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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE/COLLEGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

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EXERCISE NEW HORIZONS

MULTINATIONAL OPERATIONS

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Today Multinational Operations have become a reality and continue to be the primary method for resolving international crisis ranging from major conflicts to peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance. These operations are far from new. The cross channel assault on the Normandy beaches during World War II, for example, is one of the most important combined operations at that time. In 1991, as another example, Military Forces from various countries conducted as a coalition the Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm for the liberation of Kuwait .

Multinational Operations consist of forces from different nations with different objectives usually for a single occasion or for longer cooperation in an issue of common interest. However the international system of today and the foreseeable future is characterized by the dominance of the United States. Despite its military might, the United States has always turned to other countries to seek their assistance to deal with certain crisis. Today, “Most of the countries and regional organizations of the world have arrived at the same conclusion regarding the importance of regional coalitions”.<sup>1</sup>

This paper examines the conduct of Multinational Operations using the principles of joint doctrine as a foundation. This paper will argue that Multinational Forces are the best way to react effectively anywhere, and in a very short time, to any international crisis.

This paper will briefly discuss Multinational Operations as a primary mode for resolving international crisis world-wide. The paper will also explain different types of Multinational Operations; discuss issues concerning Multinational Operations; and end with the considerations which will lead to the unity of effort and to Multinational Mission success.

In this era, Multinational Operations are usually undertaken as a mode of operation to fulfil specific objectives worldwide. Indeed in recent years, the United Nations became the primary tool in forming and steering global coalitions in military operations. “ In American-led coalitions, the UN role was limited to providing the seal of legitimacy.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, Michael.” The Foundation of Effective Coalition Operations” Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operations. Edited by Thomas J. Marshall, Philip Kaiser and Kessmeire. Carlisle. USAWC Strategic Studies Institute 1997, p72.

<sup>2</sup> Dixon, Anne M.“ The Whats and Whys of Coalitions” Joint Force Quarterly No.3 (Winter 1993-94), p26.

Multinational Operations proved to be successful and advantageous over the unilateral efforts of a single country in the following aspects:

- They demonstrate a worldwide unity and unanimity and they offer the political legitimacy and worldwide acceptance for sponsored measures.
- They increase the size of the military force and provide for an enhanced combat power in military operations.
- They enable several countries to share the cost of waging the war among them.

Although most world armies work towards maintaining their unilateral strength; on the other hand, they are expected also to work in close co-ordination and participate with allied and coalition forces in future operations, and “increasingly their procedures, programs and planning must recognise this reality.”<sup>3</sup>

Multinational Operations may be conducted during times of War and in military operations other than War. Each operation is unique and key planning considerations vary in accordance with the international situation, motives, values, goals and objectives.

The following are some of the operations that may be conducted in a multinational setting:

- **Combating Terrorism.** This includes antiterrorism defensive measures to combat threats and counter terrorism offensive measures taken to counteract and deter terrorism.
- **Enforcement of sanctions and naval intercept operations.** These operations are carried out to interdict the movement of certain specified items or commodities into or out of a country.

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<sup>3</sup> Joulwan, George A. “ Doctrine for Combined Operations” Joint Force Quarterly No.7 (winter 1996-97), p47.

- **Enforcement of Exclusion Zones.** The said zones are usually imposed by the United Nations and can be established in the air (no-fly zones), at sea (Naval), or on land (zones of separation).
- **Relief Operations.** These are humanitarian assistance to reduce the effects of natural or manmade disasters. These operations are limited in scope and duration of time. In these operations world countries provide relief for the affected country.
- **Peace Support Operations.** These operations include peace enforcement operations and peacekeeping operations. They are conducted in places where the rule of law has collapsed. However, each situation is dealt with separately and the operations may be conducted in support of diplomatic activities before or during or after the eruption of conflict.

Regardless of the similarities and differences that exist between various coalition forces, commanders need to understand the difficulty of combining national forces into a successful coalition. When considering the essential elements of the conduct of the multinational operations it would be rational to assume that a coalition would be united by common objectives. In reality participants seldom share the same goals and objectives. Even when goals are harmonised there is often disagreement as to how they can be achieved. “Accommodation of differences in political-military objectives is therefore of highest importance.”<sup>4</sup> Goals and objectives are normally “harmonised politically before they are handed to the military for execution.”<sup>5</sup> Wayne A. Silkett, in his article Alliance And Coalition Warfare urged that, “ In determining military ends, and means for accomplishing goals, planners must ensure common understanding of coalition political goal and strive for full unity of effort.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Marshall, Thomas J. Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operation, Military Review. 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. (December 1993), p5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p6.

This last statement refers to particular points. First, there must be an agreement upon the goals of the mission if it is to be accomplished in a timely and efficient manner. What must be equally clear, however, are the goals and objectives of various coalition participants.

Doctrine represents the second essential point in combat. A Multinational coalition must share a common doctrine since this will determine force structure and procedures. General Robert Riscassi defined doctrine as, “the technical language with which we communicate commander’s intent, battlefield mission control measures, combined arms and joint procedures, and command relationships.”<sup>7</sup>

Disagreements on doctrinal differences can be alleviated but understanding and accommodating differences in national doctrines will be required. Some differences can be adjusted through training exercises. Liaison officers with exceptional skills can also help to overcome doctrinal frictions within the coalition forces. The German army in World War II for example, was highly successful in using skilled liaison officers to ensure better coordination, understanding and co-operation with allied units. “The Desert Shield Training is another example of how national armies learned more about how to operate with other forces.”<sup>8</sup>

Logistics represents the third essential element. Generally speaking Thomas J. Marshall in his article Problem and Solutions in Future Coalition Operation argued that, “ No two nations have the same logistical or administrative doctrine.”<sup>9</sup> Logistics management in practice is a very difficult and complicated process. During the Korean war in 1951, for

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<sup>7</sup> Riscassi, General Robert W. US Army, *Doctrine for Joint Operations in a Combined Environment*, Military Review, (January-February 1997), p59.

<sup>8</sup> Marshall, Thomas J. *Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operation*, Military Review. 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. (December 1993), p5.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p11.

example, “The Dutch wanted milk when the French wanted wine. The Moslems wanted no pork and the Hindus no beef. The Orientals wanted more rice and the Europeans more bread.”<sup>10</sup> Even footwear was a problem, needing “to be extra wide to fit the Turks,”<sup>11</sup> and “extra narrow and short” to fit the Koreans, Filipinos, and Thais.

Logistics are more complex in Multinational Operations. They require more planning and co-ordination. Although logistics are the responsibility of each participant country, some nations do not have the necessary assets to sustain their forces or the essential transport means for their logistical support when they are deployed. In this event, they have to rely on their higher command and their allies to provide these capabilities

In all phases of Multinational military operations, equipment, equipment quality, quantity and interoperability constitute significant challenges to coalition partners. Among participant nations, equipment will vary in terms of modernisation levels, maintenance levels, mobility and compatibility. Standardisation of equipment is important if participants are to be able to operate together and achieve their objectives. For example, in the Gulf War, the Syrian force used Russian-made communication equipment which “unquestionably posed one of the greatest challenges in the conduct of War.”<sup>12</sup> Despite these difficulties sensible and skilful planners “must reconcile differences, exploiting interoperability where it exists and compensating where it does not.”<sup>13</sup>

Command represents another essential element of coalition operations. Unity of command is difficult to effect in Multinational Operations. Most countries are reluctant to place their military personnel and material resources in the hands of another nation. For this

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p11.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p11.

<sup>12</sup> Silkett. Wayne A. “Alliance and Coalition Warfare.” *Parameters*. US Army War College Quarterly, (Summer 1993), p78.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p6.

reason, Thomas J. Marshall argued that the, “coalition commander usually will not have unity of command. The best that usually can be hoped for is unity of effort within the command.”<sup>14</sup> Coalition leadership can take a number of forms to avoid frictions if nations in a coalition can not agree on one centralised command.

Lead nation and parallel command structures can exist simultaneously within a coalition. This combination occurs when two or more nations serve as controlling elements for a mix of international forces, such as the command arrangement employed by the Gulf War coalition. Western national forces were aligned under US leadership, while Arabic national forces were aligned under Saudi leadership.

**Planning.** A common planning process is essential and serves many important functions for any coalition operation. The involvement of various participants during the planning phase, for example, “initiates the building of trust and positive working relationships.”<sup>15</sup> General Robert Riscassi in his article, Principles for Coalition Warfare, asserted that, “the degree to which allied commanders and staff understand and participate in planning impacts on the time required to plan and the sharing of knowledge of every component of operation.”<sup>16</sup> He also argued that “without this foundation, applied as a collective process from the strategic level through tactical levels, it is difficult if not impossible to agree upon the coalition’s courses of action.”<sup>17</sup> Having agreed on courses of action, the coalition is then able to move through the remainder of the planning process. This

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<sup>14</sup> Marshall, Thomas J. Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operation, Military Review. 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. (December 1993), p57.

<sup>15</sup> “Support for the Process of Planning Coalition Operations”; available from <http://www.dodccrp.org/12000/CCRTS/cd/papers/>; internet; accessed 14 April 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Riscassi, General Robert W. “Principles for Coalition Warfare,” Military Review, Vol.73 No.6 (June 1993), p58.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p58.



includes force evaluation, air and naval classification to perform various missions, formulation of the concept of manoeuvre, the fire support plan and assignment of missions to various forces. A command and control system is the primary requirement to conduct effective, detailed and timely planning. In addition to an efficient command and control capability, multinational operations require staff officers who are competent and highly experienced in joint and combined operation in all phases of War.

Command and command structure are further key elements for coalition operations. Pigeau and McCann claimed that the commander “is a military’s mechanism for harnessing command potential and for formalising its structure by situating it within a chain of command.”<sup>18</sup> The commander must therefore adopt a command structure which will enable him best to fulfil his goals and objectives. However, unity of command is difficult to realise in Multinational Operations. Most countries are reluctant to pass their military forces and material resources to another nation’s commanding officers. For this reason, Thomas J. Marshall argued that, “coalition commander usually will not have unity of command. The best that usually can be hoped for is unity of effort with the command.”<sup>19</sup> General Robert Riscassi argued that command relationships between national commanders should be based in a way that “authority matches responsibilities.”<sup>20</sup> A recent example was demonstrated in the case of Desert Storm, when the United States as a lead nation exercised command over operations. In my view, successful coalition leaders will be those who best handle operational realities by applying the proper blend of vision, determination, patience, tolerance and flexibility.

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<sup>18</sup> Pigeau, Ross and Carol McCann. “Re-conceptualizing Command and Control.” Canadian Military Journal, Vol.3, No.1 (spring 2002), p53.

<sup>19</sup> Marshall, Thomas J. Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operation, Military Review. 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. (December 1993), p57.

<sup>20</sup> Riscassi, General Robert W. “Principles for Coalition Warfare,” Military Review, Vol.73 No.6 (June 1993), p59.

**Training.** Bowman and other writers have emphasized the importance of training. Bowman asserts that “training is the glue which holds a military force together.”<sup>21</sup> Continued training will enable Multinational participants to learn common doctrine and how to handle modern equipment and advanced technologies. It will also improve a coalition units capabilities and effectiveness. Thus through proper training, combined units will master and sustain collective war fighting skills. This assumes that time is available for training before combat commences. In case the situation dictates otherwise, joint exercises or simulation exercises prior to or during operations enable all coalition forces to start building unity of effort.

**Cultural Differences.** Another major point of friction can be caused by cultural differences “Culture shapes a nation’s doctrine and method of conducting military operations.”<sup>22</sup> However, each partner in Multinational Operations possesses a unique cultural identify in terms of religion, class, language, work ethic, discipline, standards of living and traditions. All these elements individually and collectively can crack coalition solidarity.

**Religion.** A coalition may consist of individuals with different religions. Each may have special requirements that must be taken into consideration during the planning of the operation. These requirements include religious holidays , customs and religious practices. Steve Bowman in his efforts to explain this point asked, “what would have happened to the

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<sup>21</sup> Bowman, Steve, “ Historical and Cultural Influences an coalition Operations.” Military Review 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. (December 1993), p20.

<sup>22</sup> Switzer, Cdr G.D. “Coalition and Alliance in the Twenty First Century”; available from <http://wps.cfc.dnd/papers>; internet; accessed 15 April 2004.

coalition formed against Saddam Hussein in 1990 if Israel had decided to join the War effort against Iraq.”<sup>23</sup>

**Language.** In any Multinational Operation, communication is very vital-language barriers can constitute a serious problem. “The problems that can arise due to miscommunication are potentially disastrous.”<sup>24</sup> However after a language is selected all written documents must be translated to be understood by different coalition participants. The formulation of common lists of terminology are also essential for common cause and understanding. Wayne A. Silkett asserted that, “Language is too important to be left to chance.”<sup>25</sup>

**Class and Gender Distinctions.** Other cultural differences involve class and gender distinctions. The officer / soldier relations in some armies for example are clearly defined and strictly enforced and observed compared to other armies. In some cases, the presence of female service personnel may be “offensive”<sup>26</sup> to some coalition partners.

**Discipline and Cultural Tolerance.** Level of discipline and cultural tolerance vary widely between various coalition partners. Some Armed Forces may not tolerate working next to each other. Planners must determine which forces can work comfortably with each other during operations and which ones must be kept apart.

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<sup>23</sup> Bowman, Steve. “Historical and Cultural influences on coalition operation”. *Military Review*. 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition (December, 1993), p19.

<sup>24</sup> Multinational and Alliance/Coalition Operation.”; available from <http://www.au.af.mil/au/cpd/>; internet ; accessed 15 April 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Silkett Wayne A. “Alliance and Coalition Warfare” *Parameters*, (Summer 1993), p81.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p79.

**Work Ethics.** The work ethics is another cultural factor that may vary greatly between coalition forces. Differences in work ethics reflect the national cultures that influence the way they operate. However, planners must assess their impact in cooperative efforts and how such differences can be accommodated.

**Command, Control, Communication, Computers and Intelligence.** These systems provide the means for conducting effective planning and for improving the unity and integration of coalition forces. They serve to bridge different languages and to improve the capabilities of these forces for transmitting, receiving, collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information. These systems can also be applied to share and integrate national resources and enhance coalition warfare.

**Rules of Engagement.** Rules of Engagements are, “directives to military forces and individuals that define the circumstance, conditions, degree and manner in which force or actions may or may not be applied.”<sup>27</sup> Colonel Drew A. Bennett in his article, Coalition Rules of Engagement, explained that these rules “facilitate guidance on the use of force.”<sup>28</sup> He also explained that “They address when, where, against whom and how force can be used.”<sup>29</sup> Rules of Engagement enable coalitions to overcome many obstacles by coordinating the use of force and ensuring interoperability and compatibility.

The United States, for example, has tried over time to avoid purely unilateral operations. As a case in point, with Operation Desert Shield/Storm the United States Armed Forces allied with Forces of coalition countries to achieve a great victory in the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi aggression. Desert Shield/Storm reaffirmed the importance and the

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<sup>27</sup> Multinational Consideration, Appendix G. ; available from <http://WWW.MSTP.Quantico.usmc.mil/GCE> ; internet; accessed 15 April 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Bennett, Col. Drew A. “Coalition Rules of Engagement” JFQ, (Summer 1995), p124

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p124.

effectiveness of multinational operations. The unique capabilities of each of the United States military services and those of each coalition partner were exploited during various phases of both operations.

Likewise, these operations reaffirmed the importance of well-defined goals and objectives, political and civic support. In Desert Shield/ Storm the United States and its allies and coalition partners gained legitimacy through the measures enacted by the United Nations Security Council. The Security Council Resolution 678 issued on November 29, 1990 stipulated that "if Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein did not remove his troops from Kuwait by January 15, 1991 a US-led coalition is authorized to drive them out."<sup>30</sup>

The favorable conditions, basing privileges and facilities which were provided by the coalition partners in the Arabian Gulf enabled the United States and their Western allies to reap an easy victory over the Iraqi army. The modern ports and airfields of Saudi Arabia accommodated the massive build-up with relieve ease. As well, there were virtually unlimited free supplies of fuel and water. Such conditions as were provided by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries were unique and would have been unlikely to be available in such a short time had the United States decided to launch a unilateral operation. In other locations and under unilateral conditions, the United States would have to operate without this very important support. In addition, by working with other allies and coalition partners the United States was able to generate tremendous combat capability in short period of time, which resulted into a fully integrated combat operation of unprecedented success. Clearly, Multinational Operations are more favorable over unilateral operation in terms of scope of possible operations, legitimacy, unity of efforts, cost and guaranteed success while sustaining light casualties.

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<sup>30</sup> Richelson, Jeffery T. "Operation Desert Storm: Ten Years After."; available from <http://www.gwn.edu/narchiv> internet; accessed 21 April, 2004.

Multinational Operations legitimized by the world community and supported by a number of countries will often be the preferred mode of combat operations as well as for conducting peacekeeping operations. However, these operations can be influenced by cultural differences and coalition leadership.

Multinational operations demonstrate the advantage of success over the unilateral efforts of a single country because they increase the size of the overall force, enable nations to share the cost of conducting War and enhance the legitimacy of strategic goals and objectives.

Coalition warfare is not an invention of today. Since ancient times, groups have banded together as a method to defeat an enemy that was superior either in power or in number. Though such multinational coalitions are often disbanded once the mission is complete, the fact that they occur often, and frequently with the same sets of partners, indicates that Multinational Forces remain the best way to react effectively anywhere, and in a very short time, to any international crisis. Given the world we live in, we can expect the United Arab Emirates to participate in more Multinational Operations in the future with allies and friends to preserve peace and stability around the world.

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