Title: Does Pre-Conflict Integration of Multinational Combat Forces into Operational Warfare Increase Unity of Effort?

Abstract:
The U.S. will likely continue to conduct combat operations in conjunction and cooperation with a multinational coalition. Unity of effort is an overarching goal of the Multinational Force Commander (MNFC). This paper analyzes the functionality of achieving unity of effort through pre-conflict multinational integration of Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) planning staffs. The analysis is conducted through the lens of establishing mutual trust and confidence among coalition partners, and by analyzing factors of interoperability. These factors are addressed by analyzing three key areas: command and control, intelligence, and logistics. The paper concludes that in an effort to fully integrate these forces it is necessary to establish standing multinational force structures within the regional combatant command staffs.
DOES PRE-CONFLICT INTEGRATION OF MULTINATIONAL COMBAT FORCES INTO OPERATIONAL WARFARE INCREASE UNITY OF EFFORT?

By

Mark E. Swiney
Major, USAF

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature:________________________________

3 February 2003

________________________________________
Academic Advisor: Joseph Dill, Lt Col, USAF
The national military strategy of the United States provides the following guidance and impetus to combatant commanders: “While retaining unilateral capability, whenever possible we must seek to operate alongside alliance or coalition forces, integrating their capabilities and capitalizing on their strengths.”¹ With this in mind, U.S. regional combatant commanders have to anticipate the likelihood that they will conduct most combat operations with a coalition of multinational forces. Orchestrating a successful multinational operation that achieves unity of effort is perhaps the most difficult job of a military commander. Anything that can give the operational commander an edge in integrating multinational forces prior to the formation of a coalition is certainly desirable. It is therefore a reasonable assumption that training and maintaining a fully integrated multinational planning structure within each regional combatant command will facilitate combining forces once a coalition is formed during an imminent crisis. It is also a reasonable assessment that multinational force integration should not be an afterthought to the joint planning process, but should be integral to the entire process. Some commanders would argue, however; that there is no single command structure that can be applied to every situation and therefore no amount of multinational training can prepare the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) commander for the realities of an ad-hoc coalition at the operational level. They could further argue that since the international makeup of an ad-hoc coalition cannot be foretold, it is impossible to integrate the planning staffs with the correct multinational components in advance. The question then becomes: Does prior integration of likely coalition partners within the planning staffs of the combatant commander result in a greater unity of effort when conducting multinational combat
operations? This paper seeks to answer this question through analysis of key areas common to all multinational operations.

Unity of effort is an overarching goal of the CJTF commander in his role as the Multinational Force Commander (MNFC) when conducting coalition operations.\(^2\) “Effectively planned and executed multinational operations should, in addition to achieving common objectives, facilitate unity of effort without diminishing freedom of action while preserving unit integrity and uninterrupted support.”\(^3\) This analysis will address the integration of multinational forces through the use of an illustrative example in order to determine the unity of effort value gained by maintaining a fully integrated planning structure within standing CJTF operations.

I have chosen the Bosnian peace enforcement operation as an example of a relatively recent, large-scale multinational operation. This example contains elements of a pre-existing, integrated, multinational command structure and staff (NATO), as well as diverse coalition members (including former adversaries) included on an ad-hoc basis, that we had never anticipated would be part of a unified coalition. This operation is characterized as a peace enforcement operation, which is defined by Article 42 of the UN Charter as: “military action to maintain or restore international peace and security.”\(^4\) It is predominately a low intensity combat operation; however, problems identified with this operation can be expected to be present and magnified during time compressed high intensity combat operations.

This example may very well be the future makeup of all multinational forces. Future coalitions will likely integrate both existing alliance members as well as unforeseen partners, regardless of the regional theater. Following the Bosnia peace agreement of
1995, the initial Implementation Force (IFOR), and subsequent Stabilization Force (SFOR), were established. IFOR, nicknamed “Joint Endeavor” consisted of every NATO nation with armed forces as well as 18 non-NATO nations. All nations participating in IFOR, along with two additional non-NATO partners, later formed the subsequent SFOR, “Joint Guard”. Typical of multinational operations, this action represents a monumental integration of forces from a multitude of nations, each with a different language, culture, and doctrine. Ultimately the military forces of 32 individual nations (compared to 38 nations in the Gulf War), including the forces of such diverse and unlikely partners as Russia and Ireland, combined in this operation.

“World affairs are now characterized by a range of threats and potential threats that are multidirectional, multidimensional, and highly unpredictable.” Unified regional combatant commanders cannot afford to ignore the fact that combined operations are much more likely to occur than unilateral U.S. operations. It is important to remember, however, that unity of effort in multinational operations can be undermined and constrained by national level political decisions. The following analysis seeks only to address those areas relating to operational warfare.

Any time multinational military forces are combined for combat operations; three key areas must be adequately staffed and supported by the command structure in order to facilitate unity of effort. These key areas are: command and control, intelligence, and logistics. Each of these key areas will be analyzed through the lens of establishing mutual trust and confidence among coalition partners, and by analyzing factors of interoperability. Both trust and interoperability permeate all areas and present challenges to mission accomplishment at every level.
Trust and confidence within command and control organizations play a critical role in multinational operations, and include the reliability and expected capability of combined forces. These issues will continue to be challenges for future U.S. commanders, considering that nearly every time the United States has engaged in armed conflict it has done so by leading a multinational coalition. Since trust inspires confidence, it is imperative that commanders develop mutual trust among potential coalition partners.

“After World War II, General Dwight D. Eisenhower stated ‘mutual confidence’ is the ‘one basic thing that will make allied commands work’.” Then, as now, the fact remains that only through close cooperation and personal contacts can mutual trust and confidence be attained.

Operational commanders are often reluctant to depend upon untested coalition partners to conduct critical military operations. This further underscores the need to have a working relationship with any coalition partner prior to conducting combat operations. The operational commander is never guaranteed success, whether using one’s own forces or those of another country, and reliance on coalition forces must be fully incorporated into the operational scheme. Trust is often the key ingredient required for integrating other nation’s forces into a coalition team. As stated in Joint Pub 1, “Trust does not result from good feelings or devout wishes but is based on the mutual confidence resulting from honest efforts to learn about and understand the capabilities each member brings to the team.” The importance of trust among combat forces cannot be overstated. “Trust expands the commander’s options and enhances flexibility, agility, and freedom to take the initiative when conditions warrant.” Trust can only be gained over time and through a close association among military members. It will be noticeably absent when a
coalition is formed with member states that have not had prior military to military contact. Relationships among multinational forces therefore require a long maturation process in order to foster the trust and cohesion that are necessary for effective use of combat forces.

As an example of this, during both Joint Endeavor and Joint Guard there was a failure in mutual trust between the multinational division headquarters and the Special Forces teams assigned to them. This mistrust blurred the lines between national and international confidence, since the problem persisted regardless of the nationality of the Special Forces teams. Lack of effective liaison between Special Forces (both U.S. and coalition) elements and their headquarters compounded this problem, leading commanders to conclude that Special Forces assets were not working in cooperation and conjunction with the overall effort. This mistrust was equally apparent from the perspective of the Special Forces operators, because they believed that conventional military officers at the headquarters had little knowledge of their capabilities and frequently put them at undue risk. This lack of trust can be summed up as a result of the absence of effective training between conventional forces and Special Forces. Lending to the argument for prior integration of forces is the fact that this mutual mistrust faded later in the operation as relationships were fostered and capabilities became better understood.

Command and control interoperability was greatly challenged in this operation by the inclusion of Russian military forces into IFOR; however, most of these challenges were overcome through liaison teams and a special arrangement for the command structure of Russian forces. Russian General Leontiy P. Shevtsov retained tactical control of Russian forces, but reported directly to the supreme allied commander Europe. According to
General Shevtsov, this command and control arrangement worked “fairly good” and represented “solid, practical, effective working relationships”, but he also recommended more substantial collaboration between Russia and NATO in the form of teaching, conferences, seminars, courses at military educational institutions, and contacts at the highest operational levels.\textsuperscript{14}

There were certainly interoperability shortcomings in both the IFOR and SFOR operations. Therefore, it is no surprise that the command and control structure struggled with both efficiency and effectiveness, considering the number of participating nations. While many involved with the operation advocated more training for multinational forces to facilitate interoperability, others would argue that no amount of training can prepare an operational commander for the challenges an ad-hoc coalition presents to the command. They would further argue that each operation is unique and requires a different approach for successful integration of coalition forces. In the complex environment of multinational operations “mission creep” is an ever-present danger. Multiple coalition partners, civilians, non-governmental organizations, private voluntary organizations, refugees, etc., each have a different set of requirements and interests. Each of these, and many other groups, may share the battlefield. The multinational forces commander must synchronize efforts when tackling unexpected crises during both combat and military operations other than war.\textsuperscript{15}

Command and control for this operation also involved a compressed timeline for the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. These obstacles were overcome through creative uses of operational and tactical control mechanisms, but the command leadership acknowledged that the significance of these difficulties would be greatly magnified in a
high intensity multinational combat operation. The rapidly changing scenario and requirement to respond quickly to a commander’s instructions, especially regarding incidents that overlap area of responsibility boundaries, magnify the problem significantly. The IFOR command assessed that the only way to overcome mutual trust and interoperability problems is to invest in more combined training.\textsuperscript{16}

Intelligence sharing with coalition partners is perhaps the most difficult decision an operational commander must make. While it is clear that intelligence information must be shared when conducting combat operations, the question is: How much can we share without jeopardizing U.S. national security? Predictably, the essence of this question is the trust and reliability of coalition partners. While difficult during any operation, intelligence sharing becomes exponentially more complicated when conducting large-scale multinational combat operations.

Mutual trust and confidence is a two way street for coalition partners and frequently presents problems. Regarding intelligence information gathered by coalition partners during IFOR, it was often difficult to get critical information reported up the command chain prior to being “siphoned off to national command channels or national intelligence agencies, rather than being reported to the headquarters IFOR.”\textsuperscript{17} Both reporting and dissemination of intelligence information may require two or more levels of operations. Release-ability of documents to foreign nationals may require a separate structure devoted to each classification category in any particular operation. Classifications such as “US Only”, “Releasable to NATO”, “Releasable to Non-NATO”, or “Releasable to UK, CA, AU”, etc., may each require a separate reporting and dissemination structure.\textsuperscript{18} This is not a new or unique problem, but one that is omnipresent and ubiquitous to every theater
of operation. CJTF commanders must always balance the need to know with the criticality of the operation.

Intelligence interoperability often focuses on equipment limitations, but the processes involved in working with coalition partners can also highlight significant challenges. Besides the obvious problems of what and how much intelligence information to share, sharing too much information is also problematic. From the IFOR perspective, most nations were simply not used to the huge volume of intelligence information that was made available, and did not have the processes and capability to deal with the amount and variety of data. Conducting appropriate analysis of intelligence information and assessing its priority prior to release to international partners can mitigate this problem somewhat, but in order to streamline the intelligence sharing process, a thorough understanding of each member’s capabilities and limitations is required. Understanding the capabilities of coalition partners can only be ascertained from experience gained through a close working association. Of course any experience is valuable, but once a large coalition is formed during actual operations the number of participants is likely to grow to such an extent that previously established processes may rapidly become inadequate for the situation. Nevertheless, prior association is a valuable tool in identifying problem areas and laying the foundation for conducting intelligence operations during multinational combat situations.

Interoperability was also negatively affected by the large number of national intelligence cells within the IFOR theater of operations. There were at least 16 individual national intelligence cells in the theater, each reporting both through their national channels and to the operational IFOR intelligence headquarters. Most of these cells
placed a greater priority on pursuing national agendas rather than on supporting the operation. National intelligence agencies will always desire to establish individual cells, sacrificing unity of effort in the process. Therefore, this situation will likely persist, and there appears to be no reasonable solution to this problem.

Given the inherent restrictions involving intelligence sharing, and the tendencies toward supporting national priorities, it is unlikely that prior integration of multinational intelligence centers will completely eliminate these problems. Nevertheless, establishing relationships early could prevent some of the disjointed nature of a large multinational intelligence operation, and may provide time to streamline processes involving reporting and dissemination channels. The bottom line is that so long as national intelligence priorities take precedence over operational requirements, unity of effort will not be achieved.

The logistical tasks supporting a large-scale multinational combat operation are enormously complex and share many of the same challenges as both command and control, and intelligence. Unity of effort is particularly difficult for logistical support when numerous nations are tasked for ad-hoc coalition operations. During the Bosnian operations an acceptable level of unity of effort was never achieved, logistical power was not maximized, and limited resources were not used effectively.20 The United States often assumes the burden of all strategic lift due to our preponderance of assets and the propensity of coalition partners to depend on us to get them to the fight. We generally assume this burden in the interest of maintaining coalition cohesion. In operation Joint Endeavor, the United States took the logistical lead by establishing a headquarters in Croatia and staffing it with over 400 logisticians from 14 countries.21 Even though
adequately manned with a multinational staff, this fact alone did not produce unity of effort, as the analysis will show. This headquarters was understandably faced with many of the same command and control issues that were prevalent in the overall operational command and control structure.

Duplication of effort, resulting from lack of trust and confidence in the logistical system, particularly regarding sustainment functions among participating nations in both contracting and supply, placed an unnecessary strain on the limited resources. Even though the IFOR logistics headquarters was operational and fully staffed, many issues regarding competing national interests remained. Had this organization been established prior to the operation, these difficulties would likely still remain. The failure of achieving unity of effort hinges on the fact that logistics is a national responsibility, and while establishing an integrated logistical staff reduces many friction points, it does not alleviate the fundamental difficulty of forcing coalition priority over national interests. Trust regarding logistics is not confined to coalition issues, but is common among joint partners as well. Multiple orders for the same item to ensure its receipt clogs supply lines, and creates confusion and needless duplication of effort. This blatant lack of confidence in the logistical system often creates an endless supply loop. Supplies are ordered in duplicate or triplicate, the system becomes clogged, priorities get adjusted, and the duplicate items gather dust somewhere while other items needlessly await shipment. U.S. transportation command is actively working this issue for U.S. forces, but the educational process is difficult, and the results may not have any impact on multinational operations since logistics remain a national responsibility.
Logistical interoperability is complicated by the ad-hoc nature of coalition operations and affects both synchronization and sustainment. Apportioning logistical burden-sharing requires time for negotiations between coalition partners which delays initial support to the operation. Many of these delays are caused by prolonged discussions of funding, rather than focusing on more practical issues such as national capability. It is during this stage that the U.S. absorbs most of the burdens of strategic lift by default. These administrative delays create issues at cross-purposes to the rapid response requirements frequent to many multinational operations. Interoperability is often further complicated by a hastily created logistical organization once financial issues are resolved. The primary purpose of logistical burden-sharing is to create a system of shared responsibility aimed at improving efficiency for the entire operation. Nevertheless, the frequently hectic organizational structure created during ad-hoc operations often creates an inefficient logistical system, with national requirements taking precedence over operational logistic demands. Despite the readily apparent problems created by the national aspects of coalition logistics, things are unlikely to change. The facts remain that: “Without a comprehensive, well-planned and rehearsed logistics system no military operation can succeed,” and therefore, “nations are most unlikely to rely on others for resources essential to their fighting capability.” It is obligatory for the MNFC to exert influence on the process of establishing a functional logistics system even if the established command structure does not provide direct authority over coalition logistics forces. Logistical interoperability then, revolves more around the command and control system and integration of logistical assets, and less focused on fundamental equipment limitations. This does not imply that national assets are not limited among coalition
partners, because they are, but this is a limitation that is likely to remain and there is little a combatant commander can do about it.

By analyzing unity of effort when addressing the key areas of command and control, intelligence, and logistics, it becomes clear that there are many potential pitfalls when integrating multinational combat forces. It is equally clear, that prior integration of a few coalition partners does not alleviate the problem. What has become apparent, however; is that unity of effort requires the cooperation of all member states at every level, from the national strategic to the tactical. It is the unenviable task of the operational commander to foster the trust and cooperation of military forces through integration and collaboration.

The foregoing analysis leads to recommendations that include fostering trust and confidence through focused training, establishing a framework for multinational combat force integration into the planning staffs, and establishing guidelines for coalition participation during combat operations. Each of these factors warrant attention from the combatant commander’s staff, and all deserve consideration for inclusion into the theater strategic capabilities plans and theater engagement plans of each region. Furthermore, these recommendations are applicable to each of the three key areas dissected above. Command and control, intelligence, and logistics can all benefit from implementation of a comprehensive, focused, multinational training plan that leads to permanent staff integration.

Of all the key area components that affect unity of effort, the strongest argument for early integration of multinational forces into the planning staffs is the inevitable bond of trust and confidence that will provide the foundation for conducting successful
multinational combat operations. Conversely, should prior integration fail to produce trust and confidence, that fact in itself is valuable information and will greatly affect the planning process. This will be addressed further as a recommended limitation of combat operations. The most profound fact from this analysis is that trust and confidence permeates all key areas and is critically important to achieving unity of effort, regardless of how that trust is gained.

A common theme from this analysis is, unsurprisingly, the need for more focused and comprehensive training involving integration of multinational forces. Therefore, my recommendations predictably include focused training. The earlier a commander can integrate the planning staffs with coalition members, the better the command will be prepared for execution of operational directives. Establishing a permanent multinational planning staff is one way to guarantee that at least a core of coalition personnel are available for immediate consultation for any impending crisis situation.

Integrated training of combatant command staffs must be directed towards conducting coalition operations and focused on the planning functions, both deliberate and crisis action, within the joint staffs. Simple field training and command post exercises do not meet the multinational training needs of an operational CJTF commander. Training must be comprehensive in scope and fully integrated with multinational personnel. Only by experiencing the inevitable problems multinational forces face, can planners appreciate different points of view and understand the types of obstacles that will always need to be addressed. Providing an integrated training environment is the first step in the educational process. This process will develop as the integrated planning structure
matures, building upon each success until multinational integration is transparent to the commander.

Some would argue, however; that by establishing a framework of multinational training and doctrine we are implying consensus toward the doctrine of our partners, or are establishing some type of pre-arranged authority that may not be commensurate with future operations.\textsuperscript{24} The fear here is that a crisis could develop faster than the military components could react and that they would fall back on old doctrinal or procedural structures without regarding the unique aspects of the operation. In fact the Bosnian IFOR demonstrated that in the absence of an agreed multinational doctrine, participating countries quickly fell back on their national doctrines.\textsuperscript{25} It is clear that the ad-hoc nature of coalitions often prevents prior planning and training with all potential coalition military partners. Furthermore, the planning window is often short and war-gaming is often limited or nonexistent for operations involving unforeseen adversaries. These problems will likely persist, and while they can be minimized through training and exercises, they cannot be mitigated completely.

Multinational participation should begin in the planning phase and continue through the after action phase in order to capture lessons learned for future training opportunities. This is especially important when planning and conducting a major theater exercise. It is critical when planning for actual combat operations.

It is imperative that combatant commanders establish a personal relationship with their international counterparts. “The result of good rapport between leaders will be successful teamwork by their staffs and subordinate commanders and overall unity of effort.”\textsuperscript{26} Only through personal contact at every level can trust and cooperation be developed.
Establishing permanent multinational planning staff officers to facilitate training opportunities can further advance this military to military relationship. Waiting until a crisis breaks out to establish multinational teams is an avoidable hindrance to force integration. “Early establishment [of a multinational planning staff] reduces the fog and friction caused by incompatible communications systems, doctrine, and operating procedures.”

This process can be formalized within every unified command by establishing a standing multinational forces coordination center, consisting of a staff element from member nations with sufficient linguists and subject matter experts to integrate into all functional areas of the command. This approach represents a strong commitment to multinational force integration, but must be embraced by the command and fully supported at every level in order to be successful.

Once a coalition has been formed, and political support from coalition partners has reached the point that military support is offered, the first step the operational commander must take is to initiate a request for assets, instead of merely accepting forces offered without careful consideration of what capabilities are needed. “Unfortunately, too often multinational forces have been employed without carefully matching the ends and means. Participating forces are often selected for reasons of political balance and representation, rather than military effectiveness. As a result, multinational forces are often less than the sum of their parts and thus fall short of expectations.”

The operational commander must always put the mission first and not allow political considerations to interfere with successfully executing that mission, because while it may be fear that binds a coalition together, it is failure that ultimately fractures it. Military commanders, however, are accountable to the coalition’s political goals and must not lose sight of the coalition’s
mission and desired end state. When the time comes for imminent hostilities and the proposed requisite military to military cooperation has not occurred, the combatant commander should limit the participation of multinational forces to operations other than combat. There will always remain a vast array of support opportunities in which a coalition partner can contribute to an operation without becoming involved in actual combat operations.

These recommendations are primarily aimed at fostering mutual trust and confidence among potential coalition partners in order to produce operational unity of effort. They would further serve as a foundation for establishing an integrated planning staff at the regional combatant commander level, including areas of command and control, intelligence, and logistics. This foundation is necessary because during crisis there is no substitute for experience derived through existing multinational systems and processes. Time critical combat operations are unforgiving and demand established procedures that are known to work. This cannot be known if staff integration begins concurrently with the operation at hand.

Therefore, I must conclude that mutual trust and confidence is the glue that binds coalitions together, and produces the conditions required to achieve unity of effort. Establishing mutual trust requires time, and time is usually a luxury commander’s cannot afford when conducting critical combat operations. Nevertheless, we can reasonably conclude that unity of effort can be achieved in any coalition, given enough time, regardless of the nature of its formation; however, the time required to achieve this effort can be significantly reduced through prior integration and training with potential coalition partners. This conclusion does not imply that this is an uncomplicated task, nor does it
imply that any degree of unity can be achieved if the coalition partners are not fully dedicated to the effort. It does implicitly imply, however; that unity of effort is only achieved when coalition partners trust and have confidence in each other. This can only be attained through direct personal contact. This conclusion further implies that the most reasonable method of developing personal relationships is through a continuous process of training and exercises.

The analysis has shown through representative examples that any prior training and staff integration is beneficial to conducting multinational combat operations; however, depending upon the command structure established and individual personalities, a regional combatant commander can successfully achieve a reasonable unity of effort with any coalition when members are all dedicated toward achieving a common goal. Coalition members with a separate national agenda will not contribute to an operation whether or not they have a history of cooperation.

“There is a good probability that any military operations undertaken by the United States of America will have multinational aspects, so extensive is the network of alliances, friendships, and mutual interests established by our nation around the world.”

With so much emphasis on multinational operations, today’s combatant commanders must place a high priority on multinational cooperation and training, especially regarding critical combat operations. The fact remains; however, that most regional combatant commanders have not integrated multinational forces into their planning and command structure, have not established multinational planning staffs, and are generally unprepared for high intensity multinational combat operations.
There remain in the world today some 40 unresolved conflicts, any one of which may erupt into full-fledged war with little or no warning. These conflicts span the globe and encompass nearly every unified regional command. In fact, on average, five to ten of these smoldering conflicts involve intense hostilities at any one time.32 For better or worse, the United States can expect to be engaged in multinational military operations for a long time to come. The challenges of multinational warfare will likely remain, but hopefully through training and experience we can lessen the growing pains. As Winston Churchill is reported to have said: “The only thing in war worse than having to fight with allies is having to fight without allies.”33 We had better get used to it.
NOTES


7 Peter T. Haydon and Ann L. Griffiths, Multinational naval forces, (Halifax, NS: Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, 1996), 83.


12 Ibid.

13 Findlay, 51.


16 Johnstone-Burt, 17.

17 Ibid., 41.


19 Johnstone-Burt, 41.

20 Eugene W. Mittuch, Logistics support for NATO’s new strategic concept: the need for a multinational logistics command. (Newport, RI: Department of Joint Military Operations, U.S. Naval War College, 13 May 2002), 1.

21 Ibid., 5.


25 Ibid., 40.


27 Ibid., II-11.

28 Ibid., II-13.

29 Goodpaster, 15.

31 JCS Joint Pub 1, vii.
32 Goodpaster, 11.
33 Dulin, 3.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Haydon, Peter T. and Ann L. Griffiths. Multinational naval forces. Halifax, NS: Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, 1996.


