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Command and Control: The Essence of Coalition Warfare

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> "What experience and history teach us is this: that people and governments never learn anything from history, or have ever acted upon it." -- Hegel

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The fundamental change in international relations resulting from the collapse of the Warsaw Pact has reawakened interest in coalition warfare. Unlike alliances, which have an enduring element to them, coalitions are ad hoc, short term, and established for a specific objective.[1] The best recent example is Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, which showed the benefits and difficulties of coalition warfare.

The most contentious aspect of coalition operations is command and control. This sensitivity reflects the participants' concern over who will command their forces and what authority that commander will have. The converse is equally significant to military and political leaders in each nation contributing forces to a coalition: the degree of day-to-day control national authorities will have over the employment of their own forces. These issues will be developed in this article through an evaluation of salient lessons from the wars of this century, with particular emphasis on the two World Wars. Those lessons will be compared to current doctrine to discover whether they appear to have affected current US doctrine on command and control of coalition operations.

Within the US forces, recent joint and single-service doctrine has discussed in varying detail principles for the planning and conduct of coalition warfare. Of particular note is the absence of one of the principles of war, unity of command. Instead, unity of effort is proposed, since the former may not be achievable.

Coalition Operations as a Management Concept

The renewed interest in coalition warfare is reflected at the highest level and featured in both the National Security Strategy (NSS)[2] and the National Military Strategy (NMS)[3] of the United States. The NSS establishes several circumstances favoring the use of coalitions in advancing the interests of the United States and its allies:

> We will act with others when we can.[4]
>
> In alliance and partnership when our interests are shared by others.[5]
>
> *Overseas Presence*: Enhance the effectiveness of coalition operations, by improving our abilities to operate with other nations.[6]

The NMS is equally specific: "While we maintain the unilateral capability to wage decisive campaigns to protect US and multinational security interests, our armed forces will most often fight in concert with regional allies and friends, as coalitions can decisively increase combat power and lead to a more rapid and favorable outcome to the conflict."[7] Since coalition operations will therefore be the most common method for the employment of US forces, the required doctrine must be developed or adapted to post-Cold War requirements. This process is well under way, albeit at an early stage. Useful insights for adapting current doctrine can be developed from an inquiry into the evolution of coalition warfare in modern history.

Coalitions Through World War I

Coalition warfare is not a new concept. It was the enduring feature of European wars throughout much of the 18th and early 19th centuries. Indeed, the Napoleonic Wars demonstrate graphically the key features of coalitions: their short duration and their ad hoc nature. In this century the World Wars were between coalitions, while Korea (under the UN), Vietnam, and the 1990-91 Gulf War were fought by US-led coalitions. Even in the Western Hemisphere, where the United States could be perceived as wholly dominant, the political necessity of legitimacy has produced coalition operations in Grenada and Haiti. The initial burden of the latter operation, managed through the UN, fell on the United States.

The Cold War caused nations with common interests to join together in pursuit of a common objective, although the enduring nature of the threat at the time and the necessary response from the World War II Allies seemed to favor an alliance over a coalition. For nearly 40 years, two alliances--the Warsaw Pact and NATO--confronted one another across the inter-German border. Elsewhere the United States aligned itself with friendly states in regional alliances--CENTO and SEATO[8]--although they proved to be short lived when compared to the North Atlantic Alliance.

It is the two World Wars, however, that have had the greatest effect on our understanding of how coalition warfare can be conducted. There is almost a continuum from the loose structures of 1914 through to the conclusion of World War II in Europe in May 1945, wherein the most developed coalition ever assembled achieved victory.

World War I was fought primarily between two coalitions, the Central Powers (principally Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Turkey) and the Allies (principally France, Russia, the United Kingdom, Italy, and eventually the United States). The command arrangements for much of the war were extremely loose, at best relying on cooperation and coordination among the Allies, with nations pursuing their own national goals much of the time. Today such arrangements are described as parallel command, which "exists when nations retain control of their deployed forces. If a nation within the coalition elects to exercise autonomous control of its force, a parallel command structure exists."[9] It was only in 1918, when the Allies on the Western Front were staring defeat in the face, that a more thoroughly integrated command system was adopted.

The concept of parallel command therefore underpinned Allied command relationships for much of the war. On the Western Front, where the British army fought beside the much larger French army, command arrangements were national. On his assumption as commander in chief of the British army in France in 1915, General Sir Douglas Haig was reminded by the War Minister, Lord Kitchener: "Your command is an independent one and you will in any case not come under the orders of any allied general."[10] Haig, however, had to command his army within the reality of the high-intensity operations of the Western Front and rapidly came to a different conclusion. Later that year he wrote, "I am not under General Joffre's orders, but that would make no difference, as my intention was to do my utmost to carry out General Joffre's wishes on strategic matters as if they were orders."[11]

The arrival of the United States Army on the Western Front in 1917 saw no immediate change in the extant arrangements. General John J. Pershing's directive from the Secretary of War stated: "In operations against the Imperial German government, you are directed to cooperate with the forces of the other countries employed against the enemy; but in doing so the underlying idea must be kept in view that the forces of the United States are a separate and distinct component of the combined forces, the identity of which must be preserved."[12] Pershing's perception of successful Allied command arrangements was to be revealed in April of the following year.

It was not until the near collapse of the Western Front in March 1918 following the major German offensive that changes were made in command and control among the Allies; even then they were not immediate. A resolution signed at Doullens on 26 March 1918 stated: "General Foch is charged by the British and French governments to coordinate the action of the Allied armies on the Western Front. To this end he will come to an understanding with the Commanders-in-Chief, who are to furnish him all the information necessary."[13] So although General Foch was established as a supremo, he was given no authority. Continued deterioration on the Western Front, exacerbated by new problems of coordination between the British and French armies, necessitated further action.

On April 3 the Prime Ministers of France and the United Kingdom, together with their senior military commanders and General Pershing, met at Beauvais to review again the command arrangements established little more than a week earlier. With general agreement that the Doullens Resolution had not achieved the desired result, General Pershing

stated the case for unity of command. His words then are as apposite today:

> The principle of unity of command is undoubtedly the correct one for the Allies to follow. I do not believe that it is possible to have unity of action without a supreme commander. We have already experience enough in trying to coordinate the operations of the Allied Armies without success. There has never been real unity of action. Such coordination between two or three armies is impossible no matter who the commanders-in-chief may be. Each commander-in-chief is interested in his own army, and cannot get the other commander's point of view or grasp the problem as a whole. I am in favor of a supreme commander and believe that the success of the Allied cause depends upon it. I think the necessary action should be taken by this council at once. I am in favor of conferring the supreme command upon General Foch.[14]

Pershing's view was reflected in the Beauvais Agreement:

> General Foch is charged by the British, French and American governments with the coordination of the action of the Allied Armies on the Western Front; to this end there is conferred on him all the powers necessary for its effective realization. To the same end, the British, French and American governments confide in General Foch the strategic direction of military operations. The Commanders-in-Chief of the British, French and American Armies will exercise to the fullest extent tactical direction of their armies. Each Commander-in-Chief will have the right to appeal to his government, if in his opinion his army is placed in danger by the instructions received from General Foch.[15]

Between April and November 1918, however, General Foch was able to achieve only a coordinating role, since his staff was smaller than that of a brigade.

World War I forced the evolution of command and control in a coalition from parallel command to unity of command, exercised finally by a Supreme Allied Commander-in-Chief on the Western Front, General Foch. The inability of coordination measures, even with a compliant British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Douglas Haig, to meet the demands of Allied action against the rapidly changing situation in the spring of 1918, persuaded the Allied leaders that unity of command was a prerequisite to effective Allied warfighting. The events of 1918 were to have a profound effect on the participants, not in the immediate aftermath, but in their influence on the Anglo-American alliance of World War II.

Coalitions in World War II

World War II gradually forced the development of coalition warfare to the greatest level of integration and sophistication in history. The Franco-British alliance of 1939-40 showed that some of the lessons of 1914-18 had been assimilated. A Supreme War Council was established consisting of the two Prime Ministers, their Foreign Ministers, and their senior military advisers. A system of lead nation was established, based on preponderance of forces within a given theater. In the Mediterranean Sea, the French led in the west and the British, with a French naval squadron under command, led in the east. In France, Lord Gort, commander of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), reported to the French commander in chief via the commander of French forces in northeast France, General Georges.

While this might appear to show the lessons of 1918 being put into practical effect, real unity of command was never established among the forces arrayed initially against the Nazis. Field Marshal Montgomery, then a Division Commander in the BEF, wrote: "Between September 1939 and May 1940, the Allies had never conducted any exercises, either with or without troops, [although] an indoor exercise on the model could easily have been held. There was no coordination between the operations of the Belgians, the BEF, and the First French Army."[16] The defeat of the French in the summer of 1940 and the emergence of the Anglo-American alliance in 1941-42 fostered a new approach to the problems of coalition warfare, specifically to the particular issue of command of coalition forces.

These issues appeared at the forefront of Allied considerations within weeks of the attack on Pearl Harbor, driven by the rapidly deteriorating situation in the East Indies, the Philippines, and Malaya. The need for a supreme commander in the theater was raised by General Marshall in December 1941 at the Arcadia Conference in Washington, when he declared "that the adoption of unified command [in the theater] would solve nine-tenths of the problems of British-American cooperation."[17] The resulting Australian, British, Dutch, American Command (ABDACOM) under General Wavell firmly established the principle of unity of command from the beginning of the new coalition; that

principle was to prove fundamental to success.

The difficulties of agreeing on the terms of reference and authority of the commander in chief of ABDACOM were profound. Early drafts were full of prohibitions, and his final powers were very constrained. General Marshall, however, seemed undismayed: "If the Supreme Commander ended up with no more authority than to tell Washington what he wanted, such a situation was better than nothing, and an improvement over the present situation."[18] Both sides appreciated the many failings of this initial attempt at establishing the authority of a coalition commander, but the die was cast in the acceptance of the principle of unity of command. It can be no accident that Marshall was the proponent of this arrangement. As General Pershing's chief staff officer from 1917 to 1924, he had witnessed firsthand the tribulations of Allied command in 1918.

The difficulties encountered by the two allies in coming to a common view and understanding of the principles of command should not be underestimated, since their approach was diametrically different. Both accepted the need for a coordinated higher direction of the war to refine grand strategy; establishment of the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington met that need. However, theater command and the authority vested in those commanders was another matter. The British regarded service chiefs within a theater as co-equals (a committee) and Churchill required close supervision of his commanders, doubtless born out of the many failings of British generalship in the early part of the war: "It is not sufficient to give a general a directive to beat the enemy and wait and see what happens. The matter is much more complicated. The general may well be below the level of his task, and has often been found so. A definite measure of guidance and control is required from the staffs and from the high government authorities."[19] Conversely, the American tradition favored a broad delegation of responsibility and authority to a commander, on the principle that he should be assigned a job, given the means to do it, and held responsible for its fulfillment without scrutiny of the measures employed.[20]

The decision to carry out a combined invasion of North Africa in late 1942 drew the issue of theater command to the fore. Fortunately, the American view prevailed and General Eisenhower was appointed supreme commander for Operation Torch. General Marshall advised him that "it is the desire of the War Department that you as Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces should have the maximum feasible degree of authority and responsibility, and that you should operate at all times under as broad a directive as possible."[21] Whatever the difficulties, and they had been significant, by the time the coalition's first real offensive operation began, the principle of unity of command and a supreme allied commander for the theater had been established. Recognizing, however, that this was the first time a British army had served under a US commander, General Andersen, Commander of 1st (British) Army, was given the right of appeal to national authorities--subject to some constraints--if he felt his army was threatened with dire consequences. While this right of appeal was in principle retained throughout the war, it was seldom exercised.

Allied unity of command was confined to the Western Mediterranean and later to the Western European and South East Asian theaters. Elsewhere--for example in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the Pacific--the old principle of lead nation remained, since these were either single-nation areas, or at least dominated by the commitment made by one nation. It could be argued that a greater level of unity of command and integration of forces was achieved in the coalition forces in Europe than in the US-dominated Pacific, even up to the projected invasion of Japan.

Application and Lessons, 1943-45

"Unity of command" in the Anglo-American alliance had a particular meaning, distinct from the natural authority implicit in the term command. One study noted: "It implies special arrangements to bring together under a single commander elements ordinarily controlled by separate sources of authority, each sovereign within its own sphere. Invariably the powers of the joint commander have been closely hedged about by restrictions designed to preserve the direct chain of command from the central authority of the service or nation to its own commanders in the field."[22] The same author continued, "Allied unified command was always primarily concerned with control of forces rather than territory, and it shunned as far as possible the administrative jurisdiction which was inseparable from territorial control."[23] Despite restrictions on the scope of the authority of an Allied commander exercising unity of command, it should not be presumed that he lacked authority. Quite the contrary; it was in the final instance General Eisenhower's decision alone to launch Overlord and Market Garden, and later to pursue a broad front strategy in Western Europe.

For an allied commander to exercise his authority he required a headquarters staff, a tool Marshall Foch lacked in 1918. Allied Forces Headquarters for Torch was a new and unique structure: a fully integrated combined staff, with a US commander and chief of staff and British component commanders. Its genesis was almost certainly the combined staff that General Eisenhower had assembled in London to plan Operation Torch, many of whose members accompanied him when he subsequently assumed command of the forces that were to invade North Africa. The Allied Forces Headquarters was criticized for its large size, and the difficulties of matching two different staff systems and nationalities should not be underestimated. But it performed adequately and matured as the operation progressed.

The lessons of Operations Torch, Husky (the invasion of Sicily), and the subsequent invasion of Italy all contributed to the final Allied command and staff structures for Overlord. Command of Allied air forces, especially the strategic bombers supporting the theater operation, had been problematic, and the appointment of Air Marshal Tedder as both Eisenhower's deputy and Commander-in-Chief of Allied Air Forces ameliorated the problem. Eisenhower also decided that the land component command should reside with him and not with a separate commander and staff. Lieutenant General Morgan and his COSSAC[24] staff, charged with the planning of Overlord in 1943, had to operate under a system of "opposite numbers" until General Eisenhower arrived in January 1944 and insisted on an integrated combined staff. Thus was the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) born. SHAEF was initially a combined *army* staff, with joint input from collocated component planning staffs, and occasionally from the full air and naval component staffs. Following the invasion, an air staff was assembled to support Air Marshal Tedder as the Commander-in-Chief of Allied air forces.

It was indeed fortunate for the Allied cause that General Eisenhower was selected by General Marshall, and subsequently approved by the political leaders of the United States and Britain, to lead Allied forces in Europe. By the manner in which he discharged his duties he became the epitome of the successful supreme allied commander. It is hard to imagine either Patton or Montgomery in such an appointment.

Eisenhower described his concept of allied command and the requisite characteristics of the commander in a letter to Admiral Mountbatten on the latter's notification that he was to assume command of the Southeast Asia Command:

> The written basis for allied unity of command is found in directives issued by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The true basis lies in the earnest cooperation of the senior officers assigned to an allied theater. Since cooperation, in turn, implies such things as selflessness, devotion to a common cause, generosity in attitude, and mutual confidence, it is easy to see that actual unity in an allied command depends directly upon the individuals in the field. This is true if for no other reason than no commander of an allied force can be given complete administrative and disciplinary powers over the whole command. It will therefore never be possible to say the problem of establishing unity in any allied command is ever completely solved. This problem involves the human equation and must be met day by day. Patience, tolerance, frankness, absolute honesty in all dealings, particularly with all persons of the opposite nationality, and firmness, are absolutely essential.[25]

General Eisenhower's influence was felt not only in the manner in which he conducted himself as the Supreme Allied Commander but also in Allied Forces Headquarters in the Mediterranean and later at SHAEF in northwest Europe. With the exception of having his own chief of staff, he placed no weight on any particular structure or organizational method within the traditional staff framework, which he regarded as mere detail. Instead, he emphasized the characteristics required of good staff officers: confidence, logic, and loyalty.

This necessarily brief examination of World War II coalition command can be summarized by reflections on allied command by two senior US Army officers. General Devers, Commander of the 6th Army Group, listed the principal problems that an allied theater commander should expect to have to confront:

> (1) Characteristic lack of clarity and firmness of directives received from the next superior combined headquarters or authority.
> (2) The conflicting political, economic, and military problems and objectives of each of the allied powers.
> (3) The logistical capabilities, organization, doctrines, and characteristics of each of [the] armed forces under command.

(4) The armament, training, and tactical doctrines of each of the armed forces under command.
(5) Personal intervention and exercise of a direct, personal influence to assure coordination and success in the initial phases of the mission assigned by the next higher combined authority. Lastly, and in the final analysis probably the most important of all:
(6) The personalities of the senior commanders of each of the armed services of the allied powers under command, their capabilities, personal and professional habits, and their ambitions.[26]

It is likely that each of these characteristics has influenced one or another of the coalition operations conducted since 1945. They may simply be inherent in human activities at a certain level of authority and intensity.

The other observation speaks clearly to contemporary members of NATO and participants in any coalition operation. Major General Harold R. Bull, US Army, was the Chief of the Plans Directorate in SHAEF. He noted, "I can truly testify from my own experience that solving the problem of combined command in war is simpler and more expeditious than solving the joint problems in our national defense establishment in peace." He amplified that insight in words that are remarkably fresh:

> I can conceive of no scheme which will work unless three actions are taken: First, firm political decisions made and clear objectives set by national leaders above the theater commander. That is to ensure unity of purpose. That I think is awfully important. If your international high level decisions are to be made at theater level, I'd say, "God help us in unity of purpose"; [second] Unity of Command to ensure unquestioned and timely execution of directives; [third] Staff integration with mutual respect and confidence in combined staffs to ensure sound development of plans and directives fully representing the interests of the major elements of the command.[27]

World War II saw the development of coalition warfare to a peak never passed before or since. The principle of unity of purpose at the grand strategic level, reflected by unity of command within specified theaters, had been firmly established. The task of the great World War II coalition was certainly made simpler by the two principal Allies speaking the same language and sharing a common culture and common values. (Complications arose later with the integration of French forces in General Devers' 6th Army Group.) One must recall, too, that commanders had in many cases been promoted rapidly up the ranks, reflecting the needs of the large wartime armies, and the staffs were generally composed of officers with limited troop and staff experience. Despite these potential inhibitors, the Allies made the best of things in the interest of defeating the Axis powers.

Applications

Coalition operations since World War II have involved the United States and a wide range of allied and friendly states; none has achieved a command relationship that matched the level of sophistication and integration that the Allies had achieved by 1945.

- The Korean War, the first major commitment of US forces after 1945, was fought under the auspices of the UN, but the command structure at theater level reflected the domination and size of commitment by the United States. There were numerous national contingents, but the United States exercised the command function as lead nation. Given the speed with which the operation had to be established, it was inevitable that a lead nation concept was adopted.
- In the Vietnam War, with the exception of the Australian and New Zealand forces which were in effect under the operational control of the United States, the command structure seemed to take a step back in time to World War I, prior to the Beauvais Agreement. And this despite the concentration of the warfighting in the US and South Vietnamese forces. A parallel command structure was adopted which was even stretched to include the South Koreans. This command relationship was criticized by General Bruce Palmer, Jr., in his book *The 25 Year War*:

> In retrospect I believe that the advantages of having US commanders exercise operational control over other national forces, especially South Vietnamese, would have far outweighed the drawbacks, for the fact is that we did not generate our best combined efforts. As a minimum we should have insisted on having a substantive voice in the selection, promotion, and removal of key South Vietnamese commanders.[28]

- The operation to liberate Kuwait, Operation Desert Storm, achieved a marked improvement on the command

arrangements for Vietnam, but still did not achieve unity of command. Instead, the theater commander, CINCENT, strove to achieve unity of purpose and unity of effort. An interesting hybrid command relationship was established which was both parallel and lead nation, the United States leading the forces of the Western nations, and Saudi Arabia leading those of the Arab nations. However, even then it was abundantly clear to all that the United States was in the lead for both campaign plan development and conduct of the campaign once hostilities began.

Given the absence of unity of command in the 1990-91 Gulf War, a new structure was born. The coalition coordination, communications, and integration center (C3IC) had neither overall command authority nor a direct role in the campaign planning process. However, it did formalize coordination and liaison arrangements between the leaders and staffs of the two lead nations, the United States and Saudi Arabia. One author described the function of the C3IC as follows: "It is important to note that the C3IC did not command any units. The C3IC advised the separate commanders and their staffs, and it transmitted orders of one national command chain to the other. The C3IC integrated the effort of both parties into a unity of effort, not a unity of command."[29] While these arrangements suited the particular circumstances of Desert Storm, it should not be assumed that they will be relevant in future coalition operations.

The Desert Storm coalition enjoyed overwhelming force and the objective was limited and clearly achievable in a short period of time, so the shortfalls in such an arrangement, if there were to be any, had little opportunity to be exposed. Operations involving greater risk, increased opportunities for deviation from the agreed mission, or longer duration could well see coalition partners seeking greater representation among the headquarters staff charged with planning the operation they would be expected to conduct. The C3IC does not fill that need. But with that desire from coalition partners for greater representation on the staff should come a parallel demand from the coalition leader for greater unity of command.

Doctrinal Implications

With the renewed interest in coalition warfare, it is useful to look at current US doctrine for command and control of coalition operations at the theater level. The assessment covers mode of command, the integration of staffs, and the idea of unity of command as a desirable feature of coalition operations, including its application to service components.

- *Mode of command*. US joint publications[30] propose three possible command arrangements for coalition operations: parallel command, lead nation command, or the combination of the two that was used in Operation Desert Storm. They offer no guidance as to which may be preferable, nor do they note the strengths and weaknesses of each mode of command. In those publications, furthermore, the principle of unity of command is more honored in the breach than the observance.

  - *Parallel command*. US Joint Publication 3-0 notes that parallel command is the "simplest to organize and often the organization of choice."[31] It emphasizes achieving unity of effort, since it seems to assume that, by definition, unity of command is not achievable under a parallel command concept. The Army's FM 100-8, *The Army in Multinational Operations*, suggests that parallel command is often the organization of choice, but notes that "while other command arrangements emerge as the coalition matures, the parallel model is often the starting point," a sensible, if uninspiring, conclusion.[32]
  - *Lead nation command*. US Joint Publication 3-16 states that a lead nation command arrangement will achieve unity of command, though how it might do so is not explained. It notes that "unity of command established early on facilitates unity of effort. However, nations are generally reluctant to grant extensive control of their forces to one lead nation."[33] It is unclear whether this comment is based on recent and regular experience or is mere supposition. This observation, while perhaps true in the abstract, could readily change if a coalition were faced with a truly formidable threat to a national interest vital to most, if not all, of its members.
  - *Parallel and lead nation*. Operation Desert Storm provides a recent example of this option. Here, as described earlier, the coalition was split into two blocks, with the United States leading the Western nations and Saudi Arabia leading the Arabs. Saddam Hussein tried to exploit the most evident weakness in this arrangement through his SCUD attacks on Israel. Had he succeeded in provoking a response from the Israelis, it is conceivable that the coalition command arrangements might have been sufficiently disrupted to have affected the

outcome of the war.

- *Integration of staffs*. The historical examples suggest that full integration of staffs, regardless of the difficulties such a decision entails, is a prerequisite to true unity of command. Joint Pub 3-0 observes that lead nation command "is characterized by some integration of staffs. The composition of staffs is determined by the coalition leadership." It goes so far as to suggest augmenting the headquarters staff with representatives of the participating coalition members, but it does not propose full integration.
- *Unity of command*. US Joint Publication 3-0, in its section on multinational operations, discusses at some length the concept of unity of effort, but does not even mention unity of command, despite the latter being a US principle of war. It continues later: "The purpose of unity of command is to ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander for every objective. Unity of command means all forces operate under a single commander with the requisite authority to direct all forces employed in pursuit of a common purpose."[34] The joint doctrine cited to this point suggests that without a threat to vital national interests, the perceived surrender of sovereignty associated with unity of command may be an unpalatable option for some political leaders. But these same leaders are willing participants in the coalition, seeking a common objective and prepared, if necessary, to sacrifice the lives of their service men and women.

The examples from World War II show that coalition unity of command can be very constrained; General Marshall's comments on General Wavell related to command of ABDACOM illustrate a pragmatic approach to responding to national constraints on a coalition commander. Furthermore, as Eisenhower and others noted, the success of Allied unity of command in World War II rested not so much on regulation as on mutual confidence, which admittedly took time to develop. Today, however, those whom the United States would be most likely to seek as coalition partners share NATO membership or association with NATO norms through the Partnership for Peace, recent operations, and multinational exercises. These are the ideal conditions under which to develop the mutual understanding and confidence that appealed to senior World War II leaders as the secret of true unity of command exercised through a fully integrated combined (and joint) staff.

A coalition commander has always had to operate within constraints of one sort or another. Providing that these are made clear to him from the outset by contributing nations, he should in general be able to operate successfully despite the disadvantages of the constraints. A US joint task force commander is no different in having to operate within constraints; whether imposed by existing doctrine (for example, no integration of logistics) by the joint force commander, or indeed Rules of Engagement, it is a matter of degree.

Hard-won experience indicates the importance of unity of command in a coalition operation. The concept has been expressed as follows: "The fundamental purpose of combined military command is to direct the massed military effort of a coalition of nations toward the accomplishment of commonly accepted objectives in the areas for which such a command has been designated."[35] Coalition unity of command requires there to be one person in command, to whom coalition partners owe unswerving obedience, *but within the constraints established for their employment*. How else can national political and military leaders expect to create conditions appropriate to success in conflicts against determined enemies? Has US doctrine dismissed too quickly the principle of unity of command at the theater level in multinational operations in favor of the less demanding, but higher risk, unity of effort? It is of note that the most recent coalition operation, IFOR in Bosnia, has adhered to the principle of unity of command. While it could be argued that this is a NATO operation, it is in fact a coalition with NATO providing the command and control. Of the 27 nations participating, only 12, a significant minority, are members of NATO's integrated military structure. Of equal significance, the Russians accepted unity of command as a fundamental pillar of the operation.

There remains to be considered the issue of command arrangements within the service components of a coalition. These will be different within each component, as forces that are contributed to a coalition vary in their size, complexity, and familiarity with the concept of unity of command.

- The ground component invariably has been the most difficult to integrate, because doctrinal and equipment differences affect the lowest echelons of command in all armies. In World War II, the Allies did not plan to integrate forces below corps level, although divisions were exchanged among national commands occasionally for a short duration. In Korea many nations sent battalion task forces to assist the US and South Korean forces. These organizations had to be integrated into US regimental combat teams, often at significant cost to the United States, since

the integrated units were inadequately supported logistically. Following the debacle at the Imjin River, the UK withdrew its brigade from US divisional command and together with other Commonwealth forces established the Commonwealth Division. Until recently in NATO, integration did not occur below division level, but this policy reflected the employment of heavy divisions in high-intensity operations in Western Europe. In low-intensity conflict, wherever it may occur, soldiers may not even discharge their basic load of ammunition during a six-month assignment. Such operations may therefore offer greater scope for integrating battalions within a multinational brigade.

- Naval forces have in many respects achieved a level of integration unmatched among the services. Most Western navies subscribe to the concept of the composite warfare commander, whereby responsibility is delegated to a specific commander in a task group for a particular discipline, such as anti-surface warfare or anti-aircraft warfare. This principle has allowed the assembly of multinational task groups as seen in the NATO Standing Naval Forces, in the Gulf War, and in operations in the Adriatic seeking to enforce the embargo against Serbia. In addition, as a result of the larger NATO navies routinely conducting exercises with many other navies during their worldwide deployments, NATO doctrine and procedures have become almost the common currency in multinational maritime operations. Command arrangements for naval operations are also simplified to an extent by the limited number of ships involved in them, and by the fact that each ship is a self-contained unit, albeit with a significant logistic liability.
- Unity of air effort is best achieved when command and control are exercised from the highest practicable level by a designated theater commander.[36] The success of the joint force air component commander (JFACC) concept during Desert Storm has proved a system that is capable of commanding an air operation whatever the aircraft's origin. The JFACC concept is capable of employing any aircraft that is offered for tasking provided that its characteristics match the requirements of the planned missions. As with the naval component, NATO procedures have again provided a common procedural basis for multinational operations.

Conclusions

The lessons of both World Wars have provided clear models of how coalition command should be arranged to "direct the massed military effort of a coalition of nations toward the accomplishment of commonly accepted objectives in the areas for which such a command has been designated." Unity of effort was inadequate to cope with the demands of the German offensives in spring 1918 and summer 1940. Unity of command and integrated staffs were at the heart of the successful Allied commands in World War II. Command structures and relationships to support unity of command must be established from the outset of campaign planning. They are not easily constructed under the pressure of operational reverses.

Yet despite these lessons, we appear to have surrendered too easily the principle of unity of command and the integrated command structures that flow naturally from it. Regrettably, Operation Desert Storm has assumed a position of role model that it ill deserves. Aspects of warfare that stress coalitions--reverses such as occurred in Somalia--did not occur during the 100 hours of ground combat. Therefore one must ask, "Is unity of command so hard to achieve?" Coalitions are accepted by many countries today as the norm for military action, since they reduce costs and convey legitimacy. Equally, they allow the sharing of the burden among those with particular skills or capabilities that other coalition members may lack. When compared with the United States and the United Kingdom in 1941, who shared a common language but little else, certainly not common doctrine or even the experience of training together, the position of many countries today is immeasurably better.

Unity of command is seen by some as a surrender of sovereignty which, unless a nation is in peril, should not be attempted. But in order to minimize their political risks, those same leaders who are concerned over sovereignty are also concerned with an efficient and timely operation and with minimum casualties. The military leader must explain to policymakers the benefits that even a constrained coalition unity of command may bring when set against these potential risks.

NATO has by default provided a common doctrine (which includes unity of command as a fundamental principle), common operating procedures, and experience of combined training and combined staffs. These standards are taken for granted among its membership; they are also permeating states who aspire to membership, especially those who have joined the Partnership for Peace. In many other countries there is commonality of equipment, while the principal Western states train the forces of other nations as well as participate in exercises with them. These circumstances all contribute toward the potential cohesion of coalitions, the bedrock of which is trust. This was the strength of Allied

unity of command in World War II. Should it not contribute equally today, in supporting the principle of unity of command for coalition warfare?

NOTES

1. Joint Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, Joint Pub 3-0 (Washington: Joint Staff, 1 February 1995), p. VI-1: Alliances and coalitions are defined as follows: a. *Alliance*. An alliance is a result of formal agreements between two or more nations for broad, long-term objectives. b. *Coalition*. A coalition is an ad hoc arrangement between two or more nations for common action.

2. The White House, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington: The White House, February 1995). Hereafter NSS.

3. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America 1995: A Strategy of Flexible and Selective Engagement* (Washington: GPO, 1995). Hereafter NMS.

4. NSS, p. ii.

5. Ibid., p 7.

6. Ibid., p. 9.

7. NMS, p. 13.

8. CENTO was formed in 1959 and dissolved in 1979. Members were the UK, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey. Although the United States was not a formal member, it had bilateral defense treaties with the latter three countries. SEATO was formed in 1954 and dissolved in 1977. Members were Australia, France, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, New Zealand, the UK, and the United States.

9. Joint Pub 3-0, p. VI-6.

10. John Terraine, "Lessons of Coalition War," *RUSI Journal*, 134 (Summer 1989), 57-62.

11. Ibid.

12. John J. Pershing, *My Experiences in the First World War*, Vol. 1 (rpt.; New York: Da Capo Press, 1995), p. 38.

13. Ibid., p. 374.

14. Ibid., p. 375.

15. Ibid., p. 376.

16. Department of the Army, *The Army in Multinational Operations*, FM 100-8 (Washington: Headquarters, US Department of the Army, 11 September 1995), p. 3-8.

17. The War Department, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-42*, in the series *US Army in World War II* (Washington: US Department of the Army, 1953), pp. 123-24.

18. Ibid., p. 124.

19. Winston S. Churchill, Minute to the Chiefs of Staff, 24 October 1943.

20. R. M. Leighton, "Allied Unity of Command in the Second World War: a Study in Regional Military Organization," *Political Science Quarterly*, 67 (September 1952), 412.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., p. 402.

23. Ibid., p. 411.

24. Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander

25. Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., ed., *The Papers of Dwight D Eisenhower: The War Years III* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 1420-24.

26. Jacob L. Devers, "Major Problems Confronting a Theater Commander in Combined Operations," *Military Review*, 27 (October 1947), 3-4.

27. Harold R Bull, "Combined Operational Planning," lecture to AFSC, 25 April 1949.

28. Bruce Palmer, Jr., *The 25-Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1984), p. 52.

29. Mark B. Yates, "Coalition Warfare in Desert Storm," *Military Review*, 73 (October 1993), 48.

30. Joint Pub 3-0, p. VI-1; also, Joint Staff, *Joint Doctrine for Multinational Operations*, Joint Pub 3-16 (Washington: Joint Staff, 1995), pp. II-10 - II-13.

31. Joint Pub 3-0, p. VI-6.

32. FM 100-8, p. 2-3.

33. Joint Pub 3-16, p. II-11.

34. Joint Pub 3-0, p. A-2.

35. Elisha O. Peckham, "Organization for Combined Military Effort," *Military Review*, 30 (November 1950), 47.

36. Joint Pub 3-16, p. IV-17.

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