

U.S Army South Exercise SOUTHERN VANGUARD 22 Integrated Deterrence in the Western Hemisphere

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U.S. Army South, Exercise SOUTHERN VANGUARD 22
Integrated Deterrence in the Western Hemisphere

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History

“Right now, 1000+ U.S. Army and Brazilian Soldiers are jointly conducting air assault exercise SOUTHERN VANGUARD 22, the largest U.S. element to conduct training with Brazil since World War II. This is what Integrated Deterrence looks like.”

**Secretary of Defense, Honorable Lloyd J. Austin
8 December 2021 (via Twitter)**

“America does not fight alone. Alliances and partnerships are among the greatest sources of our military strength. Our roadmap for building and strengthening relationships spans a range of activities that include military and key leader engagements. Boots on the ground deter would-be adversaries, and small, scalable engagements with our Allies and partners open doors to the access and presence we need to compete effectively. We cannot take for granted these relationships and the vital access and presence they provide us.”¹

U.S. Army South’s SOUTHERN VANGUARD (SV) series of exercises are built to enhance relationships, promote mutual military readiness, improve interoperability, and establish the foundation for lasting integrated deterrence with select partner nations (PNs) in the United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) area of responsibility (AOR). Although executed at the tactical level, they are proving to have strategic impact at the army-to-army level.

The first iteration, Exercise SOUTHERN VANGUARD 21 (ExSV 21) took place in Chile with participating units from the U.S. Army’s 10th Mountain Division and Chilean Army’s 3rd Mountain Division. Multiple other partner countries including Colombia, Peru, and Chile are committed to conducting this combined training event with the U.S Army through FY28. U.S. Army South (ARSOUTH) conducts ongoing assessments to determine which countries and identify the expected durations necessary to train with to accomplish country support plan strategies and long-term goals in the region.

“SOUTHERN VANGUARD 22 builds upon a partnership between Brazil and the U.S. The collaboration and partnership that comes with an exercise like this is extremely important to us. It builds interoperability. It also allows us to understand each other’s capabilities. Most importantly, it builds camaraderie down at the tactical level, as well as readiness for both countries, and partnership.”²

**Major General William L. Thigpen
U.S. Army South Commanding General**

Resende, Brazil, 13 December 2021

Overview

This second iteration of Exercise Southern Vanguard, focusing on the Brazilian Army (BRAAR), was an unprecedented combined military exercise in Latin America. It merged the BRAAR Land Operations Command (COTER) sponsored, and 12th Infantry Brigade (Air Mobile) conducted CORE 21 (Combined Operations and Rotation Exercise) with USSOUTHCOM sponsored and U.S. Army South conducted Exercise SOUTHERN VANGUARD 22 (ExSV 22). Training occurred at two different locations in Brazil. First, at Lorena (vic. Sao Paulo) and then moving to Resende (vic. Rio de Janeiro).

A first of its kind, this exercise not only committed the largest U.S. Army conventional force ever sent to train in Brazil, but it also integrated two separate national exercises into one. Additionally, it established command and control under a battalion level Combined Task Force headquarters (TF 5 BIL), versus under a lead nation with normal exchange of liaison officers between armies for interoperability. TF 5 BIL had a BRAAR Commander, U.S. Army Deputy Commander, and an integrated battalion staff.

Planning began in October 2020 as codified in mutually agreed to army-to-army staff talks. A deliberate combined Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) planning cycle preceded the CORE 21/ExSV 22 command post exercise (CPX) from 29 November to 5 December 2021. This preparatory work, along with the recognized need to consciously

“This was the first time we worked together. Army-to-Army readiness cannot be accomplished until we have more experience together. The goal for mutual readiness is by 2028. At this point the army could choose any unit to accomplish the combined mission. We are undertaking two major exercises- airmobile and jungle operations. Assessments are done best together. The biggest step is the beginning. I believe it is possible to achieve mutual readiness if we keep working together.”³

**Major Mateus Brum (Brazilian Army)
Chief White Cell, 12th Infantry Brigade (Air Mobile)**

CALL Interview in Brazil, 13 December 2021

form the team before the start of the exercise (STARTEX), proved invaluable to forge the dynamics of establishing interoperability, developing/maintaining a common operational picture, and conducting operations. A conscious decision was made by the Task Force Commander to make himself available at multiple touchpoints during the MDMP week to answer the staff's questions, provide guidance, and to make early-on decisions. This approach served the planning process well as the commander spoke excellent English and mitigated the language barrier constraint. (Figure 1)



Figure 1: TF 5 BIL Commander receiving a briefing by combined staff leveraging sand table method during planning (Photo courtesy of ARSOUTH Public Affairs Office)

Additionally, relatively early in the MDMP cycle it became clear using U.S. Army only, or BRAAR only MDMP steps did not work. Exclusively using either country's process caused confusion, consumed too much time, and impeded interoperability. This drove the task force to develop a combined MDMP to plan and execute operations understood by both armies. This lessened the need for interpreter and translator support, as these are high demand, low density personnel.

Below chart used in theater with BRAAR MDMP steps on the left indicating where they correspond to U.S. Army MDMP steps on the right (Figure 2). This made planning requirements and briefing times clear to both armies, without the need for translation, as steps are in each country's language. It was posted and used in TF 5 BIL headquarters. From U.S. Army South perspective, this is a best practice to be shared with other PNs conducting future SV exercises.

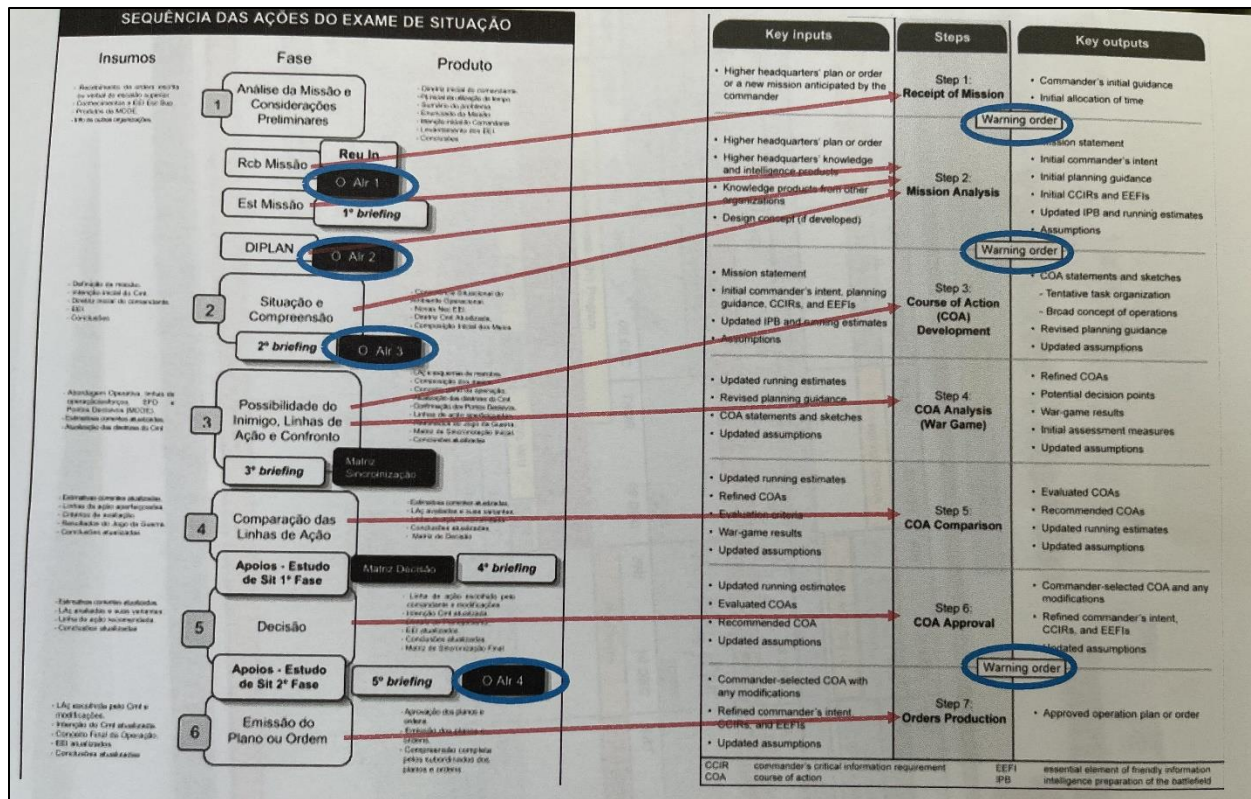


Figure 2: TF 5 BIL Combined MDMP (Chart provided by TF 5 BIL)

CORE 21/ExSV 22 CPX was conducted from 6-15 December 2021. The exercise had the below six major training events. There was a mid-After-Action Review (AAR) on 10 December and a Final AAR on 15 December. It was discovered both armies had similar but distinct AAR formats. The BRAAR AAR tends to be more statistically oriented, divided into phases, and with less planned for discussion. The U.S. Army AAR approach by design is overall more dynamic and intended to be facilitated professional discussion. Both formats analyze what happened during an operation, attempt to discover why things occurred the way they did, and most importantly how to make things better next time. The Center for Army Lessons Learned senior military analyst worked side by side with the BRAAR AAR Chief. It was mutually agreed by both armies to use the U.S. AAR format. BRAAR senior leaders stated they saw great value in the difference demonstrated.

- Combined Military Decision Making Process (CMDMP)
- Air Assault Operations
- Urban/Irregular Warfare Operations
- Deliberate Defense
- Live Fire Exercises
- Casualty Evacuation (CASEVAC)

Exercise Task Organization

Participating Brazilian Army units and roles in the exercise included:

- 12th Infantry Brigade (Air Mobile) provided the BRAAR Exercise Director, Exercise Control (EXCON), exercise White Cell, After Action Review (AAR) Chief, and observer controller-trainers (OC/Ts)
- Southeastern Military Command Training Center provided analysts and simulations support
- 5th Light Infantry Battalion (Air Mobile) provided the Task Force Commander, select task force staff, and three airmobile companies
- COTER Doctrine Center

Participating American Army units and role in the exercise included:

- U.S. Army South provided the U.S. Exercise Director and administrative White Cell
- 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) provided the Task Force Deputy Commander, select task force staff, and an air assault company
- 1-54th (GAARNG) Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB) provided OC/Ts
- New York State Partnership Program (SPP) provided observers assessing future involvement
- Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) provided a senior military analyst to collect lessons/best practices, conduct key leader interviews, and support to the AAR

Goals and Objectives – Focus on Interoperability

“The opportunity for the U.S. to be interoperable with such a significant partner as Brazil, gives us both the ability to deter threats and provide assurance within the region.”⁴

**Major Geoffrey Edmunds
Deputy Commander, TF 5 BIL (Executive Officer, 3rd BCT, 101st ABN DIV
(AASLT)
Resende, Brazil, 17 December 2021**

CORE 21/ExSV 22 had an overarching objective to improve interoperability between the U.S. and Brazil. U.S. Army South developed and used an Interoperability Framework concept based on standards found in AR 34-1, Multinational Force Interoperability. Human, technical, and procedural interoperability domains were considered. Interoperability observations were analyzed and assessed in context of tactical, operational, and strategic operational environments across the warfighting functions and mission sets. This included the exercise’s premier training event of a combined air assault operation. (Figure 3)



**Figure 3: 1-187th IN BN Soldiers on combined air assault operation
(Photo courtesy of ARSOUTH Public Affairs Office)**

Assessment worksheet checklists annotated tasks performed, or not performed, and recorded at what level of warfighting function interoperability was achieved (Level 0- Not Interoperable, Level 1- De-conflicted, Level 2- Compatible, or Level 3- Integrated).

An Interoperability Assessment Wrap-Up Report was produced at the end of the exercise. It contained compiled collection results from assessment worksheets used by both U.S. and Brazil OCTs and CALL Analyst. It recorded the 287 observations performed against specific tasks and across the six warfighting functions. The chart below measured the interoperability level achieved by warfighting function. (Figure 4). Results vary by

warfighting function. All but the Fires Warfighting Function were observed. Assessment results ranged from Level 0- Not Interoperable to Level 2- Compatible. In the case of Fires, Level 0 really meant that it was not observed due to no exercise play.

What was achieved during this rotation will help shape training for the next ExSV 24 CPX with Brazil. U.S Army South and BRAAR are already planning to conduct Command and Control, Fires, and Sustainment virtual working groups and tabletop exercises, in 2023, to address issues needing improvement. This concentration of training will also support exercise design for other future PN SV engagements.

Interoperability Assessment				Assessment Worksheet (Southern Vanguard 2022)	
Interoperability Assessment	Cumulative Assessment	Cumulative 'Go'	Observations Performed	Task Number	Task Name
Command & Control (LV1 Interoperability- Deconflicted)					
LV2			32	1	Conduct Liasion Coordination
LV2			17	2	Conduct the Operations Process for Command and Control (C2)
LV1			17	3	Integration of Partner Nation Common Operational Picture and communications platform with USARFOR Common Operational Picture
Movement & Maneuver (LV2 Interoperability- Compatible)					
LV2			32	1	Conduct Liasion Coordination
LV2			17	3	Integration of Partner Nation Common Operational Picture with USARFOR Common Operational Picture
Fires (LV0 Not Interoperable)					
LV1			12	1	Conduct Liasion Coordination
LV0			8	3	Integration of Partner Nation Common Operational Picture with USARFOR Common Operational Picture
LV0			8	5	Coordinate lethal and non-lethal fires in support of Partner Nation mission
Sustainment (LV1 Interoperability- Deconflicted)					
LV1			23	1	Conduct Liasion Coordination
LV2			15	3	Integration of Partner Nation Common Operational Picture with USARFOR Common Operational Picture
LV1			23	4	Conduct Combine Sustainment Activities with Partner Nation
Protection (LV1 Interoperability- Deconflicted)					
LV1			8	1	Conduct Liasion Coordination
LV1			9	3	Integration of Partner Nation Common Operational Picture with USARFOR Common Operational Picture
LV1			8	6	Coordinate Force Protection Activities with Partner Nation
Intelligence (LV1 Interoperability- Deconflicted)					
LV1			32	1	Conduct Liasion Coordination
LV2			17	3	Integration of Partner Nation Common Operational Picture with USARFOR Common Operational Picture
LV1			19	7	Disseminate Combine Information and Intelligence
Total			68		

Grand Total: 287 Observations

**Figure 4: Interoperability Assessment Wrap-Up Report
(Chart provided by ARSOUTH)**

Exercise Impact – Major Step Forward in Integrated Deterrence

“In this era of long-term strategic competition, the United States must remain the partner of choice throughout the Western Hemisphere ... authoritarian regimes and transnational criminal organization enabled by China and encouraged by Russia are attempting to consolidate power in the region, and free societies are being directly challenged ... whether [working] against COVID, transnational criminal organizations, the predatory actions of China, the malign influence of Russia, or natural disasters, there’s nothing we cannot overcome or achieve through an integrated response with our interagency allies and partners.”⁷

**General Laura J. Richardson
U.S. Southern Command Commanding General
Nomination hearing before Congress, 3 August 2021**

“While the National Defense Strategy won’t be released until later this year, it is no secret that the concept of integrated deterrence will play a large part in the document. In terms of integrated ... we mean, integrated across domains, so conventional, nuclear, cyber, space, [and] informational. [It is also] integrated across theaters of competition and potential conflict [and] integrated across the spectrum of conflict from high intensity warfare to the gray zone ... finally, the whole alliance system is crucial to integrated deterrence. We have to work alongside our allies and partners so that our adversaries know that they’re not just taking on the United States, they’re taking on a coalition of countries who are committed to upholding a rules-based international order.”⁵

“Integrated defense means bringing all allies and partners together, and using all tools available to counter threats, including different and all government agencies, the private sector and industry and non-governmental organizations. [It also] requires us all to work closely together – not only with our PNs in the region, but also democratic allies and partners around the globe.”⁶

SOUTHERN VANGUARD is meeting priorities of strengthening alliances and partnerships as laid out in the Army Posture Statement 2021. Based on the success of this rotation, the U.S. Army is realizing the effectiveness and efficiency this military-to-military engagement is having in the USSOUTHCOM AOR.

Gains made in multinational interoperability resulted in increased trust, confidence, and capabilities between armies. The BRAAR’s positive perception of this shoulder-to-shoulder training reconfirmed their resolve to continue long-term support to SV series of exercises. Testament to this, Brazil will host and conduct ExSV 24 again in Brazil with U.S. Army forces in November 2023. It will center on combined jungle operations. Multiple requests by BRAAR senior leaders calls for this type of persistent engagement as the only way to achieve interoperability, identify common shared threats and challenges, enhance mutual readiness, improve security, and determine modernization needs.

Conclusion

“You have to have trust to operate together in a combined task force. Being in the same terrain together and experiencing the same difficulties is the only way to acquire trust and knowledge. This exercise was a great first step and we are in better shape now than when we started. However, it is only our first step to getting to where we achieve common goals between each country to counter common threats.”⁸

**Major Rodrigo Magalhaes (Brazilian Army)
Exercise Control Director, 12th Infantry Brigade (Air Mobile)**

CALL Interview in Brazil, 14 December 2021

This exercise delivered opportunities to enhance interoperability at the tactical level with operational and strategic significance. Moreover, it represented a relatively low cost, high impact demonstration of integrated deterrence against common threats in the Western Hemisphere.

U.S. Army South is already planning future SV exercises. Under a multi-year plan through 2028, not only Brazil, but also Colombia, Peru, and Chile are hosting future iterations. Built into the plan, PN platoons or companies will also go to the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, Louisiana. There they will participate in and experience our best tactical capstone training to better prepare for combined operations with U.S. forces at SV exercises in their home countries. Of note, in FY 26, U.S. Army South envisions expanding out and inviting North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) observers to attend.

At the Army level, SV is being recognized as a powerful tool for influencing and broadening U.S. posture across Latin America. Reciprocally, the exercise is influencing partner armies to make commitments with the United States to train together to improve their country’s security environment, now and into the future. A true win-win situation – the U.S. Army builds readiness and maintains access through expanded presence in the region to deter malign state actors wanting to encroach on vital long-term relationships we have built. And, our partners are conducting planning and operations with premier U.S. Army Active Component formations, up to battalion level, to enhance their readiness and to potentially modernize their armies. An impressive site was the combined task force below proudly standing together at the closing ceremony. (Figure 5)



Figure 5: Commander, TF 5 BIL (front) and Officers and Soldiers from 3rd BCT, 101st ABN DIV (AASLT) and 1-187th IN BN (AASLT) (left) and 5th IN BN (Air Mobile) (right) at closing ceremony (Photo courtesy of ARSOUTH Public Affairs Office)

Annex A – Key Leader Interviews

- **Major Mateus Brum** (Brazilian Army), G3 Aviation, 12th Infantry Brigade (Air Mobile) and for exercise the Chief White Cell, with interview conducted on 13 December 2021
- **Major Bruno Scormin** (Brazilian Army), G3 Operations Officer, 12th Infantry Brigade (Air Mobile) and for exercise the Chief, AAR Section, with interview conducted on 13 December 2021
- **Major Rodrigo Magalhaes** (Brazilian Army), G3, 12th Infantry Brigade (Air Mobile) and for exercise the Exercise Control Director, with input provided from Lieutenant Colonel Mauricio Franca (Brazilian Army), Commander, TF 5 BIL and Major Geoffrey Edmonds (U.S. Army), Executive Officer, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and for the exercise the Deputy Commanding Officer, TF 5 BIL with interview conducted on 14 December 2021

Major Mateus Brum
Chief White Cell, 12th Infantry Brigade (Air Mobile)
Interview conducted on 13 December 2021

1. What are the benefits of establishing a Combined Battalion Task Force HQs to conduct multinational operations versus one nation in charge? What are the challenges?

It produces a better battalion level task force. The combined staff is able to plan how to use the different countries assets. It makes it easier to give orders because of the laced in staff. For our August Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation, a Brazilian Army (BRAAR) company and battalion staff integrated into a U.S. Army battalion. Lessons learned from CORE 21/SOUTHERN VANGUARD 22 will affect our future combined command and control relationship. Establishing a combined battalion task force works better. In my view, simply exchanging liaison officers (LNOs) cannot accomplish the staff integration.

In regard to challenges, each country conducts their own version of the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP). We discovered the need to develop a combined planning process. Results of this process proved very effective and efficient. However, to improve things for the next exercise we need to assign interpreters/translators for each country. It would also be beneficial if more U.S. Army officers learn the language of their partner nation. The BRAAR already does this. Operations will be enhanced if more Americans learn Portuguese and Spanish.

2. How did you conduct integrated Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) and what was learned that you will continue to use in future combined operations?

We were able to merge the two armies MDMP because they are so similar. Capturing and publishing this combined planning process is an essential requirement going forward. The BRAAR will ensure this is done.

3. How did we establish and how effective was our Common Operating Picture (COP)?

The BRAAR does not use phase lines and other coordination measures like the United States. We need to standardize these between our armies. An effective COP was established based on both armies learning each other's coordination measures during the combined MDMP and during operations. The commander determined how he wants to receive information and make decisions. In the BRAAR MDMP steps there are more touchpoints to the commander than in the U.S. model. During CORE 21/SOUTHERN VANGUARD 22, more briefings to the commander resulted in more opportunities for the commander to provide his guidance and intent to a combined army staff.

4. Are we in better shape now to counter common threats? If so, how?

Yes, we are in better shape. Information gained at battalion level will be provided to higher levels. Problems identified at this level will be the same at higher levels. Solutions for solving language barriers and doctrine and combined process problems have been identified.

We must continue to do this kind of exercise in order to counter common threats. Required is year by year exercises. Lessons learned will be lost if we wait for two years between events. Developing two distinct lines of effort (LOEs) is essential. One covering upcoming 12th Infantry Brigade (Air Mobile) JRTC rotation and the other on 23rd Infantry Brigade for upcoming SOUTHERN VANGUARD 23 jungle operations.

5. In what ways did this exercise enhance mutual readiness?

This was the first time we worked together. Army-to-Army readiness cannot be accomplished until we have more experience together. Goal for mutual readiness is by 2028. At this point the army could choose any unit to accomplish the combined mission. We are undertaking two major exercises- airmobile and jungle operations. It is best to do the assessment together. The biggest step is the beginning. I believe it is possible to achieve mutual readiness if we keep working together.

6. Where did we achieve interoperability and where did we not by warfighting function?

At the battalion level we achieved a level of interoperability by warfighting function as follows:

- Command and Control: Needs improvement but worked on important issues and identified future requirements such as developing mutual encryption capability
- Movement & Maneuver: Good level of interoperability
- Intelligence: Good level of interoperability
- Fires: Getting better but need more complex training to view actions
- Sustainment: Good level of interoperability
- Protection: Good level of interoperability

7. What can make the next CORE/SOUTHERN VANGUARD an even better exercise?

Between exercises we must train on major noted deficiency areas experienced on this exercise. This includes communications and fires. Recommend both armies conduct and receive reciprocal training. To accomplish communications objectives, send five

personnel from the 23rd Infantry Brigade, next BRAAR unit conducting a SOUTHERN VANGUARD, to conduct training on radios/networks at the U.S. Army Signal School at Fort Gordon, Georgia next year. Then, send five personnel from Fort Gordon to the 23rd Infantry Brigade location in Brazil. Recommend doing the same type of personnel exchange with the U.S. Army Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma next year to mitigate fires issues.

Additionally, it would be good for the next U.S. Army battalion conducting SOUTHERN VANGUARD 24 to have the opportunity to go to Brazil before the exercise. Always good to identify problems before the command post exercise (CPX).

Finally, to make the next exercise better we should conduct a series of virtual warfighting function tabletop exercises (TTXs). We need to plan these out well in advance in order to focus on the most critical ones given a limited amount of time.

8. Is there anything we did not cover that you would like to add?

I would like to add our human interoperability capabilities are good. However, to achieve combined readiness and alliance between our countries requires a look at the difference between the U.S. and Brazil's military infrastructure. The BRAAR needs more modern materiel if we are to work together as two big countries to counter common threats. Bottom line, BRAAR equipment and systems need modernization. We need more U.S. support to Brazil's modernization efforts.

Also, we must better define what can be shared. For example, right now the U.S. may not transfer certain technologies to Brazil. Given these type constraints and limitations, perhaps it may be worth considering what can we mutually develop together. Perhaps a new family of armored vehicles for example. Equipment that is mutually beneficial will make us more interoperable.

Major Bruno Scormin

Chief, After Action Review (AAR) Section, 12th Infantry Brigade (Air Mobile)

Interview conducted on 13 December 2021

1. What are the benefits of establishing a Combined Battalion Task Force HQs to conduct multinational operations versus one nation in charge? What are the challenges?

In my view, a combined battalion task force worked best on this exercise. When we are combined, group input is more integrated.

There are challenges when one nation is in charge. For example, often it is difficult for others to present information. Another challenge is in communications. Operations are difficult when only communicated in English or Portuguese. Also, acronyms are a problem. To fix we should develop an acronym list at the (Higher Control) HICON and at the battalion.

Believe the two staffs must come together before the exercise to close communication gaps, develop acronym list, and publish orders along with other documents. Between major exercises recommend we establish working groups to address known issues from the last exercise. This could be in a Leader Training Program (LTP) format and must include the HICON, Exercise Director (EXDIR), U.S. Army and Brazilian Army Cell Chiefs, and major players.

In the Brazilian Army (BRAAR), it is encouraged but not required to gain a second language. In the BRAAR, many enlisted and officers speak English and Spanish. This is accomplished by either the army providing the training, or the person does this training on their own. The benefits are you get a certificate that is good for professional development and future assignments. At our Officers Academy, at the School for Captains, and at the School for Majors and higher they can take second language courses. Here they gain proficiency in a country's language they may be assigned to. Or they take the language course simply to gain knowledge on a separate language. Either way they gain promotion points and assignment consideration.

Let me provide you a good illustration. If you are buying French helicopters, senior BRAAR leadership will encourage someone directly involved to speak French. Interoperability is increased when members of the BRAAR can speak the language of the country we are partnering with. This is particularly true on exercises and for new equipment fielding. Also, for upcoming annual Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotations a lot of BRAAR personnel will learn English.

2. How did you conduct integrated Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) and what was learned that you will continue to use in future combined operations?

The battalion task force MDMP steps integrated the planning process that was similar to what the BRAAR uses already. Some of the steps the U.S. Army uses are named different. Our combined staff was definitely a positive from this exercise. We learned

much from the U.S. Army's AAR format and lessons learned process. It was another way of doing things. We adapted it and merged it into our process during the exercise.

3. How did we establish and how effective was our Common Operating Picture (COP)?

Interpreters and translators were needed at the 12th Infantry Brigade (Air Mobile) HICON. They could have provided a good service supporting Daily G3 Updates, our Training Center Simulations Section, and at the Exercise Control (EXCON) end of the day "Sunset" meetings. Given this, at some of the key meetings there was an interpreter. BRAAR officers interpreted at the EXCON Daily Updates and most importantly for the two AARs.

EXCON had to translate documents and not all were completed. This included the Exercise Directive. On exercises, major documents must be in both Portuguese and English to be effective.

4. Are we in better shape now to counter common threats? If so, how?

Yes, by working together through our planning, processes, and by more common tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). All elements integrated at their levels. This was demonstrated when we worked together at the air assault training, follow on operations, and when we conducted the deliberate defense to counter the late-night attack by the Opposing Force (OPFOR). There were a lot of lessons at both the Solider and staff levels. The more we do these type exercises the better shape we will be.

Between now and SOUTHERN VANGUARD 24 (SV24) we must keep up the momentum. Consider and plan for quarterly in-progress reviews (IPRs). Our planning calendar should include Tabletop Exercises (TTXs) by warfighting function (WfF) and perhaps a Leader Training Program (LTP) before the command post exercise (CPX). For SV24 itself, it needs to be longer by including more pre-deployment training so both armies are better prepared to conduct the exercise when it starts. Incorporating Academics and a Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) may ensure both forces better understand the combined plan and are more interoperable.

5. In what ways did this exercise enhance mutual readiness?

In my opinion we are more interoperable today on both what is difficult and what is common between our armies. There is improved mutual readiness as a result of the completed training and exchanging of contact information. In the future, what was learned will be used to update brigade and battalion Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Also, the BRAAR Land Operations Command (COTER) will develop handbooks and update doctrine.

In our lessons learned system, the BRAAR Lessons Learned Section analyzes lessons and produces publications. The 12th Infantry Brigade (Air Mobile) along with other operational units provide updates to publications and sends these to COTER.

We also send our officers out to partner nation armies. For example, when we wanted to learn more about air assault operations, we requested and sent someone to Fort Campbell. He became the Air Assault School Executive Officer and brought back information to update our Air Assault Manual. Seeing other countries gets new viewpoints.

6. Where did we achieve interoperability and where did we not by warfighting function?

There were some command-and-control problems, language constraints, and radios not talking to each other. Specifically, each country had different encryption on communication systems. I submit we achieved significant interoperability in the sustainment WfF as resupply was excellent.

7. What can make the next CORE/SOUTHERN VANGUARD an even better exercise?

Conduct more briefings, do more training before exercise begins, improve communications, and conduct TTXs by WfF. Examples are fires and communications TTXs.

8. Is there anything we did not cover that you would like to add?

It was an excellent exercise for both the BRAAR and U.S. Army. The AAR process was very good.

Major Rodrigo Magalhaes
Exercise Control Director, 12th Infantry Brigade (Air Mobile)
Input provided from Lieutenant Colonel Mauricio Franca (Brazilian Army),
Battalion Commander, TF 5 BIL and Major Geoffrey Edmonds (U.S. Army),
Executive Officer, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault),
and Deputy Commanding Officer, TF 5 BIL
Interview conducted on 14 December 2021

1. What are the benefits of establishing a Combined Battalion Task Force HQs to conduct multinational operations versus one nation in charge? What are the challenges?

The combined battalion task force developed and used a combined Military Decision Making Process (MDMP). This provided better ways to achieve mutual tasks and objectives. Employing a combined battalion task force proved more effective than commanding separately and bridging differences with liaison officers (LNOs). The combined staff brought points of view from both countries. This made the MDMP clearer and improved capabilities. Bringing the staff together in this way is better than a separate approach. Planning and executing under a combined battalion task force headquarters also proved more efficient versus one nation in charge.

However, there were challenges. These included command and control and cultural differences such as food customs. Day by day the troops got use to these differences. A more critical challenge was radio encryption keys not working between armies. Each country has different keys. But this challenge is not too big to overcome in the future. Challenges between armies can be overcome by conducting more exercises more often. Scheduling these annually is essential, or we will lose the momentum.

2. How did you conduct integrated Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) and what was learned that you will continue to use in future combined operations?

Focus on objectives and products to produce not the process challenges. When we come together, we know each army has different MDMP processes. We respected each other and learned from each other to keep the planning going. It is difficult to direct each country to do planning only in a certain way. The approach was to combine to achieve objectives. There were only small differences as the Brazilian Army (BRAAR) MDMP is based on U.S. Army MDMP. The difference were some steps not in content. This enabled both armies to focus on how they normally plan.

3. How did we establish and how effective was our Common Operating Picture (COP)?

The combined battalion task force possessed a lot of means to establish and maintain a course of action (COA). There were no significant communication issues. The BRAAR units had available U.S. personnel with their communications equipment, and it was the same the other way around. This was a solution for this exercise only. In the future, we

must be able to develop another solution by not just using a mix but enveloping true communications interoperability.

At the Exercise Director level, I saw a lot of communication devices and at times there were internet network problems. For example, during the exercise's Very Important Visitors (VIP) Day the internet system went down. We solved this by having alternate and redundant systems. To be clear, some of the communication devices and networks used during the exercise were not organic for command and control at the BRAAR brigade level. There were provided to us.

In the future, the BRAAR Land Operations Command (COTER) wants to establish a training center similar to your Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) in Brazil. We need to go through the challenges of setting this up. Units training in this type of environment will have the opportunity to work on establishing and maintaining a COP against the Opposing Force (OPFOR) during the scheduled rotations. It will happen someday in the future in Brazil with the U.S. Army's help.

4. Are we in better shape now to counter common threats? If so, how?

Yes, for both armies by mutual knowledge on each other's capabilities and capacities that generate mutual trust. You have to have trust to operate together in a combined task force. Being in the same terrain together and experiencing the same difficulties is the only way to acquire trust and knowledge. This exercise was a great first step and we are in better shape now than when we started. However, it is only our first step to getting to where we achieve common goals between each country to counter common threats.

5. In what ways did this exercise enhance mutual readiness?

I believe we did achieve our goals in this exercise. We also identified issues to improve in the future. This training brought opportunities to learn from problems presented to a combined task force. As they saw problems, they figured out how to solve them. This enhances our mutual readiness. Therefore, maintaining our current level of mutual readiness is important. But, enhancing it is better. This can only be achieved by ever more complex problems in training, including adding other dimensions in the operating environment to negotiate.

Planning and operations worked well in the human domain in CORE 21/SOUTHERN VANGUARD 22. However, there are other areas to consider for mutual readiness. Will things work well if we add U.S. equipment? Is CLASS III fuel compatible between our vehicles and helicopters? Is CLASS V ammunition compatible between weapon systems? These were not tested this time. We must educate and train both armies on each other's ammunition. In this exercise there were no problems because both U.S. and Brazil brought their own. However, these are essential requirements to consider when assessing our real-world mutual readiness. We must work together to plan the next exercise. It must focus on how to best test ourselves in order to gain more mutual readiness. We should know what is compatible in command and control, communications,

fires, and aviation before the command post exercise (CPX) begins. Adding a BRAAR company to a U.S. formation in the future will additionally test mutual readiness.

6. What can make the next CORE/SOUTHERN VANGUARD an even better exercise?

From the Exercise Director level, here is where the battalion task force is at:

- Command and Control: Need to fix the encryption key issues
- Movement & Maneuver: Okay at the company level
- Intelligence: Okay
- Fires: Okay at what was tested
- Sustainment: CLASS I food and water are okay, but the exercise did not drive all classes of supply
- Protection: Okay

There are ways we could improve across the warfighting functions to prepare for and conduct the next CORE/SOUTHERN VANGUARD. These include:

- Establish a Logistics Working Group (WG) and do a crosswalk on classes of supply
- Establish a Fires WG focused on the targeting process
- Conduct a series of Tabletop Exercises (TTXs) on select warfighting functions
- Deploy U.S. Army vehicles and equipment next time and have BRAAR Soldiers work on them
- Have U.S. Army Soldiers work on BRAAR vehicles and equipment

7. What can make the next CORE/SOUTHERN VANGUARD an even better exercise?

We need to cross walk logistics classes of supply and maintenance and establish command and control relationships prior to exercise to close gaps. Have both U.S. and Brazilian forces arrive earlier to the exercise location to exchange doctrine and processes. Recommend 5-10 days before the start of exercise (STARTEX). The objective is to see and work MDMP and how it will work in CPX execution. Also, during this timeframe consider conducting a Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) Drill and Academics to better prepare

the combined force to plan and operate together. These additions could make the next CORE/SOUTHERN VANGUARD an even better exercise.

Endnotes

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