ACHIEVING OPERATIONAL SUCCESS
IN A COALITION ENVIRONMENT

By Lieutenant-Colonel C.G. Simonds

Abstract

This paper examines the nature of operational success in a coalition context. Considering the nature of coalitions themselves, the paper identifies and examines the determinants of operational success, using the principles of operational art as the basis for understanding how commanders seek to achieve assigned objectives. The challenges, or points of friction, which manifest themselves in coalitions are analysed, including both critical strategic- and operational-level factors that impact upon the commander. Finally, the paper argues that, despite conditions inherent in a coalition environment, operational commanders can achieve success through the enhancement of personal authority and the creative application of flexible decision-making.

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INTRODUCTION

The nature of warfare leading into the 21st century, characterized by failed and failing states, ethnic, religious, or sectarian-based violence and a general shift from inter- to intra-state conflict, highlights the complex character of the modern-day geo-political environment. To address the challenges expected to be faced, Canadian foreign and defence policy has articulated the view that multilateral relationships represent the mainstay of the nation's military contribution to peace and stability in the international sphere. Indeed, alliances and coalitions have been central to the Western military experience. Against such a backdrop, it is difficult to imagine any intervention in the next twenty years in which Canada would not be involved in a multinational context. Moreover, Canada is not alone in this view.

Amongst allied or like-minded nations, the consensus view is that military responses to global challenges will be increasingly executed on the basis of partnerships amongst those who are willing to address either specific threats or those to broader global peace and security. The President of the United States has articulated that effective multinational efforts are an essential pillar of the United States' approach to dealing with contemporary challenges in the world.[1] Similarly, as a point of fundamental doctrine, the United Kingdom has indicated that the deployment of British forces outside of an alliance or coalition framework would be a rarity.[2]

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[1] George W. Bush, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (Washington, D.C., The White House: March, 2006), Introduction.
[2] United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, *JWP 0-01 British Defence Doctrine (Second Edition)* (October 2001), 3-8.

Canada has a long history of engagement in alliances and coalitions focusing the efforts of its military deployments. Active political and military participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations have provided, and continue to serve as, opportunities through which the strategic objectives of security and national defence and the promotion of Canadian interests and values are advanced. Canada's involvement in multinational forums such as these, and participation in other coalition operations, such as the International Commission for Control and Supervision in Viet Nam from 1971 - 1972, has provided a solid understanding of the nature of such complicated commitments. Important in this regard is the fact that, although an underlying common purpose brings nations together to resolve a particular problem, states enter into coalitions for differing reasons. Consequently, strategic objectives may be as varied as the number of nations involved. Diverse goals, mixed capabilities, national restrictions and the retention of national command authority by contributing nations all pose key challenges to commanders in attempting to fulfill their responsibilities.

Canadian military doctrine notes that "the operational level of conflict is the level at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theatres or areas of operations."[3] Implicitly, operational commanders are responsible for the design of campaigns, entailing the development and execution of a series of tactical actions aimed at realizing given strategic objectives. Commanders endeavour to practice the operational art with a view to realizing these goals. However, recognizing the nature of coalitions and national limitations established by partner governments, operational commanders are inhibited in their ability to achieve success.

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[3] Department of National Defence, *Canadian Forces Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2005), 1-5.

This paper will argue that, despite conditions inherent in a coalition environment,

operational commanders can achieve success through the enhancement of personal authority

necessarily have a common base in approaches to, and procedures for, the conduct of warfare. Although both alliances and coalitions bring forward challenges or points of friction in the execution of military action, the degree to which these are manifested will depend largely upon the extent to which the forces involved have interacted or been integrated prior to being engaged in conflict.

There are many reasons why such associations are formed. In *The Troubled Partnership*, Henry Kissinger identifies three particular reasons why military alliances are created.[6] In the first instance, they are generally the only manner in which overwhelming power can be generated to defend against aggression. Broad-based coalitions were formed in both First and Second World Wars, based in some cases upon existing treaties or alliances, aimed at creating the necessary political, economic and military power to stand firm against military aggression and expansionism. Secondly, partnerships are formed to make clear that an alignment of powers exists as a means of deterrence. In the post-war period, founded upon the principle of collective defence and security, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is the most recognizable of such agreements. Lastly, alliances are used to translate an implied interest in reciprocal support into a formal accord. In such cases, by establishing formal agreements, countries seek to remove any ambiguity in another's indicated assurances of support, should they be subject to attack by a third party. As Kissinger points out, "Great Britain and France had no assurances of U.S. assistance at the beginning of both World Wars."[7] In the case of World War II, through British/American staff talks leading up to December 1941, the United Kingdom sought to formalize the role of and relationship with the United States, should the latter enter the conflict.

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[6] Henry A. Kissinger, *The Troubled Partnership*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965), 11.
[7] *Ibid.*, 16.

Although formulated in the 1960s, in the context of a bi-polar international environment with competing democratic versus communist political ideologies, the reasons outlined by Henry Kissinger remain largely relevant today. However, as the complexities of peace and security in the international domain increase, so have the rationales for the conduct of military operations in a coalition or alliance context. Combined operations permit economies in the dedication of resources, making engagement in the international sphere affordable for many nations. Importantly, coalitions and alliances create a measure of legitimacy to the use of military forces as an instrument of political policy. This was reflected in the 1990/1991Gulf War.

In that particular conflict, a supporting United Nations Security Council Resolution explicitly legitimized the use of force by a coalition of nations to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait.[8] Of particular concern to those Western countries involved was the need to ensure that participation was not specifically perceived as aimed at furthering their own political agendas in the Gulf region. Implicit legitimacy in the deployment of Western military forces resulted from the broad involvement of Arab and Middle Eastern nations, some of who were politically adversarial towards the United States. Such was not the case in the invasion of Iraq in 2003, led by the United States. Although a Security Council Resolution[9] was used as the basis for the use of force to depose Saddam Hussein, its legitimacy in specifically authorizing military action, as a result of Iraqi non-compliance with obligations resulting from the 1990/1991 Gulf War, was hotly contested. Consequently, leading up to the invasion, the United States and the United Kingdom sought to bring together as many nations

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[8] United Nations Security Council Resolution 678, 29 November 1990, http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions.html.
[9] United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441, 8 November 2002, http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions.html.

as possible in a 'coalition of the willing' to provide political and public legitimacy to the use of force to overthrow the Ba'athist regime.

Whether to harness sufficient military power either to act or to realize economies, to deter aggression, or to legitimize the use of force, the underlying rationale for nations joining together with others in alliances or coalitions is the achievement of some political purpose. As such, the articulation of the particular strategic objectives, or ends, of any military action rests with the associated political authorities. What is more, these will reflect the specific values and interests of those individual states that have come together to form the alliance or coalition. It is at this the strategic level that the security goals are delineated and the resources to be exploited to achieve those goals defined, including military forces. Based upon these objectives, a military strategy is developed. As Canadian Forces doctrine suggests, this represents "the manner in which military power should be developed and applied to achieve national objectives…"[10] Of particular significance in considering the operational commander's responsibilities, 'strategy is the sole authoritative basis…and guides operations by establishing aims, allocating resources, and imposing conditions on military action."[11] Strategy then establishes the foundation for both the 'ways' in which military force will be applied and the 'means', or resources, that will be used to achieve the ends. It is against these elements, the defined ends, the ways and the means, that operational success will be measured.

OPERATIONAL SUCCESS

In its most basic form, operational success can be defined as the achievement of the given strategic objectives in the manner that the strategy dictates and using the resources

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[10] Department of National Defence, *Canadian Forces Operations…*, 1-4 – 1-5.
[11] *Ibid*., 1-5.

provided. However, as operational commanders do not stand at the pinnacle of the military

decision ladder, others will always appraise their true effectiveness against broader factors.

The length of time taken to realize the goals and the ultimate costs represent the bases against

which the expectations on operational commanders are generally weighed. Costs, in this

regard, include both materiel and financial expenditures in resources, as well as the human

price paid in realizing the desired goals. The use of these factors as an evaluation tool

becomes all the more delicate in a coalition environment, in which the different partners will

continually assess the cost of military action against the protection or promotion of their

interests and values. In the end, at that strategic level, it would be expected that the ends

would be achieved in the shortest time possible and at the minimum cost.

At the operational level, the fundamental role of the commander then is to effectively

implement a particular military strategy, translating the strategic objectives into coherent

military actions on the ground, in a manner that satisfies the expectations of the political and

military authorities. The ability to bring this about is recognized as the talent of exercising

the operational art. It is important to recognize that operational art and the operational level

of war are not one and the same. While the operational level is that which bridges the

strategic and tactical realms, operational art is generally interpreted as the skill with which a

designated commander employs military forces through the design, planning, organization

and conduct of campaigns and major operations in a theatre or area of operations.[12] As

Canadian Forces doctrine specifically offers, "Operational art refers to the ingenuity of a

commander in the design and execution of campaigns. So while not the exclusive province

of a specific level of conflict, it does require a level of command capable of exercising the

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[12] See, for example, United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, JWP 0-01 *British Defence Doctrine (Second Edition)* (October 2001), 1-2.

authority and skill required to determine when, where and for what purpose forces will or will not fight."[13] In essence, operational art represents "…a method to translate strategic aims (ends) into campaigns (ways) using elements of operational design that will ultimately permit the allocation of resources (means) to be utilized at the tactical level …"[14] The degree to which one succeeds, or overall effectiveness in achieving the strategic goals, ultimately distinguishes the master from the journeyman.

Variations in Western interpretations, as it relates to the operational art, provide some measure of insight into the manner in which various nations approach the design of operations. The general Canadian view, founded upon the commander's ingenuity, is similar to those of the United Kingdom and of NATO. These jurisdictions emphasize skill as the basis of the operational art, implying that the commander plays the key role in the design and planning of military operations. United States doctrine sees operational art as, "The application of creative imagination by commanders and staffs – supported by their skill, knowledge and experience – to design strategies, campaigns and major operations and organize and employ military forces,"[15] placing a greater emphasis on the staff functions in the development of the campaign plan.

It is the campaign plan that represents the formal expression of the commander's interpretation of his assigned task. It is in effect a roadmap, linking a series of tactical actions, kinetic and non-kinetic, in time and space, all aimed at achieving the desired end. Importantly, it captures the commander's vision of how and when events are to unfold and articulates his intent. If the commander were considered the conductor and those forces

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[13] Department of National Defence, *CF Operational Planning Process* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2002), 2-2.
[14] Howard Coombs, "Perspectives on Operational Thought," in *Operational Art: Canadian Perspectives Context and Concepts* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2005), 78.
[15] United States, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-0 Joint Operations*, (17 September 2006), IV-3.

under his command the orchestra, the campaign plan is the sheet music, or score, for the concerto, guiding each instrument or section of instruments of military power, sometimes simultaneously, at other times in a continuous sequential manner, with tempos and strengths varying, all leading to the final crescendo. As a tool to command and control subordinate forces, the campaign plan defines the why, the what, the where and the when military actions will be executed and by whom.

Within Western nations, approaches to supporting the development of a campaign plan, or the operational planning process, vary by country from a very deliberate, mechanistic one to a much more loose process. For the United States, campaign plan development is derived from linking a broad range of staff activities guided by the Joint Operational Planning and Execution System. This is itself a process which "includes joint operational planning policies, procedures, and reporting structures supported by communications and automated data processing systems."[16] Complex supporting processes, like the Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace and the Joint Targeting Process all combine to create a holistic, systems approach to designing and executing a campaign. As elements of a larger system, though, they are by nature staff-driven, relying more on the ability of staff officers to collect and consolidate volumes of data and information and then map out options for military action. Emerging concepts like the Effects-Based Approach to Joint Operations build on the complex nature of these processes, using general systems theory, in which problems are viewed in the context of a "set of systems composed of tangible elements (nodes) and their relationships (links) to each other"[17] as its foundation. As with the other

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[16] United States, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 1-02 Department of Defence Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, (12 April 2001 amended through 17 September 2006), 293.
[17] United States, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Supplement One to Commander's Handbook for an Effects-Based Approach to Joint Operations* (2 March 2006), 2.

processes, effectiveness relies heavily upon the capacity to garner, collate and understand

data or information, and then to act upon that understanding by applying judgment.

In the case of the United Kingdom, campaign development centres on the

commander. From his estimate, operational ideas are generated which establish the

framework of the Commander's Intent and his Concept of Operations. These notions provide

the basis from which the staff can design the campaign.[18] Although in practice, the Canadian

Forces' Operational Planning Process captures such activities as the Intelligence Preparation

of the Battlespace, Canadian doctrine leans more towards that of the United Kingdom, with

the commander driving the development and implementation of a campaign plan through his

initial estimate or Mission Analysis.[19] In these command-centric approaches, operational

success, measured in terms of such factors as creativity, agility and flexibility, can be said to

hinge directly on the abilities of the commander. The nature of the commander's role is

highlighted in British joint doctrine in articulating the requirement for "…what Moltke

referred to as talent and T.E. Lawrence as the irrational tenth [to supplement the]…web of

procedures, systems and processes [that] bring some sort of structure…"[20] to the

complexities of modern fast-moving warfare.

Contemporary theory and doctrine place the manoeuvrist approach to warfare at the

heart of the commander's ability to achieve success in the modern battle space. Recognizing

the nature of conflict, as it exists in both moral and physical planes, the philosophy of

manoeuvre warfare seeks, as its principal objective, "to defeat the enemy by shattering his

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[18] United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, *JDP-01 Joint Operations* (March 2004), 3-9 – 3-11.

[19] Department of National Defence, *CF Operational Planning Process…,* 4-4.

[20] United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, *JDP-01 Joint Operations…,* 3-9. T.E. Lawrence, in examining the nature of warfare, noted that nine-tenths of tactics were certain, taught in books. The other tenth, the true test of generals, derived itself from instinct, and through practice was reflexive in crisis situations. For more on this see: T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of wisdom: A Triumph*, (London: Cape, 1940).

moral and physical cohesion, his ability to fight as an effective coordinated whole, rather than destroying him physically through incremental attrition."[21] While the specific principles, or tenets, of manoeuvre warfare vary amongst Western nations, the notions of exploiting weaknesses, synchronization and dictating the pace, or tempo, of operations represent common threads relevant to the subject at hand.

In considering the exploitation of weaknesses, the commander seeks to avoid directly confronting an enemy's strength. Although some weak points may be readily evident, more often than not, the commander must use a broad range of intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance assets to seek them out. Once gaps are identified, combat power can be pulled through the opening to strike directly at critical vulnerabilities, dislocating and disrupting the foe. The exploitation of these weak points demands "agility, flexibility and anticipation, and low-level freedom of action on the part of the engaged forces."[22] Tactical actions are executed either simultaneously and/or in rapid succession, in order to both dislocate or disrupt enemy strengths and pre-empt the enemy by seizing and maintaining the initiative. This synchronization of events is a continual activity throughout the execution of a campaign plan, serving to ensure the commander freedom of action. In order to maximize the effectiveness of the harmonization of a wide spectrum of military actions in time and space, "dynamic, anticipatory responses are essential."[23] This enables the commander to establish and control the rhythm with which tactical operations are conducted. Dictating the tempo in this manner allows a commander to control the battle space, to determine when, where and for what purpose forces will be engaged. Commanders seek success by controlling the pace of operational activities, continually presenting the opposing

[21] Department of National Defence, *Conduct of Land Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 01 July 1998), 15.
[22] *Ibid*., 16.
[23] Department of National Defence, *Canadian Forces Operations…*, 3-9.

commander with new problems which will, ultimately, stymie his ability to react appropriately. In addition, success is equally influenced by the ability of the commander to react to the opponent's actions. Ideally, the most effective of commanders would continually pre-empt their enemy, denying them opportunity and seizing the initiative with a view to maintaining a degree of momentum that an adversary is unable to cope with. Commonly understood as being *inside* the opponent's decision cycle, controlling the tempo of operations is dependant upon the timeliness and accuracy of intelligence and the nimbleness to exploit situations that are presented. This implies the need for flexibility in the commander's ability to direct the actions of subordinate forces and the equal ability of those forces to exercise initiative quickly in reacting to available opportunities.

Implicit in the ability of a commander to exercise the operational art is the notion of command itself. Canadian Forces doctrine defines command "as the authority vested in an individual of the armed forces for the direction, coordination and control of military forces."[24] Importantly, the Canadian doctrinal concepts of command recognize that it is "…uniquely human and highlights the importance of the commander in all activities within a military force relating to employment."[25] Doctor Ross Pigeau and Carol McCann underpinned the human nature of command in their studies of command and control. In re-defining command, they characterize it as "the expression of human will necessary to accomplish the mission."[26] Their model of the three creative dimensions of command – competency, authority and responsibility - offers important insights into the expectations of command and commanders. If one accepts at the outset that commanders are selected on the

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[24] Department of National Defence, *CF Operational planning Process…*, 1-1.
[25] *Idem.*
[26] Dr. Ross Pigeau and Carol McCann, "Re-conceptualizing Command and Control," *Canadian Military Journal* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 56.

basis of their inherent competency to achieve the particular strategic objectives of a military

operation, then the capabilities of authority and responsibility represent variables. With

respect to authority, Pigeau and McCann distinguish between legal authority, which is vested

in a commander, and personal authority, which a commander garners, or wins, from

superiors, peers and subordinates as a result of his force of character. The personal authority

held tacitly by a commander serves to reinforce and build upon the degree of legal authority

that he possesses. In examining the dimension of responsibility, Pigeau and McCann have

identified extrinsic responsibility as the degree of accountability up the chain of command.

Further, it "implies a behavioural contract between an individual and his or her superiors."

On the other hand, intrinsic responsibility is seen as the measure of commitment or

obligation that a commander possesses in relation to actual mission accomplishment.

According to Pigeau and McCann, maximal command is achieved "when there is high

authority (both legal and personal) and acceptance of responsibility…(both extrinsic and

intrinsic)."[27] In such circumstances, the commander will have been provided the full

authority to direct the activities of the forces subordinate to him and their component

elements, and he will have earned the respect of superiors, peers and subordinates through his

inherent competency, his reputation, his experience and his character. In addition, he will be

willing to be held accountable for the responsibilities bestowed upon him and he will possess

and articulate a clear resolve towards achieving the mission.

In considering the commander's position in relation to the execution of military

operations, the analysis of Pigeau and McCann supports the principles of command outlined

in Canadian military doctrine – unity of command, span of control, chain of command,

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[27] *Ibid*., 60.

delegation of authority, freedom of action, and continuity of command.[28] The principles of

unity of command, chain of command and freedom of action are germane to the subject

presented. The former suggests the vested legal authority to plan and direct operations, to

direct and control the resources committed to the task, and to be held responsible for the

results. The concept of a chain of command suggests that individuals respond directly to a

particular higher authority and, conversely, issue orders and directions to subordinate

elements within a hierarchical structure. Freedom of action implies a degree of autonomy

vested in subordinates to exercise initiative in undertaking tactical actions in response to the

changing dynamics of the battle space. This notion of mission command relies, on one hand,

on the skill and knowledge of the subordinate commander, and on the other, on a shared

degree of trust and confidence between commanders. Consequently, personal authority plays

a definitive role in engendering the atmosphere conducive to a mission command culture.

In the end, it can be said that the keys to operational success, achieving the desired

ends, lie in the ability of the commander to develop and execute a campaign plan that

optimizes the capability to act and react in an agile, flexible and creative manner. These

traits, when exploited synergistically, enable the commander to pre-empt, dislocate and

disrupt the adversary. Agility is derived the availability of information, allowing the

commander to anticipate an enemy's actions and counter them in a dynamic manner.

Flexibility stems from the ability to harness the skill and knowledge of subordinate

commanders, who exercise freedom of action to exploit opportunities that are presented.

Creativity flows from the commander's insights and ability to see the campaign unfold as it

is developed, enabling the anticipation of actions and reactions. The common thread binding

these is the commander's ability to direct, to coordinate and to control, or to command,

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[28] Department of National Defence, *Canadian Forces Operations*…, 2-4.

assigned forces. Ultimately though, these flow from the strategic decisions which frame the ends, guide the ways and establish the means to achieve them.

COALITIONS AND POINTS OF FRICTION –
STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

At the strategic level, three key issues have the potential to undermine the operational commander's ability to realize success – agreement on common objectives, the military strategy and the command arrangements.[29] With respect to objectives, although coalition partners have a responsibility to establish clearly the strategic goals that will frame the operational commander's mission planning and execution, this is typically not an easy task. Three particular problems are faced in this regard – achieving initial consensus and maintaining it, providing clarity in the political expectations, and the impact of changing objectives over time.

In the first instance, achieving a consensus amongst coalition members can be difficult. With coalitions formed to address short-term problems, the ability to achieve certain unity in defining strategic objectives will largely be a function of the direct threat posed to the partnership members. At the outset of the Gulf War, the immediacy of the threat posed to the people of Kuwait, coupled with regional concerns regarding Iraq and the balance of power in the Middle East, facilitated the achievement of a unified approach to the problem amongst the coalition, supported by a clear United Nations Security Council Resolution. Such could not be said for Operation Allied Force, the NATO campaign concerning Kosovo. In this case, the overall operational commander, General Wesley Clark, noted in testimony to the United States Senate Armed Services Committee on 21 October 1999 that, "In the case of Kosovo,…the consensus of 19 nations was required to approve action, and many countries

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[29] Waldo D. Freeman, Randall J. Hess, Manuel Faria, "The Challenges of Combined Operations," *Military Review* 72, no. 11 (November 1992): 4.

had preconceptions about how to apply force. Every single nation had a domestic policy, and every single nation had a different set of political problems."[30] Beyond the difficulty in achieving an initial consensus on the objectives, the problem of maintaining political unity once military action begins can have a serious impact on the operational commander's ability to prosecute his plan. In the case of Kosovo,

normal rotation of responsibilities.[32] Aside from the broader political impact of losing a strong European supporter, the sudden withdrawal of troops by Spain forced both political authorities and commanders to re-evaluate plans to account for the gap in both capacity and capability lost.

In the second case, achieving a consensus may result in objectives articulated in an ambiguous manner, lacking sufficient clarity to allow the operational commander to effectively translate them into an appropriate end-state. A lack of precision is often characteristic of mandates for military missions established by the United Nations. In the case the United Nations Mission in Haiti in 1995, for example, the objectives outlined in the Security Council Resolution established the maintenance of a secure and stable environment, the protection of international personnel and key infrastructure as objectives of the mandate.[33] Although translating the latter two objectives into military actions is reasonably achievable, 'maintaining a secure and stable environment' leaves significant latitude for interpretation, complicating the ability of the operational commander to determine exactly what is expected of him. Most importantly, such ambiguity opens the door for multiple interpretations by the various contingents making up a coalition. National representatives will have their own position about what constitutes security and stability, based upon their assessment of the security picture and measured against their interests and values. Consequently, they will intervene to veto the employment of their personnel when they do not see the commander's decisions as consistent with their perceptions of the goals. In addition, national contingents will establish their own measures of progress or success, based

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[32] Marc Champion and Greg Jaffe, "Poland's Leader Questions U.S. Steps in Iraq; Weapons Issue is Criticized; German Officials Try to Get Spain to Temper Rhetoric," *The Wall Street Journal*, 19 March 2004, A.12.
[33] United Nations Security Council Resolution 975, 10 January 1995, http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions.html.

upon their interpretation of the objectives. Both circumstances have the potential to undermine a commander's ability to execute his campaign plan by reducing flexibility.

Lastly, changing political goals can have serious effects at the operational level. Commanders must continually evaluate the political and military situation as events unfold, and make adjustments as warranted. However, changes in strategic objectives or strategy demand a full re-evaluation of the elements of the use of force as a policy option. Failure to do so can have catastrophic effects at the operational level. Strategic changes clearly impacting upon the ends require a commensurate reassessment of both ways and means. The United Nations' and United Task Force (UNITAF) 1992/1993 deployments to Somalia and the transition to stabilization operations in Iraq in 2003 reflected the ultimate results of failures to adjust means and ways to changed ends.

During the course of the UNITAF deployment, two significant changes to objectives occurred. Initially put in place as a result of a United Nations Security Council Resolution[34] to facilitate the distribution of humanitarian aid, the 38,000-strong military force, with United States' Marines and the 10th Mountain Division forming the foundation, had the power to deal with the Somali factions.[35] General Aidid, for example, boasted a force of some 35,000 troops under his command.[36] As a result of the force parity and the logistics capacity of UNITAF, the strategic objective established by the United Nations, the political authority, proved achievable, with the ways and means linked approriately. However, at the end of March 1993, a new Resolution established nation building and pacification as key political

[34] United Nations Security Council Resolution 794, 3 December 1992, http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions.html.
[35] Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down*, (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press), 92.
[36] Jonathon Stevenson, *Losing Mogadishu*, (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 44.

goals.[37] By this point, a transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II, the United Nations' force, was underway. This latter organization was to be some 20 percent smaller in size than UNITAF. Clearly, the resources (means) required to effect a change in mission orientation calling for pacification, and necessitating disarmament, were not appropriately assessed, particularly considering challenging experiences of UNITAF in this area. Further change resulted from the Security Council Resolution deeming General Aidid an outlaw.[38] At this stage, less than 9,000 American troops remained in theatre as the handover to the United Nations continued. The decision to deploy Special Operations Forces to hunt for General Aidid and to dismantle his command and control architecture can be assessed as an appropriate allocation of resources to meet the task. However, although the means to execute Aidid's capture were addressed, the broader requirements to deal with the repercussions of this clearly were not. In particular, the dismantlement of the command and control structure was conducted coincidentally, aggravating Aidid's clan and its supporters.

With respect to the transition to stabilization from major combat operations in Iraq, commentary has been put forward that the shift in political objective from deposing Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath regime to one of democratization did not reasonably consider the means required to meet the task. The size of force necessary has been estimated to be between as much as 500,000 and 700,000.[39] Both cases illustrate a significant disconnect between the political objectives and the resources provided, resulting in a significant impact on the operational commander's ability to achieve success.

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[37] United Nations Security Council Resolution 814, 26 March 1993, http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions.html.
[38] United Nations Security Council Resolution 837, 6 June 1993, http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions.html.
[39] United States, Department of Defence, *U.S. Military Operations in Iraq: Planning, Combat, and Occupation*, ed. W. Andrew Terrill, (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, April 2006), 9, 19.

Political consensus on the military strategy can also be a serious point of friction. Developed by the coalition political leadership and its military advisors, this is all the more required because it delineates the way military power will be used and defines the means necessary to realize the objectives. The classic historical representation of this is the debate over the method to defeat the Axis powers in the Second World War. Key issues of strategy that required agreement amongst the Allies included determining the priority of effort between Europe and the Pacific, the need to create a second front to relieve pressure on Russia, and attacking the underbelly of the European continent as opposed to a direct assault across the Channel. In a more contemporary context, the United States itself played a major role in limiting the ability of the military commanders to develop a plan for decisive success in Kosovo. NATO military planners recognized at the outset the limitations of air power in protecting the Kosovar Albanians from ethnic cleansing. Consequently, they originally developed a campaign based upon a ground invasion of the Kosovo province, aimed at expelling Serb forces from the area. Considering domestic public opinion, President Clinton vetoed the option. The playing of a red card by one of the political principals served to limit the options available to the operational commander to achieve timely victory. The result of this was a 78-day air campaign with the ground deployment occurring only after Serb forces had withdrawn from the Kosovo province.

Agreement at the strategic level on the command arrangements for the execution of military operations is equally essential. For the operational commander, the ability to effectively develop, and most importantly, execute a coherent campaign plan will be directly affected by strategic decisions on the command arrangements. The degree of preparatory time, the level of existing interoperability between coalition partners and socio-cultural

factors all play a role in determining the optimal approach. A range of options exists that includes: a lead, or framework nation arrangement; a parallel command structure; and, an integrated structure.

A framework, or lead nation construct, is one in which one partner provides the commander and the foundation for the supporting headquarters, usually from an existing structure. This approach proved very effective in the June 2003 European Union coalition deployment to the town of Banui in the northeastern Ituri region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.[40] Coined Operation ARTEMIS, it used the framework nation structure, with France providing the headquarters, based upon the 9th Brigade légère blindée marine, and the operational command elements.[41] Suited to short-notice responses to international crises, where a high degree of cohesion and an established work methodology are already ingrained in an existing organization, these factors provided the French operational commander with the necessary tools to develop his campaign plan and then to effectively react to the dynamics of stabilization operations on the ground.

In the case of the parallel command structure, the most well known is that used during the 1990/1991 Gulf War. General H. Norman Schwarzkopf remains the most recognized of commanders in that conflict; however, there was, in fact, no supreme commander. His command authority was limited to the Western nations deployed in the theatre. Recognizing religious, cultural and political sensitivities, Arab forces were commanded in a distinct area of operations by Saudi General Khaled Bin Sultan, who was equal in authority to Schwarzkopf. In such circumstances, the hallmarks of success at the operational level are

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[40] Charles C Pentland, "The European Union and Civil Conflict in Africa," *International Journal* 60, Issue 4 (Autumn 2005): 919.
[41] Stale Urliksen, Catriona Gourlay and Catriona Mace, "Operation Artemis: The Shape of Things to Come," *International Peacekeeping* 11, no. 3, (Autumn 2004): 516.

close cooperation and coordination amongst deployed commanders. This was achieved through the establishment of a Coalition Coordination, Communications and Integration Centre, which was responsible for harmonizing the activities of each group of forces. An excellent personal relationship between the two commanders set the tone for close cooperation amongst the staff of the Centre.

Integrated command structures have become more prevalent in coalition operations in which parity in force contributions exists. In addition, based upon existing alliance military structures, integrated command will cascade through the strategic to the operational level. Such has been the general case with NATO deployments. Group cohesiveness and the degree of functionality of the organization will have particular operational impacts. The staff members' level of prior work experience in an integrated environment will have a bearing on the degree to which this is manifested. In the case of the Headquarters Multinational Division (Southwest) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, commencing in September 2000, a two-week group-training period was conducted prior to each staff rotation. This facilitated the development of both a close working relationship amongst staff members and a solid familiarity with the operating procedures for the headquarters.

Summarizing, one can see that strategic decisions set the conditions which will determine the degree to which a coalition commander achieves success at the operational level. The appropriate means, linked to a coherent military strategy, flowing from clearly articulated ends, which reflect unanimity amongst the partners, are essential to establishing the suitable environment within which the coalition will operate. A continual evaluation of the ways and means against changing goals ensures that the coalition has the capability to adapt to evolving circumstances. With these tools, coupled with fitting command

arrangements, the onus then rests on the coalition commander to address the friction points inherent within his command.

COALITIONS AND POINTS OF FRICTION –
OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

There can be no question that, at the operational level, a significant number of potential points of friction exist amongst coalition partners. Challenges as varied as cultural and religious factors, doctrinal approaches to warfare and logistical considerations all represent areas where differences in views will challenge the operational commander in realizing his objective. However, there are three significant points of friction that have the potential to seriously inhibit the commander's ability to succeed – information availability, inter-operability and the command relationships.

With regard to the availability of information, three particular problems face the operational commander. The first, and probably the most significant challenge, is national restrictions on the disclosure of information. As a matter of sovereign interest, nations restrict the divulgence of intelligence information to other countries. This issue has been long recognized as an impediment to coalition and alliance operations. As pointed out by Freeman, Hess and Faria in 1992, "Most potential allies will not approach the range of US capabilities to collect and process intelligence."[42] Indicating that intelligence sharing amongst the NATO nations has been a consistent problem over the lifetime of the organization, the authors note that Alliance members have consistently sought more information than what the major providers have been prepared to proffer.

Bi- and multilateral agreements do exist amongst many nations. Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, for example, have had a long-standing

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[42] Waldo D. Freeman, Randall J. Hess, Manuel Faria, The Challenges of Combined Operations…, 4.

arrangement for the cooperative collection and sharing of intelligence. However, despite

such agreements, each country has its own national security interests, including the

protection of sources. Consequently, not all information would necessarily be shared. In

addition, participation in a coalition does not in itself imply that one would be brought into

the fold in terms of the sharing of intelligence. Such is the case with the nations involved in

Regional Command (South) in NATO's International Security Force in Afghanistan.

Canada, having the command function for the formation over the February – November 2006

timeframe, benefited from the availability of intelligence provided under the basis of bi- and

multi-lateral agreements. Yet, despite the fact that the Canadian contingent falls under Dutch

command from the late fall of 2006, policies preclude the Canadian commander sharing

intelligence provided by other partners with the Dutch commander. Such circumstances

intrinsically hamper a commander's ability to develop a common situational awareness,

inhibiting the ability to be agile and flexible. A particular lesson falling out of Operation

Iraqi Freedom has been the need to resolve the challenges of sharing information, in

particular access to classified networks and planning tools.[43]

Secondly, recognizing that coalition members serve their national interests,

intelligence may, at worst, be withheld or, at least, be shaped to elicit a particular reaction on

the part of the commander that is consistent with the providing nation's own political goals.

Lastly, beyond challenges posed by the release of intelligence, differing perspectives will

also affect individuals' views about what is relevant in terms of information, based upon such

things as language, culture and religion. The particular importance of activities or events

may not be appreciated and may, as a result, go unreported. This was evident in May 2001 in

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[43] Staff of the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned, "Operation Iraqi Freedom Lessons Learned," *Marine Corps Gazette* 89, no. 5 (May 2005): 81.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, which saw violent civil unrest by Bosnian Serbs against the reconstruction of a mosque in the Republika Srpska capital of Banja Luka. Although intelligence existed that a radical group intended to protest the activity, the degree of influence and support of the element was under-estimated by analysts, who saw the belligerents as a minor organization. Consequently, information was passed to the tactical formation too late to pre-empt the riot that resulted.

Efforts are certainly made to 'sanitize' information with a view to ensuring its broad release to coalition members. In 1996, William Perry, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, issued a directive that attempted, as a matter of course, to address the problem in multinational operations, citing that:

> "Coalition warfare is the future model…and I want the Intelligence Community to rededicate itself to the concept of releasable tailored intelligence – intelligence produced at the lowest security level commensurate with the protection of sources and methods…From this point forward we must write to the consumer."[44]

The principal challenge for the operational commander is the time required to put intelligence in a releasable form.

The ability to both develop and execute a decisive campaign is inherently reliant upon the availability of information from which intelligence can be derived. If the formulation of the commander's vision and concept of operations and the supporting campaign plan are based upon the ability to understand one's adversary, to identify strengths and weaknesses in both moral and physical planes, and then to react to the actions of that foe as the campaign unfolds, information dominance is essential. Operational success hinges upon a shared situational awareness that enables commanders to react and seize opportunities. This necessitates the free flow of intelligence throughout the chain of command. The impacts of a

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[44] Barrett K. Peavie, Quoted in "*Intelligence Sharing in Bosnia*," School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2000), 4.

lack of timely information become acute, considering the elusiveness of the threats and the fleeting manner with which they present themselves in the complex operational environments in which coalition forces now find themselves deployed. For organizations that rely heavily upon net-centric systems and processes to support decision-making, or a more complex system of systems like the Effects Based Approach to Joint Operations, the commander's ability to work inside his adversary's decision cycle can be seriously impaired by the lack of timely or clear information, leading to ineffectiveness in command.

Inter-operability is concerned with a broad range of factors, including, equipment, doctrine, training and logistics that define the ability of one force to work effectively with another. More important than the specific nuts and bolts or the methods of conducting warfare of coalition partners is the general widening gap in capabilities that is growing amongst nations. As reported by Bryan Bender in Jane's Defence Weekly in 1998, "US and allied military commanders have expressed concern that…[the US] runs the risk of outpacing NATO and other allies to the point where they are incapable of operating effectively with US forces on future battlefields."[45] The Kosovo conflict reinforced the growing potential challenges that can arise in coalitions based upon capabilities. The Canadian Contingent Commander during the ground operation phase, Colonel Mike Ward, noted that, "While most national contingents within KFOR [the Kosovo Force] shared similar doctrine, we were hamstrung by the absence of a common communications architecture…there was no communications means that could link all nations of the coalition."[46] Reporting on the observations from Operation Iraqi Freedom five years later, the Marine Corps Center for

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[45] Bryan Bender, "US worried by coalition 'technology gap'," *Jane's Defence Weekly* 30, no. 4 (29 July 1998), 8.

[46] Mike Ward, "Task Force Kosovo: Adapting Operations to a Changing Security Environment," *Canadian Military Journal* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 70.

Lessons Learned noted again that in relation to the operational realities, "…equipment compatibility, connectivity, and capability differences exist across the spectrum among coalition partners."[47] These realities highlight the particular challenge posed by communication in achieving operational success.

There are two particular aspects of this that are important. In the first instance, there is the challenge of language itself amongst member states. Beyond mere problems with differing lexicons, the actual translation of information, instructions or direction can result in misinterpretations as to intent. The Chief of Staff of the Multinational Force and Observers Sinai put it clearly in stating that "…what I say to an American may not be interpreted the same as if I say it to a Canadian, an Australian, or a Fijian … You can issue orders and edicts, and demand that things happen, but that doesn't get things done in this multinational environment."[48] Interestingly, although the Force was composed of 11 nations at that time, the statement refers to four nations that use English as their first language. The challenges are certainly magnified in instances of countries that have mother tongues other than English. In addition, the use of language is not solely a verbal exchange; inflexions, facial and body movements all contribute to the conveying of a message.

Critical to operational success from the outset are the complete understanding of the commander's intent and his concept of operations. A lack of comprehension of these and instructions received as events unfold, or unclear information passed upward, on the part of subordinate tactical commanders will, at best, reduce the degree of agility of the force and, at worst threaten mission success.

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[47] Staff of the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned, Operation Iraqi Freedom Lessons Learned…, 80.
[48] Elfrat Elron, Boas Shamir and Eyal Ben-Ari, "Why Don't They Fight Each Other? Cultural Diversity and Operational Unity in Multinational Forces," *Armed Forces & Society* 26, no. 1, (Fall 1999): 81.

Colonel Ward highlighted the significance of the technical aspects of communication with respect to his command in Kosovo in identifying that the lack of a secure communications architecture, "…limited the degree to which we could stay abreast of developments in the whole of KFOR and conform to the Commander's intent and concept."[49] This emphasizes the requirement for a common situational awareness to facilitate agility, flexibility, anticipation, and low-level freedom of action on the part of engaged forces. Without this, forces will not be able to react in an effective and timely manner to threats, nor exploit exposed weaknesses.

The final major point of friction that has the potential to seriously inhibit the commander's ability to succeed relates to command relationships. Accepting that unity of command and chain of command are key components of a commander's capacity to exercise his authority, the typical relationships associated with coalition operations undermine these principles. As Robert Riscassi points out, "relinquishing national command and control of forces is an act of trust and confidence that is unequalled in relations between nations."[50] The gravity and proximity of threats would be the principal guide in the degree of command integration of forces. Consequently, in modern circumstances, few nations are prepared to surrender complete control of their forces to a foreign commander. In this regard, Thomas Durell-Young notes that, "It is often the case that instead of ascertaining which levels of command a coalition commander requires to accomplish the mission, national authorities attempt to relinquish the least amount of authority, thereby retaining as much control over their forces as possible."[51] As a result, forces are generally allocated under the Operational

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[49] Mike Ward, Task Force Kosovo: Adapting Operations to a Changing Security Environment…, 70.
[50] Robert W. Riscassi, Principles for Coalition Warfare…, 67.
[51] Thomas Durell-Young, "Command in Coalition Operations," in *Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operations*, (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1997), 29.

Control of a joint and combined force commander, with nations retaining national command of their forces, with a National Contingent Commander exercising Operational Command in the theatre of operations.

The command relationship of Operational Control is defined in NATO doctrine as follows:

> "The authority delegated to a commander to direct forces assigned so that the commander may accomplish specific missions or tasks which are usually limited by function, time or location; to deploy units concerned, and to retain or assign tactical control of those units. It does not include authority to assign separate employment of components of the units concerned…"[52]

This relationship inherently restricts the ability of the operational commander to exploit and optimize force capabilities through the task organization of elements of different nations. Consequently, it seriously limits the scope of courses of action available in campaign development and critically undermines flexibility and agility in reacting to events as the campaign unfolds. Two additional phenomena derive themselves from the extant command relationships – the tyranny of boundaries and national vetoes.

Riscassi points out that, "close operations can be divided into national sectors."[53] Given the long duration expected of such missions, this has become a common feature of stability, or peace support, operations. As experience suggests, this method carries the danger of creating fiefdoms, in which national forces develop a sense of ownership, distinct from the superior command, of their area of operations. In addition, in the prosecution of the coalition campaign plan, "…there are risks to and inefficiencies in this approach. It could critically hinder the ability to mass combat power across national boundaries."[54] In this

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[52] NATO, AAP-6, *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions (English and French)*, (Bruxelles: NATO Standardization Agency, 2006), 2-O-2.

[53] Robert Riscassi, "Principles for Coalition Warfare", *Joint Forces Quarterly*, No. 1 (Summer 1993), 66.

[54] *Idem*.

regard, boundaries can effectively limit the agility of the force, constraining the ability to react effectively to the actions of an adversary.

Although the literature is itself sparse in illustrating the realities and impacts of national vetoes, it is recognized as a certainty in coalition operations – witness President Clinton's outright veto of the initial option of a ground invasion of Kosovo. In Operation Desert Storm, "most nations reserved the right to consult independently with their home government."[55] This was also true of the air campaign in Kosovo. In that particular case, nations maintained the entitlement to veto targets, exercising the right based upon their views of the suitability of the action in realizing the desired ends and the perceived potential for collateral damage. The United States went as far as to conduct its own extensive air operations, outside of those of NATO, with a view to realizing its political objectives. Independent action on the part of coalition members has the serious potential to undermine cohesion within the force. As noted regarding the American actions in Kosovo, "Some allies appear to have been somewhat piqued by the independence with which a number of U.S. aircraft operated, though the fact that these aircraft never conducted attacks on targets vetoed by other allies limited the dissension."[56]

British joint doctrine formally recognizes the authority of national contingents in noting that their National Contingent Commander "will hold the national 'red card", which, "…essentially vetoes…possible or actual aspects of the operation in which a nation will not agree to participate."[57] Although the British doctrine notes that the effectiveness of its national commander can be measured by the rarity with which red cards are exercised, and

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[55] Mark F. Cancian, "Is There a Coalition in your Future," *Marine Corps Gazette* 80, no. 6 (June 1996): 29.
[56] Ivo H. Daadler and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly NATO's War to Save Kosovo* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 2000), 121.
[57] United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, *JDP-01 Joint Operations…*, 4-5.

suggests that points of friction need to be identified early with a view to "negotiating the problem away,"[58] the embedding of the principle as an element of doctrine represents a troubling institutionalization of a method to undermine the authority of the designated commander.

Exercising the operational art, in a manoeuvre warfare context, calls upon the commander to exploit weaknesses, carefully synchronize tactical actions and dictate the tempo of operations. Having to bend to a coalition member's particular views or need to obtain specific mission authority for its forces is an intrinsically disruptive process, causing dislocation and weakness. Recognizing that time is generally required for national contingent commanders to consider possible or actual tactical actions, or for them to seek counsel from their national governments, this condition impacts upon the ability of the commander to operate within the decision cycle of his adversary. In such cases, he can potentially lose the initiative and find himself in a position in which he is not dictating the tempo of the operation – a potential road to failure. In the end, in terms of command effectiveness, the use, or even existence of red cards marginalizes the legal authority of the commander.

Recalling Pigeau and McCann's model of the dimensions of command, maximal command is achieved in circumstances of high authority (both legal and personal) and high responsibility (both extrinsic and intrinsic). The inherent limitation engendered by the command relationship of Operational Control and the power of national veto serve to directly attack the vested legal authority of the commander, by limiting the extent to which he can truly direct, coordinate and control the military forces assigned to his charge. Notwithstanding, coalition partners will still place a high degree of accountability upon the

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[58] *Idem*.

commander's shoulders. As such, he will feel an equally high degree of extrinsic responsibility. As Pigeau and McCann note in discussing the Command Capability Space, instances in which "there is an acceptance of high levels of responsibility without commensurate high levels of authority being given…results in ineffectual command."[59] Importantly, there is a serious risk that the commander, frustrated by the high expectations imposed upon him and recognizing the limits of his vested authority, may surrender in terms of his own resolve and motivation towards the mission. In such a circumstance, the creation of a condition of low intrinsic responsibility will further magnify the degree of ineffectiveness of his command. Ultimately, as the two theorists point out, "Without sufficient authority, a commander is compromised in his mission."[60]

When all is said and done, the key challenges at the operational level revolve around the ability to convey intent, gain the information dominance necessary to control the rhythm of operational activity on the battle space and to direct, coordinate and control the forces assigned. Points of friction directly attack the agility and flexibility required to exercise operational art in a manoeuvrist context. Such circumstances demand creative approaches on the part of the commander to overcome the obstacles presented.

FACILITATING OPERATIONAL SUCCESS

The nature and complexity of the challenges facing the operational commander in achieving success cannot be simply waved away. They will, for the most part remain extant throughout the course of the prosecution of the campaign. The issue becomes one of how to mitigate the impacts and effects of the problems faced. In this, the commander plays a central role.

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[59] Pigeau and McCann, Re-conceptualizing Command and Control…,60.
[60] *Idem*.

In considering how best to address the challenge facing the commander, one can turn to the concept of 'personal authority' referred to by Pigeau and McCann. The limitations imposed on the vested legal authority by the traditional command relationships and the potential for the use of red cards by national representatives must be balanced off by the development of a high state of personal authority. This is wholly dependant upon the force of character of the commander and his ability to engender trust and confidence on the part of superiors and subordinates. As Pigeau and McCann reinforce, "An individual's ethics, values, courage (both physical and moral) and integrity form the basis for…enduring personal authority."[61]

In dealing with the strategic issues affecting success, commanders must be prepared to provide operational insights into the impacts of political and strategic decisions, as well as options for consideration. In addition, they must be prepared to challenge superior authorities, both military and political, with a view to ensuring that objectives are sufficiently clear and commonly understood and that the means to achieve these are sufficient, given the determined strategy. This does not suggest the requirement for superiors to be dealt with in a brazen or confrontational manner; to the contrary, As Robert Riscassi suggests, "The coalition commander must walk a fine line between accommodating and compromising, yet preserve the ability to achieve military decision."[62] In this vein, the ability to act with diplomacy is a clear trait required of a coalition commander. This said, senior political and military authorities carry their own responsibility to ensure success and must be held to account to meet their obligations. In support of this, British doctrine emphasizes that, "the

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[61] *Ibid*., 59.
[62]62 Robert Riscassi, "Principles for Coalition Warfare",…, 63.

operational commander should do all he can to discuss military problems on a 'one-to-one' basis with Ministers and senior officers from contributing nations…."[63]

In addressing the problems of developing a sound and common degree of situational awareness and the associated challenges of communication, the use of liaison officers can assist in mitigating impacts on the ability to maintain information dominance and react in a flexible and agile manner to weaknesses and opportunities as they are presented. A close understanding of the unfolding of the campaign plan can be achieved through the use of selected liaison officers in what has been termed as 'directed telescopes'. Robert Scales points out both the extensive historical use of these individuals and their utility in providing senior commanders with a clear picture of the battle space. As he notes in respect to Montgomery's employment of these windows on the battlefield, "these liaison officers traveled extensively, gathering and reporting information…Many returned at night…to provide firsthand accounts of their insights."[64]

While liaison officers can serve to address the more immediate need for situational awareness, command effectiveness demands the development of sound personal relationships between coalition and subordinate commanders. Regular contact and discussion serves to build confidence, trust and understanding between individuals, enhancing the weight of personal authority that each commander carries. Habitual contact builds upon the degree of awareness of those cultural characteristics that create misunderstanding and attack the force's ability to operate in a flexible and agile manner. Most importantly, the confidence and trust engendered through constant contact supports the creation of a climate conducive to creating

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[63] United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, *JDP-01 Joint Operations…*, 4-8.
[64] Robert H. Scales, "Trust, Not Technology, Sustains Coalitions," *Parameters* 28, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 7 - 8.

a mission command culture. This establishes an environment that supports the exercise of freedom of action essential to acting and reacting to pre-empt an adversary's actions.

Dealing with the challenges of command relationships and national vetoes builds upon the need for the commander to maximize his level of personal authority. Commander's can exploit concepts developed as part of studies into decision-making. In particular, Cheryl Martin's analysis of Adaptive Decision Making Frameworks, in which styles change with respect to each objective, offers insights into approaches that commanders can use to optimize their relations with subordinates and national representatives. Focusing on what is termed multi-agent systems, the spectrum of interaction styles identified by Martin is illustrated in Figure 1, with approaches ranging from a strict obedience environment, through one of shared, collaborative control, to independence of action.[65]
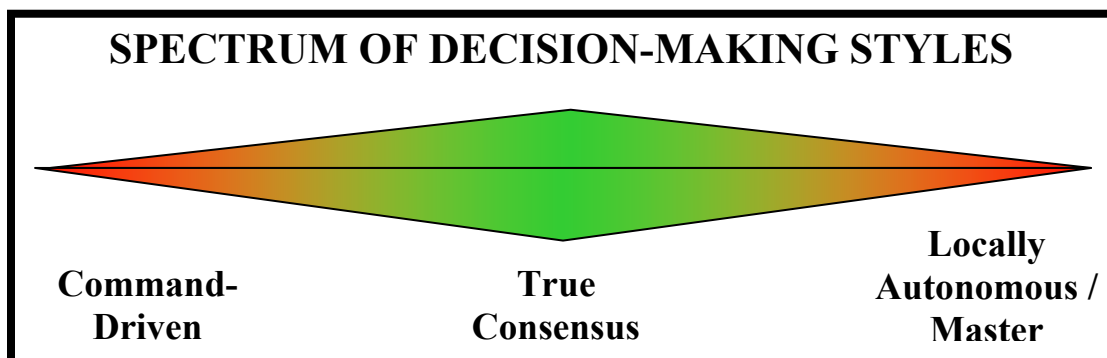

SPECTRUM OF DECISION-MAKING STYLES

Command-Driven   **True Consensus**   **Locally Autonomous / Master**

Figure 1. Decision-Making Interaction Styles for Individual Agents[66]

Martin's research focused on the efficacy of Adaptive Decision-Making Frameworks in the context of artificial intelligence systems. Notwithstanding her focus, the principles and results are equally relevant to command theory. The results of the study revealed that using an adaptive approach to decision-making could result in significantly improved system

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[65] Cheryl E. Martin, *Adaptive Decision-Making Frameworks for Multi-Agent Systems*, (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas at Austin, Dissertation, May 2001), 2-3.
[66] *Ibid*., 2.

performance.[67] Applying the theory to command in a coalition environment, the most effective commander will move across the spectrum of styles of interaction in dealing with subordinates and national contingent commanders. In endeavouring to maximize the degree of support from others, the commander should seek to ensure that other commanders have a sense of ownership of the decision; that is, that they collaborated in and shared control of the process. On the other hand, recognizing the principles of Mission Command, commanders must also facilitate local autonomous decision-making. It is in this way that commanders may exploit opportunities as they present themselves. There is no question that circumstances will, at times, force the commander to be prescriptive in providing direction; however, using this approach sparingly for occasions where the operational reasons are compelling will avoid the frequency of challenge by a partner's national authorities.

CONCLUSION

Charging operational commanders with the responsibility to achieve military success, nations have a long-standing history of joining together to address challenges to security. In the contemporary environment, whether seeking adequate combat power, economies of force or public and political legitimacy, the popular consensus is that military responses to threats to global peace and security will continue to be addressed in a coalition context. Regardless of the specific motivation for partnering with other nations, the underlying rationale is the achievement of some national political objective. It is the articulation of the strategic objectives that frames a coalition commander's ability to achieve success. The definition of the ends drives the formulation of the ways, and defines the means which bound the commanders operating environment.

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[67] *Ibid*., 246.

The role of the commander is to translate the defined objectives into military actions, using the concepts associated with the operational art. Demanding creativity on the part of the commander, true operational art relies on the ability to act and react inside the decision cycle of an adversary. This calls for awareness, agility and flexibility across the coalition force. However, existing practices on the part of the members forming a coalition serve to undermine the operational commander's ability develop and execute campaigns in an optimal manner.

Consensus and ambiguity at the strategic level create challenges that will continue to be a problem through the course of a campaign, as actions are scrutinized for their value and relevance to the defined strategy and national political authorities evaluate progress. Information dominance will be hampered by both limitations on the timely sharing of clear intelligence and the technical ability to pass information as a result of inter-operability challenges. Force agility and flexibility will be affected by both this and limitations in the ability to convey instructions and directives. Command structures and command relationships typically support a condition of ineffectual command, challenging the vested legal authority that a commander requires to ensure responsiveness and flexibility.

Commanders can mitigate the effects of the impacts of the varied goals, mixed capabilities, national restrictions and the retention of national command authority that contributing nations bring to the coalition. Both advising and challenging strategists and political authorities to fulfill their responsibilities will serve to provide for a clear frame of reference from which the commander can plan and measure success. The use of liaison networks as directed telescopes between levels of command contributes to ensuring the shared situational awareness essential for operational success. Offsetting the intrinsic

limitations in legal authority, commander, commanders must strive to enhance the personal authority which they carry. Achieving this relies upon the development of close personal relationships with subordinates and national authorities, enhancing mutual trust and confidence and creating an environment conducive to functioning in a mission command culture. Using an adaptive decision-making framework, guided by the circumstances, offers the commander opportunities to create an environment in which there is a sense of shared ownership in the result. Using both collaborative and mission command approaches as the dominant means for decision-making serves to empower partners, improving the effectiveness of the command environment and enhancing the likelihood of decisive operational success.

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