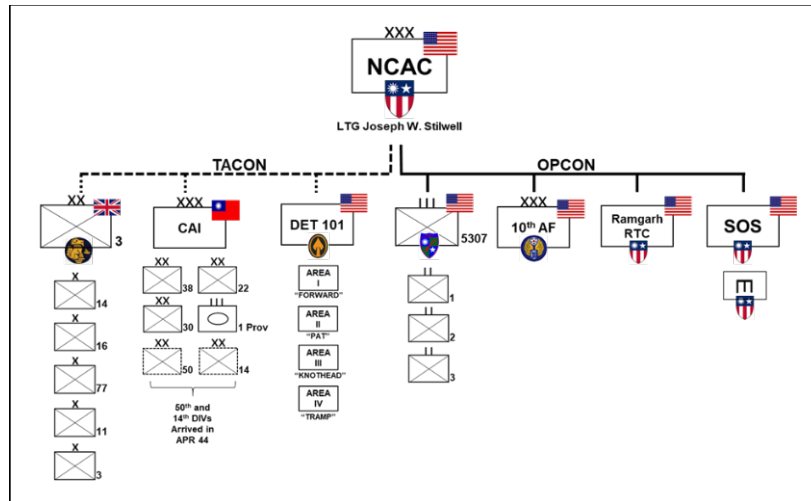


Figure 5. Northern Combat Area Command Task Organization. Created by Author.

Operating in the newly formed Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC), the CAI or X Force consisting of the 22nd, 38th and 30th divisions with their US advisors would clear the veteran Japanese 18th Division from Hukawng and Mogaung Valleys. Originally intended to join the Chindits, Stilwell obtained control of Galahad directing Brigadier General Frank D. Merrill's Marauders to conduct a series of deep turning movements establishing blocks on the Japanese LOCs while the Chinese applied frontal pressure. Tasked to serve as guides, identify drop zones for resupply and screen the advance were native Kachin Rangers—warlike tribesman originally organized by US Office of Strategic Services Detachment 101 in 1942 to

harass the Japanese, interdict LOCs, rescue downed pilots, gather intelligence, and conduct espionage and counter espionage operations.⁵⁶

By late 1943, they had expanded to several battalions numbering nearly three thousand strong capable of limited attacks. The British counterpart to the OSS, the Special Operations Executive, would continue similar unconventional operations in central and south Burma. South of NCAC, the British Special Force (3rd Indian Division), renamed as the “Chindits,” were to infiltrate central Burma, protect Stilwell’s southern flank, and block Japanese reinforcements and resupply. With north Burma’s primitive roads, the advance depended almost entirely on aerial resupply, especially the deep penetration units.⁵⁷

North Burma Area of Operations

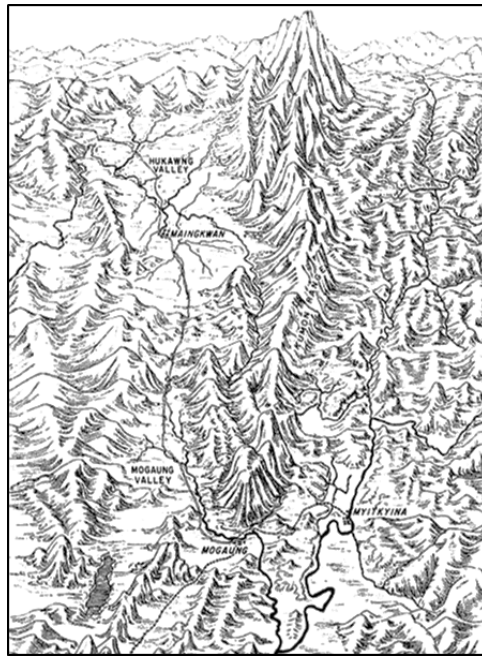


Figure 6. North Burma Area of Operations. US War Department, Intelligence Division, *Merrill’s Marauders: February-May 1944* (Washington, DC: War Department, 1945), 19.

⁵⁶ David W. Hogan Jr., *India-Burma: The US Army Campaigns of World War II* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1995), 8; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell’s Command Problems*, 39-44; Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, 356.

⁵⁷ David W. Hogan Jr., *US Army Special Operations in World War II* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1992), 111-12.

In North and Central Burma, the Allied advance faced some of the most inhospitable areas for military operations in the world. Roughly the size of Connecticut, the topography of north Burma is typified by geographical extremes. Steep, densely wooded highlands cut by numerous streams, and mountain ridge lines boxed in and dominated the main axis of advance down the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys to Myitkyina. The Kumon north-south range to the east rose to elevations over ten thousand feet. North Burma is further defined by a series of rivers and valleys covered by thick jungle wilderness with native footpaths and cart tracks providing the primary means of cross-country movement in most areas. Additionally, with a tropical monsoon climate, north Burma encounters temperatures that can exceed one hundred degrees Fahrenheit from June to September with the monsoon rains exceeding seventy-five inches. This made it imperative to seize Myitkyina by the end of the dry season in May. Finally, insect born malaria and typhus, as well as widespread dysentery, were a greater threat than the enemy. The effects of illness along with inadequate rest and nutrition proved debilitating—particularly to British and US troops.⁵⁸

The complex human terrain and cultural history of Burma played a critical role in the campaign. Openly opposed to ethnic Burmese in the south, the north is composed of pro-British and stubbornly independent tribes of the Kachin, Karen, and Shan peoples. Leveraging their warlike culture, the Allies recruited the assistance of the Kachin and Karen tribes to provide intelligence and small bands of guerrillas to conduct unconventional attacks on the Japanese. While the Shan and Karen played an important role in operations to the South, the Kachin played a decisive role in the campaign to seize Myitkyina.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ US War Department, Intelligence Division, *Merrill's Marauders: February-May 1944* (Washington, DC: War Department, 1945), 16-23; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 37-38.

⁵⁹ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 36-37; Hogan, *US Army Special Operations in World War II*, 108-10.

Case Study 1: X Force (CAI)

Introduction

Case Study 1 illustrates the use of conventional partner forces enabled by US capabilities to achieve strategic and campaign objectives in an economy of force theater where the United States faced significant limitations on the application of its military power. Similar to the current conflict environment, the Allies faced higher priorities and commitments elsewhere in other theaters and were unable to provide major conventional forces for large-scale operations. The alternative was to partner with Chinese conventional forces and provide enabling capabilities to achieve regional and strategic objectives.

Background to the X Force

Following the retreat from Burma in May 1942, Stilwell and remnants of the Chinese Expeditionary Force withdrew to positions inside north eastern India to begin the process of rebuilding. Even as he was withdrawing, Stilwell developed a concept to reconstitute the Chinese Army using the remnant of two divisions reinforced by soldiers flown in from China as the nucleus for the force of three divisions that would retake Burma. Stilwell cited lessons learned from the defeat in Burma and predicated his strategy on his belief that with proper leadership, resources, training, and US direction, Chinese soldiers could fight and win against the Japanese. However, rebuilding the Chinese Army would require considerable effort to reconstitute a beaten force, significantly depleted by the retreat. Establishing a training center at Ramgarh, India, Stilwell and his US staff worked tirelessly to establish the infrastructure and provide the training and resources necessary to rebuild the Chinese formations into an Army capable of defeating the Japanese.

Task Organization

With the addition of a third Chinese division, the CAI eventually totaled nearly thirty-five thousand soldiers in October 1943. In April, Stilwell received two more Chinese divisions for the drive to Myitkyina. Organized around three infantry regiments, each division included two artillery battalions, an engineer battalion, a signal battalion, a transportation battalion, a reconnaissance company, and an assortment of service units. At full strength, each regiment had approximately 2,650 personnel.⁶⁰ In addition, the CAI included the 1st Provisional Tank Group commanded by a US Colonel and consisted of both US and Chinese manned light and medium tanks. While the Chinese commanded their formations, they also had embedded US Liaison teams to serve as combat advisors down to battalion level equipped with radios to report to through the advisor chain up to Stilwell's headquarters. The major challenge to Stilwell's efforts was that the primary loyalty of the Chinese commanders was to Chiang Kai-shek.⁶¹

US Training and Advisor Mission and US Partnered Forces

Known as the Chinese Army in India or Chih Hui Pu, Stilwell brought in US trainers, logisticians and medical units to train, supply and care for the Chinese soldiers as well as prepare the US liaison teams. Numbering nearly two hundred officers and seven hundred enlisted members, US instructors focused on training basic soldier skills, jungle training, tactics, and leadership. While nominally a Chinese headquarters, US officers dominated the CAI staff under the direction of Brigadier General Hayden L. Boatner. Serving as both Stilwell's Chief of Staff and the CAI Deputy Commander, Boatner supervised the reform effort at Ramgarh and the initial campaign planning.⁶²

⁶⁰ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 52-53.

⁶¹ Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 443; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 211-15.

⁶² Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 36-37.

To support their logistical needs, the Ramgarh Training Center and CAI received support from the Services of Supply units within the theater.⁶³ This included artillery, small arms, heavy machine guns, anti-tank weapons, mortars, and a small number of light and medium tanks. Air Transport Command, and the 10th Air Force under Eastern Air Command, provided innovative aerial resupply and supported tactical operations with close-air support and strategic bombing missions.⁶⁴

In addition to the Chinese divisions, Stilwell received control of a limited number of US Army units. While predominantly US Army Air Corps and logistical units, this included the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) and the combined First Chinese-US Provisional Tank Group. With the assistance of OSS Detachment 101, the 5307th (also referred to as Galahad and “Merrill’s Marauders”) specialized in long-range penetration operations modeled after Orde Wingate’s 77th Indian Infantry Brigade. The US units worked in tandem with the Chinese divisions and provided the deep penetration and armored capability necessary to support the planned Chinese offensive in northern Burma. Given the small number of US maneuver units, the planned campaign to seize Myitkyina relied on US Army ground and air operations to motivate the Chinese formations and achieve operational mobility and depth, but remained contingent on sufficient mass provided by the CAI.

CAI Operations in Support of the North Burma Campaign

Following Quadrant, the Combined Chiefs of Staff renamed the Ramgarh Forces as the NCAC.⁶⁵ The North Burma Campaign Plan dubbed Albacore, generally followed a phased

⁶³ The Services of Supply (SOS) provided operational and tactical level logistical support to the CBI theater of operations. Additionally, SOS provided material support to the CAI and supervised the distribution of Lend Lease equipment.

⁶⁴ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell’s Command Problems*, 6-11; Hogan, *US Army Special Operations in World War II*, 110.

⁶⁵ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell’s Command Problems*, 138-39; Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 383.

approach to clear the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys leading to the capture of the main objective of the airfield and rail hub at Myitkyina while also clearing the route to complete the Ledo Road. Using Galahad supported by the Detachment 101 to execute a series of envelopments, Stilwell planned to employ Lieutenant General Sun Li-jen's 38th and Lieutenant General Liao Yao-hsian's 22nd Chinese divisions to seize the key terrain leading to Myitkyina.⁶⁶

Phase 1: Initial Operations through the Tanai River (October 1943-January 1944)

Prior to launching operations in December 1943, NCAC directed the lead Chinese regiments of the 38th Division to occupy key crossing points on the Tarung River and enter the Taro Plain. However, due to poor reconnaissance and slow movement, the Chinese unexpectedly collided with elements of Lieutenant General Shinichi Tanaka's veteran Japanese 18th Division at both the key river crossings, and northern entrance to the Taro Plain. Japanese units isolated and surrounded the lead battalions which survived only through air resupply. Chinese attempts to relieve the isolated units resulted in a stalemate until late December.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Hogan, *India-Burma*, 13.

⁶⁷ Jon Diamond, *Burma Road 1943-44: Stilwell's Assault on Myitkyina* (London: Osprey Publishing, 2016), 39-41; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 45-48.

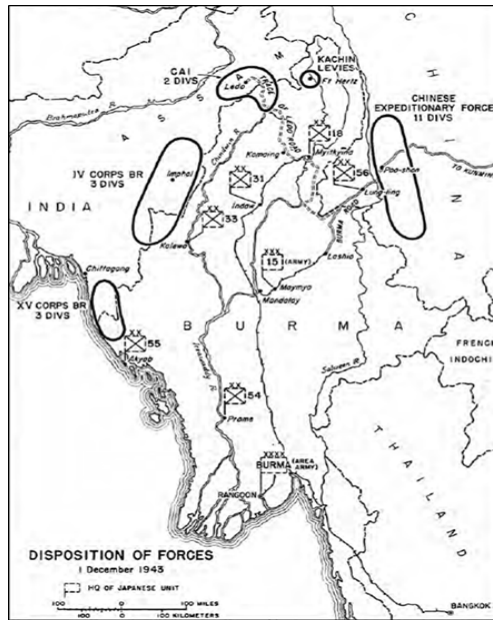


Figure 7. Disposition of Forces, December 1943. Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *China-Burma-India Theater: Stilwell's Command Problems* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1956), 120.

Returning from the Sextant Conference in late December 1943, Stilwell took personal command in the field. Leading from the front, he directed attacks to envelop and reduce the Japanese positions; relieving the isolated Chinese units by the end of 1943.⁶⁸ This small but important victory boosted Chinese confidence that they could meet the Japanese on equal terms.⁶⁹ Taking advantage of this success, Stilwell pressured the Chinese to attack more aggressively ordering the 38th Division to continue advancing south into the Hukawng Valley and the 22nd Division into the Taro Plain. Executing wide envelopments, they cleared the Taro Plain by the end of January and advanced sixty miles down the Hukawng by the end of February; unfortunately allowing the Japanese to escape but with a new found respect for the Chinese and the US aerial resupply capability.⁷⁰ In spite of these successes, Stilwell assessed the Chinese as

⁶⁸ Diamond, *Burma Road*, 41-44; Hogan, *India-Burma*, 12-13; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 124.

⁶⁹ Hogan, *India-Burma*, 12-13.

⁷⁰ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 127.

too cautious and casualty averse resulting in lost opportunities to encircle and destroy the Japanese units.⁷¹ Intent on continuing the advance southward, Stilwell finally received control of the 5307th, which he planned to use to increase the offensive tempo in the next stage of the campaign.⁷²

Phase 2: Attack through Jambu Bum (February 1944-April 1944)

Having twice failed to envelop and destroy the Japanese 18th Division, Stilwell again planned to envelop and annihilate the Japanese divisions between his Chinese and US formations. In concert with a deep envelopment by Galahad and one Chinese regiment to cut the Japanese line of retreat along the Kamaing Road, the 22nd and 38th divisions and the tank group would continue advancing south to seize the key villages of Maingkwan and Walawbum.⁷³ Departing on 24 February on their first mission, Galahad employed Kachin Rangers who served as guides and provided accurate intelligence on Japanese troop locations. Eight days later they established a blocking position near Walabum, achieving complete surprise. Leaving a rearguard to hold the Chinese, Tanaka launched several unsuccessful attacks against the Marauders. Eventually overwhelmed by the combined Chinese-US effort, the 18th Imperial Japanese Army Division narrowly escaped on 8 March 1944 leaving NCAC in control of Hukawng Valley north of the Jambu Bum. Given the initial setbacks in December 1943, the combined operations at Maingkwan and Walawbum initiated a war of movement that validated Stilwell's bold campaign design.⁷⁴

With Tanaka's division retreating south to establish positions on the high ground of the Jambu Bum separating the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys, Stilwell's next objective was clearing

⁷¹ Ibid., 128.

⁷² Diamond, *Burma Road*, 27; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 130-31.

⁷³ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 142-48.

⁷⁴ Diamond, *Burma Road*, 47- 55.

the Mogaung Valley. Capitalizing on success, the 5307th and a battalion from the 38th Chinese Division departed on 12 March, executing two wide envelopments to cut Japanese communications at Shaduzup and Inkangahtawng again screened by Kachin Rangers.⁷⁵ Using Galahad in a shaping operation, Stilwell advanced south with the 22nd Division and the 1st Provisional Tank Group along the Kamaing Road. Seizing the Jambu Bum After further delays, elements of the 22nd and 38th Chinese divisions then fought a series of fierce actions against the Japanese before seizing Shaduzup and the mouth of the Mogaung Valley on 29 March 1944.⁷⁶ Galahad's 2nd Battalion repelled several determined Japanese assaults over eleven days near Nhpum Ga before the 1st and 3rd battalions came to its relief.

Though successful to this stage of the campaign, the combined force had suffered significant losses. By mid-April 1944, the Chinese divisions suffered losses totaling over twenty percent of its strength. More serious was the effect on the 5307th. Of the original 3,000 troops, the Marauders were down to 1,400 and those were near a state of collapse.⁷⁷ Though severely weakened, the 18th Imperial Japanese Army Division managed to withdraw to Mogaung and Myitkyina.⁷⁸ Despite the missed opportunity to trap the Japanese, the Allies had a firm foothold in north Burma and the scales appeared to be tipping in the Allies' favor.⁷⁹

Phase 3: Advance and Seizure of Myitkyina (April 1944-August 1944)

With the Japanese offenses blunted at Imphal and Kohima, Southeast Asia Command approved Stilwell's plans to seize Myitkyina. Stilwell was under increasing pressure from the

⁷⁵ Diamond, *Burma Road*, 41-44; Hogan, *India-Burma*, 16; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 124.

⁷⁶ Diamond, *Burma Road*, 56-58; Hogan, *India-Burma*, 16; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 175-88.

⁷⁷ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 188-91.

⁷⁸ Diamond, *Burma Road*, 63.

⁷⁹ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 202.

Joint Chiefs of Staff to seize Myitkyina's all-weather airfield as soon as possible to enable increased air supply to China. Acknowledging the strategic situation, Stilwell devised an ambitious plan that balanced four critical realities: "[t]he Japanese offensive in India, the slow progress in North Burma Campaign, the Generalissimo's reluctance to cross the Salween, and the steady consumption of time."⁸⁰ Attempting also to stay ahead of the summer monsoon season, Stilwell ordered a simultaneous CAI offensive to seize Mogaung and an ambitious "end run" maneuver by a combined Galahad Chinese force reinforced with DET 101 led Kachin Rangers.⁸¹ The combined force would march sixty-five miles through the grueling Kumon Range to seize Myitkyina by a *coup de main*.

Divided into three task forces, the remnants of Galahad, two Chinese regiments recently flown in from China, and the Kachins stepped off on 28 April. The heat, rugged terrain, and disease caused additional attrition of Galahad but the combined forces reached Myitkyina undetected on 16 May and seized the airfield completely by surprise the next day. Unfortunately, initial jubilation fell away as attempts to seize the town of Myitkyina eventually degenerated into a siege. Elsewhere, the Chinese 38th Division and a depleted Chindit force eventually seized Mogaung on 28 June. It was not until 3 August when Chinese forces finally secured the town of Myitkyina. Stilwell gained his victory but at a heavy cost. The Chinese lost an additional 4,200 casualties, and the US forces lost another 2,200. By then the Marauders virtually ceased to exist and required evacuation to India.⁸²

⁸⁰ Ibid., 204.

⁸¹ Diamond, *Burma Road*, 66; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 204-05. An "end run" is a football term used to describe a situation where the ballcarrier attempts a lateral movement around the defensive line. Stilwell is known for his use of football analogies.

⁸² Diamond, *Burma Road*, 64-73, 81-89; Hogan, *India-Burma*, 17-20; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 204-56.

Analyzing the Effectiveness of CAI Operational Approach

Assessing the effectiveness of the CAI partner operations in support of the North Burma Campaign of 1944 as an example of the BWT operational approach provides mixed results. At the operational level, NCAC achieved its principle campaign objective to capture Myitkyina Airfield before the Monsoon rains. Almost immediately following the seizure of the airfield, the tonnage of air supplies increased dramatically to China. Yet at the tactical, level Chinese performance proved frustrating. Piece meal commitment of forces, lack of initiative, overly cautious troop leaders, and unimaginative attacks led to excessive casualties and lost opportunities to defeat the Japanese.⁸³

Through extraordinary effort, the United States and Great Britain rebuilt Chinese force capacity and capabilities. The Chinese were well trained and equipped and better than their Japanese advisories. They also enjoyed excellent intelligence on Japanese forces and dispositions from DET 101 as well as complete air superiority. All the training and new equipment provided at Ramgarh could not eliminate the Chinese sense of inferiority to the Japanese. Often only the unrelieved pressure Stilwell's physical presence kept the Chinese advance going.⁸⁴ To assist his effort, he relied heavily on his US liaison teams located within each Chinese division down to battalion level. The US liaison officers provided accurate information on the Chinese which often conflicted with Chinese reports. Stilwell also empowered them to approve resupply requests as incentives to action. However, by the end of the campaign, the CAI did not prove as effective as hoped in stimulating offensive action.

The arrival of Galahad set in motion a war of maneuver which Stilwell hoped might energized the Chinese. Galahad's first two missions were deep envelopments to establish blocking positions synchronized with the Chinese advance. In each case, the Japanese focused on

⁸³ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 128, 185, 212.

⁸⁴ Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 419.

the enveloping force because of the slow Chinese advance. In a series of sometimes desperate and confusing encounters, the combined CAI, Galahad, and Kachin force outfought the Japanese, but the Japanese successfully withdrew and avoided encirclement and defeat. These first Allied victories cleared much of north Burma, but forward progress was slow. The factor of time and the Chinese sluggish advance led to Stilwell's decision to send Galahad on a wide envelopment to seize Myitkyina.

The principle explanation for the Chinese lack of offensive spirit reveals one of the critical obstacles to effective partner operations—conflicting interests. While Stilwell was ostensibly the commander of the CAI, Chiang undermined his control through secret messages to the Chinese commanders to move cautiously and only when he approved.⁸⁵ The Generalissimo remained more concerned with preserving his force for the projected postwar conflict with the Chinese Communists. As Stilwell reported to have said, “The Japanese are a disease of the skin: they can be cured. The Communists are a disease of the soul: it affects the whole body.”⁸⁶ He believed the Japanese threat, while urgent, would be short-lived and removed by the Allies, whereas the destabilizing influence of the Communists posed a greater long-term threat to his regime.

Consequently, alone among all Allied and enemy commanders in any theater, Stilwell could not count on his field commanders to carry out his orders.⁸⁷ While Galahad and the untried Chinese regiments recently flown in from China, and the Kachin Guerilla's fought a desperate battle for Myitkyina, the 22nd and 38th Chinese divisions continued to plod along. Released by Chiang in late May (along with Chinese Y Force attacking from the north), the 22nd and 38th divisions finally displayed the offensive spirit Stilwell believed they were capable of, seizing Kamaing on 12 June. Supported by the depleted British 77th “Chindit” Brigade, Mogaung fell on

⁸⁵ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 211-215.

⁸⁶ Edwin Moise, *Modern China: A History* (London: Longman, 1994), 84.

⁸⁷ Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 443.

25 June, completing the defeat of the Japanese 18th Division. However, only with the vital assistance of Galahad, Detachment 101, and the British did the CAI finally clear the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys of Japanese forces.

The impact of this divergence in interests cost the Generalissimo strategically. Had Stilwell achieved a speedy victory to end China's blockade, Chiang's position in China would have been strengthened in 1944 by the increase in supplies and equipment via the completed Ledo road and the return of battle tested troops. Because of the delays, the road was not completed until January 1945. At that point, the Air Transport Command delivered more supplies per month than the road.⁸⁸ By then, Allied planners no longer believed China could fulfill its earlier promise to decisively engage the Japanese.

Case Study 2: Detachment 101 (OSS)

Introduction

As another illustration of the BWT operational approach, Case Study 2 demonstrates how unconventional warfare capabilities employing surrogate indigenous guerilla forces enabled by US capabilities can complement conventional forces in major combat operations. While conventional partner forces may possess significantly greater combat power, they may also have critical limitations and capability gaps. Synchronized with CAI and Galahad operations in north Burma, Detachment 101 operations with its formidable indigenous Kachin guerilla force were decisive in achieving unity of effort and ultimately, success in the North Burma Campaign. Beginning with a handful of personnel and with limited guidance, DET 101 evolved from providing intelligence and conducting limited sabotage to leading over ten thousand guerillas conducting attacks against Japanese forces in support of Allied operations in Burma.

⁸⁸ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 205; Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 484.

Establishing DET 101 (April 1942-December 1943)

William J. Donovan, head the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) created Detachment 101 on 14 April 1942 as the first US unit to conduct unconventional warfare behind enemy lines in the war.⁸⁹ Seizing the opportunity to employ an unconventional capability to support operations in Asia, Donovan viewed Burma as an audition for the new agency. Meeting with Donovan before leaving for China, Stilwell remained apprehensive but agreed on the condition that Donovan appoint Captain Carl Eifler, a Stilwell favorite, as its commander.⁹⁰

Following his defeat in Burma, Stilwell, recognized the limited available resources and welcomed the assistance DET 101 could provide. Meeting with the newly formed twenty-one-member detachment, he directed that they establish a permanent presence in Burma and provide a means to shape and support the planned ground operation in north Burma. Detachment 101 to collect intelligence and sabotage operations focused on Japanese units and lines of communication in north Burma. Stilwell was especially interested in interdicting rail lines and destroying bridges leading to Myitkyina as a way to limit the use of its airfield.⁹¹

Operating on Stilwell's broad guidance, Eifler spent the remainder of 1942 establishing his organization, training, equipping, recruiting, and building a network of agents to lay the groundwork for guerilla operations. Through their collective efforts and considerable improvisation, the detachment was ready for operations by November 1942.⁹² Eifler focused the organization on five initial missions: espionage, sabotage, guerilla warfare, propaganda, and escape and evasion operations.

⁸⁹ James R. Ward, "The Activities of Detachment 101 of the OSS," in *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II*, ed. George C. Chalou (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 2002), 318.

⁹⁰ Hogan, *US Army Special Operations in World War II*, 9-11; Ward, "The Activities of Detachment 101 of the OSS," 319.

⁹¹ Hogan, *US Army Special Operations in World War II*, 101.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 102.

By the end of January 1943, the detachment was already providing Stilwell with critical intelligence on Japanese activities deep behind the lines. Impressed with the results, Stilwell approved an expansion of the organization directing Eifler to gather more intelligence, increase recruitment of the Kachin tribesmen, provide them with arms and equipment, and train them for direct action against the Japanese.⁹³ Through the remainder of 1943, trained intelligence agents and guerilla cadre infiltrated into selected areas of north Burma, contacted reliable Kachins, and establish field bases to recruit and train these fiercely anti-Japanese Tribesmen to conduct sabotage and small-scale attacks.⁹⁴ The Detachment now focused more on guerilla warfare rather than sabotage. Beyond guerilla operations, the detachment rescued downed pilots and provided an increasing percentage of the target intelligence to the 10th Air Force.⁹⁵

On the eve of the campaign, the detachment had eleven radio stations reporting regularly on Japanese activities and six operating bases each manned by detachment cadre with over eighteen hundred Kachin guerillas, called Kachin Rangers, prepared to support Stillwell's campaign.⁹⁶ In January 1944, Stillwell directed the new detachment commander, Lieutenant Colonel Ray Peers, to rapidly expand the force to three thousand to support the Chinese and Marauders.⁹⁷ If effective, Stilwell said he would support expansion to ten thousand.⁹⁸ Peers quickly reorganized into four area commands covering the campaign area of operations. Each area command was responsible for all activities within their zone while Peers provided the vision and common operational picture which enabled unity of effort with the conventional forces. He

⁹³ Ibid., 105-06.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 106.

⁹⁵ Hogan, *US Army Special Operations in World War II*, 108; Troy Sacquety, *The OSS in Burma* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 115.

⁹⁶ Hogan, *US Army Special Operations in World War II*, 107-08.

⁹⁷ Sacquety, *The OSS in Burma*, 74.

⁹⁸ Ward, "The Activities of Detachment 101 of the OSS," 323.

provided early warning, cleared trails, and identified drop zones for resupply.¹⁰¹ Kachins ambushed Japanese moving south to avoid the block; forcing them into the Marauders and resulting in heavy casualties.¹⁰² In the support of the Chinese advance, Detachment 101 forces alerted by agents near Japanese garrisons, ambushed Japanese reinforcements moving north. In this effort, the Marauders and Guerilla forces combined to inflict over a thousand Japanese casualties.¹⁰³

In late March, while the Chinese continued advancing south to seize the high ground of the Jambu Bum at the head of Mogaung Valley, the Marauders conducted two wide envelopments to establish blocking positions on the Kamaing Road at Shaduzup and Inkangahtawng. The guerrilla forces continued to integrate their operations and improve interoperability with Galahad. Two hundred guerillas screened the Marauder's deeper envelopment to Inkangahtawng, provided a small reserve force, and conducted reconnaissance and raids.¹⁰⁴ When warned by NCAC that the Japanese were advancing on Inkangahtawng to attack the its position, 2nd Battalion withdrew north to Nhpum Ga where it successfully withstood eight days of violent attacks inflicting heavy Japanese casualties.¹⁰⁵ Kachin Rangers alerted the 2nd Battalion to the direction of the attacks while also disrupting the enemy's ability to pinpoint Marauder defenses. Earlier, the OSS area commander formed a Kachin led 160-man direct action "Lightning Force," which ambushed Japanese resupply columns and disrupted radio and wire communications.¹⁰⁶ Joining Galahad's 1st and 3rd battalions, they conducted their own

¹⁰¹ Scott R. McMichael, "A Historical Perspective on Light Infantry" (Research Survey, no. 6, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1987), 28.

¹⁰² Dean Breilis and William R. Peers, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerilla Force* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 142.

¹⁰³ Breilis and Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 144; Hogan, *India-Burma*, 14.

¹⁰⁴ Sacquety, *The OSS in Burma*, 118.

¹⁰⁵ Hogan, *India Burma*, 16.

¹⁰⁶ Breilis and Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 159; Sacquety, *The OSS in Burma*, 119.

envelopment of the Japanese attacker but the dual threat from the Marauders and the advancing Chinese forced the Japanese to withdraw toward Kamaing on 9 April.

Peers directed three of his four area commands to support the final drive to Myitkyina. Area III continued its direct support of the Marauders. In addition to providing three hundred Kachin Rangers to Galahad's 2nd Battalion that suffered heavily at Nhpum Ga, they provided three hundred and fifty additional Rangers to screen the infiltration of all three Galahad battalion task forces. Another four hundred supported the Chinese drive to Mogaung. They also pushed sabotage activities south to interdict the Mandalay-Myitkyina railway.¹⁰⁷ Area II guerillas guided the Marauder force through the Kumon Range to Myitkyina, screened their eastern and northern flank, provided logistical support from its landing strips, and ambushed Japanese attempts to reinforce from the north.¹⁰⁸ Area I became the main effort with the primary mission of observing and reporting on the situation as Galahad moved towards Myitkyina. Area I's fifteen hundred guerillas completed the isolation of Myitkyina from east and south through attacks on roads and waterways leading to Myitkyina.¹⁰⁹ Area I guerillas also conducted conventional diversionary attack on a Japanese garrison defeating an infantry company and preventing three Japanese battalions from reinforcing Myitkyina.¹¹⁰

The OSS reconnaissance elements reported the airfield was only lightly defended. On 17 May, 2nd and 3rd battalions with Kachin Ranger reinforcements isolated the airfield while 1st Battalion and a Chinese regiment seized the airfield and eliminated virtually all Japanese defenders. However, failure to exploit this success led to a two-month siege as the Japanese gradually reinforced the town. While conventional forces attacked the city over the next two months, DET 101 forces continued guerilla and conventional attacks with battalion sized

¹⁰⁷ Brellis and Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 162.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 162-63.

¹¹⁰ Sacquety, *The OSS in Burma*, 122.

elements north, east, and south of the city to further isolate Myitkyina. On 2 August, the last Japanese elements evacuated the city and Chinese forces finally secured Myitkyina the next day.

Analyzing the Effectiveness of DET 101 in Partner Operations

Assessing the effectiveness of DET 101's partner operations in support of the North Burma Campaign of 1944 appears deceptively self-evident. NCAC achieved its principle campaign objective to capture Myitkyina Airfield before the monsoon rains. Capturing this objective was critical to the Allied objective of supporting China. While Galahad ceased to exist, fresh US Forces arrived and DET 101 and its ever-expanding Kachin guerilla force continued to provide support to Allied efforts to liberate southern Burma.

The effective integration of DET 101 and its Kachin partner forces with Allied conventional operations demonstrated a highly successful operational approach that ensured unity of effort throughout the campaign. Yet, DET 101 initial intelligence collection, raids, and sabotage operations hardly foreshadowed the impact of its later operations on the success of the North Burma Campaign. Growing from an organization of a mere twenty personnel to over one thousand US operatives and ten thousand Kachin Guerillas capable of large-scale infantry operations, DET 101 was both a force multiplier and provided complimentary capabilities to the operations of the CAI and US ground and air forces.

DET 101's effectiveness is clearly evident in the impact of its operations on the success of the CAI and Galahad. The establishment of radio stations with Kachin operators and field bases in north Burma in 1943, provided a stream of real time actionable intelligence of Japanese activities, dispositions, and a complete order of battle by February 1944.¹¹¹ Eighty-five to ninety percent of NCAC's actionable intelligence originated from DET 101 sources. At the commencement of the campaign, NCAC had the advantage of a common operational picture over

¹¹¹ Sacquety, *The OSS in Burma*, 75.

their opposing forces.¹¹² This real time intelligence also extended to identifying targets for the 10th Airforce providing eighty-five percent of the targets for air combat missions. Fiercely independent, the Kachins knew the terrain and their enemy, and were natural guerilla fighters that were adept at planning.¹¹³

DET 101 provided the training, equipment, food, and medical care that established a relationship of mutual trust and transformed the Kachins into an extremely loyal, formidable, and tactically proficient force whose actions had operational level impact.¹¹⁴ Well-armed with mortars, small arms, and crew-served weapons equal to or better than those of the Japanese, they became experts at conducting ambushes and interdicting Japanese LOCs. Growing in size and confidence, they displayed an aggressiveness the Chinese conventional forces often lacked. By end of the campaign they successfully conducted conventional company and even battalion-level infantry attacks against Japanese forces.

The greatest impact on the success of the campaign was their support of Galahad and indirectly the success of the Chinese advance. Initially reluctant, the Marauders quickly developed a reliance on the Kachins and integrated them into their formation. In all, nearly three thousand Kachins supported Galahad's operations. In each of the three envelopments culminating with the successful attack on the Myitkyina Airfield, Kachins familiar with the terrain and existing trail networks sometimes, enabled Galahad units to move largely undetected and at a speed they could not have achieved independently. Screening far ahead, they guided the Marauders into blocking and attack positions timed to support the Chinese advance often achieving complete tactical surprise. Arguably, Kachin support of the Marauder's 2nd Battalion at Nhpum Ga prevented its destruction. Kachins and OSS operatives also facilitated critical aerial resupply and timely evacuation of casualties from cleverly camouflaged OSS built airstrips.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Brellis and Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 147.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 69.

For the final drive on Myitkyina, the OSS operatives and Kachin Rangers provided real-time intelligence on the Japanese defenders from observation posts in place for weeks, guided the Galahad and Chinese force undetected to their assault positions, and more importantly augmented the severely depleted Marauders with an additional maneuver element. After the campaign settled into a siege, the Kachin guerilla forces sometimes conducting conventional infantry operations, successfully isolated the battle area from Japanese reinforcement and withdrawal.

Similarly, the measures of DET 101's effectiveness in the campaign were the impact of its operations on the Japanese. The number of Japanese casualties inflicted directly and by OSS guided air attacks, supplies destroyed, road and rail lines of communications disrupted only partially demonstrate the impact of DET 101 operations. The persistent unconventional warfare campaign diverted Japanese forces to garrison and LOC security and ineffective counter guerilla operations, leaving insufficient forces to defend against the conventional Chinese and US attacks.

The constant attrition from raids and ambushes further weakened the Japanese. The near constant three-hundred-and-sixty-degree threat from well-trained Kachin guerillas had a significant psychological effect on the Japanese as well, especially in rear areas. The Japanese were tense, cautious, and slow to react.¹¹⁵ Japanese prisoners preferred fighting the Chinese rather than the Kachins where casualties were higher. Kachin support to the Chindits protecting Stilwell's southern flank experienced similar results.

In summary, DET 101 and their Kachin guerillas were indispensable to the success of the North Burma Campaign and in the campaigns that followed as the Allies defeated the remaining Japanese forces in Burma thereby destroying the myth Japanese superiority in jungle warfare. Typical of the sentiments of US and British commanders alike, was the expression of gratitude Colonel Charles Hunter, second in command of Galahad, sent to Peers at the conclusion of the

¹¹⁵ Brellis and Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 146-47.

Myitkyina campaign, justifiably stating that the Marauders “could not have succeeded without them.”¹¹⁶

The DET 101 experience is not consistent with the current BWT operational approach as described by Votel and Keravouri where operations are “led by our partners.”¹¹⁷ Indispensable to DET 101’s success was US leadership, initially Eifler and then Peers, rather than Kachin leaders. Their vision and tireless efforts communicated through area commanders led to the remarkable success of the detachment and its Kachin allies.

Analysis of Partner Operations and BWT

From these case studies, it is possible to distill a set of interrelated principles evident in the North Burma Campaign that may be useful when the United States considers the BWT operational approach in future conflict. These principles include: aligned interests between partners; existing partnered force structures and capability; unity of command and partnered force agency; planned operations that leverage partnered force strengths; unity of effort and partnered force integration; and sufficient resources to ensure success. While this is not an exhaustive list, these observed principles provide the operational planner with the ability to appropriately plan partnered operations using a BWT operational approach.

Aligned Interests between Partners

For the purposes of this analysis, alignment of interests occurs when two parties recognize a common problem and share a mutual desire to resolve the problem. In other words, partnership succeeds when both actors recognize that “cooperation will result in a mutually beneficial exchange” and their respective objectives and endstates are better served through

¹¹⁶ Hogan, *US Army Special Operations in World War II*, 119.

¹¹⁷ Keravouri and Votel, “The By-With-Through Operational Approach,” 40.

collective action.¹¹⁸ The alignment of interests establishes a shared responsibility and ownership for the desired outcome. From the beginning of the relationship, the United States and China had a shared interest in the defeat of Japanese, but they differed on how to best accomplish this goal.

The United States initially believed that improving the efficiency of the Chinese Army, it could defeat Japanese forces in Burma and China. Chiang Kai-shek preferred the Allies' defeat Japan and secretly preferred to maintain a defensive posture; preserving combat power for a future conflict with the Chinese communists.¹¹⁹ Chiang's reluctance to decisively engage the Japanese in Burma significantly impacted the operational and strategic success of the North Burma Campaign. Because the Generalissimo maintained a tight leash on his operational commanders in Burma, the campaign took longer than Stilwell and the Allies believed necessary. Ironically, the delays in seizing Myitkyina weakened Chiang Kai-shek in the post-war period and delayed the opening of the Ledo road and the return of combat troops by six months to a year.¹²⁰

Allied and Kachin interests were less complex and better aligned resulting in a mutually productive relationship. By establishing mutual trust and sharing hardships, Detachment 101 formed a committed and durable relationship, resulting in increased effectiveness and overall impact on the outcome of the campaign. While the relationship between the Kachins and Detachment 101 thrived, the relationship between Chiang Kai-shek and Stilwell became toxic leading eventually to Stilwell's recall and ultimately to China's further military decline.¹²¹ This fractured relationship imperiled the alliance and disrupted the campaign. Ultimately, decisions on cooperation are based on political calculations. However, partnerships are maintained and continued through personal relationships and mutual trust.

¹¹⁸ Homiak, "Expanding the American Way of War," 24.

¹¹⁹ Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 222, 233-34.

¹²⁰ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 205; Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 484.

¹²¹ Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, 365-79.

Existing Partnered Force Structures and Capability

The case studies reveal the challenges with raising, training, and equipping surrogate forces. While small unconventional units are more easily raised and trained, raising larger conventional units is more complex, often incurring additional investments in time and resources. Fundamentally, partner forces must possess a degree of competence, capacity, and will. While competence and capacity can be developed through the sponsor, the resolve to conduct combat operations is the responsibility of the partner force. With the remnants of two Chinese divisions, the United States and British invested enormous amounts of material and training to reconstitute the Chinese Army in India; eventually growing to five divisions.¹²²

At the outset of the campaign, the Chinese were better organized, trained, equipped, and supplied than the Japanese. However, the Chinese were restrained by their defensive mentality, a factor that negatively impacted the progress of the campaign. Stilwell took extraordinary measures to build momentum and instill confidence in the Chinese by ensuring relative superiority and achieving overmatch.¹²³ In spite of these measures, the Chinese commanders remained overly cautious, even in situations where the Chinese greatly outnumbered the enemy. While the Chinese possessed the capacity and capability to attack, the lack of offensive resolve slowed their progress.

Unlike the Chinese who had an existing organizational structure, albeit minimal in some cases, Detachment 101 built an unconventional warfare structure and capability from scratch. Initially starting from a small team, the detachment quickly grew into a ten thousand-man guerilla force capable of battalion-size conventional operations.¹²⁴ Evolving from an organization initially focused on intelligence gathering and sabotage, Detachment 101 transformed and adapted to

¹²² Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, 324-25.

¹²³ Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 419.

¹²⁴ Brellis and Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 156, 162, 167-68.

existing conditions to meet the operational requirements outlined by Stilwell. Leveraging the warrior ethos of the Kachin culture and their intimate knowledge of the jungle, Detachment 101 transformed small bands of local tribesman into a coherent and lethal force capable of executing conventional and unconventional operations.¹²⁵ The Kachin Rangers provided Stilwell with the ability to attack the Japanese in depth through continuous and simultaneous guerilla actions synchronized with the Chinese and Galahad.

Unity of Command and Partnered Force Agency

Partnered forces must be allowed to retain an element of control and decision authority over their formations. However, partner force agency is balanced with the necessity to employ combined formations under a unified authority empowered to make decisions and steer the organization in a common direction. While Stilwell remained in command of all Chinese forces in north Burma, Chiang Kai-shek commanded from the shadows.¹²⁶ As a result, Stilwell was never confident that his Chinese subordinate commanders would follow his orders.¹²⁷ Stilwell provided the Chinese opportunities to demonstrate initiative and exercise agency over their formations. However, the fragile command relationship prevented a level of mutual trust as Chinese commanders remained deferential to Generalissimo's cautious orders. Balancing the fragility of the relationship and with the urgency to maintain momentum in the campaign, Stilwell demonstrated the dynamic ability to lead through artful combinations of force, finesse, and encouragement. Ultimately, however, the Chinese never displayed the level of decisiveness and initiative needed to maintain the tempo of operations. As a result, Stilwell had to increasingly rely on the sacrifices of Galahad and Detachment 101 to carry-out the campaign.

¹²⁵ Hogan, *US Army Special Operations in World War II*, 106-7.

¹²⁶ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 211-15.

¹²⁷ Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 443.

In contrast to the Chinese, the Kachins proved loyal, reliable, effective, and capable of conducting independent operations.¹²⁸ While Detachment 101 provided overall direction and operational control, Kachin leaders remained in command of their own guerilla forces. Living with the Kachins and sharing their hardships, Detachment 101 engendered trust, empathy, and confidence. Detachment 101 provided training, supplies, equipment, humanitarian aid, and recognition. In return, the Kachins transformed into model guerilla fighters. While paid in various currencies, even opium, the Kachins were not mercenaries.¹²⁹ Motivated by a common hatred of the Japanese, the Kachins remained committed to the war effort by ideas larger than monetary benefit.

Planned Operations that Leverage Partnered Force Strengths

Partnered forces are only effective when they are employed in a manner that suits their strengths. Using a partnered force in operations that are outside their capability or capacity reduces their willingness to cooperate and potentially threatens the partnership. Partner forces often provide unique capabilities that are not resident within the sponsor force and capacity when sponsor forces are unavailable. Recognizing the lack of available US forces for the CBI theater, Stilwell devoted himself to rebuilding the Chinese Army in India.

Stilwell believed that, if properly trained, adequately resourced, and competently led; the Chinese soldier was capable of defeating the Japanese.¹³⁰ However, Stilwell recognized that the Chinese still believed that they were inferior to the Japanese. To help compensate for weak Chinese situational awareness, Stilwell established US liaison teams to initially facilitate resupply, but more importantly, to keep him informed on Chinese actions and locations. Armed with this knowledge, he influenced the advance primarily through personal presence. Stilwell

¹²⁸ Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 443.

¹²⁹ Brellis and Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 69.

¹³⁰ Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 172-73, 416.

focused initially on building local Chinese superiority leading to small but important successes to build confidence. Stilwell also used Allied air power and deep penetrations by Galahad and Kachin guerillas to mitigate Chinese limitations and provide the necessary encouragement to drive the Chinese forward. While the Chinese, on occasion, affirmed Stilwell's confidence in their potential, their performance remained inconsistent throughout the campaign missing opportunities to encircle and defeat the Japanese 18th Division.¹³¹

The Chinese weaknesses were the Kachins strengths. With expert knowledge of the terrain and living in the jungle, the Kachins were aggressive, confident, and good planners where the Chinese were reluctant and timid. These qualities grew with US training, equipment, and supplies.¹³² Lacking organization, Detachment 101 established a network of radio stations and support bases, initially conducting vital intelligence collection and sabotage directed against the Japanese lines of communication. The initial success of Detachment 101 improved recruitment and led to expanded capabilities and a transition to larger guerilla attacks. With a robust network, Detachment 101 and the Kachins Rangers were ideally postured to support Stilwell's North Burma Campaign. Integrated into Galahad, the Kachins were essential to the seizure of Myitkyina.

Unity of Effort and Partnered Force Integration

Effective partnered force integration requires unity of effort across the combined force to ensure coordination and cooperation toward a common objective. The capabilities of a partnered force must be integrated to compliment both conventional and unconventional forces. This coordination and cooperation include US Joint forces enablers to mitigate capability gaps in partner forces.

¹³¹ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 128, 185, 212, 256.

¹³² Hogan, *US Army Special Operations in World War II*, 108-9.

Stilwell's plan for the North Burma Campaign, integrated the complimentary capabilities of each of his principle combat forces; the CAI, Galahad, and Detachment 101 with its Kachin guerillas. Stilwell timed Galahad's envelopments with the Chinese advance. Integrated into Galahad, the Kachin Rangers provided intelligence on enemy dispositions and screened their advance into blocking positions. The Kachins also conducted synchronized strikes elsewhere in the Japanese rear areas that in coordination with Marauder blocks, presented the enemy with multiple threats Tanaka was unable to effectively counter.¹³³ To improve coordination, Detachment 101 established liaison with NCAC headquarters to provide intelligence, maintain situational awareness of Chinese movements, and facilitate adjustments to Kachin force dispositions. Displaying remarkable agility, Detachment 101 reorganized on the eve of the campaign providing guidance to each of its subordinate commanders who were trusted to operate independently on commander's intent.¹³⁴ Stilwell's forces committed errors and missed opportunities to defeat the Japanese 18th Division early in the campaign, but the Chinese forces demonstrated they could fight and win against the Japanese. Capitalizing on Allied air superiority and supplied almost entirely by air, Stilwell's forces seized Myitkyina and ended China's isolation.

Sufficient Resources to Ensure Success

Effective the nature of partner operation implies a dependency on the sponsor force for resources, equipment, training, and enabler support. By providing the necessary means to prepare for and sustain operations, the sponsor force builds confidence and provides tangible evidence of their commitment to the partner force. Additionally, sustainment provides the sponsor a critical degree of leverage with the partner force. In the North Burma Campaign, the Chinese and the Kachins both remained reliant on the US resources, modern weaponry, training, and advisors to

¹³³ Brellis and Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 146-47.

¹³⁴ Hogan, *US Army Special Operations in World War II*, 110-12.

sustain the fight against the Japanese. This support proved decisive in defeating the Japanese in north Burma and in operations that followed that liberated the remainder of Burma.

Beginning even before the United States entered the Pacific war and for the next four years, the US Services of Supply provided millions of dollars in military aid and committed some of its best military leaders, trainers and advisors, engineers, and aviators to assist China to fulfill its role as a major contributor to defeating Japan.¹³⁵ For the North Burma Campaign, the Chinese eventually provided abundant manpower, but the CAI remained reliant on Allied support to prepare for and sustain combat operations. Throughout his time as CBI commander, Stilwell maintained the belief that the Chinese, with sufficient resources, training, and leadership, could provide the conventional force necessary to defeat the Japanese. Providing the Chinese with tanks, small arms, communications equipment, artillery, and access to close air support and aerial resupply through US advisors, Stilwell provided the necessary means and expertise to galvanize the CAI into action. However, Stilwell faced a crucial dilemma: how to leverage Chiang's support for the campaign when he had no wish to commit his best trained and equipped units to combat preferring instead to conserve them for the postwar. While Stilwell and the CCS ultimately agreed that the Campaign in north Burma represented the priority for support to China, the decision negatively affected the US relationship with Chiang Kai-shek. Distrustful of the British, Chiang became increasingly recalcitrant and, at critical times before and during the campaign, threatened to withdraw his support for the CAI's operations in north Burma eventually delaying Y Force participation until April, 1944 demanding more military aid in return.¹³⁶ Because Chiang maintained separate access to FDR, he earlier pressed instead for aid to support to air operations to preserve his combat formations. This further damaged the relationship between Stilwell and Chiang, eroding Stilwell's influence, and undermining his relationship with

¹³⁵ Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, 324-25; Hogan, "India-Burma: The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II," 24.

¹³⁶ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 82.

Chinese tactical commanders. While this case study highlights the need to properly resource a partner force, the North Burma Campaign underscores the importance of providing enablers and material support to demonstrate US commitment. However, it may also be necessary to use these resources as a means to maintain a degree of leverage to overcome political and operational differences. Ironically, had Chiang provided his support to opening the campaign earlier in 1944 as Stilwell recommended, his postwar position in China would have been strengthened to by ending China's blockade earlier and leading to the increase in supplies and equipment via a more southerly air route and the completed Ledo road, and the return of battle tested troops.¹³⁷

The support to the Kachin Rangers, on the other hand, remained limited to small arms, training, and communications equipment. Already possessing a strong will to fight the Japanese, the Kachins required only limited sustainment and training from Detachment 101. More importantly, Detachment 101 provided weapons equal to or better than the Japanese, providing the Kachins a decisive advantage over the Japanese in close combat situations.¹³⁸ Developing and refining methods of aerial resupply, Detachment 101 provided the Kachins with timely and reliable resources which enabled tempo and extended operational reach throughout the North Burma Campaign and after. Additionally, Detachment 101 made early investments in training and instruction on key communications platforms and clandestine patrolling methods that paid dividends over the course of the campaign. DET 101's leadership and material support transformed the Kachins into an extremely loyal, formidable, and tactically proficient force whose actions had operational level impact.¹³⁹ DET 101 with their Kachin Ranger allies, were both a force multiplier and provided complimentary capabilities to the operations of the CAI and US ground and air forces.

¹³⁷ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 205; Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 484.

¹³⁸ Hogan, *US Army Special Operations in World War II*, 111; Sacquety, *The OSS in Burma*, 75.

¹³⁹ Brellis and Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 69.

Conclusion

In the *Joint Force Quarterly* article, “The By-With-Through Operational Approach,” General Votel and Colonel Keravuori stress the need to develop partner force “participation and operational ownership.”¹⁴⁰ Advocating the need to enable and support partner forces, Votel and Keravuori argue that the intent of a BWT operational approach is to assist regional partners to lead operations as a means to reduce the US level of involvement. Citing examples in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen, Votel and Keravuori view BWT as a framework to enhance regional security without the direct involvement of large numbers of US troops. While this definition of BWT may be appropriate to address small-scale contingency operations and stability operations, this approach is less effective when applied to large-scale combat. Furthermore, in many ways the definition provided by Votel and Keravuori overlooks the degree in which the operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen often require significant US leadership and personal investment to invigorate partner forces. During the North Burma Campaign, for example, the Chinese frequently slowed their advance and delayed action, often at the detriment to operational and even strategic objectives. Without the personal leadership of General Stilwell and OSS officers, the CAI and Kachin Rangers may have never played a significant role in the campaign. BWT is not an operational approach by proxy. Merely providing resources, training, and enabler support is simply insufficient. Partnership implies shared hardships and teamwork. Galahad’s sacrifice during the North Burma Campaign, for example, galvanized the Chinese into action and vitally demonstrated US resolve and commitment.

The US military generates physical, cognitive, and moral overmatch over potential adversaries by using a BWT approach that integrates the capacity and capabilities of a surrogate force. In many circumstances, the US military cannot replicate the unique skills, attributes, and local knowledge of an indigenous or conventional surrogate force. In northern Burma, for

¹⁴⁰ Keravuori and Votel, “The By-With-Through Operational Approach,” 41.

example, the Kachin's understanding of the local area, access, and mastery of jungle warfare proved decisive in the campaign for Myitkyina. The initial long-range penetrations by Detachment 101 using mostly US teams proved disastrous. Only after deciding to recruit and organize the Kachin tribesman, did the detachment achieve the mandate envisioned by Donovan in 1942. Additionally, given increased fiscal constraints and growing strategic commitments, the US military will face challenges to generate the requisite forces and the necessary endurance to fight more than one major regional conflict. Like the CBI theater in World War Two, the United States may likely encounter situations where it lacks sufficient capacity to succeed without the use of partner forces to fill the current deficiency in US combat troops. Had Chiang Kai-shek not provided Chinese troops, the North Burma Campaign would not have occurred.

The preceding examination of BWT devotes the bulk of its analysis to the components of successful partner operations. However, this analysis excludes a deeper discussion of the benefits of partner forces. In the last twenty years, the US military focused significant attention on security force assistance in support of stability and limited contingency operations. This focus diverts attention away from a meaningful dialogue on partner forces as a force multiplier in support of large-scale combat. The current Joint and US Army operating concepts highlight the increased difficulty to generate, deploy, and converge combat forces and capabilities in a denied environment. As the Heritage Foundation highlights in its annual assessment of the US military, the current gaps in capability and troop numbers will potentially hinder the US military's ability to achieve the necessary physical, cognitive, and moral access to isolate a peer or near-peer adversary.¹⁴¹ Additionally, the current operating concepts overlook the very real possibility that a future conflict might extend geographically beyond the physical capabilities and capacity of the Joint force, encompassing multiple theaters of operation. Given these limitations, it is essential for the Joint force to build a doctrinal framework that incorporates partner forces as a means to

¹⁴¹ Heritage Foundation, "2019 Index of US Military Strength."

harness their unique capabilities and operational benefits.

Within the context of major combat operations, partner forces extend operational reach, provide depth, secure local and international legitimacy, and contribute unique capabilities not resident within the sponsor force. Each of these benefits were apparent in the North Burma Campaign. During the initial stages of the campaign, the Kachins provided physical, cognitive, and moral access to an otherwise denied environment. Isolated by terrain and the Japanese defensive positions, Stilwell depended on the Kachins and Detachment 101 for intelligence and an unconventional force capable of disrupting Japanese rear areas. This enabled the initial deployment of the CAI and Galahad as well as the bombing campaign to attrit the Japanese units defending the avenues of approach to Myitkyina. Additionally, the tactical intelligence and knowledge of the local area provided by the Kachins allowed the combined British, Chinese, and US force to attack along multiple axes and overwhelm the Japanese through successive envelopments. While the Chinese proved difficult to employ at times, the CAI provided the necessary mass to defeat of the 18th Japanese Division. Together with indigenous forces, the Chinese provided a source of legitimacy that transformed a local campaign into a joint and combined effort to defeat the Japanese. Isolated from the local populace and unable to translate tactical gains into strategic success, the Japanese contended with a coalition of nations and peoples along interior and exterior lines. Even if the United States could have provided sufficient ground combat forces to engage the Japanese unilaterally in Burma, the rates of disease and fatigue within Galahad and the Chindits demonstrate the difficulty of fighting in an unfamiliar and austere environment. Given the unavailability of US combat troops, it is likely that without partner forces, the Allied strategy in South East Asia could not have been implemented.

The North Burma Campaign illustrates that partner forces are an indispensable component of warfare. As with current operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Europe, the Joint force is reliant on the contributions of partner forces and nations to accomplish US strategic objectives. Ultimately, surrogate forces and partner operations provide US military leaders with

scalable options—both in and outside of armed conflict. Using a broader BWT operational approach translates the relationships developed through security cooperation into decisive instruments of war.

Recent operations in Iraq and Syria against Islamic State fighters demonstrate the boundaries of partner force operations. The recent campaign to seize Mosul, for example, illustrate the limitations of a BWT operational approach that is purely reliant on the unequal contributions of the partner force. Simply providing resources, training, and advisors may work in some limited situations, but in the context of major combat operations, this approach is insufficient to generate and maintain the required momentum against a capable enemy. During the North Burma Campaign, Stilwell employed Galahad as a means to invigorate the Chinese and provide a tangible symbol of US commitment to the campaign. Even after Galahad became combat ineffective, Stilwell kept the Marauders in the fight to demonstrate US resolve and its obligations to the Chinese. As stated in the *US Army Special Operations Command Campaign Planner's Handbook*, “material benefits do not effectively buy allies.”¹⁴² Financial and material support may lubricate the pathways toward cooperation, but alone they are insufficient in generating the mutual trust and shared hardships that build resilient and enduring relationships. Without a meaningful and tangible investment, cooperation with a partner force remains an unequal relationship. While General Votel and others advocate a BWT approach that reduces US troop commitments as a means to eliminate strategic risk, this interpretation is overly cautious and may ultimately prove ineffective in a conventional, high-intensity conflict.

¹⁴² US Department of the Army, *SOF Campaign Planner's Handbook of Operational Art and Design* (Fort Bragg, NC: US Army Special Operations Command, 2014), V-15.

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