



# ***NEWS FROM THE FRONT***

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## **The “By, With, and Through” Approach: An ASCC Perspective**



LTG Michael X. Garrett  
Commander, USARCEN

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# United States Army Central White Paper

## **The “By, With, and Through” Approach: An Army Service Component Command Perspective**

*From Egypt to Pakistan, and from Kazakhstan to Yemen, the US Central Command’s area of responsibility is, by most estimates, just as strategically important as it is volatile. All of this instability combines to make our partnership and cooperation with regional militaries all the more critical.*

**Lieutenant General Michael X. Garrett, Commander, United States Army Central**  
Remarks at the Task Force Spartan Transition of Authority (29th Infantry Division to 35th Infantry Division)  
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United States Army Central

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## Foreword

This white paper provides US Army Central's perspective on the contemporary operating environment as the Theater Army for the US Central Command Area of Responsibility. It also constitutes a request of the Army to analyze the By, With, and Through (BWT) operational framework for the purpose of informing future force generation, training, and mission command for Army forces.

While current doctrine does not provide a settled definition for the BWT method of conducting operations, USARCENT describes the By, With, and Through operational approach as conducting military campaigns primarily by employing partner maneuver forces with the support of US enabling forces through a coordinated legal and diplomatic framework.

Effectively executing BWT requires several changes in policy and in mindset. The definition of the term partner must be carefully and continuously refined. Strategy may differ when US forces are not the only means and partners see the ends differently. Operational art is affected when partners have the initiative and dictate the tempo. Methods of tactical execution must remain flexible as junior leaders blend tactics, techniques, and procedures with those of partner forces. We discuss the risk to mission and risk to force at the operational level of war and ways we have mitigated that risk in execution.

This paper will highlight the impact of unsettled definitions on the Theater Army's support to the Joint Force Commander in the BWT prosecution of Operation Inherent Resolve. It is written from the Army Service Component Command (ASCC) perspective rather than that of the Coalition Joint Task Force (CJTF). While USARCENT is not suggesting that we stop fighting By, With, and Through our partners, we suggest that this operational approach needs more analysis in order to be employed optimally. In fact, a deeper understanding of the implications of By, With and Through will very likely inform the future training and preparation for the US Army's Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFAB).

This paper is complementary of ongoing initiatives throughout the US Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility such as the Mosul Studies Group in Iraq and Expeditionary Advisor Packages in Afghanistan.

Finally, I would like to thank all involved for their hard work in developing this White Paper in the interest of the future force.

Michael X. Garrett  
Lieutenant General, United States Army  
Commander, US Army Central

## INTRODUCTION

United States Army Central (USARCENT), the Theater Army for the Central Region, provides comprehensive support to multiple efforts through an operational approach that United States Central Command (CENTCOM) describes as fighting By, With and Through operational partners. This approach poses a unique set of circumstances that require greater understanding to overcome inherent challenges and to fully realize associated opportunities. The terminology can be found in CENTCOM messaging, written orders, and engagements with key leaders. This BWT operational approach shapes the security environment in countries or regions where a large US presence may be unwelcome, impractical, or merely a supporting effort to other instruments of US policy. However, doctrine does not fully define this concept, and it is not yet known how this operational approach will affect the readiness and tactical employment of US Army forces.

USARCENT seeks to illustrate the unique characteristics of the BWT way of war from the perspective of a Theater Army responsible both for supporting the fight and, in some cases, contributing forces directly to combat operations. Because the intent of this paper is to engender discussion across Department of Defense (DoD) and contribute to the development of the future force, USARCENT welcomes dissent and constructive dialogue.

While CENTCOM uses the term BWT in mission statements for current operations the concept is doctrinally undefined. For the purpose of this paper, USARCENT describes the By, With, and Through operational approach as conducting military campaigns primarily by employing partner maneuver forces with the support of US enabling forces through a coordinated legal and diplomatic framework. Adherence to this approach finds US forces task organized and deployed in small, non-doctrinal packages<sup>1</sup> across Joint Operations Areas (JOA) to austere locations among non-organic formations, often without habitual and doctrinal sources of support. In some cases, this dispersion exceeds the Theater Army's capacity to provide mission command, protection, and some categories of sustainment such as medical, maintenance, distribution, and risk to force sustainment.

Challenges inherent in the BWT method of war confronted USARCENT from the time it established the initial Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Headquarters for Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) in 2014. The same challenges persist to the present time while USARCENT serves as the Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) for CENTCOM in addition to being the Theater Army and Army Service Component Command. In each of those roles, and at various times, USARCENT adapted its organizational architecture to successfully accomplish all missions assigned by the Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC). Frequently, these solutions call for the use of capabilities and resources originally allocated for other missions to include deterring malign influence and hostile aggression throughout the region. USARCENT is greatly enabled in its efforts to provide this support by leveraging the proximity of the friendly nation of Kuwait and the relationships developed there during more than twenty years of continuous presence and engagement.

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<sup>1</sup> Non-Doctrinal Employment describes the employment of units in packages that are different from and/or with mission command relationships that are unintended by approved force design.

The notable success of the 1st Theater Sustainment Command (1TSC) and Task Force (TF) Spartan (divisional mission command node for Operation Spartan Shield [OSS]) in their respective roles as provider of theater logistical support and mission command of an armored brigade combat team and field artillery, air defense artillery, combat aviation, and engineer brigades is due in large part to their spirit of adaptability. In an allusion to the diplomatic skills required to overcome obstacles such as the obscure customs regimes of partners sharing a common border, Brigadier General Robert D. Harter, Commander of the 316th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, noted that "BWT is inherently working through sovereign nations to get approval to help them. This can be very frustrating." (BG Harter Interview 19Jul17)

Executing within the BWT operational approach not only poses challenges, but opportunities as well. BWT's defining characteristic may be the limitation placed on the direct employment of US combat arms Soldiers. Currently, infantry remains the decisive arm for coalition forces fighting in Iraq and Syria, but not for supporting US forces. Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) is not employing US maneuver units as trained and organized, and, by design, this often limits conventional US troops' exposure to direct ground combat. In practice, the BWT approach requires the Theater Army to enable both US Special Operations Forces (SOF) and coalition partners, as well as US conventional forces employed in an advisory role that is more commonly associated only with SOF.

The national or non-state partner is readily providing soldiers to perform infantry and even armor roles in close combat operations. This reliance on host nation maneuver forces changes the calculation of risk to US forces. As Colonel Pat Work, Commander of 2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, noted in his interview with the Center for Army Lessons Learned, "They [Iraqi Security Forces] assume 99.9% of the physical risk every day." Lieutenant General Steve Townsend, Commanding General CJTF-OIR, cited a specific instance of this behavior with a vignette about Iraqi infantry following closely behind bulldozers during intense combat operations in Mosul (Lt. Gen. Townsend, CENTCOM Commander's Conference, July 23, 3107). While decreasing the risk of US casualties, the willingness on the part of partner nations to incur loss may also lend increased legitimacy to their efforts. As partners invest in their own security and demonstrate commitment to their nation, it counters the perception of US forces as an occupier with only self-interest at stake.

Multiple capabilities of the US military complement the needs of our warfighting partners. US infantry and armor Soldiers find themselves in the role of primary trainer to counterpart indigenous forces. The partners also rely on a large volume of US precision fires to enable their maneuver on the battlefield. They lack non-human sources of intelligence (GEOINT, MASINT, and SIGINT). They do not possess sophisticated equipment such as vehicles that enable protected mobility or precision weapons that mitigate collateral damage. Their logistical capabilities are insufficient to sustain or extend operational reach. Their technology is not sufficiently advanced to provide an edge in the action/counter-action cycle of weapons development and force escalation. Partners hunger for the morale boost and confidence that US support brings. In his exit interview, MG Martin, Commanding General of 1st Infantry Division, noted that "What we had to do is assure them that we would always be there." (MG Martin Interview, 12Jul17)

USARCENT anticipates that the US civilian leadership will continue to demand that military operations be executed BWT. This preference for BWT operations is due in part to the empirical effectiveness of letting those with the greatest stake in the outcome shoulder the

greatest burden of risk. Survival is clearly a powerful motivating force. It is also true that local forces are more culturally attuned to the nuances of dealing with local populations. Perhaps most importantly, BWT supports the US national preference for minimizing casualties in the absence of an existential threat. As a result, the challenges of BWT execution will continue to confront operational and tactical commanders. Commanders must, therefore, adapt their methods to achieve mission success.

The examples provided throughout this paper represent the experiences of USARCENT as the Theater Army supporting Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) and Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). While some lessons may be unique to the operational environment in the Central Region, most actions taken in support of OIR and OFS can surely provide a model for similar future conflicts and inform related initiatives such as the Multi-Domain Battle concept. The reliance on partner nation ground maneuver and the relative absence of similar US forces from the battlefield bears further analysis to determine impacts to present day force generation and future force readiness. While USARCENT acknowledges that the US Army must plan and be prepared for near-peer conventional war, the unpredictable nature of future wars dictates that the Army must also account for the tactical and operational implications of BWT warfighting.

## BACKGROUND

In 2017, as the US enters its sixteenth consecutive year of conflict in the Middle East, the goal of building partner capacity for the effective implementation of a BWT operational approach continues to be a work in progress. USARCENT, as the CENTCOM Theater Army, remains front and center in the fight, straddling the line between the complexity of informing strategy and the complication of designing feasible operations. Although the BWT approach to fighting is neither without precedent in military history or an altogether new development in CENTCOM operations, its current formulation to minimize US forces and casualties bears new analysis.

The term itself, “By, With and Through”, or “BWT”, originated decades ago as a component within the definition of Unconventional Warfare (UW).<sup>2</sup> The 2003 edition of Joint Publication 3-05, Doctrine for Joint Special Operations (December 2003), defined UW as "a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted **through, with, or by** indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities and unconventional assisted recovery."



“Fighting BWT is as old as our country’s history, even though the name is new. In the American Revolution, Brits [British Military] used Torie colonists and Native Americans. [And during the] Indian Wars we used tribes against each other.”

- LTG Michael X. Garrett

Picture: British BG Brock and Tecumseh 1812

From its inception in describing SOF activities in low intensity conflict, BWT has evolved over the years to describe conventional activities in multi-domain battle. In years past, BWT could be viewed as an operational approach in an economy of force environment. Today’s fight against ISIS is hardly an economy of force mission from the standpoint of whole-of-coalition operations. Presently, BWT describes how the US applies the warfighting functions, minus US maneuver, in its fight alongside major partners willing to commit thousands of troops to decisive action. The lack of common understanding results in challenges at the tactical and operational levels while also having implications for the strategic level of warfare.

A comparison with OIF I (2003) draws a stark contrast to the BWT approach. That campaign was a conventional fight employing combined US arms to defeat a mostly conventional enemy force. However, following the initial, successful invasion, the need to place coalition partners at

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix: Doctrinal Lineage of the terms “By, With, and Through”



the forefront of operations emerged. While this practice led to an anecdotal understanding of BWT, the present resource-constrained environment demonstrates the need for a thorough DOTMLPF analysis in order to anticipate the demands and the efficiencies of the approach.

The 2017 CENTCOM Posture Statement reads: “The Counter-ISIS (C-ISIS) Campaign has entered its third year and we are on track with the military plan to defeat the terrorist organization in Iraq and Syria. Our **“by, with, and through”** approach and operational level simultaneity strategy are working, and our partner forces continue to build momentum across the battlespace as we pressure the enemy on multiple fronts and across all domains.” (Statement of General Joseph L. Votel on the Posture of U.S. Central Command March 9, 2017) USARCENT’s support to the Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) would benefit greatly from an analysis by the institutional arm of the US Army on the deeper implications of this approach.

## **BWT EFFECT ON WARFIGHTING FUNCTIONS**

The Army forces assigned to the CENTCOM AOR are one tenth of the number assigned to the Pacific Command (PACOM) AOR and one fourth the number in the European Command (EUCOM) AOR. All forces other than those assigned are present in response to need-based requests for forces (HQDA Globally Engaged Army chart, August 2017). In the course of meeting the GCC’s need for Army forces, the Theater Army is the first echelon to review a request for additional capabilities. Often, the process of force generation leads to a denial of additional capability from outside the theater and a directive to employ capabilities already present for other purposes. This alternative sourcing process is documented in the form of a Theater Coordinated Assistance (TCA) request from the warfighting headquarters to the GCC. Absent an explicit policy decision which underwrites the drawing down of capabilities allocated to respond to other, more existential threats, it is then left to the service component to ensure the GCC understands the associated risk to the ability to respond to other contingencies.

USARCENT supports two named operations in the USCENTCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR), Operation Freedom’s Sentinel (OFS) and Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). It exercises force protection responsibilities for the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) treaty organization in Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula, home to a very active branch of the Islamic State. It directly executes tasks associated with the deterrence and theater security requirements of Operation Spartan Shield (OSS) in the fifteen nations where US troops are not engaged in active combat. At the operational level, there is only one source from which to draw forces should the Department of the Army choose not to resource new deployments. As a result, the ASCC must carefully articulate the risk to executing its OSS mission in its support to either OIR or OFS.

Mission Command: From the Theater Army perspective, the lack of a full complement of division-level enablers in the OIR CJOA results in operations that are unable to be fully synchronized with associated support requirements. Outside the CJOA, Task Force Spartan (TF Spartan), a mobilized Army National Guard (ARNG) division headquarters, supports both OSS, OIR, and OFS with deliberate planning and detailed risk mitigation practices. The high number and wide variety of dynamic and un-programmed missions conducted by its arrayed forces continues to have impacts on manning, equipping, maintaining, and employing the force in support of both operations.

Major General Blake Ortner, TF Spartan Commander from December 2016 to July 2017, said in his exit interview that TF Spartan “had elements that were tasked for the Advise and Assist missions, but they were tasked across huge geographic areas. So, what that often meant is that you have the battalion commander that’s running the TAC up in Mosul, you’ve got his XO down here in Kuwait managing the rest of the forces, the staff is split between the locations ... So, what you have is each location ending up with a reduced force, reduced staff planning and things like that. So, that could constrain the mission command capability a little bit.” (MG Ortner 07Jul17)

MG Ortner also noted an adjustment in command relationship that supported mission accomplishment: “Some of the command and support relationships were working against OIR and us. So, in working with OIR and ARCENT, we adjust some to improve combat operations.” (MG Ortner, 07Jul17) As an example, he referenced CENTCOM’s adjustment to authorities which permitted the repositioning of HIMARS to respond more flexibly to the fluid tactical situation on the ground in Iraq.

MG Ortner summarized the risks to the OSS mission of deterring malign influence and hostile aggression across the Middle East when he stated, “Leaders at all levels are being asked to step outside of their normal responsibilities and lead and mitigate risk beyond what they were trained to do. They are also being asked to employ their equipment and forces outside of what would be normal (Mission Essential Task List [METL] or Army Universal Task List [AUTL]) mission requirements. In practice, not all of these efforts or employments are success stories, but the challenges, and resultant solution sets, are in line with what was derived in the Army Operating Concept (AOC) – guiding future force development through identification of first order capabilities that the Army must possess to accomplish missions in support of policy goals and objectives.” (MG Ortner 07Jul17)

Examples of non-doctrinal employments incurring increased risk include:

- Attack Weapons Teams (AWT) (2x AH-64s) are executing geographically dispersed operations and with a command and support relationship separate from its company headquarters. The Combat Aviation Brigade operates with limited maintenance and refueling in an undefined logistics supply situation. TF Spartan depends on USAF to execute operational movement in the absence of organic US Army transportation capabilities.
- TF Spartan HIMARS ISO OIR are deployed in 2x launcher teams called Light HIMARS Packages. Technically, the HIMARS units are designed to fight in 4 launcher platoons where each platoon includes a required Fire Direction Center. In the smaller configuration, Sergeants are independently executing mission command of Fire Direction Centers. While they have been generally successful, the situation calls for anticipatory training of NCOs who may find themselves in this role.
- The 420th Engineer Brigade forms cross-functional teams and detachments below the level presumed in doctrinal task organization. These small teams are “commanded” by Staff Sergeants who are controlled by SOF elements with loose command and control relationships, and faced with making tactical and operational level decisions in the execution of their mission.

In an opposing view, COL Pat Work, an on-the-ground Advise and Assist (A&A) brigade commander, noted, “There is no loss of chain of command because our TTP is not recorded in

doctrine. Perhaps this mission profile epitomizes Mission Command." Work also said that "Bandwidth might be the most important class of supply to A&A. Power generation may be number two." (COL Work, Jul17)

Movement and Maneuver. US Army forces are conducting movement in Iraq and Syria, but not maneuver, because the current form of BWT calls for the reliance on a partner's maneuver force in the battlefield geometry. Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, defines maneuver as, "Employment of forces in the operational area through movement in combination with fires to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy." (JP 3-0, 17Jan17, p. xiv) Although not used for direct ground combat, there remains a requirement for US infantry in other traditional roles. In CJTF-OIR small advisor teams often have a full platoon of infantry for force protection.

Intelligence. The US military has the most capable intelligence architecture in the world and focuses a variety of intelligence assets in the fight against ISIS. However, the absence of prior intelligence sharing agreements among partners can hinder the sharing of technologically-derived information from US sources. For the counter-ISIS fight, this challenge was somewhat overcome by the development of a tailored Middle East Security Forces (MESF) caveat. Inversely, US forces are unable to use HUMINT generated by partner nations to fill gaps in their situational understanding. US Forces must determine a means to achieve efficiency in the development of a common operating picture and situational awareness in coordination with partner forces having different technology, language, and culture.

Fires. The current BWT fight relies on precision fires, and the US military delivers fires more accurately now than at any time in US history. BWT, in effect, trades the effects of Precision Guided Munitions (PGMs) for the lethality and fire discipline of US troops on the ground. US combined arms doctrine calls for unified fire and maneuver to mass effects, seize and maintain the initiative, and cause multiple dilemmas for the enemy (ADP 3-0 Unified Land Operations, pg. 1). Iraqi Army and Syrian Defense Forces instead depend heavily on fires to disperse or attrit enemy forces prior to the seizure of terrain through maneuver. This Iraqi and Syrian practice of employing fires to achieve the effect of eliminating enemy resistance without complementary maneuver required fire missions in such number as to increase the risk of error or collateral damage.

Because US policy is averse to incurring casualties to either US forces or noncombatants, the employment of relatively scarce precision munitions is preferred, which greatly increases their rate of expenditure. Some observers may conclude that the high demand for indirect fires on behalf of less capable partner maneuver forces has little applicability to a more conventional conflict. However, it seems likely that a US commander would show the same reluctance to commit infantry into an urban fight if precision fires were available and unconstrained.

Additionally, fires employed in the course of BWT operations are typically dynamic rather than deliberate, making predictability of usage rates and resupply forecasting slightly more complex. MG Martin in his exit interview said "Of the 16,500 so strikes we did over the course of the year I bet 90% or more were dynamic because it was the nature of the fight. Deliberate targeting in this environment for CJFLCC does not work." (MG Martin, 12Jul17)

#### Sustainment.

BWT is at least as logistically intensive for U.S./Coalition forces as traditional operations, especially when supplying munitions in support of indirect fires. As a result of the increased

expenditure of precision munitions, the allocated storage and distribution capabilities are hard-pressed to provide sufficient stocks to the point of use, and the industrial base is severely taxed to meet manufacturing demand. BG Harter refers to this unexpectedly high expenditure of artillery munitions with his observation, “BWT is more logistically intense than if our forces were doing this ourselves. Particularly intensive in the use of precision fires.” He also noted that “The Iraqis understand maneuver, but sustainment in their formation is not there yet.” (Harter, 19Jul17)

MG Paul Hurley, Commanding General, 1st Theater Support Command from June 2015 to June 2017 wrote, “Waging war against [ISIS] with a limited U.S. military presence requires non-doctrinal logistics solutions to support coalition, U.S., and host nation forces. ... Without the authorities, access, and logistics structures of the past, the 1st TSC’s challenge is two-fold: providing operational and tactical logistics to U.S. forces while simultaneously providing material and supply support to the Iraqi forces.” (Army Sustainment, Nov-Dec 2016, pages 39-40.)

Indications are that BWT inhibits the development of US partners’ tactical and operational sustainment beyond that which is necessary to conduct the close fight. It may be the case that so long as the US is willing to establish, and pay for, the establishment and upkeep of lines of communication for major operations, partners will continue to rely on that support. MG Hurley noted, “Coalition partners in the region rely too heavily on U.S. logistics expertise and equipment to achieve operational capability.” (Army Sustainment, Nov-Dec 2-16, page 40.)

USARCENT provides medical and maintenance support to partners and the Joint Force through tailored, non-doctrinal packages. The decentralized employment of small elements (HIMARs sections, AWTs, Sentinel Radar systems, sustainment packages), and constraints on the number of Soldiers deployed, stretches the ability of the maintenance and supply systems to uphold the readiness of critical systems supporting the CJOA. Maintenance support relies heavily on civilian field service representatives (FSRs) who in turn depend on military-provided transportation and security to move to remote and austere locations around the battlefield. The concept of traditional unit basic loads (UBLs) for supplies and spares is not employed, and formations rely on a just-in-time (JIT) concept of support.

In order to match the partners’ operational tempo and extend operational reach, BWT requires basing from multiple contingency operating locations. While this places advisors and support with partner forces where they are most critically needed, the requirement to provide logistics at each of those locations requires sustainment packages (forward logistics element [FLE]) in ever-smaller numbers with less robust capabilities. The sustainment architecture on which coalition and partnered forces rely is continually modified to provide the maximum possible support to a rapidly changing CJOA within the constraints of US policy and the political sensitivities of coalition partners.

Bureaucratic customs processes associated with conducting operations in sovereign nations also challenge the distribution and transportation networks within the CJOA. For example, the need to use commercial line-haul carriers over inadequate road networks, as well as limited airfield capability and an insufficient number of movement control units lessens the effectiveness of the current CJOA distribution network. Maintaining effective control and accountability over the distribution of weapons and equipment in a semi-permissive environment also continues to be a significant logistical challenge.

Others have noted that the lack of available force structure constrains operational flexibility. MG Martin gave an example of the request for an advisor team, "You also have to understand that the tail that is supporting that advisory team, has to be accounted for. So, when you say advisor team, you're looking at an infantry platoon plus a couple of staff officers, let's say that's forty people. However, there's an additional five or ten people we have to add to the BSB [Brigade Support Battalion] or whoever. When we throw some extra advisors, now we have to ask for a route clearance package, because now, more advisors, more networks for them to move to and from the roads, now we've got more roads to clear." Because these forces are not readily available, planners must forecast and request the capabilities far in advance or the tempo of operations must slow to await their arrival.

Operational headquarters must budget for forces to support base operating support (BOS) requirements, and this mission has further taxed the limited logistics forces available to provide BWT support in the CJOA. MG Hurley wrote that "US logisticians are meeting this non-doctrinal workload using a manning-restricted sustainment footprint that is arguably inadequate for the task." (Army Sustainment, Nov-Dec 2-16, page 40.) 1st TSC and USARCENT always accomplished the mission, but DOTLMPF improvements can reduce risk and improve efficiency.

Protection. BWT mitigates the risk to infantry and armor Soldiers who historically have the highest incidence of casualties, but it increases the risk to other forces distributed across the battlefield that are dependent, in some cases, on local forces for their force protection.

MG Martin stated "To achieve that access and to build that relationship you must have people forward that are not commuting to work, but they are living there with them and with that it works very well. But there are risks associated with that." He continued, "This environment forces commanders to spend a lot of time assessing risk because it is not something that you look at episodically or periodically. It's a thing you must continually assess over time."

In referring to another dimension of Soldier risk, COL Work noted in his exit interview that "Protecting ourselves and our partners is a top priority. Risks include illness and injury. ... I spend much of my time evaluating and mitigating risk with our TF A&A Cdrs. ... Consider the roles of Chaplains and Behavioral Health specialists as well. Distributed forces, potential limitations to ground mobility, and the human dimension of our Soldiers in a hazardous environment creates risk if there is not added preventative and reactive capacity."

While BWT seeks to increase the likelihood of accomplishing political objectives and to decrease the risk to US forces in the close fight, it increases the risk to strategic and tactical mission accomplishment. The tactical mission is placed at risk in relying on the decision-making processes and priorities of partners, while risk to the overarching strategic mission is increased when objective end states and those of chosen partners diverge.

Finally, USARCENT executes BWT operations at an increased risk to its steady-state requirement: deterring malign influence and hostile aggression while setting conditions for transition to combat and shaping the environment to mitigate threat. Of course, the elimination of all risk is an unachievable, and probably an undesirable, objective. As an Army War College professor noted, "In war, risk is a zero-sum game where combatants have to make trade-offs between risk to themselves, the mission, and noncombatants. Eliminating the risk to noncombatants places this risk squarely on combatants and the mission. If combatants also

refuse or are not able to accept sufficient risk, then it all falls on the mission, which is often itself sacrificed (as a result)." (Pfaff, 16Feb17)

## **RECOMMENDED APPLICATION TO DOTMLPF-P**

Doctrine: The Army should establish a doctrinal definition of BWT and a framework for BWT operations, similar to the Multi-Domain Battle construct. The outcomes of this effort would better enable planning and resourcing the BWT fight, and it would provide warfighting headquarters, force providers, and other key stakeholders a common frame of reference for discussing the requirements and objectives for BWT operations. The effort could create doctrine for adapting employment of smaller formations with enablers through leveraging the Mosul Study Group and embedded analysts from the Center for Army Lessons Learned.

Organization: Develop the Security Force Assistance echelons to execute BWT at all levels in the competition period of conflict, including high intensity ground combat. The Army should design scalable formations to execute BWT operations at multiple echelons able to incorporate subject matter expertise able to advise multiple warfighting functions.

Training: Incorporate the lessons learned described in this paper during units' pre-deployment rotations to training centers. Training to succeed in contemporary combat operations means that units are trained to effectively execute BWT. BWT requires living with partner forces versus "commuting." Training should replicate the current battlefield conditions, including the dispersal of constrained resources and the presence of reduced or indigenous force protection.

Materiel: At the operational and tactical level, BWT calls for additional analysis of the types and quantities of equipment the US provides to partners and whether planning assumptions for expenditures remain valid. The Army should study the implications of providing BWT partners with technologically advanced equipment and how to best assist with maintenance of that equipment. At the strategic level, BWT should drive analysis on which partners the US chooses to equip. The Joint Force needs to plan for the possibility that a portion of that equipment may fall into the hands of our enemies. Commanders must inventory the skills required of sustainment personnel at all echelons level to execute the appropriate distribution of materiel. BWT requires development of sustainment operations for US and partner forces that are subject to US partners' momentum and initiative. Current sustainment models require reframing.

Leadership and Education: US Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) should continue to train small-unit leaders for the independent actions that this method of warfighting requires. Training must incorporate an understanding of the cultural characteristics of coalition partners.

Personnel: A consequence of the relative success in conducting BWT operations is that leaders today see it as more acceptable from a domestic political perspective than placing large numbers of boots on the ground. As a result, requests for forces (RFF) are often deployed at less than MTOE capacity and capability, with less than full complement of staff, fewer personnel than required, and without the necessary array of skills. USARCENT has found that fighting BWT is as hard as fighting conventional battles and needs complete organizations for supporting functions. Fewer boots on the ground may equate to more resource intensive operations due to reliance on partner maneuver forces.

Facilities: USARCENT's support to OIR may be an anomaly in the overall BWT method of war. Success is heavily reliant on the access, basing, and overflight from nearby stable and reliable partners (particularly the nodes in Kuwait). In the future, success in BWT should not be dependent on facilities in the theater and near the fight.

From the Theater Army perspective, can we succeed BWT [by-with-through] without access to a large, permissive ISB [intermediate staging base]? And, are we prepared to provide BOS-I [base operations support integration], including Force Protection, to multiple small FOBs and COPs?

- LTG Garrett's comments at AUSA 2017 Warriors Corner Presentation



Policy: US policy makers should be informed about the impact of sustained BWT operations on the future ability of US forces to execute operations at the higher

end of the warfare spectrum.

## **POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS**

In addition to the implications of fighting By, With and Through for warfighting functions and DOTMLPF, there appear to be implications for national policy and strategy as well. For example, the reduced presence of US combat troops may blur red lines for opposing forces, increasing the opportunity for miscalculation. While these and other matters may be beyond the scope and breadth of this document, USARCENT seeks to highlight a few issues for further consideration by the appropriate organizations.

Prosecuting wars through a BWT approach requires a national political commitment that is different, and may have a lower threshold, than a personnel-intensive, casualty-inducing campaign. What does this mean for the ability of the GCC to obtain the policy and resource support necessary to sustain and succeed in extended operations?

What considerations must be made when the narrow interests that form the basis for a BWT relationship begin to diverge? What binds the partners together until the primary goal is accomplished? What other agencies of government or international organizations are necessary to outline areas of agreement and to define the mechanisms and boundaries of cooperation?

Is the US government or military liable for war crimes committed by partners through whom we are prosecuting the conflict? What is the US responsibility to influence partners and prevent

their violation of the laws of war? Would a proven violation, or even an allegation of illegal conduct, affect US commitment at the expense of accomplishing national objectives?

Fighting BWT requires the massive transferal of US military equipment to partners who may have other uses for that equipment, or their ability to maintain possession may be minimal. In what ways should the US tailor or condition lethal-aid assistance in order to minimize future threats, or do short-term benefits outweigh long-term risks?

These and other questions have no easy answer. Even so, their consideration by senior headquarters and policy planners now may greatly ease the task of commanders in the future. Those commanders are charged with designing operations and developing relationships with partners that bear the best possible chance meeting strategic objectives and accomplishing desired national end states. A road map to effective and acceptable coalition architecture for the execution of BWT operations would be helpful to planners and commanders alike.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the execution of current operations, US Army Forces in the CENTCOM AOR are often not operating as designed, formed, and trained. In response, force providers should consider the characteristics of BWT when building and deploying organizations. For instance, it is worth considering whether SFABs ought to have tiered capabilities in order to serve most effectively as maneuver elements for the Theater Army's execution of BWT operations. The adaptation of US Army forces to the BWT paradigm will have a direct impact on the execution of missions by other components in the CENTCOM AOR.

US Army pre-deployment training does not account for the manner in which some units and personnel are employed in the CENTCOM AOR. BWT often results in units and personnel conducting operations as interchangeable parts without organic enablers. Units are deployed, tasks and purposes evolve, and TTP remain in theater. There is as of yet little formal knowledge transfer of BWT back to the generating force.

Fewer boots on the ground does not necessarily equate to less resource intensive operations. In fact, quite the opposite is often true. The military organizations of US partners are often less sophisticated, making support for their operations even more complex. The fact that the BWT approach is dependent on vulnerable US-affiliated groups provides enemies with opportunities to indirectly affect the US mission. US forces reliant on local actors lose control over certain elements of operational art: operational reach, tempo, and risk. US Army forces cede initiative to either an imperfect partner or an enemy motivated by an existential threat.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the continued employment of US Army forces in a "By, With, and Through" operational approach demands further study by the institutional Army. If our forces are to be successful in this new operational approach, it is essential to reach a common definition of the concept and to prepare leaders and formations for its intelligent execution.



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## Appendix: Doctrinal Lineage of the terms “By, With, and Through”

The current DOD definition of UW alludes to present day understanding of BWT. It states, “Unconventional warfare — Activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power **by operating through or with** an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area. (JP 3-05, 16 July 2014).”

Army Field Manual 3-22 *Army Support to Security Cooperation*, Jan 2013, uses the term BWT in several places including:

- Paragraph 1-2. Although the Department of State (DoS) leads and provides oversight for security cooperation efforts through its bureaus, offices, and overseas missions, security cooperation activities are conducted and coordinated throughout the geographic combatant command area of responsibility (AOR) **by, with, or through** the theater army to—(1) Build defense relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests. (2) Develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations. (3) Provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation. (FM 3-22, January 2013)

Notice the focus of this paragraph is the DOD effort to further DoS missions. In addition, the ASCC is the BWT agent, not the actor.

- Paragraph 1-38. The three ways addressed above help shape the security environment by enabling partners to develop the capability to provide for internal and external defense, export security capacity-building regionally or globally as appropriate, and expand access in countries or regions **by, with, or through** those partners where U.S. presence may be unwelcome or impractical. (FM 3-22, January 2013)

Notice the focus of this paragraph is aligned, most closely, with present day understanding.

- Paragraph 3-71. ARSOF support operational preparation of the environment through a wide range of activities that directly support unified land operations. ARSOF assess and shape operational environments **by, with, or through** host nations, regional partners, and indigenous populations in a culturally attuned manner that is both immediate and enduring. Coordination and integration between conventional forces and ARSOF support theater objectives and unified action to prevent and deter conflict or prevail in war. (FM 3-22, January 2013)

Notice this paragraph reinforces the importance of SOF in BWT.

- 6-38. (Chapter 6 Considerations for Working Effectively With Foreign Security Forces.) All planned operations must be conducted **by, with, or through** the FSF and defense establishment. The measure of an effective advisory effort is the amount of personal responsibility the FSF take for their own operations. Civilians must see that their FSF can provide for their internal security and external defense while promoting the legitimacy of the host-nation government and its capacity to build trust and confidence. Advisors maintain a subtle and ongoing influence, their presence being as constant and unobtrusive as a shadow. (FM 3-22, January 2013)

Notice this paragraph links the advisory effort to BWT.

FM 3-24 *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*, 13 May 2014, demonstrates the evolution of the term BWT and application to the fights in Iraq and Afghanistan. Paragraph 10-25 states, "Identify, separate, isolate, influence, and reintegrate is a method that combines several activities that affect relevant population groups. This can be done in both high threat situations and situations where the insurgency is at its infancy and combat is less intense. This method works **by, with, and through** the host nation; however, it may have some elements which Soldiers and Marines are directly interacting with a local population. (FM 3-24, May 2014)."

Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, 25 March 2013, states, "The nature of the challenges to the US and its interests demand that the Armed Forces operate as a closely integrated joint team with interagency and multinational partners across the range of military operations. Using a whole-of-government approach is essential to advancing our interests to strengthen security relationships and capacity **by, with, and through** military forces of partner nations, US and foreign government agencies, state and local government agencies, and intergovernmental or nongovernmental organizations." (Preface, pg. i.)