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JOINT TASK FORCE-BRAVO: A CASE STUDY IN MILITARY OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL RUSSELL J. HALL
United States Army

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Joint Task Force-Bravo: A Case Study in Military Operations Other Than War

by

LTC Russell J. Hall

Dr. John Garofano
Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Russell J. Hall, LTC, United States Army

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This case study examines the unappreciated role played by Joint Task Force-Bravo in accomplishing the national strategic security objectives for Honduras and the Central American region beginning in the 1980s through present day operations. United States national security *objectives* were to contain communism in the region and to reestablish and maintain stability, establish and support democratic governments, and to develop and sustain economic development. The *ways* to accomplish these ends involved a combined use of diplomatic, economic, and military instruments of power. The military *means* employed was the creation of Joint Task Force-Bravo. The joint task force achieved the regional stability objective through multinational exercises, training of the Honduran and other Central American militaries, and operations which kept the Honduran borders secure from Nicaraguan attacks and conducted counterinsurgency operations securing Honduran internal control and stability. JTF-B assisted in the development of a democratic government through its military-to-military contacts and supported the potential for Honduran economic development by assisting in the development and improvement of its infrastructure. The military operations other than war conducted by the joint task force were so successful that they should serve as the blue print for future military operations to be employed in similar circumstances.

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INTRODUCTION

October 1982 was a critical month for Roberto Suazo Cordova, the President of Honduras. To his west, El Salvador was in the midst of a social revolution led by the *Farabundo Marti Liberation Front* (FMLN) that threatened to support any of the five active guerrilla groups operating in Honduras and which had spawned refugee camps along the border comprised of tens of thousands Salvadorans trying to escape the violence. To the south, Nicaragua was also engaged in a violent social revolution. The Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) had violated the Honduran border on several occasions in order to attack Contra base camps located on Honduran soil and had also threatened to support the Honduran guerrilla groups. This border also had numerous refugee camps consisting of Nicaraguans and Miskito Indians who were trying to escape the violence or who had been forcibly dislocated from their land.

The Honduran president decided that the Honduran military was not large enough or trained well enough both to provide protection for border defense and to control the growing insurgency. President Suazo turned to the United States for assistance. This case study will examine the United States military response to that request reflecting a very successful operation that is still in existence today and that has assisted both Honduras and the United States since its inception. The formation of Joint Task Force-Bravo (JTF-B) and the way the

military operated in Honduras should be the blue print for future military operations other than war activities which have similar military, diplomatic, and economic national security objectives.

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Before the United States responded to the Honduran request for assistance it had to examine its strategic objectives in the region and determine how it could achieve those objectives. In this case the strategic objectives or end states that the United States desired were clearly defined. The Cold War was still in existence which, according to the Truman Doctrine, required the United States to provide support to the countries threatened with communist insurgencies. The support in this case also included the Reagan Doctrine which provided support to freedom fighters fighting against communist governments. Initial activities in the region focused on containing the insurgencies in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras. Later the United States began to publish its national security strategic objectives, stating that the United States desired to promote regional stability, establish and promote democratic governments, and support economic growth and sustainable development.[1]

The United States objective of regional security for Honduras and Central America was clearly at risk if the United States did not respond positively to the Honduran request. The threat of insurrection spreading to Honduras, the threat of Sandinista

border violations, and the large numbers of dislocated Nicaraguans (13,000 in four camps), Salvadorans (16,500 in three camps), and Miskito Indians (13,000 in two camps) supported the decision to grant the Honduran request. The United States was also concerned about the military imbalance in the region as it applied to Honduras. Nicaragua had 75,000 troops and El Salvador 49,000 troops compared to the Hondurans 23,000.[2] Additionally, the apparent success of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the possibility of a FMLN victory in El Salvador caused the United States to be concerned that its sphere of influence and ultimately its security would be at risk if it did not come to the aid of the Honduran government. There was considerable debate over this issue in the U.S. government but ultimately Elliott Abrams, Under-Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, who placed combating communism over human rights concerns in the Reagan Administration won support for U.S. action in this case.

The second strategic objective, to establish and promote democratic government in the region, also supported United States involvement in Honduras. Honduran political history had followed the stereotypical history of Central American nations. A series of dictatorships supported by foreign-owned fruit companies dominated Honduran rule from the 1800s through the 1960s. During the 1969 "Soccer War" with El Salvador, which stemmed from a centuries-old border dispute, the military assumed control of the

government and remained in power until elections were held in 1981. President Suazo won that election but was seen as a puppet president who still took his guidance from the Honduran military.[3] To achieve the strategic objective of democratic rule for Honduras was going to require a significant change from the traditional history of political rule and implied a long term United States presence in the country. The United States decision to support the Honduran president's request was seen as an opportunity to achieve that objective.

The third strategic objective, to support economic growth and sustainable development, was also going to be a significant challenge if the United States decided to accept President Suazo's request for assistance. Honduras was and still is an extremely poor third world nation. In 1982 seventy percent of the Honduran populace lived in poverty, less than fifteen percent of the rural Hondurans had access to drinking water, less than ten percent had electricity, and eighty percent of the rural population lived in shanties.[4]

The economy was dominated by the United Fruit Company, later named United Brands, and the Vacarro brothers (based in New Orleans) banana plantations. The two companies accounted for nearly seventy percent of the economic activity in the country and controlled the various political leaders who came to power through the banana companies' support. The Honduran infrastructure was limited to roads and railroad lines which

assisted the banana export business, leaving most of the country undeveloped and geographically separated. The remaining thirty percent of economic activity was in the hands of Honduran military leaders and an economic elite comprised of local land owners (the *latifundistas*) who controlled economic activities tied to the local markets or to other export crops like coffee, cotton, tobacco, and sugar.[5]

The Honduran military was fully involved in the economic life of the country; however, this involvement was not always in the best interest of the nation. The military was used to squash labor organizations and activities in order to maintain the *status quo* and the military leaders often were involved in corruption offered by the economic elites or demanded by themselves. From 1975 to 1978, with Honduran military officers in charge of the government, there were numerous scandals, in one the finance minister was found to have received a $1.25 million bribe from United Brands. According to the Washington Office on Latin America, "there was scarcely a member of the military's high command by the late 1970s who had not become a millionaire."[6] The Honduran economic history implied a prolonged United States involvement if the infrastructure of Honduras was to be improved and the traditional "have and have nots" was going to be changed.

The United States decided to honor President Suazo's request to assist Honduras. The desired end state was to establish

Honduras as a place of peace and stability that was governed by a truly democratic form of government and had an improving infrastructure with an improved economic well being. The United States would also prosper from this endeavor as Honduras would provide a foothold in the Central American region to demonstrate United States willingness to assist its neighbor against internal insurrection as well as threats from neighboring countries that might fall to socialism or communism. Given that the United States was willing to enter Honduran affairs to achieve its national security objectives, the task then centered on how to achieve these objectives.

WAYS AND MEANS

The United States decided to use a combination of diplomatic, economic, and military instruments of power as the ways to achieve its strategic security objectives. Diplomatically and economically, the United States Embassy in Tegucigalpa was augmented with over three hundred personnel. The Political, Economic, and Defense Attaché Offices were expanded to analyze and interpret the political, economic, and military developments that were occurring. A Special Liaison Office was created and had the responsibility to handle United States contacts with the Miskito Indians and the Nicaraguan Resistance, more popularly known as the *Contras*. The AID mission was expanded and by 1987 was administering a $195 million economic assistance program,

which was the second largest economic assistance program in Latin America. The Military Assistance Group oversaw a $60 million military assistance program directed towards the Honduran military. The United States maintained a 2:1 ratio of economic assistance over military assistance throughout the support period provided to Honduras. The Peace Corps, operating under embassy control, had over 300 volunteers working in Honduras in 1987, the largest Peace Corps program operating anywhere in the world at that time.[7]

Year	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94
FMS	0	0	0	60.5	48.9	46.4	27.8	25.4	20.1	12.1	11.4
MAP	76.5	66.3	60.1	10.9	.1	.9	20.1	32.6	7.8	.3	0
IMET	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.5	1.2	1.4	.5
TOTAL	77.5	67.5	61.1	72.6	50.1	48.4	48.9	59.5	29.1	13.8	11.9

Table 1. Military Program Funding (in millions of dollars)
FMS-Foreign Military Sales
MAP-Military Assistance Program
IMET-International Military Education and Training
Source: Foreign Military Sales, Foreign Military Construction Sales and Military Assistance Facts, Financial Policy Division, Department of Defense, Comptroller, Security Assistance Agency, September 30, 1996.

The embassy focused its activities to developing Honduran democracy, promoting economic development, and supporting Central American diplomacy in an effort to bring peace to the region. The United States diplomatic team along with the Honduran government reached agreements to further these goals. It was decided that the first steps to democracy were to be concentrated on conducting free and fair elections, establishing a legal framework and timetable for the election of federal, state, and

municipal officials and to help train and professionalize the Honduran judicial and police personnel. In 1987 $10 million of AID funding went to the training of these Honduran career personnel. Leaders from the police force received training at the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation Academy at Quantico, Virginia and an Officers Advanced School for police officers was established in 1985.[8] While the diplomatic and economic instruments of power were being organized and plans of action developed, the military was also developing its ways and means to achieve the national objectives in conjunction with the other national instruments of power.

The military had received an interesting challenge. There were several multifaceted tasks it was directed to accomplish: it was to help train Honduran forces and to prepare for the possibility of fighting alongside Honduran forces if the Sandinistas should violate the Honduran border; to help train the Honduran military forces to deal with internal insurgencies; to use military-to-military contacts to help the Honduran military begin to accept democratic processes and civilian rule; and to help build the needed physical infrastructure of the country to improve its economy and communications systems.

The potential for future actions covered the full spectrum of military operations other than war through full combat. The United States Commander-in-Chief (CINC), Southern Command was given the mission to accomplish these goals. The Southern

Command CINC decided to employ a joint task force to provide the command and control necessary to coordinate the varied United States military operations that would be needed to accomplish the wide ranging goals. In August 1984 Joint Task Force-Bravo (JTF-B) was organized and based at Palmerola, Honduras, the home of the Honduran Air Force Academy.

JOINT TASK FORCE-BRAVO

Joint Task Force-Bravo was the fourth in a series of joint task forces that had been employed in Honduras from 1965 to 1982. The earlier joint task forces, JTF-11, JTF-Maya, and JTF-Alpha were all very temporary in nature, having been organized to provide command and control for short duration multinational exercises or specific training programs. Two specific military activities that were conducted prior to the creation of JTF-B and which helped lead to the Southern Command CINC's decision to create JTF-B were the establishment of a Central American regional training center in Honduras, from which the United States would train military and paramilitary forces from Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, and Costa Rica, and the conduct of a multinational exercise, Big Pine II, which was focused on Sandinista activities in Nicaragua.

The creation of a Central American regional training center based in Honduras seemed to be a good idea from the United States perspective. A unified training center would allow the United

States to conserve resources needed to train the five Central American countries that decided to participate. A single site precluded the need to send five separate teams to the region and one standardized program of instruction could be developed and a uniform training program allowed insurance that each of the country's military forces were receiving the same type of training taught with the same standards. The regional training center concept lasted less than eighteen months, however, as the United States military and political advisors had overlooked a key cultural and historic factor. Honduras and El Salvador had a centuries old border dispute that had caused them to go to war with each other several times in their history. The latest war had been the "Soccer War" in 1969 which began when the Hondurans forcibly displaced Salvadorans who had been living on the Honduran side of the contested border. Although two Honduran leaders, General Gustavo Alvarez and the Provisional President, General Oswaldo Lopez Arellano had approved the plan, expecting further US military and economic aid, and had signed a pact with El Salvador agreeing to end the border dispute peaceably by 1985, the Honduran populace and most of the Honduran military vehemently disliked the fact that Salvadoran military forces were being trained on their soil.[9] The regional training center was closed and mobile training teams were sent to the countries which still requested further military training. CINC Southern Command would need a JTF to coordinate these teams in Central America; he

also desired a headquarters in Central America that would be more in tune with the specific national histories and cultures in the region that would take those factors into consideration when making future decisions.

The second major factor that led to the creation of JTF-B was the conduct of a multinational exercise, Big Pine II, in August 1983. The exercise was designed to evaluate

> ...US-Honduran ability to "detect and intercept hostile coastal incursions."...The approved exercise plans did not envisage any immediate combat role for United States forces, but called for making preparations so that American forces could be swiftly called into action if necessary.[10]

The exercise produced some striking and unexpected, though welcome results.

> The threat of US military intervention played on the Sandinista's acute fear of the US military....At the height of Big Pine II in November 1983, just days after the successful US invasion of Grenada, the Nicaraguan government mobilized the population to defend the country....The government announced an amnesty program for certain Miskito Indians who had taken up arms against the Sandinistas and a "safe conduct" program for other members of the armed opposition. The senior Salvadoran guerrillas in the Managua area maintained a substantially lower profile, and Nicaragua canceled plans to airdrop logistic support to guerrillas in the Olancho area of Honduras.[11]

Additionally, the scheduling of elections in Nicaragua in 1984 was cited to be a result of the Big Pine II exercise. This exercise and its results also led to the decision to establish JTF-B in Honduras to continue to command and control Southern Command exercises like Big Pine II in the region and to establish

a continued American forward presence in the region. The size of the joint task force and its component forces would have to be limited, however, as the Reagan administration insisted that United States combat forces would not be employed in Central America.[12]

JTF-B was created to become the military means to accomplish the national security objectives of promoting regional stability, establishing and promoting democratic governments, and supporting economic growth and sustainable development. The JTF-B commander established specific tasks within each of the objectives that the JTF would have to conduct in order to be successful. Tasks associated with regional stability included providing foreign internal defense and early warning, providing a forward training base for United States units that could deploy to Honduras to conduct training, providing mobile training teams to the participating Central American nations, and assisting Honduras in the conduct of its counterinsurgency operations. Tasks to achieve democratic progress in the region included training programs that would be directed at the Honduran military to support democratic government and the acceptance of civilian control of the military. Military-to-military contacts would also be designed to support the task of developing a democratic form of government for the nation. JTF-B also developed tasks that would support the economic development of the nation. The specific economic area that the military would be expected to

assist was the improvement and development of the Honduran infrastructure. Thus, JTF-B was to conduct military operations other than war using security assistance and national assistance programs to achieve the stated objectives.

Several constraints were placed on JTF-B. The joint task force could not include combat units. The Reagan administration policy was insistent that combat units would not be deployed to the region to conduct combat operations. Combat units could be deployed to participate in multinational exercises, like Big Pine II, but JTF-B would not be allowed to have combat units assigned to the command. Additionally, JTF-B would be allowed to operate in Honduras under an agreement that the United States and Honduras had made in 1952. Terms of this agreement dictated that any United States military presence in the nation would be temporary in nature. Thus, no permanent structures or bases for United States military forces could be built and personnel assigned to JTF-B would be assigned on a temporary duty basis, defined by United States military policy as no more than 180 days.[13] An additional agreement was reached between the United States and Honduras that stated the continued existence of JTF-B on Honduran soil would be reviewed annually.

The JTF-B commander, having been given the unit's mission and constraints, organized the joint task force. JTF-B would have its normal headquarters and joint level staff to provide the needed command, control, and coordination functions. Subordinate

to the JTF headquarters were an Army Forces Command (ARFOR) which would include a sizable medical element, an Air Force Forces Command (AFFOR), a Special Operations Force Element (SOF), and a civilian contractor who was responsible for base operations activities. Each of the subordinate elements would be responsible to assist the JTF commander in the execution of missions that involved their respective services or functions. The total size of the JTF was designed to be no more than 1,200 United States military personnel, not including United States units conducting exercises in the region.

The 1,200 personnel were organized as follows: 50 personnel were assigned to the JTF headquarters and staff. Two hundred personnel were assigned to the AFFOR to operate the control tower, provide air traffic control, weather, crash, rescue and fire functions. The ARFOR consisted of 850 personnel to provide training and logistics support for the multinational exercises, training for the Honduran military, and coordination for United States small unit directed for training exercises. Five hundred of the 850 personnel assigned to the ARFOR were medical personnel who manned the field hospital and who participated in Medical Readiness Tests (MEDRETS) throughout Honduras. One hundred Special Forces personnel operated with the joint task force to conduct the mobile training team requirements associated with foreign internal defense and national assistance programs. Additionally, a psychological operations team and a civil affairs

team were assigned to the SOF to conduct both national assistance and counterinsurgency support to the Hondurans. Finally, seven civilians were assigned as contractors to provide local Honduran labor to run the base operations required at Palmerola.[14]

REGIONAL STABILITY

JTF-B accomplished the objective to bring stability to Honduras and the Central American region. It was able to achieve this success through its foreign internal defense and security assistance programs, its counterinsurgency operations, and its conduct of multinational exercises. Foreign internal defense was taught using the mobile training teams. Their program of instruction included classes on patrolling techniques, active defense operations, intelligence operations, as well as individual soldier tasks.

JTF-B also continued the multinational exercises that had been in existence prior to the formation of the joint task force. These exercises served several purposes. First, they provided a forward presence that insured the Hondurans that the United States was committed to their support. Second, as the United States had learned from Big Pine II, the exercise with United States troops sent a signal to the Sandinistas that the United States was committed to containing their activities to Nicaragua. Third, the exercises allowed the United States and Honduran

forces to train together in case tensions in the region escalated to full scale combat operations.

The best example of success in foreign internal defense occurred in February, 1987. The Sandinistas had been crossing the Honduran border on several occasions in an effort to eradicate the *Contra* base camps which had been established on Honduran soil. Honduras was concerned that the Sandinistas would continue to cross the border which could lead to an escalation in combat operations and that the Sandinistas might establish permanent positions within Honduras. JTF-B drew up an exercise plan that called for elements of the 82d Airborne Division and 7th Infantry Division to deploy to Honduras and conduct an exercise with the Honduran military in the region just north of the Contra base camps. When the Sandinistas crossed the border to attack the Contra base camps in February 1987 the exercise, Operation Golden Pheasant, was initiated. The United States military elements along with their Honduran allies were in positions within thirty-six hours of the border crossing and began conducting their exercise which was clearly a show of force directed at the Sandinistas. The Sandinistas received the signal and no further border crossings occurred.[15]

Simultaneously, JTF-B was coordinating and conducting training and operations against the other major threat to regional stability, internal insurgency. The United States and Honduras were concerned that Honduran insurgent groups would be

supported by the FMLN in El Salvador, the FSLN in Nicaragua, Cuba, and the Soviet Union. Insurgency in Honduras could be expected given the country's poor economic state, the disparity between rich and poor, as well as the Honduran military's past in violently repressing suspected insurgents. Legendary human rights abuses occurred under General Gustavo Alvarez who had "disappeared" hundreds of people from 1982 to early 1984.[16] The JTF-B leadership decided that military force would not be the answer to the insurgency problem. Instead, they developed a plan that would feature medical, dental, and veterinary services that would be provided to the Honduran people by military personnel to prevent potential popular bases of support from falling to any of the five insurgent groups operating in Honduras.

JTF-B began conducting communications and intelligence sharing with the Hondurans. Once the shared intelligence indicated that any of the groups was beginning to target a Honduran village or region a United States-Honduran medical readiness exercise would be conducted in the targeted area. The exercise would begin with United States and Honduran psychological operations teams entering the area to announce to the populace that the medical team would be coming within three days and provided the location where the people could be seen by the medical team. The psychological operations team would downplay the role the United States personnel were playing, instead, sending the message that the Honduran government,

federal as well as local, understood their plight and finally had the resources to start improving their lives and they would start with medical and dental care.

A Honduran military security team would arrive next to insure the area was safe for the medical team to conduct its treatment and to provide a presence that the Honduran government was protecting the people from possible insurgent violence. The message that the Honduran military forces were protecting them, rather than attacking them as General Alvarez had done, was stressed by the psychological operations teams. Finally, the medical, dental, and veterinary team would arrive and provide those services to the populace. Those Hondurans who had severe medical problems would be airlifted back to Palmerola for further treatment. A rotating system was established to insure that each targeted area received a medical visit twice monthly, while Honduran public affairs personnel continued to stress the theme that the Honduran government was the key force in insuring that they received the care.

JTF-B's counterinsurgency operations in conjunction with the other democratic and economic reforms have proven to be successful. Prior to the counterinsurgency operations the various guerrilla factions had conducted hundreds of insurgent attacks, the most notable being an attack on the United States Embassy in Tegucigalpa in 1980, numerous bombings of multinational corporation holdings throughout Honduras, and had

taken over a meeting of the San Pedro Sula Chamber of Commerce in 1982.[17] Since 1985 insurgent activity has been limited to isolated terrorist attacks that have averaged less than one attack per year. The key point to note was the way the JTF accomplished its counterinsurgency mission without combat forces or violence, which in turn helped to keep the populace from joining or supporting the insurgent groups. Additionally, the training provided to the Honduran military and the example set by the United States forces helped to demonstrate to the Honduran military that "disappearing" opponents was not the way to achieve success.

PROMOTE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

JTF-B's role in developing a democratic government was focused on training and using military-to-military contacts to convince the Honduran military that they should be subservient to civilian rule. This was not an easy task given the political history of the country which, in the tradition of every Latin American nation, had been ruled by *caudillos*, local or national level strongmen with an armed force loyal to the single leader, or by the military itself. This mission also implied a long term United States presence to produce a democratic government that had never existed in Honduras. Democracy was not suddenly going to blossom in a country that had traditionally been ruled by force. JTF-B began to tackle this task by including democratic

themes, philosophy, values, and the role of the military in a democratic government in its program of instruction that was taught by the mobile training teams. These same themes were being taught at the School of the Americas and Honduran officers attending United States military courses under the IMET program were also being taught civilian rule in a democratic society. Senior United States military leaders from Southern Command, JTF-B, and the embassy team used their meetings with the Honduran military leaders to emphasize the need for a democratic government without military intervention in its political affairs. Concurrently, the United States diplomatic and economic instruments of power were being used to develop civilian leadership and a viable judicial system that could lead to democratic government.

It is difficult to determine how effective JTF-B's involvement in promoting democratic government in Honduras has been other than to note the significant progress Honduras has made in installing and maintaining its democratic government. Honduras conducted its first free elections in 1985 and has peaceably transferred power through free elections ever since. In 1990 Rafael Leonardo Callejas became president which marked the first time in 57 years that an opposition candidate became president in a peaceable manner.[18] Carlos Flores Facusse won the presidential election in December 1997, "defeating Nora Gunera de Melgar, widow of a former military president. When the new

president takes office..., it will be the fifth consecutive transfer of power between civilians, a feat in Central America, where coups and military dictatorships have been common."[19] Thus, it appears that democratic government roots have taken hold in Honduras. Additionally, the Honduran military has included the classes on democratic forms of government and civilian control of the military which were taught by the mobile training teams in its own military educational system. It is hoped that the Honduran military has learned the benefits of democratic rule.

Democracy has allowed the people to have a voice in government which has helped to alleviate the insurgency problem and has helped to provide stability in the region. JTF-B continues to operate in Honduras to help fulfill this goal should some situation arise from which the Honduran military might be inclined to intervene forcibly to take control of the government again. Ideally, it is hoped that the Honduran military has learned that there are new requirements placed on them for full participation in the international political and economic system. As Joseph Tulchin has noted,

> By the beginning of the new century, the requirements for successful reinsertion into the global marketplace and a key to Latin America's future success in the international system appeared to be set by what we might call an international code of good behavior. First and foremost, it was necessary to have a democratic government. Second, it was essential to guarantee the sanctity of property and to welcome capital in all its various forms; the code for this was to have an "open" economy.... Finally, and most

> difficult, it was necessary to become "transparent" in the conduct of international affairs and in the protection of human and property rights.... It became clear that traditional forms of influence-peddling in Latin America could become a limiting factor in the creation of new markets and, more importantly, in a nation's ability to attract new investment.[20]

Honduras has seemingly achieved the first requirement, having a democratic government, which JTF-B assisted in developing, but the economic strategic objectives have proven harder to achieve.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The final aspect of JTF-B's military operations other than war activities was to provide nation building assistance to Honduras. JTF-B's plan involved two main aspects. First, to help develop the infrastructure of the country and second, to work with the senior Honduran military leaders to halt corruption in Honduran business practices in which Honduran military leaders had a vested interest and to encourage Honduran investment in their own country.

The infrastructure development plan was the easiest of the two goals to attack. In this plan United States active, reserve, and national guard units would conduct "directed for training" deployments to Honduras to help build roads, bridges, schools, and dig wells. The Honduran government decided which projects needed to be built and prioritized those efforts. JTF-B would then take those projects and assign them to the engineer units

that were deploying to Honduras and the needed infrastructure would be constructed.

The purpose of the infrastructure development plan was to help tie the more remote regions of the country to the political capital as the only infrastructure that was in existence was tied to the export economy of the fruit companies, primarily in northern Honduras. Ideally, the improved infrastructure coupled with the stability in the region would lead to more foreign investment and with the improved infrastructure, economic activities could be spread throughout the country to prevent rampant urbanization like that which afflicted other Latin American nations. JTF-B has been successful in building the requested and needed infrastructure, constructing over 500 miles of road, and continues with this mission today but the expected economic benefits of an improved infrastructure have not materialized.

Foreign investment has not rushed to Honduras despite the improved infrastructure and regional stability. Part of this is explained by the new economic opportunities which were opened in Eastern Europe and Russia with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The potential of these new markets were seen to be more attractive than investment in Latin America. The other part of the problem for Honduran economic development dealt with their native potential investors who had profited in the past from economic enterprises but stashed those profits in overseas

accounts rather than reinvest them "to stimulate and revive the economies of their own countries."[21]

This economic elite comprised those Hondurans associated with the fruit company export economy, those land owners who controlled the domestic market, and the Honduran military who were receiving kick backs in return for maintaining the *status quo* for the landowners and the export companies. As one report noted, "...with Melgar Castro in power, military corruption as well as military repression was on the upswing. There was scarcely a member of the military's high command by the late 1970s who had not become a millionaire."[22] JTF-B's actions in this area have met with very limited effectiveness. Again, using military-to-military contacts the leaders of JTF-B have tried to point out that these methods are unacceptable to attract foreign investment but given the very personal nature of this type of action it is not known how influential or effective the contacts have been. Thus, as Joseph Tulchin noted, becoming "transparent" in the conduct of international affairs is the most difficult goal to achieve for a society that has operated on a different set of norms since its inception. No amount of infrastructure development will prove to be effective in the achievement of economic development and sustained growth until the Honduran military and the wealthy landowners begin to adapt to a new set of norms that encourages reinvestment in their own country and curtails corruption. The United States must insure that its

economic assistance to Honduras does not make Honduras economically dependent on that aid or else the democratic and economic gains that have been made could end rapidly as the Honduran military reverted to its historical political intervention pattern in order to preserve its status in Honduran society.

CONCLUSION

JTF-B was organized in 1984 to provide the means to achieve the United States national strategic security objectives of containing communism, establishing and promoting regional stability, establishing and promoting democratic governments, and supporting economic growth and sustainable development. Its activities, in concert with the other diplomatic and economic instruments of power actions, have been successful in achieving regional stability and, in terms that ended with the Cold War, containing communism. Its use of military operations other than war enabled the objectives to be achieved through multinational exercises and foreign internal defense which preserved the borders of Honduras. An innovative medical readiness training exercise program tied with intelligence sharing allowed its counterinsurgency programs to succeed and contributed to regional stability.

A guarded success can be claimed in the achievement of a democratic government for Honduras. JTF-B's democratic training

and military-to-military contacts have helped to keep the Honduran military from forcibly intervening in the political affairs of the country for over a decade. JTF-B continues to operate in Honduras today and still works with the Honduran military to accept civilian rule over the military. True success can be claimed when the military's historical "elite status" is challenged by a civilian government and one sees the military working with the civilian government to resolve the dispute peaceably rather than overthrowing the civilian government.

The final strategic objective, the support of economic growth and sustainable development, has not been achieved for Honduras. JTF-B continues to help Honduras develop its national infrastructure through its engineer directed for training program, but a radical change in Honduran economic practices must occur before success in this objective will be achieved.

JTF-B continues to operate in Honduras today. Each year its operations are reviewed and each year the Honduran government asks for its presence to be continued for another year. Its size has been decreased to five hundred United States personnel as many Hondurans have been trained to do the jobs that United States military personnel once accomplished. Most importantly, its size has been decreased as its regional stability mission is no longer needed. The borders are secure and the multinational exercises that are conducted are now focused on humanitarian assistance exercises associated with natural disasters rather

than warring neighbors. Support for the democratic government and economic development continues, relying on military-to-military contacts to help the Honduran military accept a new set of norms. All factors considered, JTF-B has been very successful in accomplishing its assigned missions and has used a minimal United States presence to accomplish national strategic security objectives. Its methods of operations and reliance on noncombat units must serve as a blueprint for any future military operation other than war that is being considered for employment in a situation that has the political, economic, and military characteristics like those that were present in Honduras in 1982.

Five specific lessons learned can be drawn from U.S. actions in Honduras. First, it is paramount to have a unity of effort when employing the diplomatic, economic, and military instruments of power. The country team was able to apply specific programs associated with each instrument of power and combine them effectively to produce viable programs which accomplished the U.S. objectives. Second, multinational exercises are effective as foreign deterrence options. Big Pine II and Operation Golden Pheasant produced diplomatic, social, and military actions within Nicaragua that helped achieve U.S. objectives for the region. Third, insurgencies can be defeated through the use of communications and intelligence sharing without the use of armed military repression. The provision of basic needed services through MEDRETE actions allowed the government to retain the

support of the populace in regions where insurgent groups might have been more influential in gaining native support in their fight against the government. Fourth, democratic institutions can be developed once the host nation decides to pursue that course of action. Training programs for the military, police, and judicial systems coupled with military-to-military contacts can help a nation transition to democracy. Finally, assistance in economic development is possible through the assistance to the host nation in developing its physical infrastructure. Building roadways to help tie the country together can be accomplished relatively easily but true economic progress ultimately reverts to the host nation's willingness to change historic patterns of capital flight and corruption.

Word Count- 6,303

ENDNOTES

[1] Charles Carlton, JTF-B Command Brief, (Palmerola, Honduras: Headquarters, JTF-B, February 1987), 2-4. American Embassy, Handbook on Honduras: Democracy, Defense, Development, Diplomacy, (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: American Embassy, Fall 1987), 2. For current policy, which has changed very little from 1984, see: The White House, A National Security Strategy for a New Century, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, May 1997), i-ii, 19, 26.

[2] American Embassy, 7, 11.

[3] Tom Barry and Deb Preusch, The Central American Fact Book, (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1986), 253-255.

[4] Ibid., 251.

[5] Ibid., 254.

[6] Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), "Honduras: A Democracy in Demise," (February 1984), cited in Ibid., 254.

[7] American Embassy, 2.

[8] Ibid., 3,5.

[9] Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., Central America: A Nation Divided, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 280-281 and Barry and Preusch, 261.

[10] Kevin J. Dougherty, "The Indirect Application of Military Power: US Policy Toward Nicaragua," Military Review, October 1994 cited in Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-07, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 16 June 1995), I-4.

[11] Ibid., I-4, I-5.

[12] Woodward, 281.

[13] Carlton, 4-5.

[14] Ibid., 3-7.

[15] Ibid., 8.

[16] Barry and Preusch, 259.

[17] Ibid., 262.

[18] Association of the United States Army, Special Report: Beyond the Cold War, A Global Assessment, (Arlington, Virginia: Institute of Land Warfare, 1990), 49.

[19] "Latin American Elections," USA Today, 1 December 1997, sec 1A, p. 11.

[20] Joseph S. Tulchin, "Hemispheric Relations in the 21st Century," Journal of Interamerican Studies & World Affairs, (Vol 39, Number 1, Spring 1997), 37.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Washington Office on Latin America, 254.

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