Red Diamond
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**TRADOC G-2 Operational Environment Enterprise
ACE Threats Integration**

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THREAT 2025+ NEARS COMPLETION

by Jerry England, TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration (DAC)

As the Threat 2025+ analysis project comes to a close, ACE-TI is making an effort to capture the key conclusions in order to ensure that realistic, robust, and relevant hybrid threat (HT) conditions become part of the TRADOC Operational Environment Master Plan.

Each threat blueprint addresses a unique challenge for US forces to contend with based on HT tactics, capabilities, and terrain. In order to meet the intent of the HT concept, every blueprint includes a significant irregular component. Conflict areas such as Syria, Iraq, and the Ukraine display a heavy representation of irregular forces that provide an integral component of the threat.

For this reason, ACE-TI recommends that the guerrilla forces in the primary brigade tactical group (BTG) increase from a company to a battalion. Additionally, the ability of the irregular forces to secure resources is astonishing and the Threat 2025+ analysis concluded that added capabilities are an

> **EACH THREAT BLUEPRINT ADDRESSES A UNIQUE CHALLENGE FOR US FORCES TO CONTEND WITH BASED ON HT TACTICS, CAPABILITIES, AND TERRAIN.**

important factor when representing the irregular forces. As such, ACE-TI recommends that guerrilla forces be portrayed with increased mobility in the form of improvised tactical vehicles and that they have access to commercial unmanned aerial vehicles.

Finally, the events in the Ukraine influenced the decision to place more electronic warfare (EW) capability at the tactical level. The inclusion of an information warfare company with improved EW systems will better represent the HT's ability to achieve information control on the BTG's area of operations.

RED DIAMOND TOPICS OF INTEREST

by Jon H. Moilanen, TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration, Operations, *Red Diamond* Newsletter (DAC)

This issue of *Red Diamond* opens with an article on the DJI-Phantom, a commercial unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). The popularity of UAVs like the DJI-Phantom comes from three main factors: relative ease of use, reliability, and accessibility. They can be used for conducting reconnaissance, exercising command and control, or providing battlefield damage assessments. With a transmission range of up to five kilometers, these UAVs also provide significant standoff from the majority of small arms.

The ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia has renewed interest in Russian techniques and procedures. The hybrid warfare in this conflict includes the use of irregular militias on both sides with training from special purpose forces. This article, second in a two-part series, focuses on militia battalions supporting Russia.

An article explains Blueprint Three of the Threat 2025+ project, an ACE-TI initiative to produce a blueprint series capturing future threat tactics from a threat perspective for training. The blueprints are rooted in Training Circular (TC) 7-100.2, *Opposing Force Tactics*, and represent projected threat capabilities. The intent of the blueprints is to validate the current hybrid threat (HT) requirements for training and the current HT force structure at training centers Army wide. This article discusses one blueprint in detail, Irregular Force Maneuver Defense in Complex Rural Terrain, and explains the conditions for its use in training.

Six June 2016 witnessed the opening ceremony for an event billed as the largest military exercise held in Poland since 1989, when voters swept the Solidarity Party to power in the country's parliamentary election. Ten years later Poland joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and, in 2006, began holding Anakonda military maneuvers on a biannual basis. In this year's exercise, Anakonda '16, Poland hosted 30,000 soldiers from more than 20 NATO and partner countries, with the United States providing almost half of the participants. This article provides an overview of the exercise and highlights some of its more notable aspects.

The upcoming Threat Tactics Report (TTR) on Hizballah contains information such as a strategic overview of the group; its alliances, weapons, and funding mechanisms; and common tactics used. The final Red Diamond article this month, derived from this TTR, includes discussion of Hizballah's history and tactics, and a review of one tactical action.

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TRADOC G-2 *Worldwide Equipment Guide:* DJI-PHANTOM COTS UAV

Figure 1. Ukrainian soldier with DJI UAV

by Jerry England, TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration (DAC)

Commercial unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) like the Da-Jing Innovations (DJI) Phantom 3 represent a rapidly-spreading threat as militaries and terrorist groups devise new ways to leverage the technology to achieve their aims. Whether it is conducting reconnaissance, providing battlefield damage assessments, or exercising command and control, commercial UAVs like the Phantom provide significant aerial coverage at a fraction of the cost of military UAVs. Current UAV systems are equipped with digital cameras that provide excellent imagery for tactical uses. The open architecture of the DJI's control application, known as *DJI Go*, has opened the door to third party-developers who want to modify and create new capabilities, presumably in a fraction of the time it would take a state-sponsored program.[1] Examples of software modifications include preloaded flight plans for autonomous flight and simple changes that open the number of available channels for command and control and telemetry of the unit.

Commercial UAVs feature improved endurance and simple controls that make it easier for inexperienced operators to use the system. According to the manufacturer, the DJI Phantom 3 UAV can operate high-definition cameras that can take still photos or live videos and transmit them for up to five kilometers. This capability provides significant standoff from the majority of small arms as reconnaissance elements attempt to obtain intelligence for potential targets. The images are produced in the most common format types, which makes it convenient to transfer images and videos to the internet via commercially available networks.

System Capabilities and Characteristics

The popularity of commercial UAVs like the Phantom 3 comes from three main factors: relative ease of use, reliability, and accessibility. These three factors are the reason many recent aerial videos from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and groups in the Ukraine conflict are likely to have been filmed with DJI UAVs.

From a marketing standpoint, the ability to operate the system effectively with very little training makes commercial UAVs one of the fastest-growing segments of the UAV industry. Intuitive designs allow soldiers to become proficient at piloting and operating all of the UAV features. How-to videos on social media sites show every aspect of the operation process, from orienting the GPS guidance system to piloting techniques. Additionally, the newer systems such as the Phantom 3 have many failsafe features that prevent new pilots from crashing, including a home feature that permits the unit to return to its last known location of the ground station, and a hover mode that keeps the unit airborne if the controls are released. There is even a setting that adjusts for wind speed to stabilize the unit under a variety of conditions.

Reliability has improved as manufacturers compete with each other for profits. Although most commercial UAVs are designed as expensive toys, operators expect five or six missions under combat conditions for some models before they are either shot down, lost, or damaged beyond repair. Command and control ranges vary from model to model, but the Phantom 3 features one of the longest in the industry, five kilometers. The Phantom 3 will operate for approximately 25 minutes on a single charge, but this time will vary dependent on additional weight carried, such as IR cameras or munitions. DJI's integrated control application allows the Phantom 3 to operate on eight separate channels that automatically switch if the current channel is being used by another electronic device. The DJI Go application is available for both Apple and Android operating systems, making it compatible with many common mobile devices.

The accessibility of commercial UAVs is another element of their growing usage in combat. At less than $2,000 per unit, the Phantom 3 represents achievable reconnaissance capability for many groups. For some Ukrainian military groups, however, even that price is too high, so the Ukrainians have resorted to crowd funding for acquiring UAVs. Websites such

as the "Peoples Project" and "The Crowd Funding Center" allow Ukrainians both inside and outside the country to donate funds to purchase weapons, scopes, load-bearing gear, and UAVs for units in the field.[2] The command and control software used to pilot DJI UAVs is an open-source application that receives modifications from application developers and users who want to make the UAV do a specific task. This has resulted in a number of improvements to the baseline interface and creates options to suit different missions. Startups such as Kenargo and Litchi have developed applications that allow Phantom pilots to build flight plans using preselected waypoints for autonomous flight. There is also an application that allows the Phantom to track moving objects and follow them. Both have clear benefits for reconnaissance and surveillance. Other modifications have expanded the number of available frequencies from 8 to 32 by removing the lock on the unit's presets. This allows pilots to manually switch frequencies if there is interference.

Figure 1. **A user shows how to orient a DJI UAV while under fire**

Employment

Many commercial UAVs like the Phantom are operating in Iraq, Syria, and the Ukraine. Videos on social media show Ukrainian soldiers directing artillery using a DJI UAV.[3] These commercial UAVs' small signature and slow speed make them difficult for traditional radar systems to locate.[4] A propaganda video produced by ISIL likely used commercial UAVs to document its assault on Ramadi and its reconnaissance efforts prior to the attacks on the Bayji refinery and a Syrian airbase.[5] A Department of Defense (DoD) spokesperson in Iraq was reported to have said that commercial UAVs pose a direct threat to US and coalition forces. The use of commercial UAVs to deliver small munitions and guide suicide vehicles, in addition to their tradition surveillance role, has caused the DoD to request additional funding to find methods to defeat this threat.[6]

System Proliferation

Commercial UAVs are available worldwide and it is expected that adversaries would use them for the purposes described above. A DoD joint urgent operational needs statement in support of counter-ISIL missions validates the assumption that commercial and small UAVs are common and a direct threat to American military personnel.[7] China has also recognized this issue and is creating an anti-UAV unit specifically designed to counter small low-flying UAVs.[8]

Training Implications

UAVs are no longer the exclusive capability of the US and its allies, as they are rapidly becoming a key part of every threat actor's arsenal. American military units will need to train to not only detect these small commercial UAVs, but develop solutions to defeat their effects. The ability to not only distinguish friendly unmanned aerial systems from enemy UAVs, but also to recommend what they potentially signify for future enemy actions, will be critical to the modern battlefield. UAVs that record soldiers' actions for propaganda purposes, collect intelligence, or drop improvised munitions are all viable events that could be encountered in the operational environment. Developing the tactics and techniques to counter commercial UAVs will need to become second nature as this threat proliferates.

Threat Doctrine Manifestations

The WEG sheet below is an example of a commercial UAV and its capabilities. The system can be used for live, virtual, and constructive training environments. The commercial UAV represents a capability that is in the guerrilla threat force structure. It is not the only UAV available to the guerrilla forces, as more capable military UAVs can also be attached to these units if the training scenario requires.

CHINESE COMMERCIAL OFF THE SHELF (COTS) MICRO UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE DJI-PHANTOM

SYSTEM	SPECIFICATIONS	Operating Temperature (F):	32-104
Alternative designations:	Phantom	Power CONUS (dBm):	20
Date of introduction:	2013	Weight (g):	365
Proliferation:	Global	**PAYLOAD**	**SPECIFICATIONS**
		Gimbal Stabilized:	Yes
Ground Crew:	1	Camera Mega Pixel (MP):	12.4
Propulsion:	4-two blade propeller Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) Electric	Camera Range Video (m):	100-3200
		Camera Range Still (m):	100-1600
		Photography Modes:	
		Single Shot:	Yes
Motor (V):	15.2	3 Burst:	Yes
Gross Takeoff Weight (kg):	1.28	5 Burst:	Yes
Speed:		7 Burst;	Yes
Maximum(km/h):	57	Time Lapse:	Yes
Max Ascent Speed (m/s):	5	Video Modes:	
Max Descent (m/s):	3	Ultra High Def:	Yes
Ceiling, max (m):	6,000	Full High Def:	Yes
Operational Ceiling (m):	300	High Def:	Yes
		Secure Digital Card Max (GB):	64
Default Ceiling from Takeoff Point (m):	120	Video Bitrate Max (Mbps):	60
		File Formats:	
Endurance (min):	23	FAT 32:	Yes
Range LOS CONUS (km):	5	exFAT:	Yes
Range LOS OCONUS (km):	3.5	Photo Format:	JPG, DNG
Launch Method:	Surface Launched	Video Format:	MP4, MOV
Launcher:	No		

CHINESE COMMERCIAL OFF THE SHELF (COTS) MICRO UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE DJI-PHANTOM (Cont.)

Wind speed at launch:	INA	MOBILE APPLICATION	SPECIFICATIONS
GPS/ GLONASS Enabled:	Yes/Yes	Name;	DJI Go
Recovery Method:	INA	EIRP (mW):	100
Dimensions (cm):	35	Third Party Applications:	Yes
Height:	INA	Live View Working Frequency (GHz):	24
CONTROLLER	SPECIFICATIONS	Latency (ms):	220
Operating Frequency (GHz):	2.400 – 2.483	Required Operating System:	
Power CONUS (dBm):	20	iOS 8.0 or later:	Yes
Power OCONUS (dBm):	16	Android 4.1.2 or later:	Yes
Endurance (btry pwr):	10%		

NOTES:
DJI PHANTOM AND ASSOCIATED APPLICATIONS ARE COMPATIBLE WITH APPLE, SAMSUNG, GOOGLE, ASCEND, HUAWEI, NUBIA, SONY, AND MI WIRELESS DEVICES.
THERMAL IMAGING CAN BE ACHIEVED BY ADDING A SEPARATE CAMERA TO THE UAV PAYLOAD, THE INCREASE IN WEIGHT CAN BE OFFSET WITH MODIFICATIONS TO THE POWER SUPPLY.

Notes

[1] Larry Friese, N.R. Jenzen-Jones, and Michael Small Wood. "Emerging Unmanned Threats: The Use of Commercially –Available UAVs by Armed Non–State Actors, Armament Research Service." Pg 22.

[2] Emiko Jozuka. "A Crowdfunded UAV Is Helping Ukraine's Bootstrapped Army." Motherboard. 18 June 2015.

[3] GlobalLeaks News. "Commercial Drone Coordinates Artillery – Ukraine." YouTube. 9 January 2015.

[4] Zhao Lei. "PLA Air Force sets up anti-drone unit." China Daily. 19 February 2016. (Link is not accessible from a US government computer.)

[5] Danielle Muoio. "ISIS may be using DJI consumer drones for surveillance." Tech Insider. 13 January 2016.

[6] Anthony Capaccio. "Armed Drones Used by Islamic State Posing New Threat in Iraq." Bloomberg News. 7 July 2016.

[7] Jordana Mishory. "DOD: $20M needed to combat critical threat of ISIL turning drones into IEDs." Inside Defense. 7 July 2016.

[8] Zhao Lei. "PLA Air Force sets up anti-drone unit." China Daily. 19 February 2016. (Link is not accessible from a US government computer.)

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US Army TC 7-100 Series and Threats and DATE

MILITIA BATTALIONS IN THE UKRAINIAN CONFLICT

PART 2: PRO-RUSSIA UNITS

by Marc Williams, TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration (ThreatTec Ctr)

The ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia has renewed interest in Russian techniques and procedures. The hybrid warfare in this conflict—as defined in US doctrine, but not Russian—includes the use of irregular militias on both sides with training from special purpose forces, and has resulted in over 9,000 killed. Last month's article focused on pro-Ukraine militia units. This month's article will focus on militia battalions supporting the pro-Russian separatist movement.

Russia's support—and some say instigation—of the Ukrainian separatist movement is well-documented despite a massive information warfare campaign to the contrary. Most of the 15,000 separatists who are fighting or fought in eastern Ukraine were Russian citizens that were either serving in or were veterans of the Russian military; these brought with them "armored personnel carriers, tanks, artillery, Strela-2 shoulder-fired missiles, [and] Grad rocket launchers, as well as the BUK surface-to-air missiles."[1] In August 2014, ten Russian paratroopers from the Reconnaissance Platoon, 1st Battalion-331st Regiment, 98th Airborne Division, were captured near Zerkal'nyj, Donetsk, wearing sterile uniforms and operating BMDs that had all identifying markings painted over.[2] Some sources reported troops from the Russian 8th Mountain Motorized Rifle Brigade, based in Chechnya, had been captured during the battle for Ilovaisk, and that the 76th Airborne Division had been involved in the fighting. Further evidence of Russian activity was the exchange of Federal Security Bureau agent Olga Kulygina for 17 Ukrainian military prisoners in September 2014.[3] Kulygina helped plan and organize Russia's invasion of Ukraine and helped arm the militias. Former Soviet special forces personnel are training the separatist units. As late as December 2015, Russian cyber militias launched cyberattacks using wiper malware against the power grid in Ukraine.[4]

The separatist districts are Luhansk and Donetsk, which border Russia and have renamed themselves as "People's Republics." Together they have announced themselves as Novorossiya—"New Russia"—and have formed the Novorossiya Armed Forces (NAF) made up of militia battalions. The Ukraine government refers to the area as "temporarily occupied territories."

The pro-Russian separatist militias remain officially

Figure 1. Map of districts within Ukraine

separate from the Russian military. The ones within Luhansk are not well-organized into a single militia. The different battalions and units generally fight only within their territory, operate without coordination, and sometimes are at odds with one another. Field commanders ignore the political leaders and do as they wish. Donetsk has begun re-forming its units into a centralized command structure subordinate to its Ministry of Defense, which also operates a school for command. Units are assigned to either 1st Army Corps or the Republican Guard. The Donetsk order of battle includes six territorial defense battalions.

Event	Date(s)
Euromaidan Revolution	February 2014
Battle of Slavyansk	12 April – 5 July 2014
Battle of Mariupol	6 May – 14 June 2014
First Battle of Donetsk Airport	26–27 May 2014
Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 shot down	17 July 2014
Battle of Luhansk Airport	19 July 2014
Battle of Pervomaisk	28 July – 5 September 2014
Battle of Ilovaisk	7 August – 2 September 2014
First Ceasefire/Minsk Protocol	5 September 2014
Second Battle Donetsk Airport	28 September 2014 – 21 January 2015
Battle of Debaltseve	16 January – 20 February 2015
Second Ceasefire/Minsk II	15 February 2015
Battle of Marinka	3 June 2015

Table 1. Key events in Ukraine

Pro-Russian Separatist Battalions

Within this list, the following units and commanders have been sanctioned by the European Council because they "have actively supported actions which undermine the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine and to further destabilize Ukraine:" Cossack National Guard, Death Battalion, Kalmius Brigade, Oplot Battalion, Prizrak Brigade, Somali Battalion, Sparta Battalion, and Zarya Battalion.[5] The units in this article are only representative of the pro-Russian separatist units, and not a comprehensive listing.

1st Motorized Rifle Brigade "Slavyansk" is also known as *Task Force Komsomol.* Based in the district of Donetsk, this brigade consists of 1st motorized infantry battalion "Viking," 2nd motorized infantry battalion "Semyonov," 3rd mechanized infantry battalion, a tank battalion, a self-propelled howitzer artillery battalion, a towed-artillery battalion, a counter-artillery battalion, and an antiaircraft battalion. Specialty units include an antitank battery, a reconnaissance company with a platoon of snipers, a sapper company, a communications company, a medical company, and a logistics company with organic security. The brigade is armed with T-72 and T-64 main battle tanks (MBTs), BMP-1/2 infantry fighting vehicles, BTR-80 armored personnel carriers, and MT-LB armored multi-purpose vehicles. Indirect fire is from 122mm D-30 towed artillery, 122mm 2S1 Carnation self-propelled artillery, BM-21 Grad multiple rocket launchers, and 120mm mortars. The antitank battery is armed with 100 mm MT-12 Rapier towed antitank guns. Antiaircraft weapons systems include the 9K35 Strela-10 short range air defense system, the ZU-23-2 Sergei towed antiaircraft cannon, and the 9K38 Igla man portable air defense system. 1st Motorized Rifle Brigade was involved in the siege of Slavyansk, April–July 2014, and the battle for Debaltseve.

Figure 2. 1st Slavyansk Brigade unit patch

Figure 3. Diesel tactical marking (courtesy Michael Sheldon)

2nd Independent Tank Battalion "Diesel" in Donetsk is armed primarily with T-72 MBTs, BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles, and Strela-10 short-range air defense missile systems. Diesel is known to field 35–40 T-72B1/B3 MBTs and ten BMP-1/2 infantry fighting vehicles. It is organized into four tank companies, a motorized infantry company, a howitzer battery, and a reconnaissance platoon. This is a relatively newer unit that was not revealed until after the ceasefires.[6] The unit fought in the battle on Marinka. It is organized much like a standard Russian tank battalion.

Figure 4. Diesel MBT (courtesy Michael Sheldon)

Apti and Timur Battalion is also known as *Death Battalion*. This is Chechen pro-separatist group commanded by Apti Bolotkhanov that served in eastern Ukraine.[7] Bolotkhanov served in pro-Russian battalions in Chechnya during 2002–2012 where he reached the rank of major.[8] Unit strength is approximately 300 fighters from former militias in Chechnya under orders from Ramzan Kadyrov, the leader of Chechnya. Bolotkhanov states the members are all volunteers, "though others have suggested they were sent as part of Russia's thinly disguised military backing for the rebels."[9] This unit took part in the first battle of the Donetsk airport, then returned to Chechnya.

Figure 5. Apti Bolotkhanov

Battalion Vostok (Battalion East) is a pro-Russian separatist unit that is heavily armed and well-organized. Its purpose is to help the eastern territories secede from Ukraine and merge with Russia. The commander is Alexander Khodakovsky, "a defector from the Ukrainian state security" where he commanded the Alpha special group.[10] Kiev has declared the unit terrorists.

Figure 6. Alexander Khodakovsky

Vostok took over Donetsk separatist headquarters in May 2014, asserted control over other militants, and set up a training camp in the botanical gardens.[11] The battalion includes Ossetians, Russians, Spaniards, Italians, and at least one American claiming to be from Texas.[12] Unit strength is around 1,000 and it participated in the battles of Donetsk airport, Ilovaisk, and Pervomaisk. Vostok is the name of a former ethnic Chechen unit that fought for Moscow against rebels in Chechnya and later against Georgia in South Ossetia in 2008. It was reported to have been disbanded, but reformed for covert tasks in Ukraine.[13] The

Figure 7. Battalion Vostok unit patch

original commander was Suliam Yamadayev, who was named a Hero of Russia in 2005. In 2009 he was assassinated in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, by an Iranian and a Tajik.[14] Kiev claims the Malaysian MH17 airliner shot down over Ukraine was downed by Vostok. Khodakovsky denies this, although Ukrainian intelligence insists it is his voice heard in recorded conversations concerning the plane's black box.[15] Some of the Chechen fighters in Vostok have combat experience from Afghanistan.[16] The unit has been accused of serious human rights abuses against military prisoners.[17] Khodakovsky has been sanctioned by the US Department of Treasury.

Figure 8. Vostok fighters including 15 year-old boy

Cossack National Guard is a Don Cossack volunteer unit in Luhansk claiming to have 4,000–5,000 fighters, commanded by Nikolai Kozitsyn. Some sources claim it has as many as 30,000 fighters that come and go. This unit stands apart from other Luhansk forces and operates independently. Kozitsyn claims the Luhansk People's Republic does not exist and the region belongs to the Don Cossacks. The Cossacks themselves are "commanded by Russians State Duma deputy in the Committee on Defense Viktor Vodolatsky."[18] The unit is armed with armor and artillery and fought in the battle of Debaltseve. Nikolai Kozitsyn has been sanctioned by the US Department of Treasury.

Figure 9. Nikolai Kozitsyn

First Cossack Regiment is also known as *Wolves' Hundred.* The commander was a Russian citizen named Pavel Dremov, also known as Batya, meaning daddy or papa. Based in Stakhanov, this unit's command structure traces directly to the Russian Commander-in-Chief despite its official designation as an irregular paramilitary force. Some of the members took part in the Georgian invasion in 2008, and most of the members took part in the takeover of Crimea in 2014. "Their aim, as professed by the fighters themselves, is to destroy the state of Ukraine and absorb most, if not all, of it into Russia."[19] Dremov was reportedly assassinated when his car exploded 12 December 2015.[20]


Figure 10. Kalmius Brigade unit patch

Kalmius Brigade, also known as *Task Force Mail*, *Miner's Brigade,* and *First Artillery Brigade,* is a separatist brigade commanded by Sergei Petrovskiy and operating in Donetsk. This unit is armed with D-30 (122mm towed howitzer), 2S1 (122mm self-propelled howitzer), MSTA-B 2A65 (152mm towed howitzer), BM-21 Grad (122mm multiple rocket launcher) and BM-27 9P140 Uragan (220mm multiple rocket launcher).[21] The brigade fought in Debaltseve and Mariupol. Ukrainian news sources claim the unit is manned by Russian mercenaries and Cossacks.[22]

Kornilovtsy Battalion is a neo-Nazi unit that operated in eastern Ukraine. Also known as Kornilovtsy Russian Attack Battalion, its members wear both Russian Spetsnaz and Nazi "death head" insignias.[23] The unit gets its name from a volunteer unit that fought in the Russian civil war on the side of the Empire, which was named after Lavr Kornilov.

Night Wolves Motorcycle Club (MC) is a Russian ultranationalist pro-Putin motorcycle club. Following the Euromaidan Revolution, the Donbass Chapter armed itself and fought as militia in the battle of Luhansk airport. The chapter commander is Vitaly Kishkinov, also known as "The Prosecutor," and the deputy commander is Denis Kuznetsov. Night Wolves MC was involved in the seizure of Crimea by blocking roads and sabotage. Donbass Chapter membership is around 50 men, most of whom are veterans of the Russian army. It operates in Luhansk and, while not currently in combat, runs several armed checkpoints. The group appears to be standing by as a reserve.[24] Night Wolves MC and its national leader, Aleksandr Zaldostanov—also known as "The Surgeon"—have been sanctioned by the US Department of Treasury. They were also sanctioned by Canada in February 2015.

Figure 12. Night Wolves MC patch
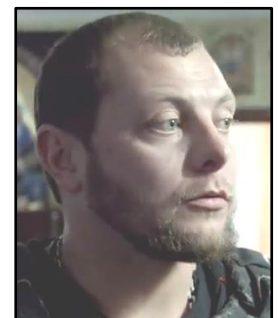
Figure 11. Vitaly Kishkinov

Oplot (Bulwark) Battalion's commander is Alexander Zakharchenko, who was elected Prime Minister of the breakaway Donetsk district in November 2014. When it was formed, the unit included Donbass citizens and former or current Russian soldiers "on leave."[25] On 1 October 2014 in a television interview, Zakharchenko "stated there were child fighters as young as 14 in his armed rebel unit, Oplot. He also claimed that 15-year-old children had served as spotters during fighting with government troops."[26] Originally a battalion, it expanded to a brigade in May 2015. Oplot participated in the battles of Ilovaisk and Pervomaisk. The unit has artillery units and at least one towed-howitzer battery is commanded by a woman, "Gaika."[27] Other sources show Oplot operating T-72BM main battle tanks.[28] Oplot and its leader have been sanctioned by the US Department of Treasury.

Figure 13. Alexander Zakharchenko

Prizrak Brigade is also known as the *Ghost Brigade* and the *14th Battalion of Territorial Defense.* The unit was established in late 2014 after pro-Russian protesters occupied government buildings in Luhansk. It began as a platoon-sized unit, but in August 2014 became a battalion as the number of fighters grew to 1,000. The unit fought in the battle of Debaltseve. The original commander, Aleksey Mozgovoi, was killed in an improvised explosive device and gun attack on 23 May 2015 along with a number of his bodyguards, his press secretary, and three civilians.[29] The current commander is Yuri Shevchenko, a former Soviet Army officer. Unit members are from Russia, US, Syria, France, Serbia, Spain, Italy, Slovakia, and the Balkans. The primary military activities include battlefield reconnaissance, sabotage, covert assault, and other intelligence activities. It is the only military unit operating under both the "republics" in the NAF.[30] This unit has been accused of serious human rights abuses against both civilian and military prisoners.[31] Current strength is estimated at 2,000 fighters.

Figure 14. Yuri Shevchenko

Figure 15. Russian Orthodox Army flag

Russian Orthodox Army (ROA) is composed of radicalized fundamentalists calling for a crusade to restore Ukraine to Russia. The commander, Nikolay Verin, also known as "Kerch," claims 4,000+ members that specialize in intelligence operations, building seizures, and defense missions. This unit operates primarily in Donbass.[32] According to Verin, weapons are in short supply, so "the first aim for the fighters is to capture weapons in battle."[33] ROA is known to kidnap, torture, and kill anyone other than Russian Orthodox believers, including Ukrainian Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, God's Church of Ukraine, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, and Muslim Tatars. It is closely aligned with Russian National Unity, an ultranationalist organization.[34] ROA has also kidnapped journalists and members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Figure 16. Somali Battalion unit patch

Somali Battalion is also known as *1st Independent Battalion-Tactical Group* and *Ilovajskij Guards Motorized Rifle (Assault) Battalion*. Somali is commanded by Mikhail Tolstykh, also known as "Givi." Somali is considered an elite unit in Donetsk, having fought major battles in Slavyansk, Ilovaisk, Donetsk airport, and Debaltseve. The unit is made up of Russians, Belarussians, Uzbeks, Azerbaijanis, and Tatars. Its goal is to "protect our Russian lands."[35] Tolstykh is from Ilovaisk. Prior to Euromaidan, he served two years as a conscript in the Ukraine Army as a tank commander. He is now a colonel in the breakaway district's armed forces.[36] The battalion is organized into three motorized infantry companies, a tank company, and an artillery battery.

Figure 17. Mikhail Tolstykh

Figure 18. Sparta Battalion unit patch

Sparta Battalion is commanded by Arseny Pavlov, also known as "Motorola," a former Russian naval infantry soldier. The unit fought in the battle of Ilovaisk and the second battle of Donetsk Airport. Pavlov once bragged about killing 15 Ukrainian prisoners of war.[37] He is also "alleged to have deliberately killed Ihor Branovytsky, a soldier with Ukraine's 81st Brigade."[38] As of September 2015, Pavlov was spotted fighting in Syria.[39] Sparta maintains an internet magazine with photos and information on its soldiers. NAF calls Sparta Battalion a special reconnaissance battalion organized into two intelligence companies and a special purpose company.

Figure 19. Arseny Pavlov

Zarya (Dawn) Battalion is part of the Luhansk militia. It is currently commanded by Andrei Ptarushev and originally commanded by now-head of the breakaway district Igor Plotnitsky, who has been sanctioned by the US Department of Treasury. Zarya includes Russian volunteers and eastern Ukrainians. In Luhansk, Zarya is the oldest and strongest unit due to its artillery component. Zarya has been documented as using PMN-4 antipersonnel mines and M-62M antivehicle mines that were banned under the 1997 mine ban treaty.[40] As of January 2015, Zarya Battalion had joined the official command structure of the district.[41]

Training Implications

Use of these types of units in a training scenario would quickly become very complex and challenging. Sorting out the exact status of prisoners of war (POWs) alone would be difficult. The known foreign fighters on both sides come from Russia, Chechnya, France, Spain, Serbia,

Figure 20. Zarya Battalion unit patch

Sweden, Poland, Italy, Georgia, Belarus, Baltic states, Finland, Norway, Canada, Croatia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Turkey, Romania, Germany (Margarita Zeidler) and at least one American on each side.[42] Is this POW a legal combatant, illegal combatant, armed noncombatant, or a mercenary? If your unit captures an American, how is he to be treated? German Margaret Zeidler states she is a journalist, but carries a rifle. What is her status and how is she to be treated if captured? A unit would need to be well versed in Training Circular 7-100.3, *Irregular Opposing Forces* and current laws before attempting this.

Scenario development with militia battalions complicates the battlefield operating picture. These units are essentially guerrilla units, but they are viewed through the legal lens of government association or not. Ukraine still does not define this conflict as a war, but as an antiterrorist operation (ATO). As a result, many pro-Ukraine units have been absorbed into the Ministry of the Interior instead of the Ministry of Defense. Many sources report police officers rather than soldiers doing the fighting. The US counterinsurgency experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq will help in this understanding, but some soldiers are going to be surprised and unsure of how to proceed when they learn their counterpart is in law enforcement rather than the military. Some of the units have not been absorbed into the formal government agencies on either side and still operate independently with their own goals and agendas. If the goal is to challenge US Army units with novel approaches based on real-world examples, the militia units of the Ukraine ATO are a good way to do it.

DATE 2.2 is the required strategic setting for all training scenarios and provides numerous groups that can be adapted to the militia volunteer battalions operating in Ukraine. In Gorgas, there are separatist insurgents (Zabzimek Separatists, Zabzimek Irregular Forces, and South Ostremek Separatists) and guerrilla units (People's Liberal Republican Martyrs Group and the Falcon Brothers). In Limaria there are the Limarian Liberation Front and the Free Lower Janga Movement. In Atropia, there are Salasyl and the South Atropian Peoples' Army, which operates multiple guerrilla brigades as part of its insurgent organization. The Bilasuvar Freedom Brigade operates in both Atropia and Donovia. Scattered throughout DATE 2.2 are smaller potential separatist organizations that could be added into training scenarios. The number, type, and capabilities will be driven by the commander's training objectives.

Conclusion

Actors participating in the Ukraine ATO fit the US definition of a hybrid threat found in Training Circular 7-100, *Hybrid Threats*. Regular forces, irregular forces, and criminals all working on their own agendas; sometimes together, and sometimes not. Tactics and techniques vary with each unit. Tier 1, 2, 3, and 4 weapons are used on both sides. Some of the units and commanders may be subject to sanctions by multiple countries and entities. Some of the units are financing their military activities with criminal activities while others are financed through oligarchs. And there are the larger strategic implications of direct conflict between Russia and European countries if major mistakes are made and the fighting escalates into a war. Despite the current ceasefire, at least one separatist soldier dies every day fighting in Donetsk.[43] Civilians in eastern Ukraine were killed in record numbers in June 2016.[44]

The US is dedicated to supporting Ukraine in improving its warfighting capacity. That includes the addition of pro-Ukrainian militias into either the National Guard or the Ministry of the Interior while adhering to the restrictions of the Leahy Amendment. US military involvement is highly restricted and subject to interagency coordination with the Department of

State and the Central Intelligence Agency. Some pro-Ukraine volunteer battalions will not be trained by the US. Even the Ukraine Land Forces do not support all the volunteer battalions, and do not include any of them in sniper training.[45]

The concern over Russian aggressiveness has triggered the latest North Atlantic Treaty Organization plans, including the formation of multinational battalions in the eastern part of the alliance: Canada to Latvia, Germany to Lithuania, the United Kingdom to Estonia, and the US to Poland.[46]

The US Army already knows Russian military doctrine and is watching how it is applied in eastern Ukraine. However, ACE-TI believes the techniques used would be shifted drastically if the US were to insert itself into a combat role. The organization strongly cautions against attempting to replicate the Ukraine-Russia fight exactly in training scenarios, the US Army is not the Ukrainians, and the Russians would not fight in the same way. They would adapt to challenge US strengths and exploit US weaknesses. For example, many of the separatist artillery units appeared to be arranged and employed using the old Soviet doctrine of regimental artillery groups (RAGs) and division artillery groups (DAGs). These were especially effective in the Debaltseve "cauldron" when the Ukrainian forces were surrounded. One separatist artillery commander boasted of destroying three Ukrainian batteries per day of 8, 10, and 12 guns each.[47] This was possible because the Ukrainians had no counterfire capability, such as AN/TPQ-36 and AN/TPQ-37 Firefinder radars, or air supremacy.[48] The separatists were using Russian PRP-3/PRP-4M sensor vehicles to locate Ukrainian artillery units, and then blasting them with massed tube artillery and rocket fire. American counterbattery assets provide real-time information and the ability to locate and destroy enemy artillery using indirect fire systems and close air support. Opposing forces placing artillery in a RAG and DAG formation, as used in eastern Ukraine, against US forces would cause the former catastrophic losses and would not be realistic training.

The Ukraine scenario is unique based on the operational environment Moscow perceived, and would not be replicated identically in the future. Roger McDermott, Senior International Research Fellow at the Foreign Military Studies Office, states:

> The extent to which Moscow could facilitate, let alone control, the destabilization of south-eastern Ukraine depended on a number of factors unique to the operational environment. These included close historical ties between the countries, a large part of the local population sympathetic to the separatist cause, corruption within the Ukrainian state system and the defense and security structures, intelligence penetration, the difficulty of ensuring control over the border, the limited combat capability of its armed forces, the political crisis that swept the existing regime from power and brought the fledgling government to office struggling to establish its own legitimacy across the entire country, among other factors. In short, the broad factors that served to facilitate the relatively rapid and peaceful seizure of territory – such as the location of Russia's largest foreign military base, or the relative ease with which Russia could deploy additional forces without causing undue alarm – are not only unique to Ukraine, but would be extremely difficult to replicate beyond this single example.[49]

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Threat 2025+
Hybrid Threat Blueprint Three

by [MAJ Jay Hunt](#), TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration

Threat 2025+ is a TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration initiative to produce a blueprint series that captures future threat tactics for training. The blueprints are rooted in [Training Circular (TC) 7-100.2, *Opposing Force Tactics*](#), and represent projected threat capabilities. The intent of the blueprints is to validate the current hybrid threat (HT) capabilities for training and the current HT force structure at training centers Army-wide. This article will discuss one blueprint in detail, Irregular Force Maneuver Defense in Complex Rural Terrain, and explain its conditions in order to facilitate use for training requirements. It will also highlight the threat tactics that are most relevant when given a set of combat conditions. This article is not intended to depict intelligence preparation of the battlefield processes.

Threat Blueprint Three: Irregular Force Maneuver Defense in Complex Rural Terrain

Blueprint Three depicts an irregular-based hybrid threat that is defending its encampments in complex battle positions, deep in complex rural terrain, against an attacking infantry brigade combat team (IBCT). The arrival of the IBCT causes the HT brigade tactical group (BTG), consisting of two guerrilla battalions and foreign special purpose forces (SPF), to conduct a maneuver defense to prevent IBCT penetration into its stronghold until key enemy combat systems can be identified and destroyed. In addition to the SPF, the guerrilla forces are augmented with additional anti-tank and air defense systems originating from a safe haven across the nearby border.

> **The HT may use a maneuver defense when:**
>
> - It can afford to surrender territory.
> - It possesses a mobility advantage over enemy forces.
> - Conditions are suitable for canalizing the enemy.
>
> **TC 7-100.2, pg 4-11**

Type of Defense: Maneuver Defense

The maneuver defense uses mobility and terrain to maneuver against an attacking force to create opportunities that cause the IBCT to disaggregate and expose key combat systems for destruction.

In this blueprint, the BTG prepares a series of simple battle positions, employs natural and artificial obstacles, and establishes sustainment caches along the primary avenue, while taking maximum advantage of the dense terrain. The BTG conducts an area defense on the approach to its right flank. This approach is closest to its actual encampments—which the BTG can least afford to lose—but is easily defensible. Enhancement of natural obstacles will further deter IBCT movement along this avenue.

The BTG leverages its knowledge of the terrain to emplace SPF reconnaissance elements far forward of its positions to identify the axis and composition of the enemy's advance. A regular forces manportable air defense system squad also augments the guerrillas with additional air defense assets to prevent IBCT air mobile operations. These elements may also conduct disruption attacks and ambushes.

> **Why not "mobile" or "retrograde?"**
>
> Opposing force (OPFOR) terms and concepts may be significantly different from similar US counterparts. OPFOR terms were selected to best portray a composite threat and intended to remove institutional and cultural biases from analyses. As a planner or developer, you may need to translate OPFOR terms and concepts for your commander.

Functional Tactics: INFOWAR

The BTG will conduct perception management information warfare (INFOWAR) activities among the local population in order to create a pervasive intelligence network and engage support of the populace. This support will enable other

protection and security measures such as camouflage, concealment, cover, and deception, and discourage noncombatants from providing support to the "outsiders." While direct action by the locals is unlikely, they may be motivated to conduct low-level harassment or sabotage.

The practical effect of this is that IBCT operations will be severely hampered and under constant observation from staging areas and on the only viable access to the BTG's area of responsibility (AOR). The HT forces in the defense will have significant advance warning of inbound force composition and direction.

Functional Tactics: Counterreconnaissance

The HT will leverage its in-depth knowledge of terrain to emplace a network of observation posts (OPs) to provide maximum situational awareness along the approaches into its AOR. While the OPs' primary mission is identification of IBCT forces and fire direction, they may also conduct opportunistic anti-vehicle ambushes with manportable antitank systems (RPG-22) provided by the SPF "advisors."

The locations of these OPs will frequently change to prevent identification or bypass. Long-term occupation of this screen of OPs is enabled by a well-developed system of supply distribution and prepositioned caches. The HT will also utilize commercial off-the-shelf unmanned aerial vehicles to identify advancing forces and control indirect fire from higher vantage points with minimal risk of betraying its positions.
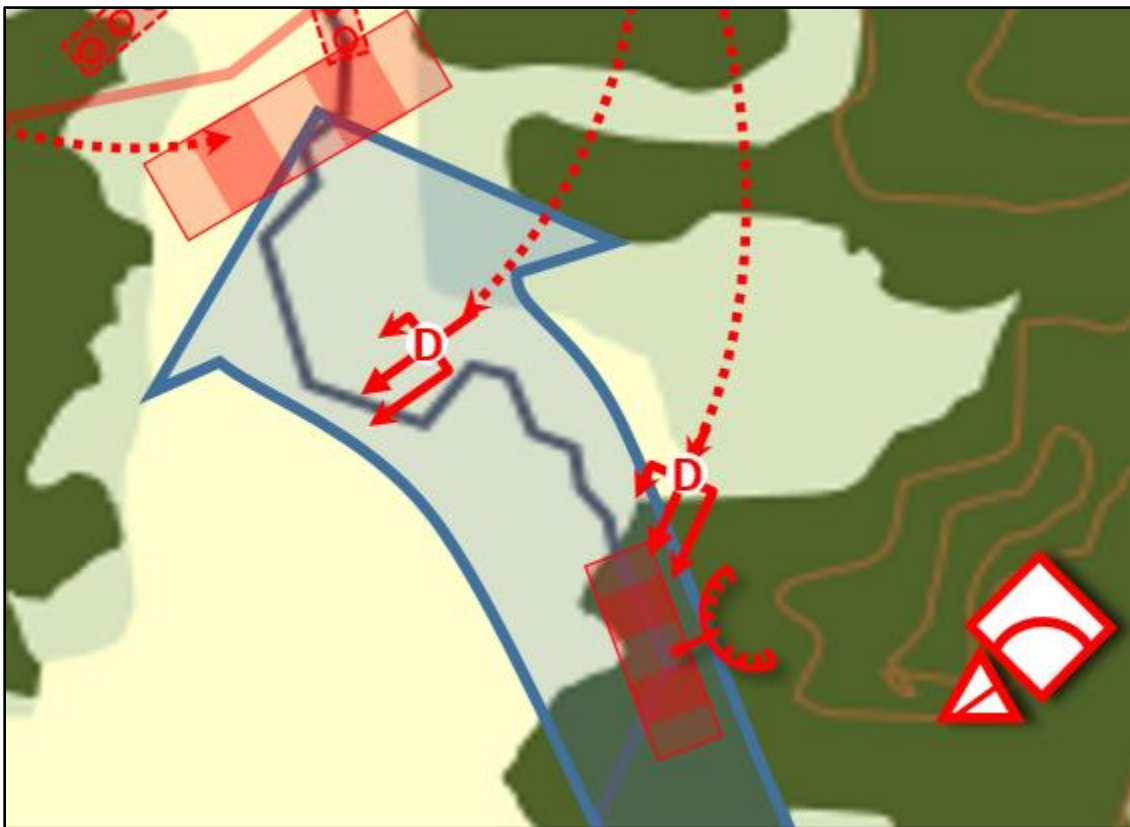
Figure 1. Initial disruption of enemy attack

Functional Tactics: Fires

The BTG observation posts and fire coordination elements will provide close and indirect fire support to defensive positions and kill zones from dispersed positions. Forward and lateral observation posts will ensure that consistent and effective fires are placed on advancing enemy elements along the entire avenue to disrupt their movement. IBCT elements may not be within range of the HT fires until their disaggregation and disruption occur when pursuing the HT contact elements. IBCT elements in the kill zone will receive massed indirect fire in order to maximize the effects of obstacles and heavy weapons. The HT weapons company's 82mm mortars and 107mm rockets will continue to provide support to the

main defense until the final protective fire section is reached and HT elements are required to withdraw. INFOWAR elements using small GPS jammers will disrupt the IBCT fire direction and air support at critical times and locations.
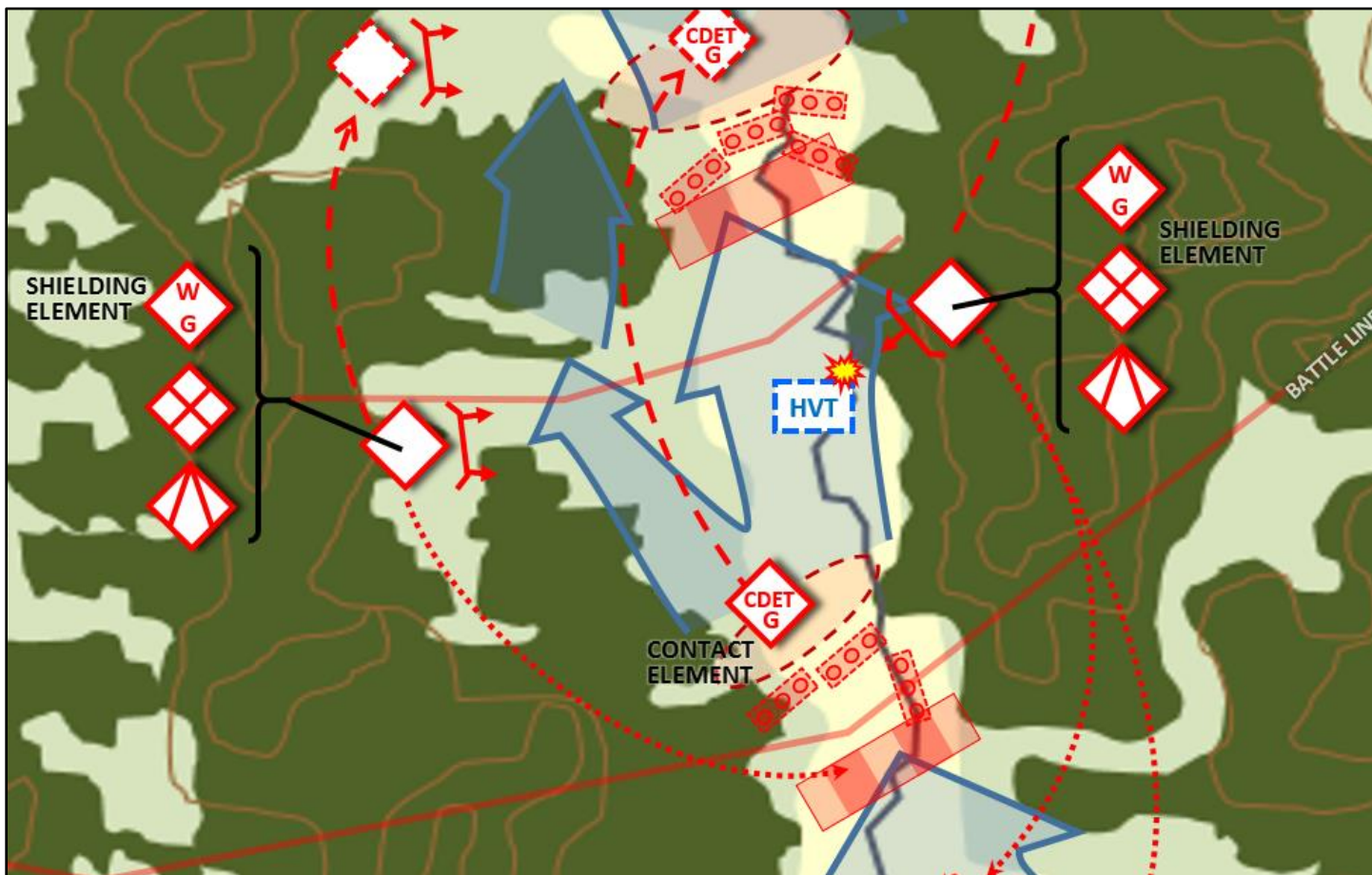

Figure 2. Defensive maneuver of contact and shielding elements

Functional Tactics: Defensive Maneuver

The BTG will use a series of simple battle positions to support defensive maneuver along the primary avenue of approach. Intelligence from village sympathizers and the OPs will allow the BTG to focus its forces for maximum effect against key combat systems. INFOWAR deception will reinforce enemy perception of the contact element as the main defense. Complex terrain, combined with natural and emplaced obstacles, will disrupt IBCT formations and expose its command and control and other key systems to direct and indirect fires. HT elements will assume alternating roles of contact and shielding elements as they engage the IBCT as it pursues the contact element into the kill zone. Defensive positions are supported by extensive pre-positioned caches that provide support and ammunition for future defensive action or a possible switch to offensive actions.

The intent of this defense is to expose and destroy key IBCT combat systems while consistently inflicting casualties and damage. Forcing the IBCT to prematurely deploy and disaggregate will increase the vulnerability of these systems. Degraded IBCT forces will eventually face a well-prepared kill zone with a complex array of obstacles, preplanned fires, and heavier weapons. The BTG will then destroy the remaining forces with massed indirect fire and a small counterattack element.

Conclusion and Implications for Training

The HT compensates for the IBCT's force overmatch through its extensive knowledge of the terrain, activation of its cultivated network of sympathizers, and leveraging of its superior mobility. The complexity of the terrain affects all aspects of fire, maneuver, and the ability of both sides to maintain situational awareness. IBCT intelligence collection and targeting

will be severely hindered by the terrain and BTG INFOWAR activities that protect assets, minimize signatures, and shape local perceptions.[1]

The HT's ability to rapidly move and operate in this terrain mitigates its force disadvantages and allows it to conduct operations at a time and place of its choosing. The OPFOR's close and cultivated ties with the civilian population will enable its use as an auxiliary. Units that understand the dynamics of the population as a force multiplier, shape the battle zone early.

The maneuver defense relies of the skillful use of fires and maneuver to deny the enemy forces their objective. Units attacking the HT must have a clear understanding of which of its key systems must be protected and where it might be the most vulnerable.

Note

[1] Headquarters, Department of the Army. Training Circular 7-100.2, Opposing Force Tactics. TRADOC G-2 Analysis and Control Element (ACE) Threats Integration. 9 December 2011. Para 7-1.

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Exercise Anakonda '16 in Europe

"A wonderful example of interoperability"[1]

by Jim Bird, TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration (IDSI CTR)

Six June 2016 witnessed the opening ceremony for an event billed as the largest military exercise held in Poland since 1989, when voters swept Lech Walesa's Solidarity Party to power in the country's first post-World War II free and democratic parliamentary election.[2] That election set the stage for others that eventually spelled the end of communist domination of Eastern Europe. Ten years later Poland joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and, in 2006, began holding Anakonda military maneuvers on a biannual basis. In this year's exercise, Anakonda '16, Poland hosted 30,000 soldiers from more than 20 NATO and partner countries, with the United States providing almost half of the participants.[3] This article provides an overview of Anakonda '16 and highlights some of its more notable aspects.

The Context

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US drastically reduced the number of Army personnel in Europe from 213,000 to 29,000, and withdrew the last US tank from Germany in 2013.[4] That left the Baltic states feeling vulnerable, especially in light of the fact that the Kremlin does everything possible to discourage former (Soviet-dominated) Warsaw Pact members from joining NATO. Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania all once languished under the Soviet sphere of influence. According to John R. Schindler, a professor of National Security Affairs at the US Naval War College, Poland is "the largest and most important NATO frontline state in terms of military, political, and economic power."[5]

Since joining NATO, Poland has been ringing alarm bells about perceived Russian threats to its national sovereignty as well as the sovereignty of neighboring Baltic countries. Schindler notes that "NATO's Baltic members are accustomed to regular harassment by Moscow, with aggressive espionage, subversion, and manipulation of local Russian minorities being part of daily life in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Russian intelligence services are highly active in the Baltics and generally treat them as less than sovereign states, much less NATO member countries."[6] Poland and the other Baltic countries were hardly reassured when Russia fought a five-day war with Georgia in 2008, co-opted the Crimea six years later and, shortly after that, employed hybrid warfare to make what appears to be a permanent lodgment in eastern Ukraine.[7]

Figure 2. Map of Baltic region

By April 2016, Polish Defense Minister Antoni Macierewicz had decided that the time had come to resurrect a Soviet-era tradition that had been allowed to lapse in 2008: a paramilitary Territorial Defense Force. The 35,000-strong new force will be trained to counter the kind of hybrid threat that was catalytic in causing parts of Ukraine to break away and assert their allegiance to the Russian Federation. The announced purpose of this force, to be recruited in September, will be "to defend against Russian aggression and to promote [Polish] patriotism."[8] Currently, Poland is the only NATO member without such a force.

What better way to demonstrate Poland's capacity for vigorous defense of its national sovereignty than to invite NATO allies to participate in this year's iteration of Exercise Anakonda? The decision to do so generated something of a controversy. Although Poland's intent in hosting Anakonda '16 was to showcase NATO's unity as a deterrent to any potential Russian threat, some European countries thought official sponsorship of the exercise by the alliance could be interpreted as an overly provocative act. Defense News reported that "while officials in both [the US and Poland] were pushing headquarters in Brussels to declare the drill NATO-owned, Germany was the ringleader among a handful of mostly Western European nations withholding approval."[9]

Besides underscoring a reluctance to unnecessarily antagonize a potential adversary by conducting a major military exercise in close proximity to its western border, Germany's position also indirectly reflected the diverse spectrum of concerns among southern European members of the alliance. Polish Foreign Affairs Minister Witold Waszczykowski acknowledged NATO's varying priorities, saying that "we have different challenges, different threats, different solutions," and offered "Polish solidarity" in helping other member-states in fighting terrorism, meeting Europe's refugee and migration challenges, and dealing with instability in the Middle East and elsewhere on the alliance's periphery.[10] So it was that in the months preceding Exercise Anakonda, while the nature of a forward-deployed very high readiness joint task force, informally called the "Spearhead force," was still being hammered out in NATO councils, alliance leaders decided to forbear

Figure 3. US and Polish soldiers flying the Anakonda '16 flag

officially designating Anakonda '16 a NATO exercise. Former NATO Supreme Allied Commander General Philip Breedlove declared, "the political leadership chose to keep [NATO and Anakonda '16] separate so as not to be too bellicose."[11]

Russia was not the named adversary in Anakonda '16. In the run-up to the exercise, Poland's Defense Minister emphasized its purely "defensive character," and NATO leaders insisted that its focus would be on deterring threats from the Middle East. Neither the Russian media nor high-ranking officials in the Russian Federation found these assurances credible. Instead, they predictably cried foul. They also perceived the exercise and the impending decision to deploy NATO forces close to the Russian border as a one-and-the-same conspiracy. Russia's foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, argued that any forward presence of NATO soldiers close to its borders was a threat to its security. "We do not hide that we have a negative attitude toward the NATO line of moving its military infrastructure to our borders, drawing other countries into military unit activities," said Lavrov.[12] He also suggested that NATO exercises in Eastern Europe might "activate the Russian sovereign right to provide its own safety with methods that are adequate for today's risks."[13]

Preparation Phase

An exercise involving over 30,000 participants from more than 20 nations and demonstrating allied capabilities to project, mass, and sustain combat power, does not happen overnight. Preparations began months in advance at all echelons of command. In early September 2015, LTG Ben Hodges, US Army Europe (USAREUR) commander, accompanied by LTG Miroslaw Rozanski, General Commander of the Polish Armed Forces, visited Poland's premier military training center in Drawsko Pomorskie to take part in a key leader theater sustainment terrain walk. This advance on-the-ground regional reconnaissance afforded the USAREUR leadership and counterparts from other NATO countries and partner nations an opportunity to gauge the capabilities of several designated key logistics nodes scattered throughout Europe. The terrain walk enabled leaders to determine which among these nodes were best suited to support future NATO and partner nation

operations, specifically including Anakonda '16. A significant aspect of the terrain walk was the attendance of more than 20 senior noncommissioned officers who worked side-by-side with their officer counterparts to maximize opportunities for junior leaders to meet sustainment challenges.[14]

The key leader terrain walk laid the groundwork for follow-on preparations that continued throughout the ensuing winter and spring. On 5 February 2015, LTG Hodges and BG Slawomir Wojciechowski, deputy commander of Poland's Armed Forces Operational Command, led a concept of operations rehearsal at Clay Kaserne, Wiesbaden, Germany, attended by

Figure 4. LTG Hodges and LTG Rozanski at Drasko Pomorskie Training Center

representatives from most of the 24 NATO and partner nations participating in Anakonda '16.[15] In early May 2016, the 4th Infantry Division (ID) Mission Command Element (MCE) hosted a rehearsal of concept drill in Baumholder, Germany, that provided military intelligence specialists throughout US Army Europe "an opportunity to collaborate and synchronize [intelligence] collection efforts in support of three major upcoming multinational exercises in eastern Europe," to include Anakonda '16.[16] According to Major Chanel Chamberlin, 4th ID MCE Intelligence Officer in charge of exercise planning, "this ROC [rehearsal of concept] drill provided intel disciplines within US Army Europe the opportunity to coordinate and create a cohesive plan to prepare for real-world implications" of the impending exercises that included Anakonda '16.[17] Synchronization was the cornerstone of this intelligence community ROC drill. As

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Antowan Bowman, the 4th ID's deputy collection manager, observed, "This event served many purposes. It was designed to lay out the methodology of how we plan to conduct [intelligence] collection, as well as [to] get all the theater intelligence representatives together to collaborate and coordinate collection efforts and address how we plan to disseminate that data to the end user."[18]

An overriding preoccupation among many end users (as Chief Bowman described them) concerned the challenge of making sure that their own personnel, equipment, and various classes of supplies arrived safely in the theater of operations in the first place. Much of the responsibility for meeting that challenge rested squarely on the shoulders of

leaders and soldiers assigned to the 364th Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC). The scope and scale of Anakonda '16 impressed BG Gregory Mosser, Commanding General of the 364th ESC. He observed, "this exercise is the first of its kind in 25 years, and the size of this exercise challenges [the capabilities of] an ESC."[19] BG Mosser further noted that "the training value of Anakonda 16 is that we are doing a real-world mission here…if we fail to deliver [on] our mission, people go without food and without ammunition."[20]

The fact that nearly 80% of the Army's sustainment logistics capabilities reside in Army Reserve and Army National Guard units underscores Anakonda '16's significance as a Total Army exercise. As was the case with the key leader terrain walk at Drawsko Pomorskie and the ROC drills hosted by the 4th ID at Wiesbaden, sustainment preparations for Anakonda '16 were

Figure 5. 364th ESC theater opening activities

under way long before the official 6 June exercise start date. 364th ESC logisticians deployed to Poland approximately one month prior to the start of the exercise. While still at home station they had readied their own equipment for shipment

by sea and air, synchronizing arrival to coincide with arrival times in-theater of an advance party that was then on hand to receive, assemble, and configure it into a functioning operations center near Warsaw. This logistics node became the hub of all Anakonda '16-related sustainment activity throughout the host nation. The 364th ESC's primary job during the exercise was to control and closely monitor all sustainment operations, to ensure situational awareness of "what, when, and where supplies [were] moving within the area of operations."[21]

Figure 6. A 635th Transportation Detachment soldier oversees placement of a 20-foot container during port operations

Effective management of sustainment operations requires hand-in-glove coordination with movement controllers. In mid-May, the 39th Transportation Battalion (Movement Control) deployed advance party personnel of six movement control teams (MCT) to 12 separate locations throughout Poland—including several ports of debarkation/embarkation and training areas—in support of Anakonda '16. The MCT's primary function was to facilitate reception, staging, and onward movement of personnel, vehicles, and cargo from participating organizations worldwide.[22] Before the start of Anakonda '16, vehicles, cargo, and associated personnel from locations throughout the continental US and Europe moved into Poland. They were met by movement control teams responsible for providing operational access and operational reach of units arriving in, moving through, and redeploying from their assigned areas via roads, rail, air, and sea. The MCT mission included administrative processing of clearance paperwork, coordinating processing through customs, and working side-by-side with NATO allies at logistical hubs across Poland.[23]

Soldiers of the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, trained hard at gunnery ranges in Bulgaria, Romania, Germany, and Poland in preparation for Anakonda '16. Part of the exercise entailed combined arms teams shooting in live-fire environments. Participating in that kind of collective training requires pre-qualification of individual tank crews. Captain Chris Garlick, commander of D Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, commented on the

importance of his soldiers successfully completing tank Gunnery Table VI at Germany's Grafenwoehr Training Area on 28 and 29 April: Qualifying means that the crew of a given tank "is prepared to go to war or continue training at the collective level. It's the ultimate test for tank crews before they move on to collective training for sections and platoons."[24] Successfully negotiating the gunnery tables is the necessary first step that certifies the tank crew's ability to close with and destroy the enemy. "At Anakonda," observed CPT Garlick, "we'll actually have the entire company out there doing collective level training with the live fire. To be certified to do that we first have to certify our crews, sections, and platoons here in Germany."[25]

Figure 7. M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tank shooting at Grafenwoehr Training Area

Opening Ceremonies

Anakonda '16 opened with considerable fanfare on 6 June 2016 in Warsaw, Poland. High-ranking diplomats, including US Ambassador Paul W. Jones and Polish Defense Minister Antoni Macierewicz, were on hand for the occasion. Also present were some key military leaders of participating nations, including US Army Chief of Staff General Mark Milley, USAREUR commander LTG Hodges, and Polish BG Dariusz Gorniak. Minister Macierewicz's remarks reiterated Anakonda '16's "purely defensive character," and the "difficult circumstances" Poland faces along the trace of its eastern border.[26] If, as

already noted, Russia was not the designated adversary during the exercise, LTG Hodges' remarks nonetheless hinted at Allied concerns over walking a fine line between legitimate deterrence and provocation. LTG Hodges alluded to these concerns in declaring that "the West wants and needs Russia back into the international community and there are several things that Russia could do almost immediately [to] help facilitate that, particularly improved transparency for their own exercises."[27] With regard to provocation, LTG Hodges noted that the Russian occupation of the Crimea, its subsequent activities in Eastern Ukraine, and its 2008 intervention in South Ossetia also had to be factored into the equation.

At the practical level of what Poland and its allies stood to gain from the exercise, LTG Hodges stressed the need "to improve responsiveness [and] interoperability, so the readiness action plan was created…Poland has hosted this exercise; they took their national defense exercise and offered it to other nations to join, everything in accordance with NATO standards and really, answering the call of the alliance to improve responsiveness and interoperability."[28] US Army COL Phil Brooks, commander of the 1st Armored

Figure 8. A Polish color guard carries flags representing participating nations during the opening ceremony

Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, acknowledged Poland's role as "a key ally for the United States, and the U.S. Army's participation in this exercise is just one example of our continued commitment to the government and people of Poland."[29] Brooks' counterpart, BG Gorniak, commander of the Polish 10th Mechanized Brigade and the Anakonda '16 Land Forces Commander at the Drawsko Pomorskie training area, said "the exercise allows units to build interoperability while strengthening their collective defense."[30] COL Brooks, stressing the value of relationships built during the exercise, observed that "we cannot ensure the collective defense of Europe without our Allies and partners, and if we are going to fight together, we must train together."[31]

Figure 9. GEN Milley speaks during the opening ceremony

Anakonda '16 Unfolds: An Array of Exercises Within Exercises

Anakonda '16 presented an opportunity to coordinate and synchronize several different exercises within one overarching framework. Saber Strike 16 and Dragoon Ride II provide apt examples of how this dynamic operated. Dragoon Ride II is a vehicle road march conducted by soldiers of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment. From 27 May–22 June 2016, the regiment demonstrated its ability to rapidly move a regiment-sized convoy of Stryker combat vehicles a distance of more than 2,400 kilometers. This 17-day movement entailed scheduled stops in each of the six countries along the route of march and conducting multinational training exercises with allied partners. These exercises included Anakonda '16 near Torun, Poland, where tactical bridging operations were underway.[32]

Saber Strike is a long-standing USAREUR-led cooperative training exercise. Saber Strike '16, like Dragoon Ride II, interfaced with Anakonda '16 to demonstrate alliance interoperability and freedom of movement alongside regional partners and to improve joint operational capabilities in a variety of venues. Like previous exercises of this type, this year's exercise objectives focused on preparing participating nations and units for future operations.[33]

On the first day of Exercise Anakonda '16, elements of the 173rd Airborne Brigade and other components of a multinational task force conducted an airborne operation at Drasko Pomorski and Swidwin training areas in Poland. Their mission entailed making a forced entry airdrop into a hostile environment and, once on the ground, establishing a corridor to be used by 2nd Cavalry Regiment soldiers moving through the area as part of Dragoon Ride II.[34] While this was going on, 530 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division jumped from C-17s into a drop zone just outside the town of Torun. Also participating in this airborne component of Anakonda '16, which the participating paratroopers knew as Exercise Swift Response, were Polish paratroopers jumping from Polish aircraft and a contingent of jumpers from the United Kingdom.[35]

Figure 10. **2nd Cavalry Regiment Stryker crosses the Hungarian/Romanian Border**

The first trooper to exit an American aircraft was MG Richard Clarke, commander of the 82nd Airborne. During an interview he spoke of the challenges inherent in coordinating a mass tactical jump with paratroopers and equipment originating from geographically-dispersed locations and entering the drop zone on three different vectors: "To put those three different trains together in midair is a tough thing to coordinate."[36] The 82nd troopers hit the drop zone 25 hours after receiving their alert notification for Exercise Swift Response, and 10 of those hours were in-flight from their home station at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

The mission came off successfully despite the loss of participation of three aircraft due to mishaps just as they were preparing to depart Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina. One C-17 experienced a mechanical problem early enough to allow cross-loading of key personnel and equipment onto another plane. A second aircraft suffered an engine malfunction as it taxied down the runway, forcing its pilot to slam on the brakes and abort take-off. Since these aircraft routinely go wheels-up at 40-second intervals, the plane immediately behind the one that experienced mechanical problems narrowly avoided an accident when (still on the ground) it braked and swerved out of formation to avoid hitting the plane in front of it.[37]

Another major challenge proved to be communications once the aircraft from the participating countries were airborne. MG Clarke observed, "The biggest gap was once [the other countries' aircraft] took off in the air, ensuring: Did all the aircraft successfully take off? Did they have any maintenance problems? Did all the jumpers get loaded on?"[38] MG Clarke also stressed the necessity of having detailed data available to guarantee situational awareness, so that "if there is a loss in combat capability by any force, we need to make sure [that we retain] sufficient force to do what we are about to do here and [decide] how we compensate if we don't."[39]

Because MG Clarke had access to a laptop computer with satellite capability, he was able to use secure voice and instant messenger to communicate with US staff during the course of the 10-hour flight. However, to reach his Polish and British counterparts, his calls had to be routed through a communications node located at Fort Bragg. Once on the ground, the communications issue dissipated because soldiers were then able to speak on the same frequency using their tactical communications equipment.[40] As General Clarke explained, getting paratroopers safely

Figure 11. **MG Clarke speaking on the drop zone**

to the drop zone signified completing only the first phase of the exercise: "The mission here is for the Polish forces to move about 20 kilometers north to the town and seize the bridge so the 2nd Cavalry Regiment that is coming [here] from the north…can cross that bridge. The airborne is for naught if we can't get that bridge secure."[41]

Bridging operations were indeed a major aspect of Exercise Anakonda '16. LTG Hodges rode in one of the leading 2nd Cavalry Regiment vehicles to cross the Vistula River on a bridge constructed by British and German allies. The connecting

Figure 12. A US Stryker crosses the Vistula River on a bridge made of German and British M3 amphibious rigs

spans consisted of M3 amphibious vehicles currently available to NATO, but not part of USAREUR's equipment inventory. So, reported Defense News journalist Jen Judson, within a short span of 45 minutes the British and Germans got the job done, connecting "their M3s with little difficulty, linking up like synchronized swimmers…The only way to tell which [M3] was British and which was German were the flags flown on each rig once the bridge came together."[42] LTG Hodges declared the bridge the best he had ever seen in his life, and praised it as "a wonderful example of interoperability."[43] He was also extremely appreciative of the British/German effort that constructed the cordon that got 2nd Calvary Regiment soldiers across the Vistula. "This is a great example," he said, "of an ally providing the capability that everybody else needs."[44] The Chief of Staff of US Army Europe, German BG Markus Laubenthal, later commented on the versatility of the M3 amphibious vehicle: "It differs from the traditional military bridging equipment because it can also function as a ferry. This is a very speedy, fast way to cross a river."[45]

Outside Guests, Ending an Exercise, and Continuing a Partnership

In keeping with a spirit of transparency, exercise organizers set aside specific days for international observers to attend and make inquiries about Anakonda '16. This transparency essentially complied with the provisions of an international agreement codified in what is commonly known as Vienna Document 2011. The document "is a politically binding confidence and security building measure designed to promote mutual trust and dispel concern about military activities by encouraging openness and transparency."[46] Both the US and Russia number among the 56 members of the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe, which adopted the document on 30 November 2011. In compliance with the provisions of the Vienna Document, the Russians were invited to send observers to Anakonda '16. After some delay, four inspectors—three from Belarus and one guest inspector from Russia—eventually showed up to observe exercise activities. They did this, however, on their own timetable, electing not to attend a scheduled observers' day on 14 June. Exercising their prerogatives under the Vienna Document, the Belarusian/Russian team conducted its own separate inspection on 15 June.[47]

Figure 13. Russian visitor photographs an American tank and crew as a US colonel looks on

Although the examples of Anakonda '16 components covered in this article showcase what perhaps could be considered more dramatic aspects of the exercise, they also underscore its essential tenor and character: the embodiment of interoperability, collaboration, and solidarity among allies. That said, space constraints preclude a full treatment of Anakonda '16's size, scope, and global reach. As explained by 2LT Brandt Ange of the 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command, "over the course of this 10-day exercise [participating] units coordinated to conduct over 18 different training events. These events, covering every major aspect of warfighting, ranged from convoy logistics and recovery to medical treatment to an Avenger Stinger live fire."[48] Her statement suggests that perhaps the best way to understand Anakonda '16 is to think of it less as a single exercise than an impressive array of specialized exercises daisy-chained together and executed on a global scale.

As the discussion on airborne operations indicated in so many words, to some extent the ghost of nineteenth-century Prussian Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke haunted the exercise. It was von Moltke who famously insisted that no operational plan lasts beyond the opening engagement, and that commanders must capitalize on opportunities embedded within contingencies.[49] In the case of the 82nd Airborne C-17 aircraft, the planes had not yet managed to get off the ground before contingency struck. So if everything did not go as smoothly as planned during Anakonda '16, adaptation was welcomed as part of the learning process.

BG Mosser, commander of the 364th Sustainment Brigade, thought of these glitches as friction. Speaking about administrative issues that surfaced in coordinating diplomatic clearances and vehicle movements through Poland, he said, "we had a bit of a learning curve there in terms of time that it takes and just their whole process."[50] But then he added, "I'm not afraid of friction; we should all look at friction or difficulties as an opportunity. It doesn't mean we failed, it means we are learning something because if everything went perfectly it means we aren't pushing ourselves."[51] He also cited refueling as a prime example of ensuring interoperability among allied nations. When refueling vehicles as part of a multinational exercise, said BG Mosser, "we have to make sure the nozzle fits inside the vehicles of another nation. That is a simple thing, but if you don't have *that* straight then the alliance does not have the responsiveness, the speed, that it has to have to be effective."[52]

On 17 June 2016, the town of Torun, Poland, hosted the closing ceremony for Anakonda '16 in a small sports stadium near the training area. In attendance were almost 700 soldiers and airmen from Poland, Britain, and the United States. The units standing present in formation included the 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command, partners from the Polish 3rd Surface to Air Missile (SAM) Brigade, and the British 19th Tank Transporter Squadron.

The closing ceremony predictably celebrated the major accomplishments garnered from using the past two-week period to improve multinational mission readiness. COL Andrzej Dabrowski, the host nation's 3rd SAM Brigade commander, observed, "we can learn a lot from you and I hope you learned a lot from us."[53] LTC Douglas Lynch, commander of the 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, surely spoke for all US participants in saying, "we have reached the end of Anakonda '16, but not the end of our partnership. The amount of multinational training we have accomplished is amazing. We look forward to strengthening our relationship over the coming years."[54]

Now it only remained for national leaders, politicians, and professional diplomats to weave the history of Exercise Anakonda '16 into the larger tapestry of geopolitics and statecraft. Whatever the outcome of that inherently dangerous process, no one can deny that the soldiers of the US, NATO, and other European partner nations did their part to make the exercise a success. The US had demonstrated both its willingness and capacity to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with its allies in Europe.

Notes

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[5] John R. Schindler. "Poland, NATO, and the Return of History." The National Interest. 31 October 2013.

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[18] SSG Diandra Harrell. "Intel Community Collaborates at USAREUR, 4 ID Rehearsal." Army.mil. 2 May 2016.

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[35] Jen Judson. "82nd Airborne Paratroopers Hit Polish Soil in Swift Response." Defense News. 13 June 2016.

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[39] Jen Judson. "82nd Airborne Paratroopers Hit Polish Soil in Swift Response." Defense News. 13 June 2016.

[40] Jen Judson. "82nd Airborne Paratroopers Hit Polish Soil in Swift Response." Defense News. 13 June 2016.

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[52] Jen Judson. "Anakonda: Germans, Brits Link Up to Build Longest Bridge." Defense News. 24 June 2016.

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[54] 2LT Brandt Ange. "10th AAMDC Concludes Operations for Anakonda 16." United States Army Internet Exchange. 21 June 2016.

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Hizballah Endures and Evolves
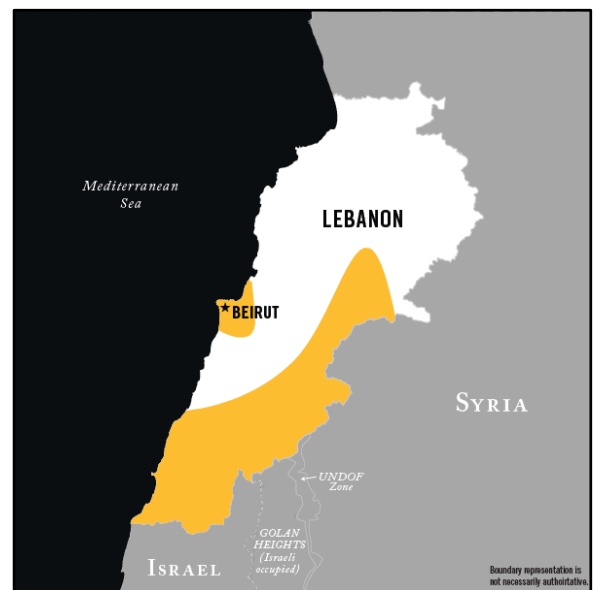## Party of God Prepared to Fight More Complex Operations

by Angela M. Wilkins, TRADOC G-2 ACE Threats Integration (DAC)

Hizballah first garnered US strategic interest when it attacked the Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983, killing nearly 300 people, mostly US Marines. Since that time, the Hizballah movement has been called by many names: terrorist group, insurgent group, political party, Iranian proxy, social movement, defender of Shia, militant group, and many others. The truth is that its structure and activities accurately fall under all of these descriptions, especially in the scope of its evolution over several decades. Hizballah's hold on the Lebanese political system and its alliances with Iran and Syria—and more recently its undefined, informal ties to Russia—have provided it with the ways and means to be what some analysts call the most formidable threat group in existence. At the very least, Hizballah must be recognized as an influential and unrelenting non-state actor in the Middle East.

Purpose and History

According to Hizballah's 1985 platform, its conflict with Israel "is not only limited to the IDF [Israeli Defense Force] presence in Lebanon" but to "the complete destruction of the State of Israel and the establishment of Islamic rule over Jerusalem."[1] Hizballah is interested in Shia Islamic domination and the destruction of anyone and anything that stands in the way. It is widely accepted that Hizballah emerged as a result of the Israeli invasion into Lebanon in the early 1980s, and has smartly involved itself with the Lebanese government since the 1990s as a means for retaining its presence in the country and controlling policy that enables its safe haven. Furthermore, Hizballah has endeared itself to many of the

people of Lebanon by providing schools, medical facilities, and other social services to garner popular support, particularly in the southern regions of the country. According to the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), Hizballah has used its militants to take control of areas of Beirut and ultimately gained veto power with the Lebanese government during negotiations in 2008 to end the violence it had caused. This power allowed Hizballah to retain its weapons and capabilities for secure communications throughout Lebanon.[2] Hizballah's extensive organizational reach ensures that it has political sway, ties to the community, and military power.

Figure 1. Hizballah locations (in yellow) according to NCTC

Although Hizballah has remained active for decades with various attacks and kidnappings, its involvement in the 33-day war with Israel in 2006 brought it again into the public's radar. Hizballah's operations were then primarily defensive and it fought that war on its own turf, in familiar territory in Lebanon. At the time, Hizballah espoused a philosophy of "do not lose:" Hizballah suffered from Israel's attacks but was not destroyed by them so, according to Hizballah's Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah, it was a victory. Although it suffered great losses (Hizballah itself claimed only 64, but up to 700 losses were likely—as well as over 1,000 citizens of Lebanon), the nearly 4,000 rockets Hizballah fired into Israel caused an estimated 1,700 Israeli soldier and civilian deaths. Even after the Israelis commenced an invasion into Lebanon nearly two weeks into the conflict, they were not prepared for the intricate bunkers and tunnel network Hizballah had created for both protection and storage of its missiles. However, Hizballah was not able to successfully defend itself from Israeli airstrikes, nor did it successfully conduct ground movement or counterattacks.

The game-changer was likely Hizballah's exploitation of media coverage that made it look like the group fared better than it did, causing the public to regard it as the victor despite the numbers showing what was more like a tie.

Since the 2006 conflict, Hizballah has worked to strengthen its offensive capabilities. While it has successfully functioned as a hybrid threat through the use of both regular and irregular tactics, its operations in Syria can definitely be described as more conventional. There, Hizballah has used offensive operations in more complex terrain in that country's unfamiliar territory versus the more familiar defensive operations from its strongholds in Lebanon. Hizballah has adapted well to these changes, taking on a more conventional look and more conventional tactics, which likely will make it stronger for any future wars with Israel. It has more antitank weapons, stronger air defense capabilities, and more experience in general since its extensive involvement in Syria. A retired Hizballah fighter described how the terrain in Syria alone has pushed the group to adapt to fighting in mountains.[3] In fact, Nasrallah has publicly stated that Hizballah intends to attack Israel in the north, which is a change from the 2006 conflict when it fired rockets over the border and baited Israel into Lebanon.

Funding, Weapons, and Alliances

A study of the group will demonstrate that Hizballah's capabilities are extensive, particularly for a non-state actor. It has funding streams directly from Iran but also via operations all over the world through money laundering, counterfeiting, cigarette smuggling, drug trafficking, kidnapping, and illegal arms trading. Hizballah also conducts fundraising for "charities"—with the money kept for itself—and derives an income from legitimate businesses owned by or associated with it.[4] Despite the variety and multitude of income sources, Iran remains the most generous by providing Hizballah a reported $200 million annually.

Most of its weapons come from and/or through Syria, and it is estimated to have more than 100,000 missiles and rockets with greater range and precision than it had ten years ago.[5] Notably, since Hizballah's involvement in the Syrian conflict, it has also been influenced by Russian military doctrine and tactics.[6] In the 1980s, Hizballah's arsenal consisted only of weapons that were cheap and readily available, so its techniques, as a result, were unrefined. The use of suicide bombers, for instance, was a way the group could cause the most damage with simplistic and imprecise explosives. Now, though, it not only has a significant arsenal of rockets, but the rockets have much longer ranges, and the group also has antitank missiles it has used against Syrian tanks in recent years.[7]

In terms of personnel strength, estimates vary greatly. Hizballah has a core group of fighters that may be as small as 300 or as many as 1,000. The training received by this core group is specialized beyond what a typical guerrilla fighter would receive, and includes communications, artillery, and engineering training.[8] Total Hizballah volunteer fighters is likely over 10,000 based on both numbers in the 2006 war with Israel and the number fighting recently in Syria. Hizballah also acts in such a way as to communicate that although it has a high number of fighters (possibly 6,000–8,000) attuned to the Syrian conflict, its home base has not been left unprotected.[9] In 2014, what was suspected to be a missile shipment from Syria was hit by an Israeli airstrike just inside the Lebanese border. Hizballah conducted a clear response the following month by bombing an Israeli patrol on the border in the contested Shebaa Farms region.

Tactics and Techniques

Hizballah has unquestionably evolved over the past three decades. The use of suicide bombers, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), missiles, and kidnappings are techniques that have endured. Since the 1980s, Hizballah has grown in size militarily, increased the number and sophistication of its weapons and equipment, and learned new ways to fight as a result of experience in major conflicts. The most recent of these is Syria where, as previously mentioned, it has fought more offensively than before, over more difficult terrain, and in partnership with other strong powers (the Syrian Army and even Russia). Because the simpler techniques are still effective and still in use, what follows is a tactical example of the use of IEDs to stop a logistics convoy in Damascus in 2014 and cause mass casualties. And, although the use of IEDs is relatively inexpensive and simple, the planning that went into the attack shows a degree of sophistication and coordination Hizballah has improved over time.

On 26 February 2014, Hizballah killed over 100 alleged opposition fighters—presumed to be al-Nusrah Front fighters who were linked with al-Qaeda in the fight against Bashir al-Assad in Syria—in a rural area east of Syria's capital of Damascus.

A video first released by the Hizballah-associated *al Manar* television channel showed a long, single-file column of alleged al-Nusrah Front fighters traversing a road in low-light hours through the Damascus countryside. The column was then obliterated by multiple simultaneous ground-based explosions (likely IEDs) followed by a smaller secondary explosion and automatic gunfire to eradicate those not killed in the initial blast.
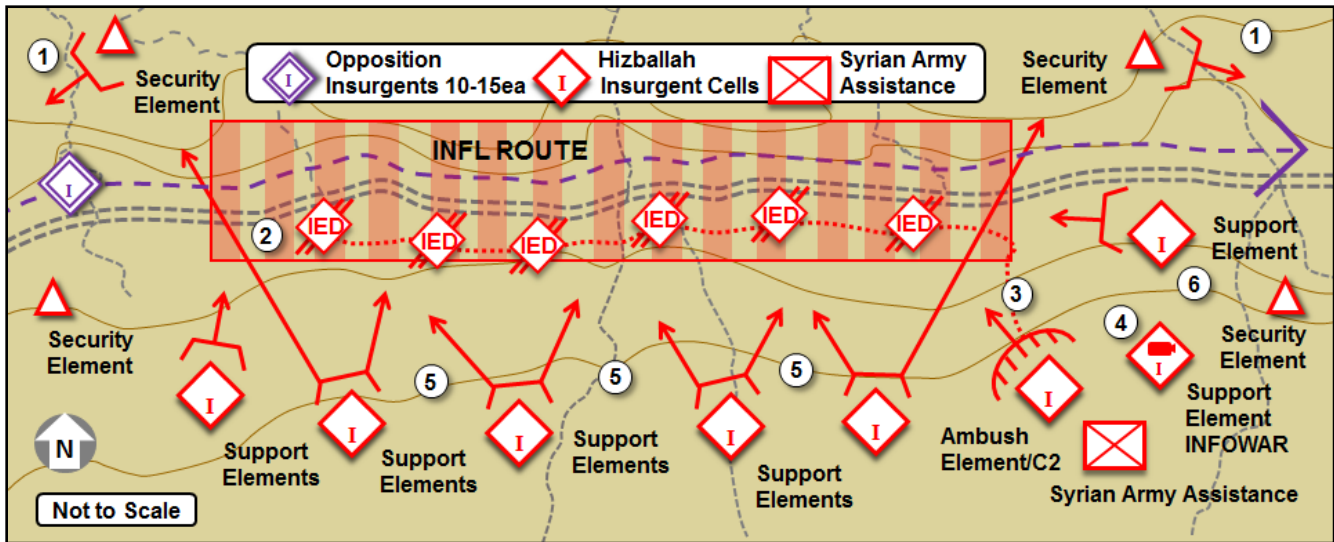
1. Reconnaissance and surveillance confirm recurring infiltration route of opposition insurgents.
2. IEDs/military-grade munitions emplaced in kill zone for simultaneous command detonation.
3. Insurgent leader to initiate ambush with command detonation and automatic weapons fires.
4. Support element prepares to videotape ambush for INFOWAR social media exploitation.
5. Support elements set in hide positions with overlapping sectors of fire into kill zone.
6. Support element with heavy machinegun prepared to engage along entire length of kill zone.
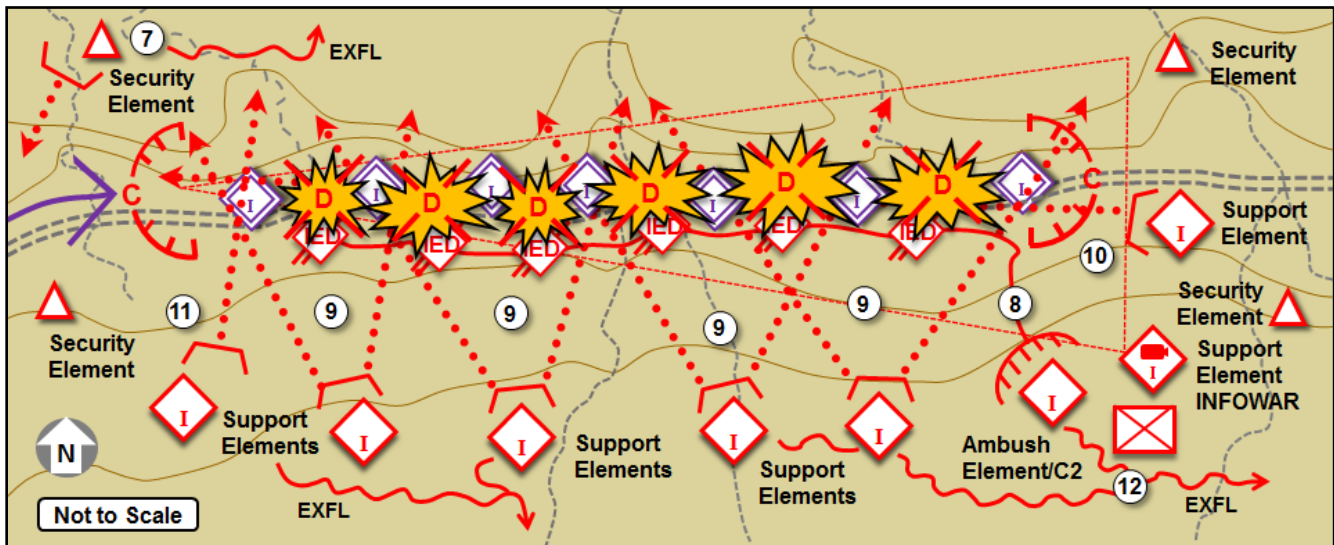
7. Security element alerts leader of approaching 80–100 dismounted insurgents on trail.
8. Insurgent leader command detonates munitions once majority of enemy are in kill zone; INFOWAR cell videotapes ambush detonation and automatic weapons fires.
9. Support elements isolate enemy with automatic fires in designated sectors of fire of kill zone.
10. Ambush and support elements contain and destroy enemy in kill zone.
11. Support elements clear and exploit kill zone after the ambush and report to cell leader.
12. INFOWAR cell videotapes ambush success; Insurgent cells disperse and exfiltrate from area.

Figure 2. Hizballah annihilation ambush of a convoy

A BBC article reported that a group linked with al-Nusrah, Jaish al-Islam, may have been part of the convoy; however, Jaish al-Islam publicly claimed that the convoy comprised civilians escaping a siege and that none of its fighters were present or harmed.[10] Nonetheless, the number killed in a short amount of time was significant due to good planning. Hizballah planners, possibly in concert with Syrian forces, determined the routes and the approximate time of the enemy's movement, and provided that information to their combat engineers in sufficient time to ensure the IEDs could be planted and concealed.

This tactical action followed the elements described in opposing force doctrine in Training Circular 7-100.2, *Opposing Force Tactics*, regarding ambushes, specifically an annihilation ambush in this case. The ambush element conducted the primary action of killing personnel and delaying or blocking movement. It is likely that there was a security element to signify enemy approach. Finally, the support element is represented by the gunmen who were on hand for the second explosion and small arms fire that followed the initial attack.[11]

The Decisive Action Training Environment (DATE) provides several threat groups that can be used to replicate characteristics of Hizballah for training. The South Atropian People's Army threat group receives significant support from Ariana, much like Hizballah receives support from Iran. Similarities are also found in the Bilasuvar Freedom Brigade, which looks to overthrow the Atropian government and has support from Donovia, as Hizballah wants to eradicate Israel with support from Iran. The Zabzimek Separatists maintain a military wing, as does Hizballah, and have also participated in confrontations over territory and ceasefire agreements that are similar to Hizballah's maintaining control in southern parts of Lebanon by brokering agreements with both the Lebanese and Israeli governments at various points throughout the last three decades.

Hizballah continues to evolve into a stronger threat despite over 1,000 casualties since its involvement in Syria, and its actions are clearly preparing it to attack Israel inside the latter's own borders, according to multiple claims by Nasrallah over the last five years.[12] To Hizballah's disadvantage, the Israeli army is technically stronger and Hizballah is struggling with negative perceptions since its controversial involvement in Syria, as supporters question why the group "protecting" them from Israel has spent so much time killing other Muslims. A war with Israel would likely be a boon to Hizballah's passive followers and would likely inflict enough damage on a stronger and well-prepared Israel army that it requires acknowledgment as a regional actor with military power and influence.

Notes

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[8] James Worrall, Simon Mabon, and Gordon Clubb. Hezbollah: From Islamic Resistance to Government. Praeger. 2016. Pg 46.
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What ACE Threats Integration Supports for YOUR Readiness

- Determine Operational Environment (OE) conditions for Army training, education, and leader development.

- Design, document, and integrate hybrid threat opposing forces (OPFOR) doctrine for near-term/midterm OEs.

- Develop and update threat methods, tactics, and techniques in HQDA Training Circular (TC) 7-100 series.

- Design and update Army exercise design methods-learning model in TC 7-101/7-102.

- Develop and update the US Army *Decisive Action Training Environment (DATE)*.

- Develop and update the US Army *Regionally Aligned Forces Training Environment (RAFTE)* products.

- Conduct Threat Tactics Course resident at Fort Leavenworth, KS.

- Conduct Threat Tactics mobile training team (MTT) at units and activities.

- Support terrorism-antiterrorism awareness in threat models and OEs.

- Research, author, and publish OE and threat related classified/unclassified documents for Army operational and institutional domains.

- Support Combat Training Centers (CTCs) and Home Station Training (HST) and OE Master Plan reviews and updates.

- Support TRADOC G-2 threat and OE accreditation program for Army Centers of Excellence (CoEs), schools, and collective training at sites for Army/USAR/ARNG.

- Respond to requests for information (RFIs) on threat and OE issues.

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