

The Brigade Combat Team: A Future Strategic Platform

by

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM: A FUTURE STRATEGIC PLATFORM

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ABSTRACT

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The U.S. Army's modularized Brigade Combat Team (BCT) provides the nation with a well-suited forcible entry and sustainable "boots on the ground" capability into global areas of interest. However, what is missing from U.S. strategy is a doctrinal organization from which a range of joint, inter-agency, inter-governmental, and multi-national efforts can be deployed, secured, and sustained to fulfill the overall Joint Force Commander (JFC), Department of State, and international community's intent. As the U.S. government refines its "whole of Government" approach to dealing with foreign policy challenges in failed or failing states requiring ground forces, the BCT is the ideal platform to bring to bear all the U.S. government, international, and indigenous capabilities in a more synchronized manner.

THE BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM: A FUTURE STRATEGIC PLATFORM

...defense, diplomacy and development were not separate entities, either in substance or process, but that indeed they had to be viewed as part of an integrated whole....

—Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, 2010.¹

The Nation has embraced the whole of government (WOG) approach to addressing international security and humanitarian challenges in the future. Across the interagency, various arms of the government are acknowledging the need to have an expeditionary capability that may have to be leveraged in the future against an international crisis. The military has also recognized this approach and has captured it in doctrine. Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, sets the doctrinal basis for the requirement for U.S. Commanders to operate across interagency and inter-governmental lines,

CCDRs and other subordinate JFCs must consider the potential requirements for Interagency, IGO, and NGO coordination as a part of their activities across the range of Military operations within and outside of their operational areas. Military operations must be coordinated, integrated, and/or de-conflicted with the activities of other agencies of the USG, IGOs, NGOs, regional organizations, the operations of foreign forces, and activities of various HN agencies within and on route to and from the operational area.²

While U.S. doctrine acknowledges the need for JIIM integration, it also acknowledges the difficulty. Joint Publication 3-08, *Intra-Organizational Coordination During Joint Operations* specifically warns of the difficulties of operating with other U.S. government agencies, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and other nations based on institutional and cultural differences.³ This paper advocates the Army's Brigade Combat Team (BCT) as the strategic solution to the need for a Joint, Inter-agency, Inter-

governmental and Multi-national (JIIM) platform to facilitate and synchronize a comprehensive approach in hostile, austere environments.

Background

The international environment continues to evolve away from the bi-polar post-World War II framework. Demographic trends such as explosive population growth in the developing world concurrent with population decline in Europe and Asia challenge the current economic structure. While the United States will remain a major economic and military power, China's expansive economic and military growth suggests a new balance of power. Other Asian states will also become more militarily capable as they grow more prosperous. Weapons of mass destruction proliferation among state and non-state actors will continue to challenge policy makers. Non-state actors will complicate deterrence and accountability. The states with weak, failing, or corrupt governments will be increasingly used as sanctuaries for terrorists, pirates, criminal networks, and miscreants of every sort, and will likely require a full WOG response. Addressing the challenges of failed or failing states in the context of debt, economic stagnation, poor governance, and limited or waning natural resources presents perhaps the most persistent, if not most serious challenge to U.S. policy makers. In a significant departure from the past, these challenges will have to be addressed in the context of an increasingly multi-nodal world with the United States as just one of many powerful states. The international order will be characterized by shifting interest driven coalitions based on diplomatic, military, and economic power.⁴

In describing the future environment, the 2012 Defense Strategy recognizes that most of the military problems confronting the United States require whole of government solutions involving the U.S. interagency or comprehensive approaches that involve

other governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and non-governmental organizations. According to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, “The United States faces profound challenges that require strong, agile, and capable military forces whose actions are harmonized with other elements of U.S. national power.”⁵

The Brigade Combat Team (BCT) has been the center piece of the Army’s expeditionary capability since the introduction of Army Transformation in 2004. This effort resulted from a desire to relook the Cold War Army with an eye to making it more flexible and deployable to deal with future contingencies. Key to this was the transition from an Army that centered on the 18,000 man division structure to a smaller brigade-centric structure of 4,000 to 5,000 troops that retained much of the larger force’s capability.

The Brigade Combat Team incorporates the various combat arms units of artillery, intelligence, reconnaissance, engineers, logistics, and others, previously only available at the Division level, into the brigade organization. This change in organization and culture makes the Brigade Combat Team self sufficient and separate from the division structure, allocating all the required capability for combat operations under the BCT Commander. Thus, in 2004, with the Army engaged in combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, United States Army Forces Command began to transform the Army’s 33 divisional Combat Brigades into 45 Brigade Combat Teams that were deployable independent of the division structure.⁶

In the 10 years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan the modular structure proved highly successful.⁷ Modular BCTs operated in areas substantially larger than those doctrinally assigned to legacy divisions, fought a complex counterinsurgency fight that

included the entire spectrum of conflict, and provided the Commander the necessary fires, intelligence, logistics, engineer and other war fighting functions from within his own organization.

The modularity effort organized the Brigade Combat Teams into three types; Infantry, Stryker, and Heavy Brigades. These BCT permutations dealt with the spectrum of conflict and threat possibilities while maintaining a flexible and adaptable force. They differ primarily in the number and weight of their vehicle platforms. Infantry BCTs are essentially built around the Soldier. They are light on vehicles, armor protection, and firepower, but highly deployable. The Infantry BCT is ideal for operating against an infantry based enemy in restrictive terrain. The Heavy BCT offers a different capability, heavy with tanks, fighting vehicles, and self propelled artillery. The Heavy BCT is unmatched in firepower and protection, but time and resource intensive to deploy. The Heavy BCT is ideal for combating a modern well equipped enemy in open terrain. The Stryker BCT is a compromise. Equipped with light but heavily armed vehicles that can easily deploy, provide rapid mobility for its infantry, and engage against a modern motorized force, the Strykers are however less capable and protected than the armor of a heavy BCT. The three varieties of BCTs and an ability to cross attach various parts to each other offer great flexibility to tailor the force mix to the particular situation.

The commonality of these BCT designs is all are robustly manned in the brigade and battalion staff sections. While the BCT staff organization is optimized for combat operations in a joint environment, the past decade has shown these staffs to be flexible and adaptable to a variety of mission sets to include those requiring interagency

integration. One such example has been the integration of the Provincial Reconstructions Teams (PRTs) of the State Department into BCT staffs in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many BCTs were able in varying degrees to reorganize the staff to better support the PRT mission. These changes included embedding BCT staff members into the PRT, combining the approval process of PRT and BCT initiatives, and conducting combined engagements with the host nation. Additionally, BCT staffs took the initiative and reorganized themselves out the Napoleonic structure of numbered staff sections to aligning along the Operational Lines of Effort suitable for counter insurgency. For example, the BCT operations and intelligence sections become the security and partnership section while the Civil Affairs and PRT become governance and reconstruction sections. Hence the staff and other BCT structures were reconfigured to accommodate JIIM integration. Further, BCTs were often augmented with a Civil Affairs Company and a Civil Military Operations Center. This latter organization, normally comprised of civil affairs personnel, is established to plan and facilitate coordination of activities of the Armed Forces of the United States with indigenous populations and institutions, the private sector, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, multinational forces, and other governmental agencies in support of the joint force commander.⁸ Thus, exists the current BCTs proven capability of using organic and non-organic resources to organize the BCT to integrate with other JIIM players.

BCT as the JIIM Platform, Case Study Kirkuk

The BCT's ability to serve as a JIIM platform and integrator is not theory, but a proven concept as one BCT in Kirkuk, Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) illustrates. In November of 2009, the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Armored

Division deployed to Iraq's Kirkuk province. By this time in OIF most of Iraq had benefitted from JIIM assets deployed to improve stability. In Kirkuk Province, a lengthy list of organizations operated independent of one another. These included the Department of State PRT, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI), Special Forces Operational Detachments Alpha (ODA) and Bravo (AOB), Tier 1 Special Operation Forces (JSOC), and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), Kirkuk Office. In addition an array of Iraqi security organizations operated in a disjointed and desynchronized manner within the area. These included the Kirkuk Provincial Police, Traffic Police, Facilities Protection Police, the Iraqi Army's 12th Division, 1st BDE Kurdish Regional Guard Brigade, the "Assayish" Kurdish Security Service (actually two of these, one for each Kurdish political party –PUK and KDP), the Iraqi National Intelligence Service, and several others. While all these organizations were aware of one another, the central Iraqi government and the Kurdish regional government had no process or method to de-conflict and synergize their efforts. These organizations were in fact working at cross-purposes and duplicating one another's efforts. The United States and international agencies also lacked formalized methods to synchronize efforts toward a common purpose. While the BCT was providing all the life support and mobility the PRT needed, there was little coordination of effort beyond these tasks. Additionally, there was no process to share information and harmonize efforts between the BCT and the UN. Clearly there needed to be a way to synchronize all these group's efforts. In the province of Kirkuk, the BCT Commander believed that only one organization had the size, resources, legitimacy, and prestige to bring all these varied, often competing and

sometimes antagonistic, organizations together. He saw this as a role for the Brigade Combat Team.

His effort began with weeks on the road meeting with various groups individually to build relationships and trust. He floated the idea of regular meetings to consult and share information. The next step was to devise an architecture of meetings to share information and synchronize efforts. The overall concept was a simple one. First, the BCT would meet internally to develop a security, operational, political, and developmental picture of the area of operations as well as the preferred operational direction for the BCT. The BCT would then use this as a starting point for discussions with the PRT and the various interagency players. The key was to share information and develop a common view and then decide what joint or interagency actions were most appropriate. The results were then shared and refined with the intergovernmental organizations and subsequently presented to the Iraqis as potential courses of action.

Thus, the BCT built an information cycle through an echeloned series of meetings designed to build a shared operational picture that starts inside the BCT, is extended to the WOG, then the intergovernmental community, and finally to the Iraqi national representatives. Unity of purpose and synergies were built by connecting all the JIIM players in developing a common picture of the operational area's tremendous complexity and a more informed way forward. The BCT became the nexus of this exchange.

There was more to the Kirkuk methodology than the mechanics that made it work. Relationship building proved essential. Despite national and rank differences across the JIIM spectrum, heads of agencies in Kirkuk were treated as equals at the

table. This was not only out of respect for their organizations but because it encouraged them to engage in the discussions. Additionally, all JIIM actors were required to participate actively and not simply listen. Too often, good listeners had a cultural inhibition against sharing information, especially in open forum. To set the proper example and tone, the CIA identified themselves to the interagency and multinational partners and spoke frankly.

These coordination meetings were essential and brought the various JIIM team members together on a regular basis. However, there was an additional track that was informed by this JIIM process. This was the Commander's Meeting. In this forum, only the BCT commander, chief of police, commander of the Kurdish Guard, and the local Iraqi Army division commander participated. In this meeting, the participants shared information and coordinated and agreed on key security activities. Equally important, it emphasized in an environment crowded with various actors that the security force commanders were held personally responsible for security. In dangerous Kirkuk this was a sobering concept, but it empowered them as well as held them publicly accountable. Given the inevitable post-incident finger pointing that occurs in any JIIM environment, knowing where responsibility resides is critical. In addition, this meeting served as a critical professionalization forum where the BCT Commander mentored and coached Iraqi leaders and they could discuss issues more openly amongst themselves.

The cycle of meetings took place weekly. The BCT threat brief was first. It provided a holistic view of enemy and political intelligence and served as the start point for developing the JIIM common picture. It included the BCT intelligence staff and the intelligence staffs of subordinate units. Intelligence and issues from this meeting were

refined and served as agenda items for the “Strategic Partners Huddle”. This second meeting brought together all U.S. intelligence assets in the province and the State Department PRT. Included were the CIA, DIA, AFOSI, SFAOB and JSOC. The purpose of this second meeting was to get joint and interagency perspectives on the Command’s intelligence picture and gain additional insights. This lively, open cross-talk amongst intelligence leaders generated alternate perspectives and teased out nuances in the intelligence picture. Additionally, agreements were brokered to integrate the efforts of the joint and interagency collection. For example, one intelligence organization would agree to look hard at this group or that person, another at a different group or person. To call it a JIIM collection plan would not be far off the mark. The Department of State provided information on key meetings among Iraqi political leaders and the U.S. government, informing the linkages between politics and security. Additionally, the “huddle” provided the key forum to discuss operations to address the threats to stability within each mandate and work to de-conflict where necessary and coordinate and compliment where possible.

This sharing of security and political intelligence across the interagency further informed two follow-on populations to complete the JIIM integration. The first was the Iraqi intelligence services. In the “Provincial Intelligence Work Group” releasable intelligence from the interagency sessions was presented to Iraqi intelligence services for review and comment. They were in turn encouraged to provide an Iraqi perspective. Consequently, the U.S. only picture was now colored by the Iraqi point of view and perspectives and nuances not previously understood emerged. Almost as importantly, these meetings served as an opportunity to mitigate antagonism existing among these

various indigenous groups--Kurds and Arabs, police and army, and military and intelligence. The interface at this level with the Iraqi intelligence services was in addition to the “staff on staff” engagements that linked the BCT S1, S2, S3, and S4 staffs to their Iraqi counterparts. These meetings served as the primary means to gain multinational synergy with the Iraqi counterparts in intelligence, operations, and civil capacity building.

The second follow on group informed by the Strategic Partner’s Huddle was the members of the “Stake Holder’s Meeting”. The Stake Holders Meeting was an effort to integrate the intergovernmental effort among the BCT, joint forces, and interagency communities’ efforts. The BCT co-hosted this forum with the State Department. It primarily focused on outreach to the United Nations Assistance Mission–Iraq (UNAMI) office in Kirkuk, although representatives from Department of Justice (DoJ), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), CIA, and the BCT Human Terrain Team also attended. The group met with and shared a number of concerns with the UNAMI. Here again, the Head of UNAMI Kirkuk was treated as an equal. Her concerns and initiatives were shared and supported as much possible and nested with State and BCT efforts. Information on key leader engagements was shared as well as other political intelligence as appropriate. Her efforts were flavored by the information provided by the BCT and Department of State (DoS) and in return information about her activities and those of NGOs she had visibility on was provided and to the extent possible synchronized.

Finally, the commanders were addressed and select items were shared with them, giving them the benefit of the entire process. Given this informed common

operational picture, broad agreements were made as to the way ahead on certain issues.

The end of the cycle brought together virtually every international and U.S. actor in Kirkuk, coalesced all the Iraqi security and intelligence forces and shared information, gained consensus, and built relationship across all of them. Perhaps most importantly situational awareness took on a whole new meaning. The saturation of perspectives brought in a level of detail, cultural nuance, local history, personal relationships, and tribal intrigue that was wholly impossible for any single agency to collect. All involved in the process gained this higher level of understanding that was dubbed “contextual awareness”. The layers of political, ethnic, sectarian, and tribal intrigue could to a better extent be separated and understood. This level of understanding greatly enhanced the quality of decision making and improved progress.

Acting in this way, the BCT fostered provincial-level JIIM synergy. During major events, such as the 2009 Parliamentary election, the JIIM team in Kirkuk achieved superb integration in both security and political lines of effort across the U.S. interagency and among its various partners. In this example, the UN and DoS were supported by the BCT in election monitoring. The BCT’s maneuver battalions, Special Forces A Teams, and JSOC teams targeted selected extremists networks early and throughout the election period, greatly limiting the enemy’s effectiveness. The BCT leadership mentored Iraqi Security Force leadership through this new experience and in turn were fully apprised of Iraqi concerns and potential issues. The assets on the ground to help stabilize Iraq were optimized. The BCT served as the hub of these efforts.

The Future BCT

In a recent study, the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth looked ahead to the Army of 2020 and defined three broad categories for likely employment of the BCT in the future. These categories were termed “Major Combat Operations”, “Foundational Missions”, and “Enhanced Protective Posture”.⁹ All these missions have JIIM implications.

Major Combat Operations. This category is best exemplified by the traditional maneuver warfare against a symmetric opponent. It includes forcible entry into the operational area, offense and defensive operations, and concurrent and follow on stability operations. Operations in this category require a broad spectrum of capability from strategic mobility, fire power and sustainability, protection from chemical and biological threat, and the ability to defeat a sophisticated enemy with armor and artillery as well as a nuanced approach to stabilizing the post-conflict environment. Major combat operations would require a substantial interagency contribution as defined in JP 3-08 *Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations* especially in the period immediately following the enemies’ defeat.¹⁰ While it is likely joint and some interagency assets like SOF and CIA would be on the battlefield from the beginning, the situation may be too hostile for DoS and USAID to deploy initially. These capabilities may be inserted later under Department of Defense protection as the conflict lessens, but needs to be applied expeditiously to the post-war environment.

Foundational Missions. This mission category is focused on supporting allies and friends around the world with assistance in combating insurgency, development of their security forces, and assisting in disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. These vary from Security Force Assistance, a mission in which the BCT partners with the host

nation for both training and operations, to using the BCT to assist in search and rescue of citizens in natural disasters. In all the various scenarios, an appropriate type of BCT would be selected, task organized, and scaled to support the mission. JIIM assets could be deployed as part the BCT or the BCT could work with JIIM assets already on the ground. Examples of these operations include past training of the indigenous armies throughout the Middle East and South America as well as the U.S. deployment of an Airborne Brigade Combat Team to Haiti in 2009 for disaster relief.

Enhanced Protective Posture Missions. These missions are those focused in support of homeland security. In these scenarios, the BCT is deployed in the United States in support of civil authorities. Scenarios include border security, infrastructure protection, restoring civil order, and disaster relief. The BCT would be expected to operate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Border Patrol, and local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. Support to civil authority is governed under Title 10 of the U.S. code.

In a change that should further facilitate interagency and regional interoperability, the Army will in Fiscal year 2013 begin to regionally align its BCTs.¹¹ That is, the Army BCTs will be habitually aligned to a particular Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) to fill his needs for forces. This change allows the BCT to familiarize themselves with the critical facts, culture, language, and nuances of the region and also the region's U.S. interagency expertise and players. This change can only further enhance synchronization across the JIIM.

The emerging strategic environment requires an integration of efforts on multiple levels to be effective. Given the robust, flexible, and expeditionary nature of the future

Army Brigade Combat Team, it is a logical hub that other JIIM expeditionary capabilities can use as a platform to deploy, conduct their missions, and synchronize their efforts with other JIIM teammates as the Kirkuk experience highlights.

The Brigade Combat Team Support to JIIM Players

BCT Support to Special Operations Forces (SOF). Special Operations Forces represent an essential military capability of the United States. Special Operations missions are characterized by stealth and precision as manifested in the superbly trained and equipped, hand selected operators conducting direct action, strategic reconnaissance, foreign internal defense, insurgency, and counterinsurgency. But the nature and structure of Special Operations often means they must depend on a host nation or out of country intermediate staging bases to conduct operations. Deploying SOF as part of a BCT, while not practical for all missions does greatly enhance the capability of both when it is practical. The BCT can provide a secure footprint from which SOF missions can be launched, can provide additional combat power for the missions when required, and can provide a robust quick reaction force. The BCT can provide casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) in a non-permissive environments as well as forcible extraction of the force in extreme situations. Moreover, a SOF force operating in the operational environment of a BCT can share the use of ISR, HUMINT, and SIGINT collection and fusion and conduct combined operations leveraging the special skills of SOF supported by the sustainable firepower of the BCT. In Iraq and Afghanistan there have been many examples of successful SOF and BCT integration. In 2005, an Airborne Infantry Battalion operating in Anbar Province, Iraq had Tactical Control (TACON) of a Special Forces Operational Detachment -Alpha (ODA) to handle human intelligence sources supporting the battalion attack against an Ansar Al Sunna

controlled city.¹² Conversely, later in the tour the same battalion was subordinated to a Joint Special Operations Task Force to support condition setting in targeting of Al Qaeda high value individuals. Throughout the war, BCTs routinely organized a robust Quick Reaction Force (QRF) with casualty evacuation, route clearance, fires, and logistics into a single Company Team to support SOF raids throughout Iraq.¹³ This sort of SOF/ BCT integration must be common in future operations and represents the most value added Joint integration of ground based assets.

BCT Support to the Central Intelligence Agency. Working closely with Joint Special Operations, the CIA often works covertly in non-permissive environments. Prior to 2001, the CIA had little presence in Afghanistan but was able to deploy and work with friendly Northern Alliance Forces ahead of both SOF and conventional forces. However, in other future scenarios the agency may find itself with no support in establishing a presence. Here is where the CIA and a BCT can work together. Deploying within the BCT conducting forced entry or Security Force Assistance and taking advantage of its security, mobility, and life support, the CIA can begin the work of connecting to human sources in an environment previously denied. The BCT can also employ its own human intelligence, signals intelligence, and aerial platforms to support CIA missions until it is able to establish its own support footprint.

BCT Support to the Department of State. The “whole of government approach” as articulated by the Secretary of State is perhaps best exemplified in the role of the State Department Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). Though the State Department leads these teams, they often include the USAID, the Department of Justice (DoJ), Department of Agriculture (DoA), and private contractors providing expertise in

economic, agriculture, education, and the rule of law. During Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, these teams partnered with the BCTs for support and coordination. The concept, although slow to be implemented in Iraq, is likely to be a model for the very kind of engagement the Secretary of State speaks to in her May 27, 2010 address before Congress,

Our long-term security will come not from our ability to instill fear in other peoples, but through our capacity to speak to their hopes...and that work will best be done through the power of the decency and dignity of the American people – *our troops and diplomats* [italics added]¹⁴

Showing its commitment to the WOG, the Department of State has created a Civilian Response Corp (CRC), which can provide hundreds of trained civilian experts to assist in COIN and stability operations.¹⁵ Clearly, the State Department must continue to depend on Department of Defense (DoD) to support them in dangerous expeditionary environments. The BCT has proven that it can provide the PRT with the necessary mobility, security, life support, and logistics.

Unfortunately, the Department of State and the Department of Defense have had a sometimes acrimonious relationship that can and has played out on the ground. As Harry R. Yarger discusses in his work, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, “Classically, the State Department and the DoD are interdependent with military power giving substance to diplomacy and diplomacy parleying military force into political success.” This is as true at the tactical level as the strategic level, however he continues, “Yet, each is overly protective of what they perceive as their turf and disruptive disputes have existed between secretaries and organizations.”¹⁶ Again this is as true in the villages of Iraq and Afghanistan as it is the halls of the Pentagon and Foggy Bottom. Training of all parties and habitual relationships would go a long way to

avoiding these frictions. When void of these frictions, the synergy between the PRT and the BCT can be a powerful combination in influencing and assisting the host nation to pursue a constructive path to stability and security.

Not only does this teaming provide the necessary support for an expeditionary State Department capability, but it soundly compliments the State Department's focus on civil capacity and rule of law through the BCT's focus on security force assistance. In addition, it couples the resources of such programs as the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) with State Department and USAID expertise, provides a well-rounded and informed Information Engagement /Public Diplomacy capability, and sends the message that the "decency and dignity" of the United States is backed by the combat power of a BCT. Virtually all of the future deployment scenarios in major combat operations and foundational missions would benefit from this synergy.

BCT Support to Inter-Government Agencies and Non-Government Agencies. The presence of intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental agencies in future deployment environments either before or during the operations of a BCT is inevitable. However, of all the JIIM relationships, this is perhaps the most sensitive. Intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations, World Health Organization, and World Food Organization, and NGOs, like Doctors without Borders, Mercy Corps, and Catholic Relief Services, all perform valuable services in failing or failed states, disaster and humanitarian relief operations, and post-conflict environments. Arguably however, their international nature, political disposition, and concern for neutrality make them reticent to coordinate and synergize in ways that the U.S. agencies prefer. It would be a mistake however to ignore their presence. The UN

brings tremendous legitimacy to operations but, like the State Department, they can be restricted by security concerns as well as political context. The BCT can establish a relationship with the UN representatives and seek every way possible to support their mission and security without compromising their neutrality or U.S. legal requirements. Once these conduits are established, synchronization of efforts on information sharing, security, and intelligence will contribute to better use of resources and create synergy.

BCT Support to the Host Nation Forces. The BCT is uniquely capable of conducting security force assistance (SFA) through adaptive task organization, a professional non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps of competent trainers, and its robust enablers of intelligence, ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Programs), engineer, signal and other capabilities that serve as force multipliers for the host nation forces. The BCT is specifically designated by FM 3.07.1 *Security Force Assistance* as the primary formation for these tasks.¹⁷ The BCT task organization is scalable both in size and capabilities appropriate to the operational environment. As SFA is conducted across the entire spectrum of conflict, the BCT can employ its assets to serve every purpose from teaching individual skills through full partnered major combat operations. In fact, many of these varied missions can go on at the same time. One such common variation seen in the waning days of Operation Iraqi Freedom was Iraqi Security Force (ISF) operations supported by on the ground advisers with BCT ISR platforms, fire support, and medical evacuation.¹⁸ The BCT can scale itself to compliment the capabilities the host nation lacks.

Moreover, the BCT represents the functional, professional, and experienced tactical component of the world's most respected military. The fact that these troops are

simply not teachers of theory or history but also experienced practitioners greatly enhances their impact on the competence and professionalism of host nation security forces. The BCT's leadership serves as an example and resource to the leadership of the host nation security force. In various areas such as targeting, intelligence and logistics, the BCT can leverage the power of its staff to achieve unity of effort and synergy between the BCT and the partner security force. Equally important is the BCT provides a means to coordinate security and other development within the host nation. In a very practical sense, it coordinates these, but also models them for the host nation forces.

Harnessing the Lessons Learned

The major challenge confronting the new BCT model is how to achieve the Kirkuk efficacy and synergy in an expeditionary environment immediately upon arrival in the operational area. The BCT is and must remain optimized for combat operations, its most high risk activity. However, success in the 21st century environment is invariably contingent on more than battlefield success. And the circumstances of facts on the ground and declining resources suggest it is to the Army's advantage to build the BCT so that it can facilitate the needs of the whole and therefore better accomplish its own mission. The BCT can be prepared for this role without restructuring it.

Not surprisingly, command selection for the kinds of individuals who can command in the multiple challenges presented by the current security environment is critical. The Army is already putting emphasis on flexibility and adaptability in leadership development. This is a step in the right direction, but the Army might also want to recognize those officers who excel in these environments to a greater degree in the promotion and command selection processes.

The education of officers and non-commissioned officers at the institutional level should also reflect an appreciation for this additional role of the BCT. It is inherent with the doctrine associated with stability operations, but a more refined doctrine needs to be developed for this particular aspect of decisive operations and leaders at all levels need to be inculcated with it. The roles of communications and trust building should be a part of this education.

At the organizational level, the BCT can task organize its assets to better accommodate JIIM integration for particular environments. Aligning the BCTs with Combatant Commands, which is already in progress, facilitates this. Thus one way to make the BCT the optimal JIIM platform is not to institutionally re-structure it, but to train the already robust BCT staff to recognize when reorganization is necessary and how to approach it. Such training should focus on interagency capabilities and the various agencies' expeditionary configurations. It should also address the presence and capabilities of the IGOs and NGOs operating in their aligned region and develop understanding as to how the connection to the BCT could best be accomplished. Certain staff members should be designated as liaisons with joint and interagency organizations and tasked to study and understand these assets while building lines of communication and trust. For example, the S2 staff could liaison with CIA and the DIA, the BCT Surgeon with World Health Organization (WHO), S9 with supporting or attached Civil Affairs organizations who might be operating a BCT CMOC or humanitarian and developmental NGOs, USAID, USDA, and others who might contribute to mission success.

All leaders within the BCT need to become very familiar with, and even experts in, the security and stability situations in their aligned regions. This alone will go a long way in making them more acceptable to and interoperable with the multinational and host nation agencies and forces. Real knowledge and understanding increases credibility and enjoins cooperation and support. BCT staff exercise scenarios should include actual interagency deployable personnel to train for the interaction and to specifically understand the dynamics of interagency planning and explore its full potential for the region. The Army transition to regionally assigned BCTs provides an excellent opportunity to liaison and train with regionally aligned interagency partners and joint counterparts. It also provides an opportunity to reach out to regionally aligned intergovernmental agencies, NGOs, and states of the region.

Security Force Assistance and multinational military training missions should also endeavor to bring together not only the military components but other non-military actors who influence and contribute to stability and recovery within the region. It is desirable that a robust exercise and engagement regime allow for the training, co-planning, and relationship building that appear to characterize the more successful of these JIIM endeavors well ahead of a crisis situation.

Conclusion

The Army's modularized Brigade Combat Team (BCT) provides the Nation not only a forcible entry and sustainable "boots on the ground" capability into global areas of interest, but also it is an ideal and available platform from which JIIM capabilities can be integrated and synchronized to create greater synergy and efficacy among the efforts of the Joint Force Commander (JFC), U.S. Ambassador, the international community, and a host nation. Properly prepared and commanded, it can effectively link security and

development activities in the operational area with an understanding of the local operating environment and consider and engage the key personalities. Its inherent capabilities make it the natural focal point and as long as it is astutely commanded and remains impartial in its support of success, others in the components of the U.S. interagency, international community, and local institutions will make use of and respond to it. If the U.S. government is to bridge the gap between the challenges these fragile and failed states pose and the limitations of our resources in future interventions, the Brigade Combat Team should be mission tasked and trained to fulfill this role. It is the solution to a significant strategic problem: a problem that can neither be ignored nor trusted to ad hoc solutions.

Endnotes

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¹⁷ Department of the Army, *Security Forces Assistance*, Field Manual 3.07.1 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, October 2011), VII-1.

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