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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE/COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAMME 9

**PREPARING FOR COALITION COMMAND – THE THREE Ps:
PEOPLE, PROCESSES AND PLANS.**

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Abstract:

In the contemporary security environment, and perhaps well into the future, coalition warfare seems likely to be the norm. Coalitions are complex systems involving frictional interaction between political and military leaders spanning the entire spectrum of war. In order to help better prepare future coalition task force commanders for success in this challenging environment this paper presents a methodology that the commander may use in his personal pre-deployment preparation to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the coalition forces that have been contributed to the task force.

This methodology focuses on three main assessment factors, namely *People*, *Processes*, and *Plans*. Once the initial description of these factors has been given, this paper will then offer a broader context discussion of the potential influence of these factors on the coalition task force operations. Lastly this paper will offer five rules that are distilled from the methodology, which the commander should observe when executing his duties in theatre.

A clear demonstration of the operational art today may well be how a coalition commander works within the various political and military restraints of their contingent forces to shape a culture of trust and commitment, and then subsequently how he or she applies these potentially dissimilar forces to achieve mission success.

In summary, this paper argues that if a task force commander undertakes a detailed pre-deployment assessment of his coalition task force members using the factors of *People*, *Processes*, and *Plans*, and considers the five rules that were outlined, he will greatly enhance his ability to plan and execute decisive coalition warfare at the operational level.

Acknowledgments:

The author would like to first acknowledge the assistance and counsel that he received from retired Canadian Major-General W.M. Holmes, MBE, CD. Prior to his retirement in 2003, MGen Holmes commanded NATO's Allied Command Mobile Force (Land) based in Heidelberg, Germany. This force comprised 22,000 soldiers from 17 nations.

Secondly, the author was also fortunate to receive assistance from Brigadier-General P.P.J. Lacroix, CD, the Commandant of the Royal Military College of Canada. BGen Lacroix commanded 5 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group between July 2002, and September 2004. During this period, he deployed to Afghanistan and commanded the Kabul Multinational Brigade, Rotation 1, for Operation *Athena*.

**PREPARING FOR COALITION COMMAND – THE THREE Ps:
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“Fate chooses your relations, you choose your friends”.¹
Abbé Jacques Delille

Introduction.

In the decade before September 11th 2001 the Canadian Forces (CF) were mainly engaged in the contribution of selected tactical-level forces to larger non-Canadian led coalition formations, often operating in mainly low-intensity peacekeeping, peacemaking, and international humanitarian relief operations. As part of the new CF Vision, that is guiding this period of unprecedented transformation, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) directed that the CF should deliberately develop the capability to undertake greater leadership roles in international coalition operations.² This commitment to international leadership has also been echoed by the last two federal governments.³ Now some five years after September 11th Canada is deliberately involved in mid to high-intensity

¹ Jacques Delille, French abbé and litterateur, born at Aiguepersen France, 22 June, 1738; died at Paris, 1 May, 1813. Voltaire considered Delille to be one of the great French poets of the pre-French revolutionary age. <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/immortels/base/academiciciens/fiche.asp?param=247>.

² Department of National Defence, *Chief of Defence Staff Action Team 3 Final Report* (2005): 1-2. This document states: “...the CF should possess both the capability and capacity to assume a Lead Nation role in a small-scale Standing Contingency Task Force (SCTF) operation or in a larger-scale mature Mission Specific Task Force (MSTF) operation. Functional Lead in a defined geographic area or component command, and Role Specialist Lead, were also affirmed as realistic and desirable CF aspirations.” The report argues for an enhanced international leadership role for the CF, as espoused previously by the CDS in the CF Vision. http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/cft-tfc/pubs/documents_e.asp. Internet; accessed 20 September 2006.

³ Liberal Government’s International Policy Statement, *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World*. (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2005). <http://www.itcan-cican.gc.ca/ips/menu-en.asp>. Internet; accessed 20 September 2006. Also see the Conservative government’s continued support to the whole-of-government mission in Afghanistan. <http://www.canada-afghanistan.gc.ca/menu-en.asp#>. Internet; accessed 20 September 2006.

stability operations while undertaking higher profile leadership roles in coalition and alliance task forces.⁴ As Canada becomes more internationally engaged the CF must continue to advance the professional development of its officer corps so that they may be more capable of undertaking command at higher levels in multinational coalition task forces.

Coalitions are always complex systems involving frictional interaction between political and military leaders through the entire spectrum of operations spanning the strategic, operational and tactical levels of war. To that end, this paper is designed to add to the body of professional knowledge on the important issue of coalition warfare command.⁵ More specifically, it is argued that a methodology is needed that future commanders may apply during the pre-deployment period to assess the competence and capabilities of coalition force contributions. A series of factors will be provided that are intended to assist a commander in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of his or her⁶ assigned multinational forces.⁷ The paper will help prepare future Canadian commanders

⁴ Recent examples of Canadian Officers commanding large multinational forces are the naval command of CTF 150 during Operation Apollo in the Persian Gulf, and command of allied forces in Bosnia and Afghanistan.

⁵ The use of term *coalition* operations in this paper was specifically chosen over the terms alliance, combined, and or joint operations, in that coalition command structures are often less well defined and thus potentially more challenging from a command perspective. Naturally, the assessment framework proposed in this paper should prove equally effective in other collaborative operations outside of the coalition environment. In CF documents the term Coalition has been defined as “a less formal alliance which is normally limited to a specific mission. Coalitions normally lack the formal status of forces’ agreements and infrastructure architecture that are common to alliances such as NATO.” Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-501/FP-000. *The Use of Force in CF Operations*. (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2001), 4-1/4.

⁶ For the remainder of the paper the dual comment of ‘his/her’ and/or ‘he/she’ will be replaced by the masculine singular form, which will serve for both genders.

⁷ The methodology that is proposed in the paper is designed to help Commanders as they prepare their force for an initial multinational deployment, often referred to as a *Roto 0* type of operation. A commander in a post-Roto 0 situation may have less discretion in the actual design of his force, but the assessment tool will serve the commander equally well given the first principles, generic nature of the methodology proposed. As well, the tool should be of value to commanders of combined, joint and service specific, or even whole of government military-civilian departmental task forces.

for success in areas such as leadership preparedness, force interoperability, and unity of effort.⁸

The methodology focuses on three main assessment factors, namely *People*, *Processes*, and *Plans*.⁹ The methodology does not suggest that the three factors are equally important, just distinct enough to deserve individual attention. Once the initial description of these factors has been given, this paper will then offer a broader context discussion of the potential influence of these factors on the coalition task force operations. Lastly, this paper will offer five rules, derived from the methodology, which the commander should observe when executing his duties in theatre.

A clear demonstration of the operational art today may well be how a coalition commander works within the various political and military restraints of their contingent forces to shape a culture of trust and commitment, and then subsequently how he applies these potentially dissimilar forces to achieve mission success.

⁸ Readers are also encouraged to refer to United States Department of Defense. *Joint Publication 3-16: Joint Doctrine for Multinational Operations*. (Washington DC: US Joint Chiefs of Staff. April 2000), and the United States Department of Defense. *American-British-Canadian-Australian (ABCA) Coalition Operations Handbook*. (Rosslyn VA: ABCA Program Office, April 2005), both of which have excellent pre-deployment checklists for coalition operations.

⁹ The ‘people, processes, and plans’ methodology presented in this paper was derived by the author from a review of the leading edge human factors studies that are underway throughout the NATO and ABCA defence scientific community. The impetus for the author to create the methodology came during the September 2006 lecture given by Mr. Keith Stewart of the Command Effectiveness and Behaviour Section at Defence Research and Development Centre Toronto as part of the Operational Command and Leadership course given to the Advanced Military Studies Programme (9) at Canadian Forces College, with permission.

Assessment Factors.

People.

The first factor, referred to as *People*, will highlight the vital need for the CTF commander to meet face to face as early as possible in the pre-deployment phase with the commanders of the national contingents, in order to make a subjective and objective assessment of the professional skills and abilities of the subordinate commanders.¹⁰ This first assessment is absolutely crucial as it will determine the degree of professional trust and coalition burden sharing that a CTF commander may expect from his coalition partners.

Some readers may feel that the issues presented in the *People* assessment factor are ‘motherhood’ leadership aspects that should already be well understood by most commanders. In that this paper is designed to serve all future commanders, some of whom may be quite junior today and less familiar with coalition operations, it is argued that these leadership aspects deserve investigation and reinforcement within the methodology.

The assessment factor, *People*, will look in more detail at the areas of the subordinate commanders’ experience, leadership environment, influence of military culture/language/religion, and the degree of readiness of subordinate forces.

¹⁰ This paper focuses on the operational chain of command within coalitions, in that the author recognizes (with the assistance of MGen Holmes) that the CTF commander may well have no influence or authority over the individual national element commanders (Canadian example being Commander Task Force Kabul). The national element commander controls the national assets in theatre that are country specific, and works directly for the national strategic authorities in their home country – this is quite separate from the operational command structure in theatre.

Subordinate Commanders' Experience.

The future CTF commander must ensure that he makes a careful review of all available information on the operational experience of the subordinate national contingent commanders. Key indirect sources of information that can be consulted may include the national contingent commanders' *curriculum vitae*, or even consultation with professional peers that have previously deployed or trained with the individuals in question. As many CF officers are now attending other nations' higher level staff and war colleges, some of the CTF commander's Canadian colleagues may well have familiarity with the national contingent commanders as course mates. The CTF commander must be very tactful in the manner in which he makes his enquiries, so as not to infer lack of confidence in any one individual by appearing overly curious. This type of indirect assessment must be kept to a minimum and handled delicately.¹¹

Beyond this indirect assessment, the commander must make a direct assessment himself by spending as much time as possible to personally interact and become acquainted with their future coalition partners. Equally, the CTF commander must understand that the national contingent commanders will likely use this same first occasion to make their own assessment of the coalition task force commander, so the event must be well planned and managed with care. This initial assessment activity will give the task force commander both an analytical and professional intuitive feel for the abilities of his subordinate commanders. Most importantly, the CTF commander must determine if he will be able to rely on the experience of subordinate commanders, and if they will have the ability to respond to the CTF commander's direction given either explicitly or implicitly during the deployed phase of the mission.

¹¹ Interview BGen Lacroix, 23-24 October 2006.

Leadership Environment.

In addition to measuring the experience and skills of his multi-national contingent commanders the CTF commander must also be able to assess their willingness to cooperate with the mission goals of the task force. This assessment of the ‘followership’ or ‘co-operability’ will allow the task force commander to determine what degree of ‘Mission Command’ he may or may not be able to apply when dealing with the subordinate commander.¹² The CTF commander must also have the courage and the tact to deal with any shortcomings that he assesses to be future mission-inhibitors. If the national commander or key staff members are clearly not up to the tasks that lie ahead, the CTF commander must find a way to politely and professionally disengage or refocus the coalition contributor away from vital missions. This must be done delicately without embarrassing the individual or contributing nation.

An astute CTF commander will be able to recognize whether the shortfalls of his subordinate commanders are due to either their lack of training and experience or at worst as a result of amateur, arrogant, and or deliberate obfuscation. No matter what the case, the CTF commander must react with acumen and professional tact to maintain mission continuity. A prudent coalition force commander must remember that some of these nations may well be called upon to contribute to future coalition forces, so professional relations must be maintained for strategic reasons.

¹² Mission Command is a style of military command promoting decentralized command, freedom, speed of action, and initiative. Subordinates, understanding the commander's intentions, are told what ‘effect’ they are to achieve and the reason why it needs to be achieved. They then decide within their delegated freedom of action how best to achieve their missions. See Maj. Gen. Werner Widder, “Auftragstaktik and Innere Führung: Trademarks of German Leadership,” *Military Review*, Vol 82, no. 5 (September/October 2002): 3-9. Also Stephen Bungay, “The Road to Mission Command: The Genesis of a Command Philosophy,” *British Army Review*, no. 137 (Summer 2005): 22-29.

Influence of Military Culture/Language/Religion.

The CTF commander and his staff should also be aware of any socio-cultural factors that may detract from the coalition's cohesion. This is particularly important given that many of today's coalitions are built outside of traditional alliances and often in a rapid and *ad-hoc* fashion. As a result, any linguistic or cultural challenges that might detract from the coalition building activities must be quickly recognized and mitigated early in the pre-deployment phase. Clear and persistent differences may well continue deep into the mission due to national traditions, religion, and differing professional military cultures. Therefore, it is essential that all commanders be aware of cultural differences in their force.¹³ An appreciation of these issues, albeit potentially intangible and vague, must be mastered by the CTF commander and his advisors to ensure that the coalition is not subjected to internal friction.

As well language cannot be over-stated as an important contributor or detractor to unity within the task force. When the CTF commander's intent is drafted, and any other subsequent written direction is given, clear, concise, action-oriented words must be used that are first of all 'translatable' into the languages of the coalition, and secondly not susceptible to double meanings or uncertainty in any other task force linguistic context.¹⁴

Degree of Readiness of Subordinate Forces.

The task force commander and the staff must also rigorously assess the readiness and calibre of the forces that are being offered to the coalition. He must determine the

¹³ Lieutenant Colonel M.D. Makulowich, "To Clash or Not To Clash: Canadian and Islamic Values on Canadian Forces' Deployed Operations." (Toronto: Canadian Forces College Advanced Military Studies Course Paper, 2005), 2. Also Colonel G.L. Gillespie, "Culture: The Key to Coalition Operations." (Toronto: Canadian Forces College Advanced Military Studies Course Paper, 2002), *Et passim*.

¹⁴ Interview MGen Holmes. 17-18 October 2006.

degree of preparation that the national contribution to the coalition forces has undergone in advance of being offered to the task force. Are they formed units with international credibility, and have they operated recently and successfully with other coalition task force nations?¹⁵ If not, how can these perceived deficiencies be mitigated?

The key is that the CTF commander must devote what limited time they have to ask very probing questions in an ‘eye to eye’ manner during the pre-deployment training period. It is also important that if a coalition member cannot attend the training that the task force commander ensures that areas of possible future risk are addressed before entry into the operational theatre. It is essential that the CTF commander utilizes robust scenarios and/or pre-mission war-gaming serials to exercise the coalition contributors.¹⁶

If time permits, the CTF commander should also observe the national contingents in their pre-deployment preparation to attain his own assessment of the units’ skills and depth.¹⁷ As this may not always be possible, the CTF commander must ensure that his staff conduct interviews and review all source material to be aware of the equipment status and force limitations and strengths of the individual national contingents.¹⁸

The CTF commander must constantly ensure that the readiness assessment remains as objective as possible. The commander may have national contingents join his force that lack any degree of reputation but that ultimately perform at a high level. Equally, some units may come to the fight with a recent national reputation that exceeds their true skills and abilities. This situation may lead the CTF commander to commit

¹⁵ The CTF commander must carefully scrutinize the process that nations use when declaring their forces operationally ready for the mission (referred to as OPREAD). Even though a national unit may have a reputation for excellence, they may or may not be as ready as ‘declared’. It may also be very difficult for the CTF commander to develop some sort of a common yard stick to measure the calibre of the coalition forces. Interview MGen Holmes. 17-18 October 2006.

¹⁶ Interview BGen Lacroix, 23-24 October 2006.

¹⁷ *American-British-Canadian-Australian (ABCA) Coalition Operations Handbook*, 4-5.

¹⁸ Interview MGen Holmes. 17-18 October 2006.

them to operations for which they are not well equipped or prepared – possibly leading to national embarrassment, coalition cohesion challenges, and mission degradation.¹⁹

Clearly, competence and readiness must be demonstrated to the CTF commander, not just declared by the nations contributing the forces.

The CTF commander must also be on the lookout for any potential competition that may develop between units of differing national backgrounds. If the rivalry becomes excessive it may well cause the national contingents involved to lose sight of the overall coalition mission, while they attempt to show each other up. This can be particularly troublesome if safety procedures are disregarded during such occasions. Past experience has also shown that some countries are simply not able to work together due to the legacy of previous operational incompatibility or, at worst, cultural incongruity or previous hostilities.²⁰ Finally, it might be possible that units within a single national contribution may be unwilling to cooperate with each other, ultimately degrading the effectiveness of the overall multinational force.²¹ The CTF commander must carefully manage the interaction between these dissimilar units, and at all times commit his contingents to the

¹⁹ By way of a maritime example: naval boarding teams operating in the same Coalition Task Force at sea often have very different levels of boarding operations that they may be permitted to undertake. These levels naturally depend on the threat that they may be expected to encounter during their boardings. Recognizing that some boarding teams are special operations capable and some are merely inspection teams, the commander must very carefully assess whether a national boarding team is capable of an operation and ensure that he does not place the team in a non-permissive and potentially dangerous and or embarrassing situation. Even though this example may seem like common sense, often the nuance between permissive and non-permissive boardings can be quite fine. Based on author's personal experience and opinion.

²⁰ An example of this incompatibility was seen in the initial unwillingness of the Argentine naval units in the First Gulf War (destroyer A.R.A. Almirante Brown and the frigate 140 A 16) to provision from the British Royal Fleet Auxiliary maritime refueling ships, due to the legacy of the Falklands War eight years earlier. Necessity eventually overcame this challenge and refueling was undertaken.

²¹ In the new Iraqi armed forces construct Iraqi indigenous land forces have been generated that have very distinct regional and cultural identities. In this situation it may well be very difficult for a multinational coalition task force commander to ask Kurdish, Shiite and or Sunni Iraqi units to operate together as one national contingent, given their cultural dissimilarity. Lt. Gen W.J. Natynczyk, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff of the Canadian Forces "Coalition Warfare." (lecture, Canadian Forces College, Toronto, ON, to the Advanced Military Studies Programme 9, 27 September 2006), with permission.

fight based on their true skills and abilities.²² Clearly this last aspect of readiness along with the previous parts of the *People* assessment factor must be carefully considered.

Discussion will now move to the second factor *Processes*.

Processes.

Discussions of military interoperability are often limited to technical aspects such as compatibility of information and weapons systems, tactics, techniques and procedures, logistics support, and intelligence sharing limitations.²³ The paper will go beyond these classic considerations of interoperability and move into the more subtle and challenging realm of organizational or non-technical interoperability.²⁴ Issues to be considered under the factor of *Processes* include the operational flexibility of the assigned forces, the trust that can be generated between the commander and the contingent leadership, the risk tolerance of each force, and coalition Rules of Engagement (ROE).

Aspects of non-technical interoperability must also be determined and dealt with during the pre-deployment scenario wargaming. Issues of non-technical interoperability

²² Patrick Michael Walsh. "Military Coalition Building: A Structural and Normative Assessment of Coalition Architecture." (Ph.D Thesis, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Spring 1999). Chapter 4, 136-154. Walsh describes the various capabilities of the coalition forces in the First Gulf War (1990-91) and how US General Schwarzkopf (Commander of the Coalition Forces) wisely committed national contingents to the line of departure in his operational plan depending on their strengths and weaknesses.

²³ Steven Metz, "The Effect of Technological Asymmetry on Coalition Operations," in *Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operations*, ed. Thomas J. Marshall, Philip Kaiser, and Jon Kessmeire, 49-67. (Carlisle PA: US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 1997), *Et passim*.

²⁴ Thea Clark. "Organizational Interoperability Maturity Model for Command and Control." Paper presented to the 1999 Command and Control Research and Technology Symposium, (US Naval War College, Rhode Island, 1999), 3-8.
http://www.dodccrp.org/events/1999/1999CCRTS/pdf_files/track_5/049clark.pdf. Internet; accessed 20 September 2006.

may in some ways prove harder to mitigate than the purely technical ones.²⁵ Let us now consider the challenging assessment issues that can be grouped under the factor

Processes.

Operational Flexibility of Assigned Units.

Even though this aspect of assessment may be very difficult to achieve before the mission, the CTF commander must always remain conscious of both the positive, and more importantly, the negative effect that politics may have on his coalition forces in theatre. The interaction between the national contingent commanders and their domestic leaders at the military-strategic level can have a compressing or limiting effect on the flexibility of the coalition contributed forces.²⁶ As a result, the CTF commander must have a detailed understanding of the degrees of command authority that they have been granted by each of the national entities. At a minimum, issues of Operational Command (OPCOM) and Operational Control (OPCON) must be discussed in detail to avoid any misinterpretation, subtleties, or national caveats that may well plague the coalition unity of command when later deployed.²⁷ Individual national contingent commanders may find themselves in a position where they must decline certain missions due to national

²⁵ In a NATO or US lead coalition technical interoperability limitations are often resolved through the adoption of NATO standardization agreements referred to as STANAGS, or through the early acceptance of US standards. <http://www.nato.int/docu/standard.htm#STANAG> Internet; accessed 26 September 2006. For example; the Canadian Navy has been offered unprecedented operational integration and task force command opportunities within the US navy sphere of operations, due to Canada's strong bilateral maritime technical interoperability. Arguably, the trust and personality aspects of non-technical naval interoperability have also enhanced this professional interaction. Also see Joel Sokolsky "Sailing in Concert: The Politics and Strategy of Canada-US Naval Interoperability," *Choices - National Security and Interoperability*. Vol 8. no. 2 (Institute for Research in Public Policy April 2002): 1-6. <http://www.irpp.org/indexe.htm>. Internet; accessed 20 September 2006.

²⁶ Nora Bensahel, *The Coalition Paradox: The Politics of Military Cooperation*. (Ph.D Thesis, Stanford University, August 1999), 3-9.

²⁷ See NATO's AAP-6 for an alliance version of the definitions of OPCOM and OPCON. <http://www.nato.int/docu/stanag/aap006/AAP-6-2006.pdf>. Internet; accessed 01 October 2006. There are differences between national and alliance terminology that may well affect the mission unity of command.

restrictions or political sentiments.²⁸ This is particularly problematic if the CTF commander has been given the OPCOM necessary to designate these very same missions to the national contingents in question.²⁹

Even though these inter-contingent command relationships may have been carefully arranged with bilateral agreements, and backed up by written authorities, there still may be a great variance in the actual interpretation within the coalition. Further, the CTF commander must assess what degree of formality he will need to exercise when issuing the national commanders their orders – need they be written or will more-informal verbal relationships suffice? The CTF commander must determine whether national contingents will be sufficiently agile and autonomous to accept operational and tactical level branch and sequel plans and short notice orders without excessive oversight and potential delay due to military-strategic level review.³⁰ A prudent CTF commander must always factor into their time sensitive planning cycle how long it might take nations to respond when tasked to conduct out of sector coalition support operations, or if they are actually even available or permitted to respond.³¹

²⁸ When nations are unwilling to accept a designated mission contemporary parlance refers to this as a ‘redcard’ call by the national contribution.

²⁹ An example of this confusion may be seen in that France’s definition of OPCOM, which constitutes “national command”, which may not be transferred to alliance and or foreign coalition commanders in any situation. Thomas Durell-Young, “Command in Coalition Operations,” Chapter 2 in *Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operations*, ed. Thomas J. Marshall, Philip Kaiser, and Jon Kessmeire, 23-48. (Carlisle PA: US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 1997), 26-27.

³⁰ Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-500/FP 000 *Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process*. (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2002), 2-7, 2-8. Branch plans are contingency operations within the basic plan, whereas Sequel plans are subsequent operations based upon probable outcomes of current plans.

³¹ Lt. Gen W.J. Natynczyk “Coalition Warfare” presentation.

Trust.

The CTF commander must also be very conscious of the degree of trust that he can place in the various national level contingent commanders. This level of trust will rely heavily on his assessment of the military ethos and teamwork that exists within the coalition members.³² Ethos is a representation of the values, beliefs, and imperatives that influence the spirit and professional conduct of a fighting force, whereas teamwork is a measure of cohesion, and a willingness to integrate individual national aspirations into the overall coalition mission.³³ Ethos is also influenced by the degree of professional experience and national values of the contributing forces, and as such is also a very nebulous and challenging attribute to measure. On occasion there may also be cultural factors that negatively influence the outward appearance of a national contingent's ethos and work ethic; a CTF commander must be cautious not to assume superiority or inferiority based on subjective and or biased assessments.³⁴ Nonetheless, the task force commander will have to at least be conscious of this factor and find ways to deal with contingent leaders if they do not garner his trust or demonstrate a lack of teamwork.

This aspect of trust is also very important when a CTF commander is basing his operational approach and command structures on the notion of 'supported versus supporting commanders'. In Canadian operational doctrine a supported commander is one "having primary responsibility for all aspects of an operation", whereas the

³² Major General, Robert H. Scales, Junior. "Trust, Not Technology, Sustains Coalitions," *Parameters*, Vol 28. Issue 4. (Winter 1998-99): 4-5. And also Scales, "Culture Centric Warfare," *US Naval Proceedings*, (October 2004): 30-31.

³³ Department of National Defence, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms Within Canada*. 25 and 31. http://www.forces.gc.ca/ethics/expectations/documents/ServirAvecHonneur_e.pdf. Internet; accessed 1 October 2006.

³⁴ Steve Bowman, "Historical and Cultural Influences in Coalition Operations," Chapter 1 in *Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operations*, ed. Thomas J. Marshall, Philip Kaiser, and Jon Kessmeire, 1-22. (Carlisle PA: US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 1997), 9-12.

supporting “provides forces and other support to a supported commander.”³⁵ If the task force commander designates one or a group of national contingents to a supporting role, the overall CTF commander should expect that the supporting forces would technically subordinate their own concerns to those of the lead supported contingent. This important command inter-relationship is undermined if the supporting commander does not execute his operations to the fullest extent or at worst only offers residual forces to the supported commander. In the worst case, some national contingent commanders may not understand this supported/supporting doctrinal approach, in this case the CTF commander will have to exercise significant oversight.

Given the *ad hoc* nature of multinational contingents and the lethality of current operations, any lack of commitment can have a costly and negative effect on coalition-wide operations. Equally, the task force commander should be on the lookout for ambitious national contingent commanders that over-commit their forces in this command relationship in a desire to use the mission for their own professional advancement or national political objectives, possibly to the detriment of the safety and effectiveness of their own forces and others.

Risk Tolerance.

The next aspect of the ***Processes*** assessment factor that should be carefully considered involves the risk tolerance of the various national contingents. It may be very difficult for the CTF commander to get a clear determination, during the early pre-deployment phase, of the nations’ political will to undertake mid to high-intensity operations. Nonetheless, he must at least attempt to determine if there are any types of

³⁵ *Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process*. 2-6.

operations that a national commander may have been forbidden to undertake because of national caveats. This determination should be made early on, so as not to inadvertently embarrass a national contingent that cannot commit to an operation later on in the campaign.³⁶ However, the CTF commander should be able at all times to call on all coalition members to accept risks that are within their national control as this will ensure that the maximum available combat power is continuously applied on the enemy in support of the mission goals.

Another aspect that may influence the risk tolerance within the force is the rotation length of each of the national contingents' forces. Some nations may have very short deployment durations of less than three months, while others may extend up to and beyond twelve months.³⁷ Forces with short duration tours are very hard to synchronize with more committed contingents. The complexity of the operations that coalition forces face today makes it difficult for short duration forces to properly acclimatize and be effective in the any subsequent operations. This aspect of rotation tempo is particularly important in large *ad hoc* contingents where the CTF commander must spend an inordinate amount of time integrating the various coalition members into a cohesive team.

³⁶ In the NATO ISAF coalition in Afghanistan there clear differences in the degree of risk that national forces are allowed to accept. At the time of preparation of this paper, Germany has its 3,000-strong force in the relatively calm northern Afghanistan region, but its parliament has declined to send any troops to the dangerous Taliban rich southern region. France, Italy, and Spain have all refused to send troops to the south, saying their armed forces are at full stretch elsewhere, meanwhile Canada, US, Netherlands, and UK forces are operating in the challenging and dangerous southern region. http://www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_PrintFriendly&c=Article&cid=1159480211202&call_pageid=970599119419. Internet; accessed 01 October, 2006. Canada's Minister of National Gordon O'Connor recently stated (October 2006) that troop shortages in Afghanistan could be solved if some of the NATO nations were willing or able (constitutionally) to remove the tight restrictions that keep many of their service personnel from deploying to regions of potential combat. http://www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_Type1&call_pageid=971358637177&c=Article&cid=1159740908983 Internet; accessed 02 October, 2006.

³⁷ Lt. Gen W.J. Natynczyk "Coalition Warfare" presentation.

Rules of Engagement.

The challenge of integration cannot be overemphasized when dealing the multifaceted issue of coalition ROE.³⁸ The ability of the CTF commander to effectively implement coalition ROE development, dissemination, and oversight may well be one of the most critical *Processes* that he must undertake as he assesses his mission as an operational level commander.³⁹ There are many different versions of national ROE ranging from individual national rules, to alliance specific conventions such as those within NATO, to even more complex international rule sets such as the ones held by the United Nations.⁴⁰

As the CTF commander undertakes his input assessment of the various national contributions he must be ready to allot a significant amount of personal and staff effort towards the review and subsequent synchronization of the individual ROE within the coalition forces. When reviewing the rules of the national contributions, the CTF commander must determine if they are robust enough to allow these forces to potentially use lethal force as required to meet the full spectrum of operations that may be encountered during the mission. If a contingent has very limited authority to use force under their ROE, or at worst they have no semblance of ROE at all, this will certainly make that nation a liability to the flexibility and responsiveness of the coalition. A CTF

³⁸ Even though the requirement for ROE is generally well accepted across most modern militaries with which Canada may operate in a coalition setting, the definitions of the term ROE and the various types of rules, are quite varied. Canadian definition is, "ROE are the command and control instrument by which the CDS controls the application of force in CF operations." Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-501/FP-000 *The Use of Force in CF Operations*. (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2001), 1-1/10.

³⁹ Colonel Eric Belcher, "Critical Mission: Rules of Engagement and Dissemination at the Operational Level of Command." (Toronto: Canadian Forces College Advanced Military Studies Course Paper, 2005), 3-5.

⁴⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel James C. Duncan, "The Commander's Role in Developing Rules of Engagement," *Naval War College Review* Vol LII, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 1-3.
<http://www.nwc.navy.mil/press/review/1999/summer/art3-su9.htm>. Internet; accessed 21 October 2006.

commander will want to see whether or not the ROE that are given to each nation allows them to apply force beyond their basic rights of self defence. His assessment will need to focus on the ability of the national forces to pre-emptively respond to hostile intent, vice having to wait for the first and any subsequent commissions of a hostile act.⁴¹

The CTF commander will also need to determine if the national level ROE are sufficiently flexible to evolve with the mission.⁴² Coalition activities may well begin with low to mid-intensity operations but could quickly escalate to potentially lethal, mid to high-intensity operations in a short period of time - thus flexibility is essential to their ability to react to dangerous conditions. The CTF commander will also have to ensure that the national contingents have sufficiently robust staffs to allow them to rapidly adjust their ROE in response to changing theatre circumstances, and subsequent commander's direction.

A clear demonstration of the operational art today may well be how a coalition commander works within the various political and military restraints, force rotation rates, and the ROE of their national contingent forces to shape a culture of trust and commitment, and then subsequently how he decisively applies these potentially dissimilar forces to achieve mission success.⁴³

⁴¹ Definitions of 'Hostile Intent' and 'Hostile Act' vary amongst nations, causing many challenges for the coalition commander. In Canada, Hostile Act generally involves a direct attack by the enemy on one's own personnel, units, or forces, where it has been assessed that death and or serious injury is likely to occur. Hostile intent exists when it is assessed that the threat of an attack is sufficiently direct and dangerous to forces that they may respond before an actual attack is undertaken by the enemy. In order to ease the discussion of this issue in the paper the author has simplified the explicit legal descriptions given in the Canadian joint doctrine manual on the use of force. This manual however, is the sole authority for the official definitions and application of ROE for the CF. *The Use of Force in CF Operations*. 1-3/10- 1/5/10.

⁴² Belcher, "Critical Mission: Rules of Engagement and Dissemination at the Operational Level of Command," 3.

⁴³ This situation may be even more complicated when the CTF commander and his forces are called upon to work alongside other government departments and civilian players in a so-called '3D and C' environment (Defence, Diplomacy, Development and Commerce). A continuous dissimilarity may prevail throughout these types of operations. Interview MGen Holmes. 17-18 October 2006.

This section the paper has discussed non-technical interoperability issues of the assessment factor *Processes* that include the operational flexibility of the assigned forces, the trust that can be generated between the CTF commander and the contingent leadership, the risk tolerance of each national contribution, and the rules governing the use of force.

Plans.

The last of the three assessment factors to be considered is *Plans*. Issues to be considered under this factor include the commander's requirement to synchronize the various multinational plans into one overarching coalition campaign plan, and the importance of the notion of 'nested intent' (definition to follow) throughout the CTF command structure.

Synchronization of Coalition Plans.

This activity involves the commander's requirement to carefully assess and synchronize the various national campaign and/or operational plans within the coalition task force into one overarching plan. The CTF commander must complete this activity before the force enters the theatre to avoid confusion once operations are underway. It is important to note that in order to maintain unity of command and effort that there can only be one CTF campaign plan. Nations may retain their own planning instruments to organize their national contingents but these must defer to the overall CTF plan.

In coalition warfare a task force commander may have to contend with national contingents that have very different approaches to military planning. Some contingents may have completed a detailed mission analysis while others may have only focused their planning on their timely arrival in the theatre, with scant consideration for other factors. Along with this reality the CTF commander may find that the various national contingents will have planned for operations that are not in concert with the overall mission of the coalition, either by deliberate or mistaken interpretation of coalition stand-up directives. The focus of this next section of the paper will be on the early determination of any possible friction or opportunities that may arise while trying to compile the overall coalition plan.

Campaign Plan.

Campaign planning is a deliberate and timely staff effort. Simply stated, this planning output should include a detailed assessment of the overall strategic guidance, the military situation (friends and foe), a clear statement of the mission, along with the execution details such as the commander's intent, through to logistics and command and control.⁴⁴ This type of detailed planning is designed to ensure that the forces involved in a coalition can achieve a clear alignment of political-military objectives, and unity of effort.⁴⁵

As part of this synchronization effort, the commander may want to designate individuals to act as a 'Red Team' to aggressively analyze, and thereafter, challenge contingents on any aspects of their per-deployment planning that may be confusing when

⁴⁴ *Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process*. 2A-1.

⁴⁵ Dan Cremin, Matt Mills, Denham Phipps, and Keith Stewart. "The Challenges of Command in Multinational Environments," *British Army Review*, No. 136 (Apr 2005): 57-58.

trying to align their efforts to the one and only CTF commander's campaign plan.⁴⁶

Further, the coalition wide constraints, restraints, and overall commander's intent, along with defined lines of operations, and centres of gravity should also be in clear agreement across the entire coalition.⁴⁷

Lastly, a CTF commander must also be aware that not all contingents may be conversant in the usage of these classic operational art terms, so he will need to decipher the individual national intentions when the terminology is not explicitly used.⁴⁸ The commander and his staff should also discern if the coalition intentions (both explicit and implicit) project an equal commitment to both the peace and war phases of the mission, ensuring that there is a consistent understanding of the end state, and specifically those conditions that define, end state, and mission completion.

Nested Intent.

The notion of the commander's intent deserves further exploration given that it is a core aspect of the operational art, and in many ways the proverbial glue that if successfully applied binds a coalition to a common purpose. One aspect of intent that is attracting more attention is the notion of 'nested intent.' Even though it is spoken about in the military milieu, it is not explicitly defined in any of the research that has been considered in the preparation of this paper.⁴⁹ One reference that sheds some light on the

⁴⁶ 'Red Team' is a commonly accepted term in military planning terminology, a function often executed by the J2 Intelligence cell, and other members of the staff as designated by the commander.

⁴⁷ *Canadian Forces Operational Planning Process*. 2-2, 2-5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 5-7, 5-8.

⁴⁹ The term 'nested intent' was discussed by Lt. Gen W.J. Natynczyk, in his "Coalition Warfare" presentation.

notion of nested intent is the US Army's Field Manual No. 22-100 entitled *Army*

Leadership, Be, Know, Do:

...if your subordinate leaders are to grow, you must let them take risks. This means you must let go of some control and let your subordinate leaders do things on their own—within bounds established by mission orders and your expressed *intent*... On the other hand, successful accomplishment of specified and implied missions results from subordinate leaders at all levels exercising disciplined initiative within the commander's *intent*. Effective leaders strive to create an environment of trust and understanding that encourages their subordinates to seize the initiative and act.⁵⁰

Nesting usually suggests a commonality between the various echelons of a force, their purpose, intent, and end state. Specifically, a plan by a subordinate level of command is 'nested' within that of the next tier, when it is convergent with the end state outlined by the commander.⁵¹ Even though this aspect of intent is subtle in nature, a task force commander must exercise great care and continuous attention when assessing the degree to which the contingents have properly understood and embedded the commander's larger coalition-wide intent into their own planning products.

From Assessment Results To Decisive Operations.

The discussion of the assessment methodology so far has considered the three factors namely, ***People***, ***Processes***, and ***Plans***, that the CTF commander must carefully assess as part of his pre-deployment preparation. This paper will now offer a broader

⁵⁰ US Army Field Manual No. 22-100. "Army Leadership, Be, Know, Do". (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, 31 August 1999), Chapt. 1, Section 1-55 - 1-56. <https://atiam.train.army.mil/soldierPortal/atia/adlsc/view/public/9502-1/fm/22-100/ch1.htm#1-4>. Internet; accessed 01 October 2006.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

context discussion of the influence that the assessment results may have on the outcome of coalition operations once in theatre.

People.

By carefully undertaking an assessment of the vital **People** factors a commander will enhance his opportunity for mission success. Most importantly, a strong CTF commander will have ensured that every opportunity has been taken to meet early and often with the national contingent leadership and unit commanders. By undertaking this vital leadership initiative, the CTF commander will reinforce a spirit of synchronization and common mission intent that will be fundamental to the success of subsequent operations. As discussed, cultural awareness and sensitivity, sometimes referred to as “culturally intelligent”, is a vital skill of the modern coalition commander.⁵² This talent will allow the CTF commander to successfully execute his duties within the diverse composition of today’s coalitions. More importantly, sensitivity and professional acumen will also permit him to deal with the demands of the host-nation officials and their respective cultural attributes.

Time spent in assessing the subordinate commanders’ experience, their leadership environment, the influence of military culture/language/religion, and the degree of readiness of subordinate forces, provides the commander with the critical situational awareness needed to move into theatre and succeed. However, a CTF commander who

⁵² Makulowich, “To Clash or Not To Clash: Canadian and Islamic Values on Canadian Forces’ Deployed Operations.”, 2. Also Gillespie, “Culture: The Key to Coalition Operations.”, *Et passim*.

decides not to undertake an assessment, or as a minimum have a Liaison Officer conduct this assessment on his behalf, may well do so at his peril.

Processes.

The aspects that are assessed under this factor are also fundamental to the eventual output and success of the coalition. This factor deals with multifaceted aspects of non-technical interoperability in key areas such as flexibility, trust, risk tolerance, and ROE. The commander's assessment of these factors is arguably a core practice in the operational art of coalition warfare, particularly given the dramatic influence that they can have over the continuity of the force. A successful task force commander that has exhausted all available means to both recognize and rigorously test his contingent commanders' operational flexibility well before the mission is executed will reap tremendous benefits from this important activity. By avoiding misunderstandings about the degree of command authority such as OPCOM or OPCON that the task force commander has over the coalition contingents, he may be able to reduce the likelihood of tragic results.

For instance, if the CTF commander is faced with a time sensitive situation where one part of the force has been overrun or ambushed and is experiencing severe casualties, he must be able to rely equally on the other coalition members to aggressively intervene and rescue the overwhelmed contingent. A wise commander will maintain a thorough understanding of the degree of agility and autonomy within their coalition forces at all

times, and on every occasion reinforces his command authorities so as to execute timely coalition reactions in dire situations.

In instances where a national contingent has been designated to assume a supporting role in deference to another supported part of the coalition, it is vital that the supporting contingent follow through on its promised contribution. An example of the importance of this type of trusted command relationship is in the provision of joint fire support by a supporting commander to the lead supported contingent during an offensive operation. If the supported commander cannot rely on the protective umbrella of fire support during the operation, their force might be overwhelmed.⁵³ Any lack of commitment of the supporting commander's resources to the overall mission would be seen as a breach of trust within the coalition.

Similarly, any variance in risk tolerance within the coalition will also undermine the collective strength of the force. For instance, if the opponent is able to determine that one national contingent is less likely to fight due to it nearing the end of its rotation in theatre, or has an obvious lower tolerance for casualties, this will offer the enemy an opportunity to compromise the overall solidarity of the coalition. A lethal strike specifically directed against that coalition partner and thus potentially leading to high casualties, may well fracture the resolve of the nation in question, possibly causing them to withdraw their forces. This type of directed attack may be undertaken against the national military contingent in theatre or against the civilian population residing in the

⁵³ United States Department of Defense. *Joint Publication 3-09: Doctrine for Joint Fire Support*. (Washington DC: US Joint Chiefs of Staff. 12 May 1998), I-2.
http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp3_09.pdf#search=%22joint%20fire%20support%20%22.
Internet; accessed 12 October 2006.

affected country. To that end a CTF commander that has addressed this vital issue of risk tolerance early on may deny this opportunity to the enemy.

From the perspective of ROE, even though the consistent application of the use of force across the coalition may never be perfectly harmonized, the CTF commander must work tirelessly to ensure that the development, dissemination, oversight, and application of the rules are as closely synchronized as possible across the entire coalition. The output of his ROE efforts should be a coalition-wide ROE standard, which is well understood by the national contributions. As well, any delegation of authority for certain ROE should be explicitly defined and authoritatively backed up by official documentation, along with regular reinforcement and ‘positive control’ during the CTF commander’s interaction with the coalition members.⁵⁴

The ROE that the CTF commander creates should not be used to over control or negatively restrain the mission; instead it should simply provide a clear and logical legal basis for any use of force throughout the theatre of operations.⁵⁵ At all times, the CTF Commander must continue to assess the strict implementation of the coalition ROE. He must ensure that the core principles of the use of force such as, minimum force, and proportionality, among others, are observed during all coalition operations.⁵⁶

It would be naïve to suggest however that the commander could perfectly synchronize the disparate national ROE into one standard coalition ROE set. As well, it might prove impossible for him to ensure 100% ROE compliance across the entire

⁵⁴ *The Use of Force in CF Operations*. 1/5/10. This notion of ‘positive control’ is essential to ensure that ROE incidents do not occur. Recent examples of prisoner abuse by coalition forces in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq serve as a reminder of how important it is for the commander to ensure that the use of force is properly followed at all times and that any incidents of unlawful use of force are promptly and thoroughly dealt with by the chain of command.

⁵⁵ Belcher, “Critical Mission: Rules of Engagement and Dissemination at the Operational Level of Command,” 3.

⁵⁶ *The Use of Force in CF Operations*. 1/5/10-1/6-10.

coalition. Nonetheless, he must use all available means and time to exercise his personal ROE authority, and work tirelessly to provide continuous oversight over the ROE process he establishes in his coalition force.

Even though many of the variables raised as part of this *Processes* factor are beyond the immediate control of the CTF commander, he must attempt to mitigate any negative effects that these factors will have during the execution of military operations in theatre.

Plans.

As discussed, in today's larger coalition operations a task force commander may be faced with the challenge of harmonizing dissimilar national interests, intentions and military plans within his overall coalition campaign plan. This synchronization of intra-coalition military planning is a vital pre-requisite to the CTF commander's ability to successfully align the coalition plans with the national strategy of the host nation that they are tasked with assisting. A good contemporary example of this challenge can be found in Afghanistan, where the various multinational coalition and NATO commanders have been required to align their military and security plans with the overarching Afghanistan National Development Strategy.⁵⁷ This strategy is designed to guide Afghanistan as it develops its own national capacity for governance and security. Clearly,

⁵⁷ The new Afghan government has produced the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, which has declared the following vision: "to consolidate peace and security through just, democratic processes and institutions, and to reduce poverty and achieve prosperity through broad based and equitable economic growth... work together to build a national army, police forces and intelligence services that can provide security and uphold the law." <http://www.ands.gov.af/>. Internet; accessed 10 October 2006.

a CTF commander in this type of strategic planning environment must carefully synchronize his coalition and national contingent plans with the host nation security framework, ultimately attempting to create an integrated plan. This last aspect of *Plans* is another key factor that a commander must assess in order to better execute his duties as a coalition task force commander.

The Commander's Five Rules.

Lastly this paper offers five rules that the author has distilled out of the methodology, which future CTF commanders should observe when planning and executing their operations:

1. Plan, plan and then plan again... but always know that not everything can be planned given the complexity of a coalition.
2. Trust your good judgment of character; language should not be allowed to serve as an inhibitor to the assessment of your coalition partners.
3. One must always be culturally aware, or if not, at be least wise enough to ask the right questions when operating with foreign nationals in a host nation.
4. Competence and readiness must be earned in the eye of the commander – not just declared by the nations contributing the forces.
5. Exercise 100% authority in the powers that you have been officially and legally granted as the commander, reinforce this authority regularly with your coalition members.

Conclusion.

This paper has suggested that in the contemporary security environment, and perhaps well into the future, coalition warfare seems likely to be the norm. It has been shown that coalitions are complex systems involving frictional interaction between political and military leaders spanning the entire spectrum of war. Because of the complexity of contemporary and future coalitions, this paper has argued that the CF must continue to advance the professional development of its officer corps so that they may be more capable of undertaking command at higher levels in multinational coalition task forces. To that end, this paper is designed to add to the growing body of professional knowledge on the important issue of coalition warfare.

A CTF commander operating with a realistic and pragmatic approach would acknowledge that he will seldom be able to choose the coalition members and designated forces, so it is vital at the outset that he learns to effectively assess and thus better employ the national forces that have been contributed to the coalition mission. To that end, the commander must also recognize that the methodology presented in this paper is only a modest predictive tool, so even a positive assessment of the coalition apportioned forces will by no means be a guarantee of success for the commander in future operations. In the end, the CTF commander may well be forced to accept and employ less capable contingents because of political considerations beyond their control. Some of these national contingents may well need to be included simply to buttress the overall coalition; the commander will just have to be careful in the way in which he subsequently employs these forces in operations.

There are also larger political-military strategic considerations that remain outside of the proposed methodology in this paper. A CTF commander must learn to recognize the aspects of coalition command that he is able to control, while at the same time being very wary of those aspects that he cannot directly influence. Clearly further research is warranted in this area of coalition warfare to prepare future commanders for success in these complex situations.

In order to help better prepare future coalition task force commanders for success in this challenging environment this paper presented a methodology that the commander may use in his personal pre-deployment preparation to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the coalition forces that have been contributed to the CTF.

It was shown that a clear demonstration of the operational art today is how a coalition commander works within the various political and military restraints of their contingent forces to shape a culture of trust and commitment, and then subsequently how he applies these potentially dissimilar forces to achieve mission success.

In summary, this paper suggests that if a task force commander undertakes a detailed pre-deployment assessment of his coalition task force members using the factors of *People*, *Processes*, and *Plans*, and considers the five rules that were outlined, he will greatly enhance his ability to plan and execute decisive coalition warfare at the operational level.

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