

**MIWG Report
to the
Multinational Interoperability Council**

Topic:

**The Lead Nation Concept in
Coalition Operations**

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PREFACE

This White Paper was prepared for the Multinational Interoperability Council (MIC). The MIC provides a multinational environment for identifying and articulating actions that, if nationally accepted and implemented, would contribute to more effective coalition operations. It serves as a senior-level, executive body for member nations to address and resolve interoperability issues. Membership at the time of publication of this paper includes Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The overall goal of the MIC is to provide a venue for exchange of relevant information across national boundaries to support the warfighter in coalition operations. It is intended to promote a responsive dialogue among the key elements of interoperability: operational planners, defense policy analysts, and experts from the command, control, communications, and intelligence community. It is not intended to duplicate or to subsume other interoperability working groups or fora.

The MIC creates and provides guidance to subordinate multinational interoperability working groups (MIWGs). A MIWG is task-oriented and outcome-based in its approach to exploring issues concerning coalition interoperability. The MIWG on Doctrine, Plans, and Procedures (DPP) prepared this White Paper for the MIC.

The focus of this White Paper is to define and further explore the Lead Nation concept as it applies to multinational coalition military operations. It seeks to identify essential factors that the lead nation and the coalition commander and staff should consider for the effectiveness and efficiency of the coalition. The paper concentrates on the strategic and operational levels of combined joint operations.

Every effort was made to reach consensus on the issues addressed in this White Paper. In those few instances where any difference remains, the divergence is explained in footnote format and recorded as a national reservation immediately following the Executive Summary. The endnotes section also reflects national reservations where appropriate.

This White Paper does not constitute official policy or doctrine, nor does it represent a definitive staff planning or military decision-making guide. It is offered to assist MIC member nations and their potential partners in serving together in future coalitions, and to assist other MIWGs in their exploration of related interoperability issues. Unlimited local reproduction and distribution is authorized.

Executive Summary

This White Paper explores the Lead Nation Concept in multinational coalition operations, and offers the following definition of a Lead Nation:

“The Lead Nation is that nation with the will and capability, competence, and influence to provide the essential elements of political consultation and military leadership to coordinate the planning, mounting, and execution of a coalition military operation. Within the overarching organizational framework provided by the Lead Nation, other nations participating in the coalition may be designated as Functional Lead Agent(s) to provide and/or coordinate specific critical subfunctions of the operation and its execution, based on national capability. These constructs may apply at the strategic, operational, and/or tactical levels.”ⁱ

The selection of a Lead Nation will occur within the international strategic context as a coalition begins to form. It is assumed that coalition operations will be conducted in accordance with a mandate recognized under international law originating with such an authority as the United Nations Security Council or a similarly authoritative body.ⁱⁱ This recognized “civil authority” will most likely act to initiate or approve the coalition activity under consideration, as well as to define overarching objectives and the desired end state. It is further assumed that this same entity would designate, or accept the offered services of, a Lead Nation. The Lead Nation must be willing and capable of assuming the role. It must be able to organize consultation on and the development of the coalition’s political objectives, act as sponsor and spokesman for the coalition’s operations in the world community, lead coordination and building of consensus during the coalition’s planning and execution phases, and be competent to carry out the anticipated operation. It must above all be a politically acceptable choice for the other coalition partners. The latter is likely to include consideration of the Lead Nation’s ties to and interests in the specific region or conflict and its acceptability to the regional actors involved. A preponderance or operationally significant share of the overall force contribution is a clear factor in selection of a Lead Nation; however, that nation must also possess the strategic *and* political attributes required to sustain a coalition, or the coalition effort is likely to fail.

Implications for planning and mission execution at the operational level are considered next. A generic model of coalition planning is proposed, in which a multinational planning cell(s) is created within the planning system of the Lead Nation. The related process of matching resources to objectives and of providing logistic support for a coalition operation are discussed, to include the need for early agreement on financial commitments and the desirability of creating a centralized coalition logistics task force or coordination cell.

The Lead Nation’s responsibilities and options for creating an effective command and control architecture are examined. It is concluded that on the operational level, the Lead Nation at a minimum is responsible for providing the overarching framework for command. The coalition command structure may be characterized by a dominant Lead Nation staff organization, by an integrated staff in which multinational subordinate forces represent a mix of nations leading specific segments of the coalition, or a combination.

The Lead Nation will coordinate for, create, or provide communications and information management structures. The coalition partners must be brought into the planning process early and interact continuously to anticipate and solve problems likely to arise from a lack of compatibility among partners’ organic command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) equipment. Non-technical issues

such as disclosure and releaseability policy will affect interoperability as well. Increasing standardization among likely coalition participants *in advance of* a crisis is a key action that could be undertaken now.

Differences in doctrine, organization, equipment, training, etc. demand a robust liaison structure to facilitate operations. Military personnel possessing regional language capabilities, cultural awareness, and experience in working and training with other countries' militaries are potentially invaluable to the multinational commander in establishing liaison.

The Lead Nation will normally provide the coalition commander. The most flexible and responsive command authority under which the coalition commander can act is to have national forces assigned to and under his or her operational control. Factors affecting the transfer of and execution of this transfer of authority are considered.

Although coalition participants may have similar political mandates, each nation is likely to bring to the coalition a different set of national rules of engagement (ROE) reflecting each nation's unique political and legal interests and its reason for entering the coalition. Some national ROE will be relatively free of constraint, while others may be severely restricted. Commanders of deployed forces may lack the authority to speak on behalf of their nation in the ROE development process. Consensus on standardized ROE should be sought, but may not be achievable. The commander must reconcile differences as much as possible and seek to develop and implement simple ROE that can be tailored by member forces to their national policies.

The interaction between coalition forces and the civil environment (both governmental and non-governmental) in which they operate is potentially crucial to the success of operations. The coalition commander will most likely require specific command and staff arrangements for the management of civil-military interface and cooperation.

Doctrine offers a common perspective from which to plan and operate, and fundamentally shapes the way military forces think about, train for, plan, and execute operations. Coalition partners using very different national doctrines will have problems harmonizing their efforts, even if they enjoy a high degree of technical interoperability. Finding ways to harmonize doctrine is an important means to ensure improved coalition operations. NATO, for example, is developing a hierarchy of Allied Joint Doctrine dealing with multinational operations; this and other existing and developing multinational doctrine should be explored and tapped for applicability to coalition operations.

The success of an operation may well depend on the training performed prior to and during the operation. The best way to develop an effective coalition force from national units is training. Training continues once the command arrives in the operational area, based on specific requirements and functions. Training should include, at a minimum, exercises to rehearse the operations order and related actions.

This paper concludes that requirements for coalition interoperability may start with, but must ultimately transcend, the relatively "simple" questions of equipment commonality and compatibility to include interoperability in the non-materiel realm. Coalition operations may demand that maximum interoperable materiel interface be achieved even when commonality and compatibility are lacking. This requires considering *all* factors impacting interoperability, to include doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, people, and

facilities. Planning for and achieving maximum interoperability in the non-materiel aspects of military operations can and should be a key focus of multinational cooperation initiatives.

National Reservations to This White Paper *(As indicated by footnoted text above).*

ⁱ France believes there may be instances in which there will be created a “group of Lead Nations” – this is certainly possible if one nation has the strategic lead, one has the operational lead, and one the tactical lead, for example. Another instance would be a “division of labor” among nations at any or all of the levels to take advantage of some special efficiency or capability. This White Paper does not explore that level of complexity. France believes that this definition should read as follows:

“The Lead Nation, or group of Lead Nations, is that nation with the will and capability, competence and influence to provide the essential elements of political consultation and military leadership to coordinate the planning, mounting, and execution of a coalition military operation. Within the overarching organizational framework provided by the Lead Nation, other nations participating in the coalition may be designated as Functional Lead Agent(s) to provide and/or coordinate specific critical subfunctions of the operation and its execution, based on national capability. These constructs may apply at the strategic, operational, and/or tactical levels.”

ⁱⁱ France does not agree with the wording “or a similarly authoritative body” or other wording which suggests that a body other than the United Nations can act to sanction coalition actions such as those described in this White Paper. France would prefer to see the wording reflect only the United Nations as such a recognized authority both here and at other places in which this reference occurs throughout the text.

Subject

This White Paper is an exploration of the Lead Nation Concept in multinational coalition operations. It was prepared by the Doctrine, Plans, and Procedures (DPP) Multinational Interoperability Working Group (MIWG) of the Multinational Interoperability Council (MIC).

Purpose and Scope

In October 1999, the Six-Nation Council on Interoperability (now the MIC) created the DPP MIWG and directed that it undertake an investigation of the Lead Nation Concept for the organization and conduct of multinational coalition operations. This was pursuant to a May 1999 seminar and command post exercise (CPX) conducted by the Council's Coalition Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) MIWG. The latter produced a recommendation that the Council recognize the "planning assumption" that future coalition operations will (or should) be organized around the Lead Nation Concept. Following the Council's transition to the current MIC organization, a DPP meeting was held in April 2000. The United States was given the lead for writing and coordinating a White Paper on the subject, utilizing the May 1999 report on the subject as a starting point.

Key Assumptions

- Future military operations are increasingly likely to be multinational in character.
- A multinational operation may be carried out within an established alliance framework or through the formation of a coalition.
- There is a common recognition by the members of the MIC of a growing need to be better prepared for coalition operations.
- In most cases, coalition operations will be facilitated by the selection of a Lead Nation, the definition and responsibilities of which are explored in this White paper.
- Each MIC member recognizes that it may be called upon to perform the role of Lead Nation in future multinational operations.
- There will be a recognized international organization or entity (e.g., the United Nations (UN)) that provides sanction and oversight for the coalition activity being considered.ⁱ

Definition of Lead Nation

This White Paper offers the following definition of a Lead Nation:

"The Lead Nation is that nation with the will and capability, competence and influence to provide the essential elements of political consultation and military leadership to coordinate the planning, mounting, and execution of a coalition military operation. Within the overarching organizational framework provided by the Lead Nation, other nations participating in the coalition may be designated as functional lead agent(s) to provide and/or coordinate specific critical subfunctions of the operation and its execution, based on national capability. These constructs may apply at the strategic, operational, and/or tactical levels."ⁱⁱ

Levels of Activity

This White Paper adheres to the three-tiered strategic-operational-tactical paradigm of military operations. The strategic level encompasses broad politico-military national and alliance or coalition interests; plans, policies, security objectives, and guidance; and the use of national and multinational resources to accomplish objectives. Politico-military issues at this level generally focus on the best use of a nation-state's instruments of national power to accomplish national, allied, or coalition objectives. The operational level concerns the planning, conduct, and sustainment of major joint campaigns and operations to attain objectives within theaters or areas of operations, and links the strategic and tactical levels. At the tactical level, battles, engagements and other military actions are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives. This White Paper is focused upon the strategic and operational levels.

The Strategic Level

The strategic level encompasses broad politico-military national and alliance or coalition plans, policies, security objectives and guidance, as well as the use of national and multinational resources to accomplish objectives. At the strategic politico-military level, nation-states are influenced by internal and external factors that shape national interests. Converging national interests typically produce coalitions. To design a successful coalition it is necessary to establish an appropriate politico-military decision making process (including an agreed framework of principles and procedures) among the coalition-nations linking together the consultation and planning processes. It is in this strategic context that the Lead Nation will be selected from among the members of an emerging coalition.

It is assumed that some recognized international "civil authority" — i.e., an organization or entity such as the UN — will act to initiate or approve the coalition activity under consideration. In this case, it is further assumed that this same entity would either designate or accept the offered services of a Lead Nation. While it is possible that a coalition might decide to proceed with an operation independent of a broader sanctioning authority, such a decision may render it objectionable or even legally impossible for some potential coalition members to take part, and may jeopardize public support for the operation. In either case, however, the ultimate selection of the Lead Nation is dependent upon the political consensus within the coalition and/or the broader sanctioning authority.

Obviously, the prospective Lead Nation must seek or consent to the role. This will require the existence, or generation of, the national will to take on the task, meaning the internal political and popular desire to become involved in a particular coalition operation. This is likely to involve the consideration of vital or important national interests in the security, economic, political, and/or cultural spheres. Existence of such interests and the concomitant will to undertake action in their protection are likely to be important criteria and even driving forces in the selection of a Lead Nation.

Even given a sufficiency of national will and interests, the Lead Nation requires the capability to establish an effective consultation process and to promote a strong coalition political lead in the international strategic context. This will include not only "routine updates" to the coalition and/or a broader civil authority (e.g., UN) but also a concerted effort to sustain the political consensus required at that level to see the operation through to its conclusion.

It will also be necessary for the Lead Nation to assume overall coordination of strategic-level planning, to take strategic mission guidance from appropriate civil political authority (coalition, UN, etc.), and to develop a concept of operations and an operations plan to fulfill the mission. This must be accomplished in concert with coalition partners while ensuring continued coordination with and approval of the appropriate civil political authority. (Further implications for planning are discussed later in this White Paper). It is incumbent upon the Lead Nation to promote unity of effort for the coalition to include political and public advocacy, legal coordination, and information sharing.

The Lead Nation must further be capable of providing for the overarching command and control (C2) functions of the coalition military operation. In all probability, this will entail a requirement to coordinate for, create, or provide the appropriate C2 architecture for the operation, down to the operational level and possibly including operational component commands.

The above discussion obviously “raises the bar” for selection of a Lead Nation beyond the level of national will and interest, to include consideration of what might be termed “national competence” to undertake the role. A demonstrated record of coalition leadership and experience in coalition operations is definitely a plus as well. The level of acceptability or suitability of a potential Lead Nation will increase if the Lead Nation is recognized by other nations as possessing these or other appropriately unique capabilities.

The criteria discussed thus far suggest that a Lead Nation must possess a level of national influence in the world community and appropriate capabilities to undertake the mission. Beyond this, however, the Lead Nation must also be politically acceptable to others in the coalition and/or the region in question. Regional ties to parties in conflict, for example, may be a plus or a minus depending upon the situation. If a potential Lead Nation is not perceived to be an “honest broker” by parties to a regional conflict, for example, it might not then be the best choice despite its possession of other qualities.

Finally, the selection of a Lead Nation might be the result of a simple question of level of commitment, i.e., a situation in which a given nation has committed or pledged the largest commitment of forces and/or an operationally significant force or capability to a given situation. This is probably the most simplistic formulation, although there is logic to the idea that the nation with a preponderance of forces (or some indispensable capability) may be most capable of providing the necessary overarching C2 and support structures required to sustain an operation. In the final analysis, however, this nation must be politically acceptable to coalition partners and capable of sustaining strategic-level political consensus. If it is not, unity of effort will suffer at best; at worst, there will be no sustainable coalition.

In summary, the Lead Nation must be willing and capable of assuming the role. It must be able to facilitate the development of the coalition’s political objectives, act as sponsor and spokesman for the coalition’s operations in the world community, lead coordination and building of consensus during the coalition’s planning and execution phases, and be competent to carry out the anticipated operation. It must above all be a politically acceptable choice for the other coalition partners. The latter is likely to include consideration of the Lead Nation’s ties to and interests in the specific region or conflict and its acceptability to the regional actors involved. A preponderance of force contribution is a clear factor in selection of a Lead Nation; however that nation must possess the strategic political attributes required to sustain a coalition, or the coalition effort is likely to fail.

The Operational Level

Planning

Coherent operational level planning is not possible without strategic level guidance. Upon the identification of a situation potentially warranting a multinational coalition response, the first strategic step must be the recognition of such a situation by the appropriate civil authorities in the nations most concerned. Presumably, consultation among the foreign and defense ministry representatives of these nations follows. Given a sufficient level of consensus on the gravity of the situation, the outlines of a coalition may begin to coalesce.

As noted previously, it is assumed that under the broad category of “civil authority,” an international organization or entity (e.g. the UN) will act to initiate or approve the coalition activity and would designate, or accept the offered services of, a Lead Nation. Concurrent with Lead Nation selection, consensus must be reached on assignment of the broad strategic mission, which the coalition is about to undertake, and the desired end state. From this strategic mission guidance, it will be possible to begin developing planning assumptions to key the development of a specific military plan. It is necessary to achieve this minimal level of strategic guidance in order to proceed with the development of an operational plan.

At the point described above, the Lead Nation can now develop a proposed concept of operations (CONOPS), assemble liaison officers (physically or virtually) from the coalition partners, vet and wargame the CONOPS, then submit it to the coalition nations’ civil and military authorities for concept approval. Upon CONOPS approval, detailed plan development could begin at the operational level. This would be followed by a review of the plan by the nations. This plan review could result in an iterative process in which comments and recommended adjustments to the plan are fed back to the planning cell, resulting in a revised plan. The next step would be the approval of the plan by coalition members, and the development of national-level supporting plans.

It is assumed that the actual “mechanics” of this planning process will be vastly simplified if coalition partners provide a “planning liaison cell(s)” early on which essentially complements the Lead Nation’s planning process. This applies at both strategic and operational levels, and extends to logistic as well as operational planning.

The actual steps and iterations in a coalition planning process may vary from case to case. The above discussion describes a generic model, which is depicted in Figure 1 on the following page.

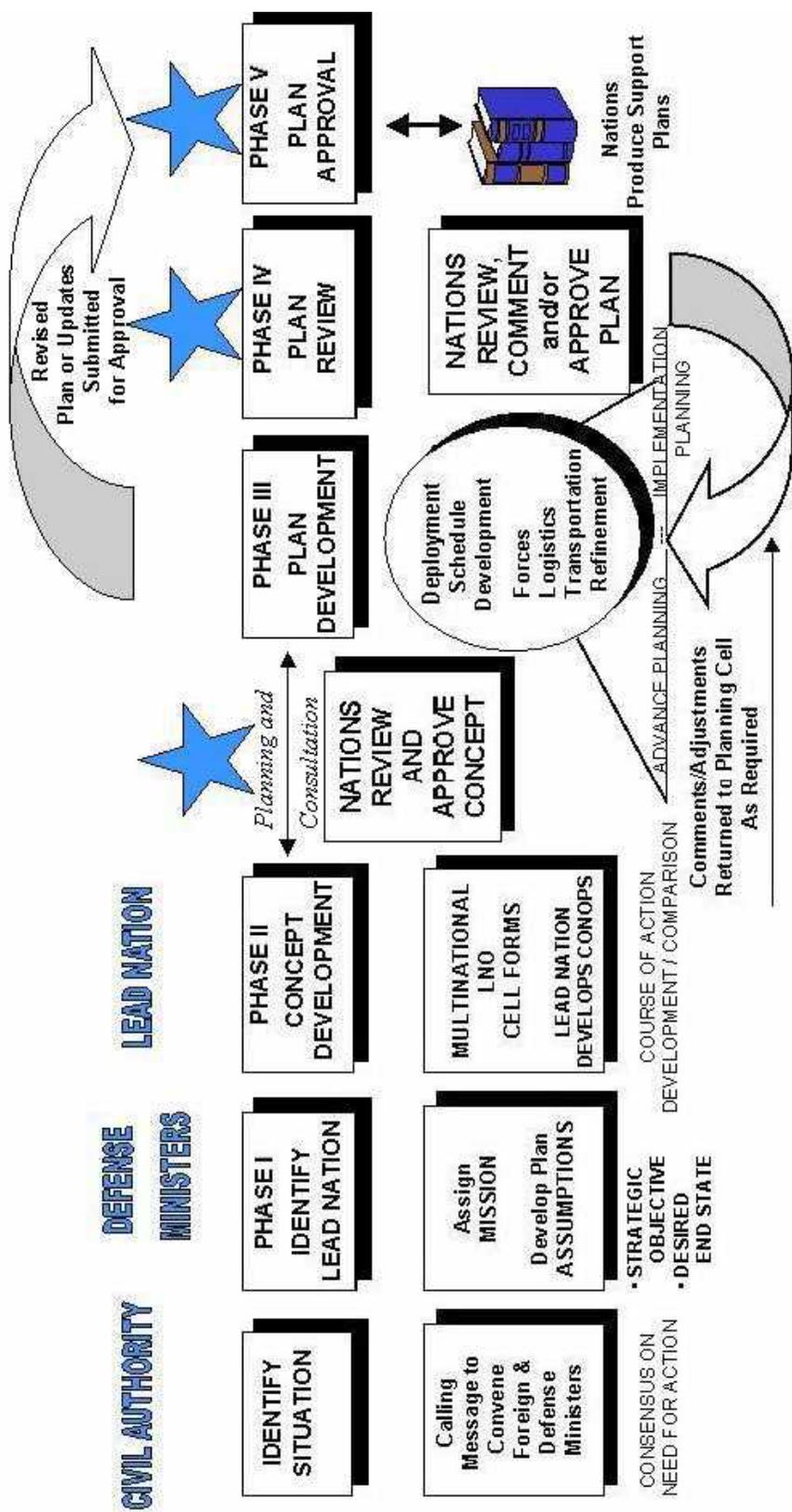


Figure 1. Generic Model of Multinational Planning Process

Matching Resources to Objectives

A critical function of the Lead Nation will be the identification of ways and means available to achieve the strategic objective. This will translate into a matching of resources to the operational plan developed. This is likely to be an iterative process and one subject to considerable negotiation among the coalition members. The formation of a planning liaison cell(s) will also facilitate this process by providing a mechanism for exchange of detailed information regarding the capabilities of each partner and the willingness and/or ability of each to commit resources. Funding authority to support coalition forces and the financial commitments of each partner should be identified as early as possible and procedures developed to ensure that there will be no adverse impact on operations.

Logistic Considerations

“Operationalizing” the resources available translates into the process of building a logistics support architecture for the coalition force. Unity of effort is essential to coalition logistics operations. This requires coordination not only among the partner nations, but also with civil authorities in the operational area as well as civilian contracting agencies. The execution of coalition logistics is most effective if it is made a collective responsibility of the coalition force. When possible, mutual logistics support should be developed for economy of effort. Coalition logistics should be flexible, responsive, and predictive, and provide timely sustainment throughout the entire coalition force. The coalition logistic plan should incorporate the logistic requirements and capabilities of all forces to ensure sustained and synchronized execution. Consensus on coalition logistics issues and requirements should be formed early.

The creation of a centralized coalition logistics task force or coordination cell may provide economy of assets and system efficiency. Even should coalition participant(s) insist upon maintaining a national logistics structure, assigning a functional Lead Nation for logistics responsibility could preclude duplication of effort. The coalition J-4 logistics staff should establish a planning group to define the extent of interoperability and capability for mutual logistics support that may exist among coalition forces.

Command and Control Structures

The Lead Nation will be responsible for establishing an effective C2 architecture, most likely down to and possibly including operational level component commands.

No single operational level command structure necessarily best fits the needs of all alliances and coalitions. Each coalition or alliance will create a structure that best meets the needs, political realities, constraints, and objectives of the participating nations. Political considerations may heavily influence the ultimate shape of a multinational command structure. However, nations participating should strive to achieve unity of command for the operation to the maximum extent possible, with missions, tasks, responsibilities, and authorities clearly defined and understood by all participants.

In formal alliances, national political objectives are addressed and generally subsumed within multinational objectives at the alliance treaty level. At least some degree of commonality in doctrine, some standardization in process, procedure, and materiel, and political consensus characterize alliances.

Coalitions are typically much less structured and less coherent groupings of nations that may come together for only a limited period of time and/or to accomplish a specific objective. Political considerations may weigh heavily in decisions regarding force composition, organization, and command arrangements. The various military forces involved may or may not have a degree of commonality in doctrine and operational concepts, and force compatibility may vary. National pride and cultural considerations may limit options for organizing a specific form of coalition command. Coalition missions and objectives may evolve over time, along with forces and force capabilities. Political objectives and limitations may also change, further complicating the tasks at hand. The commander must be attuned to such changes and adjust the command structure and training program to mitigate negative impacts where possible.

Regardless of how the force is organized operationally, each nation furnishing forces will normally establish a national component headquarters of some sort to ensure effective administration of its forces. A logistic support element is ideally included in this component. The national component provides a means to administer and support the national forces, coordinate communication to the parent nation, tender national military views and recommendations to the multinational commander, and facilitate assignment and reassignment of national forces to operational multinational organizations.

Probably the least desirable command arrangement is a **parallel command structure** typified by the fact that no single overall force commander is designated. The coalition leadership develops means for coordination among participants to attain unity of effort. Exigencies of the political situation may dictate such an arrangement but, due to the negative impact on unity of effort and efficiency, parallel command structures are avoided if at all possible.

Formation of a fully **integrated command structure** greatly complements unity of command. However, this type of structure is more likely to typify command arrangements in a formally organized alliance. An example of such a command structure is found in NATO, where a NATO commander is designated from a member nation but the staff and the commanders and staffs of subordinate commands are of multinational composition. The key ingredients in an integrated alliance command are that a single commander be designated, that the staff is composed of representatives from all member nations, and that subordinate commands and staffs are integrated to the lowest echelon necessary in order to accomplish the mission. This situation may be unachievable in the case of a multinational coalition operation.

This paper assumes that a **Lead Nation command structure** is most likely to be adopted. On the operational level, the Lead Nation is, at a minimum, responsible for providing the overarching framework for command. (Note: **combination** command structures exist when both Lead Nation and parallel command structures exist simultaneously; this occurs when two or more nations serve as Lead Nation for a mix of multinational forces, such as the command arrangement employed by the Gulf War coalition.)

The first and most obvious requirement will be for the Lead Nation to provide the operational commander for the coalition's multinational forces. The Lead Nation would contribute significantly to setting up the overarching functions of a military operation, including command and control, communications, and intelligence and information support, since these contribute directly to the coherence of the operation. Functional areas that

implicitly need to be provided or closely controlled by the Lead Nation include overall force organization, planning, and the coordination of support.

A Lead Nation command may be distinguished by a dominant nationality command and staff arrangement with subordinate elements retaining national integrity. It is also possible for a Lead Nation command to be characterized by an integrated staff and multinational subordinate forces. Integrating the staff allows the commander to draw upon the expertise of alliance partners in areas where the Lead Nation may have less experience. As a minimum, extensive exchange of liaison officers is likely to be required. Furthermore, within the overall organizational framework provided by the Lead Nation, other nations participating in the coalition may be designated as functional lead agent(s) for provision and/or coordination of specific critical sub-functions of the operation and its execution based on national capability. As part of this functional lead agency, these nations may then be required to organize and lead staff elements, subordinate component commands, and/or other functions. Figure 2 illustrates a notional multinational operational-level command and staff.

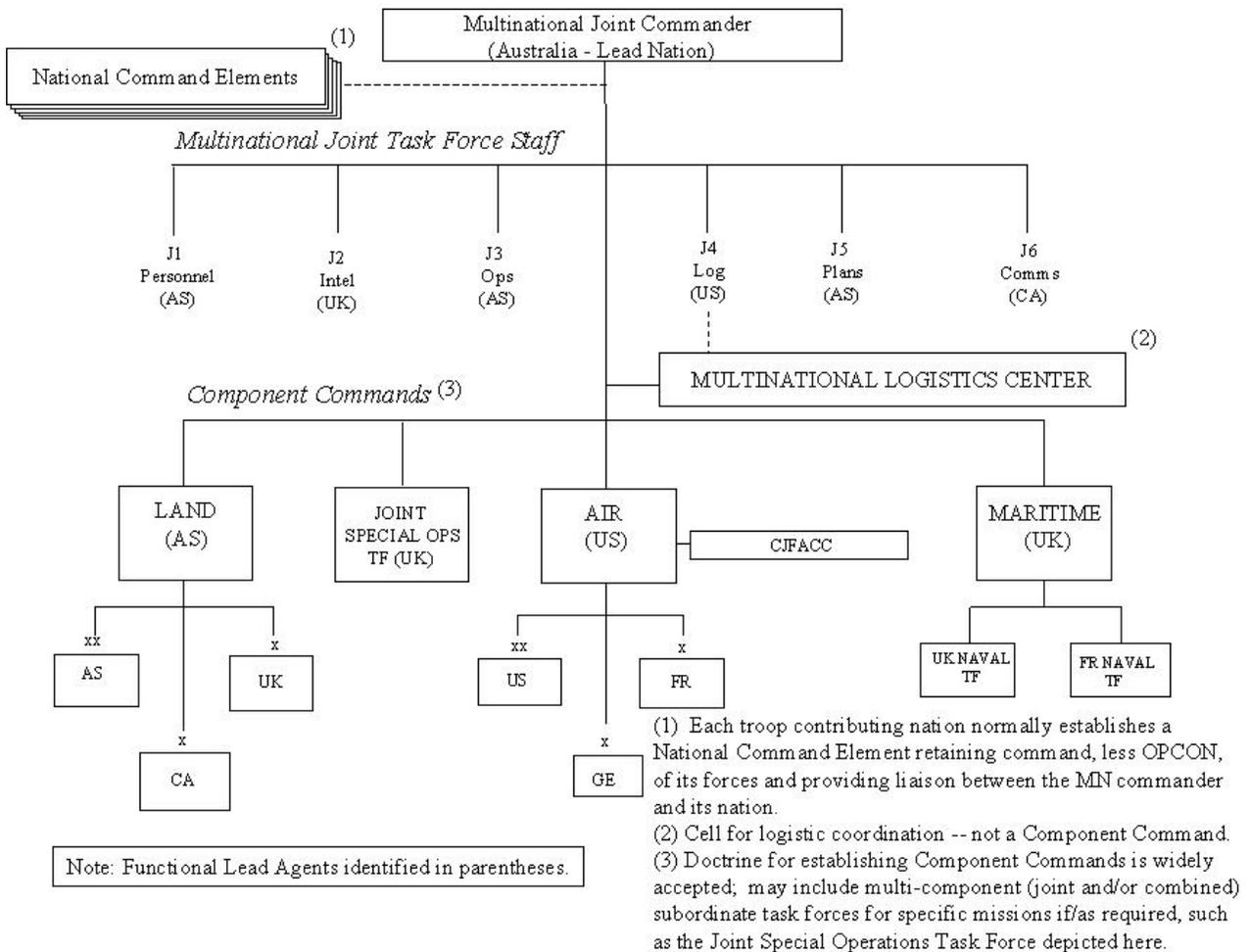


Figure 2. Notional Multinational Operational-Level Command

Headquarters Structure

As noted above, a coalition command structure characterized by an integrated staff and multinational subordinate forces could represent a mix of nations leading specific segments of the coalition. This would hold true for the headquarters staff as well as for the component commands. The diagram in Figure 2 is an example of one such coalition, with the Lead Nation and Functional Lead Agents shown in parentheses.

Communications and Information Management

It is incumbent upon the Lead Nation to coordinate for, create, or provide communications and information management structures organized so as to accomplish specific mission-related information-conveyance and processing functions. The appropriate planners from the various coalition partners must be brought into the planning process early and interact continuously to anticipate and solve a variety of problems likely to arise from a lack of compatibility among partners' organic communications equipment. Non-technical matters such as disclosure and releaseability policy will affect interoperability as well. These effects are likely to hold true to varying degrees across the entire range of the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.

Increasing standardization among likely coalition participants *in advance of* a crisis is a key action that could be undertaken now to alleviate some of these problems. This does not necessarily mean that everyone must own the same equipment. Radios may be different but they should be interoperable. The same extends to tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) regarding communications and operations in general. Simply being able to adopt in advance the maxim that communications are established "higher to lower, left to right, supporting to supported" could, for example, be a major standardization feat depending on the composition of the coalition.

Once planning for a coalition operation has begun, the commander of the multinational force should establish standard operating procedures (SOPs) whenever appropriate. These SOPs should be easy to understand and should address coalition procedures, not single nation procedures. Although the SOPs of the Lead Nation could be utilized to a great extent, the development of coalition SOPs would be preferable.

Liaison and Coordination

Regardless of other specifics of the command and information structures established, differences in doctrine, organization, equipment, training, etc. demand a robust liaison structure to facilitate operations. During multinational operations, joint forces establish liaison early with forces of each nation, fostering a better understanding of mission and tactics, facilitating transfer of vital information, enhancing mutual trust, and developing an increased level of teamwork. Early establishment reduces the fog and friction caused by incompatible communications systems, doctrine, and operating procedures. Liaison is often accomplished through the use of liaison teams. These teams should be knowledgeable about the structure, capabilities, weapons systems, logistics, command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems, and planning methods employed within their own commands, as well as having regional (or partner-specific) training and experience. These teams can provide communications using systems that might not be shareable with some coalition partners. Non-military organizations — for example, host governments or the UN — could also be

recipients of these services. Liaison teams can act as filters for the exchange of information consistent with national disclosure and dissemination policies.

Whether team members are language qualified or are provided interpreter support, understanding language, culture, and customs are key factors to successful liaison operations. Military personnel possessing regional language capabilities, cultural awareness, and experience in working and training with other countries' militaries are invaluable to the multinational commander in establishing liaison. Liaison requirements usually are greater than those for which most military formations are staffed, increasing personnel requirements. These requirements must be identified early in the planning process.

Coordination centers can also facilitate control of multinational operations, which require interaction with a variety of agencies, both military and non-military. A coordination center can assist in command and control as well as to organize and coordinate a variety of functions, including logistics and civil-military operations. It can be the focal point for support issues, alert and warning, host-nation support, movement control, and training. As a coalition matures, the role of a coordination center can be expanded to include command activities. Member nations provide a staff element to the center that is comprised of action officers familiar with support activities such as those noted. Coalition nations should be encouraged to augment this staff element with linguists and communications capabilities to maintain contact with their parent headquarters. A central coalition coordination center may be established as well as a number of functional coordination centers.

Mission Execution

In the planning phase, the operational-level commander will have identified the military conditions or end state required to achieve the strategic objective. He or she will then seek to structure activities, sequentially and simultaneously, so as to fulfil the military conditions for success. Execution consists of the application of the allocated military resources to sustain this sequence of actions. In the execution phase, the commander focuses on three fundamental processes. The first is essentially an intelligence function that seeks to determine the nature and extent of the threat or situation. The second is the employment of allocated resources and capabilities in order to create a favorable situation for execution. The third is execution of the operation to achieve the desired end state.

The multinational force commander is responsible for:

- Defining the concept of operations and operational objectives
- Determining the sequence of operational activity in space and time
- Establishing operational priorities
- Harmonizing coalition military activities
- Coordinating logistics support
- Assigning missions to participating forces consistent with their capabilities
- Delegating authority to subordinate commanders as appropriate
- Establishing a combined joint targeting system
- Applying force or presence at decisive points
- Coordinating the actions of subordinates to achieve integration of activities
- Maintaining awareness of the region's political, economic, cultural, and religious situation
- Refining the operational plan as the situation develops

- Refining the intelligence plan as operations progress
- Executing prescribed public information policy
- Keeping higher authorities informed of the situation
- Requesting rules of engagement (ROE) changes as needed
- Requesting the necessary administrative and logistic support to sustain operations
- Resolving various issues related to coalition operations
- Maintaining liaison and interaction with the sponsoring civil authority (e.g. UN), local civil authority within the operational area, and with those non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private voluntary organizations (PVOs) who may be engaged in the operational area
- Estimating costs and monitoring funding
- Establishing lessons-learned procedures for the operation
- Maintaining accountability to the coalition for the outcome of operations.

Command Relationships

Coalition operations must anticipate the possibility of varying national interests among the participating countries. Many nations may not agree or will be reluctant to relinquish command of their forces to another country or countries. On a case-by-case basis, national command authorities may place national forces under the operational control (OPCON) of a coalition commander. In such cases, there may remain *de facto* parallel chains of command, with part running through the coalition force and part through the respective national command authority (which may retain a “veto”). At a minimum, it is likely that under any command arrangement a national command element of some sort will already exist or will be established for each national contingent, and will continue to exercise administrative and other support functions during the operation. The coalition’s challenge is to arrange the best possible command relationships with its subordinate forces to ensure mission success.

The most flexible and responsive authority under which national authorities may provide forces to a coalition is normally to assign national forces under the OPCON of the coalition force commander. The assignment of these national forces under OPCON may be qualified by reservations from the respective nations in accordance with their national policies. Further assignment to service component commanders in an OPCON status by the coalition force commander is normally subject to approval by the respective national command authorities. Details should normally be spelled out in a transfer of authority agreement.

“Command, less-OPCON” of national forces is retained by the nation and is exercised through its designated national force commander within the coalition force. The designated national commander normally retains a responsibility to provide administrative support for his or her national troop contingent, to maintain contact with the parent government, and to advise the coalition commander on any action that would violate that nation’s policy.

Tactical control (TACON) is an option, but is a much more restrictive command relationship, which limits the flexibility of the multinational commander in employing the assigned force.

NATO Allied Administrative Publication (AAP)-6, *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions*, provides the following definitions of OPCON and TACONⁱⁱⁱ:

- **Operational control (OPCON).** The authority delegated to a commander to direct forces assigned so that the commander may accomplish specific missions or tasks which are usually limited by function, time, or location; to deploy units concerned, and to retain or assign tactical control of those units. It does not include authority to assign separate employment of components of the units involved. Neither does it of itself, include administrative or logistic control.
- **Tactical control (TACON).** The detailed and usually local direction and control of movements or maneuvers necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned.^{iv}

To help avoid misperceptions, terms of reference should be developed between and among the contributor nations and the Lead Nation. Command relationships should then further be described in a written document such as the operations plan (OPLAN). An essential related issue concerns the timing of the actual transfer of command authority to the coalition commander, which should also be addressed in the OPLAN or some other document for absolute clarity. The earlier the coalition force gains control, the more flexibility it has in planning, training for, and conducting operations.

Rules of Engagement

The sanctioning civil authority should provide political direction and guidance to commanders by means of ROE within identified policy and legal constraints. Presumably, the Lead Nation will play an important role in the process of developing ROE.^v

ROE are directives to military forces and individuals that define the circumstances, conditions, degree, and manner in which the use of force or other action may or may not be applied. ROE are intended to avoid ambiguity that could lead to a commander's inadvertently violating national (or coalition) policy and objectives, or to a violation of international law through inappropriate action or reaction in a given situation. In regards specifically to international law, the Law of Armed Conflict, and other convention and laws to which coalition members may be subject, ROE only exist to give guidance and cannot by themselves guarantee the lawfulness of any action. It remains the commander's responsibility to ensure that only the degree of force that is necessary, reasonable, and lawful in the circumstances is used. ROE are written as a series of prohibitions and permissions applicable to situations spanning the entire range of military operations.

Although coalition participants may have similar political mandates, each nation is likely to bring to the coalition a different national ROE reflecting that nation's unique political and legal interests and its reason for entering the coalition. Some national ROE will be relatively free of constraint, while others may be severely restricted. Commanders of deployed forces may lack the authority to speak on behalf of their nation in the ROE development process. Consensus on standardization of ROE should be sought, but may not be achievable. It may even be necessary to tailor the employment of given troop contingents within the context of the ROE permissible to those contingents. The commander must seek to develop and request authorization for simple ROE that can be tailored by member forces to their national policies, and to reconcile national differences as much as possible. For the individual soldier to understand and implement ROE, they must be clear and simple. Trying to obtain concurrence for ROE from national authorities is a time-consuming process and should be addressed early in the planning process.

All nations in the coalition will be provided with ROE by their respective chains of command. Coalition ROE will be developed during the planning process. The latter will apply to all contingents. Subsequently, subordinate formations must develop supporting ROE. Where coalition ROE are prohibitive, they must be reflected in full. However, subordinate formations are not obliged to pass on the full range of permissions granted in coalition ROE. Subordinate ROE for any given national contingent must provide clear national guidance on the use of, or support provided by, other coalition nations' weapons that might be prohibited or restricted in usage for that contingent.

It is also essential that adjacent or mutually supporting formations and forces particularly understand each others' ROE, as it cannot be assumed that each will react in the identical fashion to a given situation. This in turn can contribute to confusion, misperceptions, and even fratricide.

Civil-Military Interface and Cooperation in the Operational Area

The interaction between coalition forces and the civil environment (both governmental and non-governmental) in which they operate is potentially crucial to the success of operations. The coalition commander will most likely require specific command and staff arrangements for the management of civil-military interface and cooperation.

The coalition will need to take account of social, political, cultural, religious, economic, environmental, and humanitarian factors when planning and conducting military operations. Planning must take into account the likely presence of international, local national, and non-governmental organizations with their own aims, methods, and perspectives. Another consideration is the presence of the mass media and the expectations of both the international and local communities that form part of that media's audience. Effective relationships with a wide range of civilian organizations as well as local populations, governments, and military forces probably will be essential to future operations.

Civil-military interface and cooperation will require resources, arrangements, and activities in support of the mission which foster liaison, coordination, and cooperation between and among the coalition force and key elements in the civil environment. This includes liaison, cooperation, and coordination with international and national NGOs, PVOs, and other agencies.

Civil-military activities typically are carried out with a view to the timely transition from military oversight of functions for which civilian organizations or authorities would normally be responsible. Civil-military activities should be an integral part of the coalition commander's plan and be conducted in support of the overall mission and objectives. In general terms, therefore, the purpose of civil-military cooperation is to help create and sustain conditions that support achievement of a lasting solution to a crisis.

In the civil-military realm, a coalition operation is likely to require a minimal capability to:

- Engage in joint planning, at strategic and operational level, with appropriate civilian bodies before and during an operation
- Carry out continuous assessments of the local civil environment to anticipate problems
- Provide liaison with civil bodies within the operational area

- Monitor conduct of civil-related activities by military forces, to include local contracting
- Work towards a timely transition of civil responsibilities to the proper authorities
- Provide the coalition commander and staff with timely and accurate civil-military advice

Some national militaries have extensive experience in civil-military operations, and/or are preparing specific civil-military interface and cooperation doctrine, along with cadres of specially trained personnel. Such background and capabilities should be identified early in the planning stages and, if appropriate, be made available to support the coalition operation. Additionally, host nation resources and regional expertise must be considered and utilized.

Doctrine, Tactics, Techniques and Procedures, and Training

Doctrine offers a common perspective from which to plan and operate, and fundamentally shapes the way military forces think about, train for, plan, and execute operations. The NATO AAP6, *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions (English and French)*, defines doctrine as the “Fundamental principles by which the military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgement in application.” The principles and tenets of doctrine take into account all of the basic elements of a military force: weapons and other systems; skill levels; experience and training; deployment and sustainment capabilities; organizational issues; command and control philosophy and issues; and command arrangements. Doctrine deals primarily with extant capabilities. Doctrine is not about what is to be done, but about how it is to be accomplished. Doctrine is neither strategy nor policy, though it often influences and is influenced by both.

Coalition partners using very different national doctrines will obviously have problems harmonizing their efforts, even if they enjoy a high degree of technical interoperability. Forces operating on different fundamental principles will lack unity of effort, and could even work at cross-purposes. Areas where commonality of doctrinal approach is particularly critical include intelligence, command and control, operations and planning, logistics, and communications. Subsidiary functions of force protection, deployment, ROE, and civil-military cooperation are also key. Finding ways to harmonize doctrine is therefore an important means to ensure improved coalition operations.

This is not entirely new ground. NATO is developing a hierarchy of Allied joint doctrine dealing with multinational operations, and has developed a substantial body of Service-oriented NATO Standardization Agreements (STANAGs) over the years. American, British, Canadian, Australian Armies Standardization Program (ABCA) efforts have produced a number of similar (even identical) Quadripartite Standardization Agreements (QSTAGs). This body of existing and developing multinational doctrine should be explored and tapped for applicability to coalition operations.

The initial focus probably should be on the high-level joint and combined functional areas noted above. In this area, NATO allied joint doctrine would probably be the most applicable. For TTP, on the other hand, STANAGs and QSTAGs may provide an important source. It is more likely that nations will agree upon overarching doctrine and TTPs tailored to multinational operations than they will be to modify their own existing body of doctrine and TTPs for the sake of the coalition. In order to adopt existing NATO and other doctrine for coalition operations, specific amendments to the extant works might be

required. Any proprietary concerns of the authoring organizations must also be taken into consideration and addressed. The feasibility of tapping these types of resources should be further investigated.

The success of an operation may well depend on the training performed prior to and during the operation. The best way to develop an effective coalition force from national units is training. Training is the best method of learning the strengths and weaknesses of coalition partners and of integrating them into an effective force. Training should be done at all levels of command and include the staffs. Before deployment, command and staff CPX simulations can be used for staff training and solving problems in the coalition force command structure.

Training continues once the command arrives in the operational area, based on specific requirements and functions. Training should include, at a minimum, exercises to rehearse the operations order and related actions.

Concluding Observations

Requirements for coalition interoperability transcend “simple” questions of equipment commonality and compatibility. Coalition operations may demand that maximum interoperable materiel interface be achieved even when commonality and compatibility are lacking. The subject requires consideration of *all* factors impacting interoperability, to include doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, people, and facilities. Planning for and achieving maximum interoperability in the non-materiel aspects of military operations can and should be a key focus of multinational cooperation initiatives.

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ENDNOTES

ⁱ **NATIONAL RESERVATION**: France does not agree with the wording "...or a similarly authoritative body" or other wording which suggests that a body other than the United Nations can act to sanction coalition actions such as those described in this White Paper. France would prefer to see the wording identify only the United Nations as such a recognized authority both here and at other places in which this reference occurs throughout the text.

ⁱⁱ (a) To avoid possible confusion, it must be noted that this definition differs from but is roughly analogous to terms utilized in NATO. The "Lead Nation" referred to here would be recognizable within NATO as the "framework nation," whereas "functional lead agent" would correspond to a nation within NATO which is designated as a "Lead Nation" for functional specialty support.

(b) **NATIONAL RESERVATION**: France believes there may be instances in which there will be created a "group of Lead Nations" – this is certainly possible if one nation has the strategic lead, one has the operational lead, and one the tactical lead, for example. Another instance would be a "division of labor" among nations at any or all of the levels to take advantage of some special efficiency or capability. This White Paper does not explore that level of complexity. France believes that this definition should read as follows:

"The Lead Nation, or group of Lead Nations, is that nation with the will and capability, competence and influence to provide the essential elements of political consultation and military leadership to coordinate the planning, mounting, and execution of a coalition military operation. Within the overarching organizational framework provided by the Lead Nation, other nations participating in the coalition may be designated as Functional Lead Agent(s) to provide and/or coordinate specific critical subfunctions of the operation and its execution, based on national capability. These constructs may apply at the strategic, operational, and/or tactical levels."

ⁱⁱⁱ AAP-06, *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions (English and French)*, modified version 02, (p. 2-O-2 and p. 2-T-1), dated 7 Aug 2000.

^{iv} Virtually identical definitions are also agreed within the ABCA Armies' Standardization Office, thus extending them beyond the NATO arena. Additional information on ABCA and similar organizations:

- ABCA Armies Standardization Program. Founded 1947, ABCA produces standardization agreements and advisory publications to promote and aid interoperability among members' land forces during coalition operations.
- Air Standardization Coordinating Committee (ASCC). Focused on standards and common procedures among Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, US, and UK air forces (includes naval and marine aviation).
- AUSCANNZUKUS Naval C4 Organization. Association of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK, and United States to promote information exchange and interoperability among member nations in naval doctrine and standards.

^v ROE are constructed in accordance with the goals and objectives of the operation under consideration, but must consider the constraints and restraints imposed by International Law and the Law of Armed Conflict. These include the principles and rules set out in the

UN Charter, the Hague and Geneva Conventions, the provisions of treaties and agreements to which the coalition members are parties, and the tenets of customary international law. The majority of European nations, for example, have adopted the European Convention on Human Rights that has a significant impact on the use of lethal force in circumstances other than the inherent right to self-defense. A similar example is that nations that have agreed by treaty to forego the use of anti-personnel landmines will be constrained to include this prohibition in their ROE.