



**The Hold and Build Group:  
The Way Ahead to Implement the Winning Strategy for the Long War**

COL Frank M. Muth USA  
Introduction by James T. Kirkhope  
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Introduction

As the debate in 2008 over the proposed U.S. military "Surge" in Iraq had concluded and forces began to be deployed, possible post-"Surge" tactics and strategies finally started receiving attention by senior Bush administration officials. For example, on June 10, 2008, an Associated Press headline read that Secretary of State Condoleezza "Rice Changes Mind on Nation Building." For her article appearing in the July 2008 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, she publicly reversed her position she staked out during the presidential campaign of 2000 in that same prestigious journal. In the 2008 essay she writes, "In these pages in 2000, I decried the role of the United States, in particular the U.S. military, in nation building. In 2008, it is absolutely clear that we will be involved in nation building for years to come."

By Spring 2009 under a new administration, the "Surge" in Iraq is widely viewed as a success and the Obama foreign policy team is redirecting attention, effort, and resources back to Afghanistan. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates is keen to reprioritize the methods and modalities of the conflict and on May 11, 2009 he dismissed the top American commander in Afghanistan, GEN David D. McKiernan whom Gates apparently viewed as entrenched in conventional military operations in disintegrating unconventional spreading conflict in Central Asia. The subsequent appointment of experienced Special Operations Forces commander LTG Stanley A. McChrystal emphasizes the belief that increasingly require strategies and tactics familiar to veteran counter-insurgency are required to achieve a measure of success in Afghanistan comparable to Iraq.

New and re-emerging terms such as hybrid-warfare and COIN (counter-insurgency) have led students and future leaders of the next campaigns in the increasingly anachronistic Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) to start developing concepts and plans to execute the directives of their civilian leaders. In this essay, Colonel Frank M. Muth provides an excellent point of departure for a deeper understanding of this next phase of challenges facing our military and our country. The fact that this summary and analysis was written nearly 12 months ago demonstrates that keen eyes in both the military and civilian sectors are anticipating, thinking, and writing about *emerging* national and global security affairs, which is exactly where the Council for Emerging National Security Affairs (CENSA) seeks to be. As such, I am pleased to submit the essay below.

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Paper was originally prepared and submitted May 2008 for COL Thomas Griffith, COL Manuel Supervielle, COL Scott Patton, Seminar L at the National War College. In July 2009, COL Frank M. Muth, USA, will begin serving as Commander of the 1st Infantry Division Combat Aviation Brigade, Ft. Riley, Kansas and is expected to deploy to Iraq in 2010. [frank.m.muth@us.army.mil](mailto:frank.m.muth@us.army.mil). James T. Kirkhope serves as the Executive Director of the Council For Emerging National Security Affairs (CENSA) [www.censa.net](http://www.censa.net) and is based near Washington, DC. [james.kirkhope@censa.net](mailto:james.kirkhope@censa.net).

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From the first time a caveman used the sharpened end of a stick to defeat an opponent, to the Enola Gay releasing the first atomic weapon over the city of Hiroshima, to terrorist flying commercial airliners into the World Trade Center the definition of warfare has constantly changed. Warfare changes as technologies and tactical employments are developed and refined. As warfare changes the participants must first identify that changes have occurred and then adapt or face certain defeat on the battlefield. "The first, the supreme, the most far reaching act of judgment that a statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking"<sup>1</sup>. The Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) has changed warfare through the use of non nation state actors, terrorism as a tactic, low tech weaponry and the spread of extreme ideological beliefs used to rally or force popular support on a global scale. Although warfare has changed in our struggle to fight the War on Terrorism, the U.S Army has not significantly changed the missions or organizations charged with fighting this new warfare. To be successful in the "Long War" the U.S. Army must transform some of the Ground Maneuver Brigades that have a primary mission of kinetic combat to Hold and Build Groups (HBG) which will have the capability of accomplishing the strategy outlined by our National Command Authority in order to win the Global War on Terrorism.

Conventional warfare, maneuver warfare, limited warfare these are examples of warfare that the military is prepared to fight and win on the modern battlefield. The Global War on Terrorism presents a new type of warfare with a new type of enemy. The enemy is spread throughout the world and operates from nations that do not support their activities but are not prepared to combat them. These terrorist organizations operate in small cells and use low tech communications such as CB Radios and throw away cellular phones to avoid detection from our high tech systems. They use low tech guided bombs such as the suicide bomber, the vehicle borne explosive device and the deadly improvised explosive device. The enemy tries to recruit in areas of the world that have little or no economic opportunities and poor educational institutions. These are examples of how the enemy operates in the new warfare that defines the Global War on Terrorism. Although these conditions have existed historically in wars like Vietnam and our Revolutionary War were a combination of conventional warfare and insurgency warfare defined the nature of war, the difference today is the war is being prosecuted on a global scale, across nation states borders, and it is religious based which makes it an ideological struggle. Based on this new form of warfare, that is both being conducted globally and is ideologically based our strategy needs to also include non kinetic operations which will help to marginalize the enemy and prevent the spread of this extreme ideological movement. This is accomplished by defeating the extreme belief before it is spread in areas that have the conditions set for the beliefs expansion but have yet to take hold. This is not just in places like Iraq and Afghanistan but on the flanks in countries like Indonesia, Africa and the Philippines. "These points for concentration will, as we have said, lie mainly on the flanks of the enemy's theater of operations. That is where insurgents should build up larger units, better organized, with them to tackle larger operations."<sup>2</sup> Since warfare has changed in the Global War on Terrorism our strategy must also adapt or our ability to win "Long War" could be in jeopardy.

The National Command Authority has developed a strategy for fighting and winning The War on Terrorism. The key objectives involve both kinetic and non-kinetic operations. Last October Secretary of State Rice outlined the strategy to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "Our political-military strategy has to be to clear, hold and build"<sup>3</sup>. A clearly stated strategic mandate which provides guidance for our operational and tactical planners. The Army's Maneuver Brigades are clearly successful at conducting the missions of Clear and Hold but are

the brigades capable as they are organized now in accomplishing the Build Mission. We must always be prepared to conduct an assessment of our operational and tactical capabilities to ensure they are meeting the strategic objectives outlined by the National Command Authority "You must continually assess and reassess a situation, because what works today may not work tomorrow"<sup>4</sup>. A clear understanding of the capabilities and missions that a ground maneuver brigade conducts will assist in determining if it can meet the new missions that will support the strategy of Hold and Build.

The U.S. Infantry Brigade stands at the tip of the spear prepared to attack, destroy and defeat any enemy on today's battlefield. "The Brigade Combat Team closes with and destroys the enemy by combining reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition, long range fires, maneuver, and the support of joint and other Army units"<sup>5</sup>. There is no doubt that these units are prepared to execute this mission. The newly transformed Brigade Combat Team (BCT) has had the proof of principle in both Iraq and Afghanistan fighting both conventional and insurgency warfare. These maneuver brigades have been successful in supporting the clear and hold missions in these countries. In the fight for Mosul in the winter of 2005 I flew reconnaissance and attack mission for 1-25 Stryker Brigade. My assessment was that the brigade was more than capable in accomplishing the Clear and Hold missions but they were not resourced or organized to accomplish the Build mission.



The chart above depicts a BCT that was deployed to Iraq from January 2004 to January 2005 in the vicinity of Kirkuk<sup>6</sup>. After conducting an analysis of the mission it was determined, to be successful in this Area of Operation, the BCT needed to focus more on Building Operations. The brigade was not resourced or organized to conduct this type of mission therefore the brigade created teams and positions focused on Building Operations. There is an emphasis on, information operations, governance operations, security operations and economic operations. The Brigade created these positions from within the organization. Although the creation of this capability was forward thinking in its concept and development, none of these soldiers were trained in these specific areas of expertise. They were filling positions assigned to them and in some cases as an additional duty. The creation of a Brigade with the mission of Build that has the personnel assigned, trained and who are subject matter experts from DOD, Non-DOD and inter agency organizations instead of as an additional duty or in an ad-hoc creation would make an

extremely effective Building Team. We know these teams have been used currently and are successful but is there any historical precedence were the Build concept was used and produced successful results.

In 1956 the French Army employed the Special Administrative Sections in Algeria<sup>7</sup> and was very successful against the insurgency. The focus was on governance, services, security, economic growth, education and building a relationship with the local population. As these areas were addressed the French Forces began to build a rapport with the population and with that came trust. The trust created the condition for the unit to be a viable alternative to the insurgency forces. This in turn marginalized the insurgency force and reduced its ability to influence, expand control and recruit. The Marines also used this Build concept in Vietnam. They based this on a manual that was written in 1940 but worked in 1966 and can work today “The end aim is the social, economic, and political development of the people subsequent to the military defeat of the enemy insurgent. In small wars, tolerance, sympathy, and kindness should be the keynote of our relationship with the mass of the population”<sup>8</sup>. The Marines used this concept and developed Combined Action Platoons. They moved into villages and provided governance, security, economic growth and education similar to the French Forces in Algeria. The Marines had the same successful results as the French. The current analogy in Iraq and the historical proof of principal supports the development of the Build Organization. Before outlining the HBG and its organizational makeup it is necessary to identify the areas of emphasis that define the strategy of Build to ensure the creation and development of the HBG can support the strategy.

The Build Strategy Objectives must be clearly articulated in order to both develop the HBG organization and to write the mission statement. The following are areas of emphasis that would define the Build Strategy:

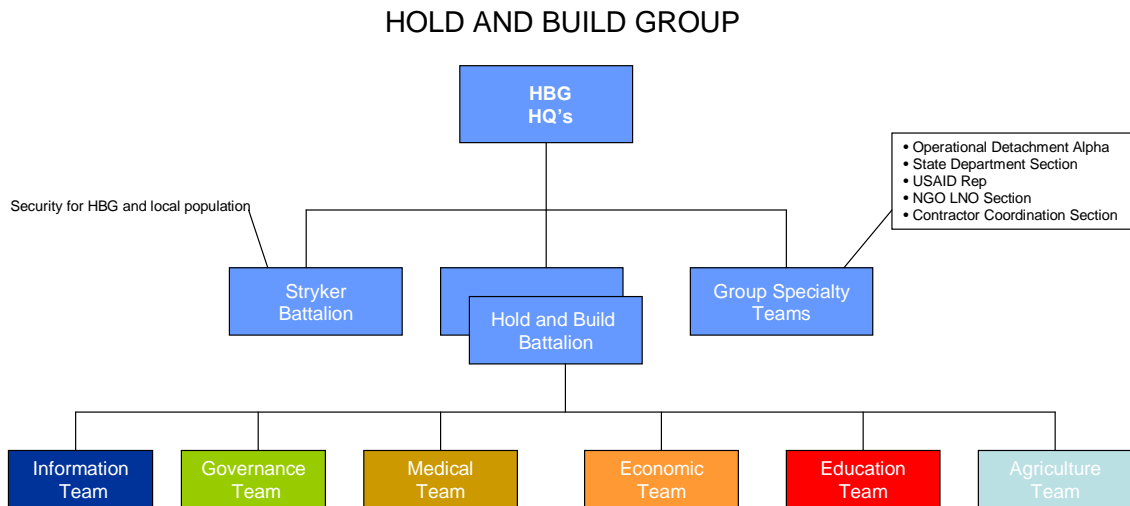
- Security and law enforcement for local population
- Governance Development and Implementation
- Governing Service Support Development i.e. electricity, water, waste removal
- Medical Services to include Veterinary Support
- Infrastructure Building, Development and Support
- Economic Development and Support
- Educational Development and Support
- Agricultural Development and Support
- Information Operations

As the HBG organization is developed the above areas of emphasis would be the guide to ensure the Build Strategy can be supported. The next area to analyze before developing an organizational structure is defining the employment criteria. This ensures that the original intent of the Strategy is being supported by the HBG and that mission creep or misuse of the organization is prevented.

Building Operations can be conducted under four types of scenarios. The first is following combat operations when the governance, security, and economic development of a country has either been destroyed or severely damaged. The HBG moves in establishes security and begins to rebuild the town, city, or nation similar to the Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRT) that currently operates in Iraq and Afghanistan. The difference between the HBG and the PRT is the PRT is smaller and does not have subject matter experts which severely limit the organization capability and success. The next employment scenario for the HBG is to operate in an area that has the conditions set for the establishment, support and growth of terrorist organizations. This supports the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism in denying sanctuaries “We will continue to prevent terrorist from exploiting ungoverned or under-governed areas as safe havens-secure spaces that allow our enemies to plan, organize, train and prepare for operations”<sup>9</sup>. I would add to this part of the strategy, deny the ability to recruit and expand the terrorist or extreme ideological movement. The third scenario is humanitarian based. The Building Operation is conducted overseas or within the continental U.S. following the detonation of a WMD or a natural disaster. Both scenarios offer an opportunity to build cultural relations

overseas and strengthen or create bonds of support and friendship in times of need. An example would be following the Tsunami in Indonesia. Indonesia is a country that is wrestling with the expansion of the Islamic extreme ideology. The Build Strategy and employment of the HBG would provide support especially following such a devastating disaster when there was a void in services and governance. Upon completing the analysis of the Build Strategy by reviewing the current proof of principle, historical references, clarifying the area of emphasis and the employment criteria, the next step is to define how this organization fits within the Army Structure and the organization of the HBG.

Over the last 4 years the Army's Divisions have transformed and created a 4<sup>th</sup> ground maneuver brigade. The intent is to increase the total number of brigades and make them relatively self sufficient. The brigades are able to plug and play within any division for operational deployments. This concept will increase the capability across the Army by providing special capabilities within the divisions, i.e. Armor Brigade, Mechanized Brigade, Stryker Brigade, Light Infantry Brigade, Airborne Brigade, or an Air Assault Brigade. These Brigade Combat Teams can deploy under a Division Headquarters to give a Divisional Commander the multi functional capability from across the Army to meet any combat mission. With this same concept in mind instead of the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade being a Combat Team it would be replaced by the HBG. The HBG would be a Brigade level organization that can provide a Division Commander a truly multi layered capability to execute the Seize and Clear with the BCT and quickly transition to the Hold and Build phase with the HBG. If an analysis of the situation determines that a Division is not required to fulfill a direct action mission but a Build mission is necessary, the HBG is capable of deploying as an independent organization to support the Hold and Build strategy within a designated area. The following is the organizational chart for the HBG. This chart outlines the areas of emphasis for the HBG:



Essential for any organizations success is a clear mission capability to ensure the proper employment especially while engaging in the Global War on Terrorism.

The primary mission for the HBG is to deploy to a nation that is either fighting terrorist or the conditions exist for the establishment or spread of terrorist activity in order to support the government. The HBG supports the government with a Hold capability and transitions to the Build Phase. The expertise the HBG provides supports both counter insurgency and Building a stronger nation. When a nation state is providing their population the central services of electricity, water, sanitation, education for the children and economic opportunities the extremist loose their power base. This is the essence of the Build capability provided by sections of the HBG. For example the Education Section; their mission is to develop schools, education administration, education curriculums, and teachers. This is one approach to developing a nation, and supporting the Build Strategy thus reducing the appeal of the extremist groups which receive support from dissatisfied and disenfranchised population. The secondary mission of The Hold and Build Group is focused on reestablishing structure at all levels of daily life after the combat the phases of Seize, and Clear. The mission is not to pull a trigger and conduct combat operations but to follow combat operations and support, develop, educate and build the town, city or nation the division is holding.

The Global War on Terrorism has changed the definition of war seeing that the conflict is with a global extreme ideology not a Nation State. The tactic the enemy uses is terrorism and it is globally prosecuted. Many of the bases of operation are in nations were the governments do not subscribe to the same extreme belief and are trying desperately to stop the spread of these ideals within their populace but have limited resource and thus limited success. These extreme Islamic believers are scattered throughout the world spreading dissention and advocating violent acts against all that do not believe. The Global War on Terrorisms unique characteristics has redefined the definition of war. With a new type of warfare comes a new type of strategy. As strategies change organizations that implement the strategies must also change or the operational and tactical execution at the tip of the spear will wither into a failed mission and ultimately a failed policy. Implementing the Hold and Build Strategy with forces developed and organized with the primary mission of kinetic operations will produce limited success in the new definition of this war. The combined organizations that have the capability to conduct both kinetic operations to Seize and Clear and the expertise to conduct non kinetic operations to Hold and Build are the key to a successful conclusion in the "Long War". You cannot kill a thought or a way of life you can only change minds and educate to succeed in this ideological war. The HBG provides that expertise and capability.

### ENDNOTES

1. Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed.and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, re.ed. Princeton, 1984, 88
2. *ibid*, 481
3. United States Department of State. Opening Remarks to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on, Iraq and the U.S. Policy. Washington D.C, 19 Oct. 2005
4. LTG Petraeus USA, "Unconventional Warfare and How you Combat it". Brookings Institute, Washington D.C., 14 Sep.2006
5. United States Army, The Brigade Combat Team Field Manual 3-90, Fort Benning, GA, Sep 2005, 1-9
6. Command and Staff Structure Chart in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. Chart 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, Oct, 2004, 2
7. Heggoy, Andrew F.Jr. Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria. Bloomington London: University Press, 188
8. Krepinevich Andrew F. Jr. The Army and Vietnam. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 172
9. United States. National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, Washington D.C., Sep. 2006, pg 16

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