

## LESSON 8

### MULTINATIONAL OPERATIONS

*“I’m not known for being patient, but to do the job there [Saudi Arabia], that’s just what I was. Decisions that would require fifteen minutes in Tampa or Washington would often consume three hours in Riyadh, as we sipped coffee, told stories and philosophized.”*

—General Norman H. Schwarzkopf,  
*It Doesn’t Take a Hero*

#### Lesson Introduction

Multinational operations are nothing new to the U.S. military. Our armed forces have participated in multinational military operations since the American Revolution. From the American victory at Yorktown in 1781 and throughout U.S. military history, multinational operations have remained central to our warfighting experience. World War II, the Korean conflict, and the 1991 Persian Gulf conflict are examples of multinational operations. The U.S. will often pursue its objectives through coalitions and alliances. In Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, more than 800,000 military personnel from thirty-six nations combined their will, forces, and resources to oppose the Iraqi military. These operations, like many before them, demonstrated the advantage of successful multinational warfare over the unilateral efforts of a single nation. Coalitions increase the size of the overall force, share the costs of waging war, and enhance the legitimacy of strategic aims.

The vast majority of U.S. military officers can readily cite countless examples of U.S. military involvement in multinational operations, often highlighting their own participation. Yet, alarmingly few officers are conversant on the requirements for successful execution of multinational operations. Perhaps it is an ingrained arrogance based on the belief that the U.S. military will carry the load in any future conflict and, therefore, multinational considerations are of minimal importance. Perhaps it is because we tend to become so engrossed in our own particular Service and joint warfighting doctrine that we traditionally neglect the reality of our warfighting past and predicted future. Whatever the reason, today’s leaders and their staffs must come to grips with the operational planning requirements that permeate *multinational* operations. Failure to do so directly affects a full range of possibilities, from increased loss of life or strained international relationships to partial or complete mission failure.

The intent of focusing on multinational/coalition operations is to enhance the student’s comprehension of the challenges and requirements of such operations in general and to contribute to the preparations necessary to meet the challenges of coalition operations as a future commander or staff officer.

## Student Requirements by Educational Objective

### Requirement 1

Objective 1. Explain the differences between coalitions and alliances. [JPME Areas 1(e), 2(a), 3(a)]

Objective 2. Discuss the reasons that the U.S. and other nations enter into multinational force arrangements when conducting military operations. [JPME Areas 2(a), 3(a)]

Objective 3. Identify the intangible considerations that guide the actions of every multinational participant. [JPME Areas 2(a), 3(a)]

#### Read:

- Zinni, General Anthony C., USMC (Ret), “Non-Traditional Military Missions,” *Perspectives On Warfighting, No. 6, Capital “W” War: A Case for Strategic Principles of War* by Joe Strange, pp. 262 to 266 (4 pages)
- Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, 10 Sep 2001, pp. VI-1 to VI-5 (stop at paragraph 4. Considerations During the Planning and Execution of Multinational Operations) (5 pages)

#### View:

- View: DOCNET segment, *Multinational Operations*, “Introduction” and “Multinational Operations Overview,” (20 minutes). Refer to Joint Pub 3-16, *Joint Doctrine for Multinational Operations*, 5 April 2000, Chapter 1, pp. I-1 to I-12 (12 pages)

In a fairly objective and comparative manner, the U.S. military may be characterized as a robust, unilaterally capable force with global reach. It is proficient across the spectrum of conflict and possesses coherent doctrine and cutting edge technology while being maintained at a high level of readiness. Could these characteristics possibly present potential problems for the U.S. military in the future? Most believe the U.S. anticipates an alliance or coalition framework for future military operations. History also demonstrates that the U.S. has taken a leadership role in most, if not all, multinational operations in the past. What implications do these factors have?

*“Since our potential multinational partners will have varying levels of technology, a tailored approach to interoperability that accommodates a wide range of needs and capabilities is necessary...However, we must also be capable of operating with our allies and coalition partners who may be technological incompatible.”*

—Joint Vision 2020

From a purely U.S. military perspective, multinational operations appear intrinsically inefficient. In addition to the challenges of cultural differences, participating nations often have unique

political constraints and restraints, doctrines, and levels of technology, as well as diverse military traditions and cultures. In most instances, few nations can contribute qualitatively at the same level as the U.S. Typically, each nation makes a unique quantitative and qualitative contribution, depending on the level of commitment, resources, and available capabilities. This contribution is based upon political, economic, and military factors. However, no matter how small, and regardless of the type of force or specific capability, the component provided by a specific nation in many cases constitutes the strategic commitment and operational level of involvement for that nation in that particular situation or operation.

Complicated political and long-term strategic concerns, force employment, command relations, intelligence, information management, logistics, and interoperability are some of the functions and issues that constitute major hurdles in multinational operations. These difficulties impose challenges to U.S. thinking, doctrine, and “the American way of war,” because they require compromises that are less efficient than a unilateral military effort by the U.S. alone. The magnitude of the challenges certainly vary with different scenarios and partners. An experienced and time-tested alliance may be well prepared for combined operations by the means of commonality in doctrines and equipment, standardization of procedures, and combined training exercises. By contrast, a hastily formed coalition is an ad hoc organization, and, therefore, is basically unprepared to plan and execute a unified, synchronized, and synergistic effort.

*“...From the birth of this great nation and our own struggle for freedom to the epic battles of two world wars in the twentieth century and the ensuing Cold War, the strengths of our partnerships have always exceeded the sum of its parts...”*

—General Henry H. Shelton, USA, Former CJCS

*“It was a check, drawn on an account at the Morgan Guaranty trust and made out to “The Government of the United States,” for \$ 760 million. The signature was Khalid’s. “The Saudis kept their word,” observed Ray.”*

—General Norman H. Schwartzkopf, USA (Ret)

Why then, should the U.S. pursue a multinational approach? Basically, it can help provide the moral legitimacy for the application of U.S. elements of national power to achieve U.S. strategic and political goals. Furthermore, acting within a multinational framework or with support from allied or coalition partners can support positions and goals beyond the timeframe and magnitude of a particular conflict. Additionally, coalition partners provide resources for operations, and have often helped fund U.S. military expenses in the past. Some allies and potential partners can provide expertise in particular fields that exceed those of the U.S. as well as provide experience from and knowledge of certain geographic regions.

The President and the Secretary of Defense direct U.S. leadership of or participation in multinational operations when it is in the nation’s interest to do so, after having consulted with the U.S. military leadership. Thus, the question for military planners of a multinational operation

is *how* to plan and operate together, rather than “*why*.” Referring to the numerous and inherent challenges of planning and conducting multinational operations, the operational *how* is probably much harder to answer satisfactorily than the strategic *why*.

In whatever way the multinational arrangements turn out, teamwork and trust are essential. Trust and a shared sense of mission are built by the following: shared hardships; missions that are reasonably achievable in accordance with capabilities; access to reserves and reinforcements, to include close air support and air interdiction; and frequent face-to-face, individual-to-individual exchanges. Common purpose not only requires well-articulated goals shared by all members of the coalition or alliance, it demands the efforts of leaders capable of inspiring, motivating, and directing multicultural forces in execution. The force of personality in combined operations is often key to multinational cooperation directly influencing the strength of the coalition or alliance. If all participating nations understand clearly stated objectives and have trust and confidence in their leaders, the combined forces should succeed. Building a team and establishing trust before, during, and after the battle and campaign are vital to success.

As stipulated in Joint Pub 3-16, mutual confidence must be developed in multinational operations. This mutual confidence stems from a sense of respect, rapport, knowledge of partners, and patience. Certainly, accomplishing these four tenets of multinational cooperation will not guarantee mission success. Ignoring them may guarantee mission failure.

The bottom line is **trust truly matters in multinational operations**—just as it does in U.S.-only joint operations. Perhaps, given the cultural and technological differences between the U.S. and potential coalition partners, establishing and maintaining trust may be even more important in multinational operations.

## Requirement 2

Objective 4. Describe the primary command and control structures used in multinational operations. [JPME Areas 1(b)(e), 2(a), 3(a)]

Objective 5. Analyze and examine the structure, organization, and command relationships within a multinational force. [JPME Areas 1(b)(e), 2(a), 3(a)]

Read:

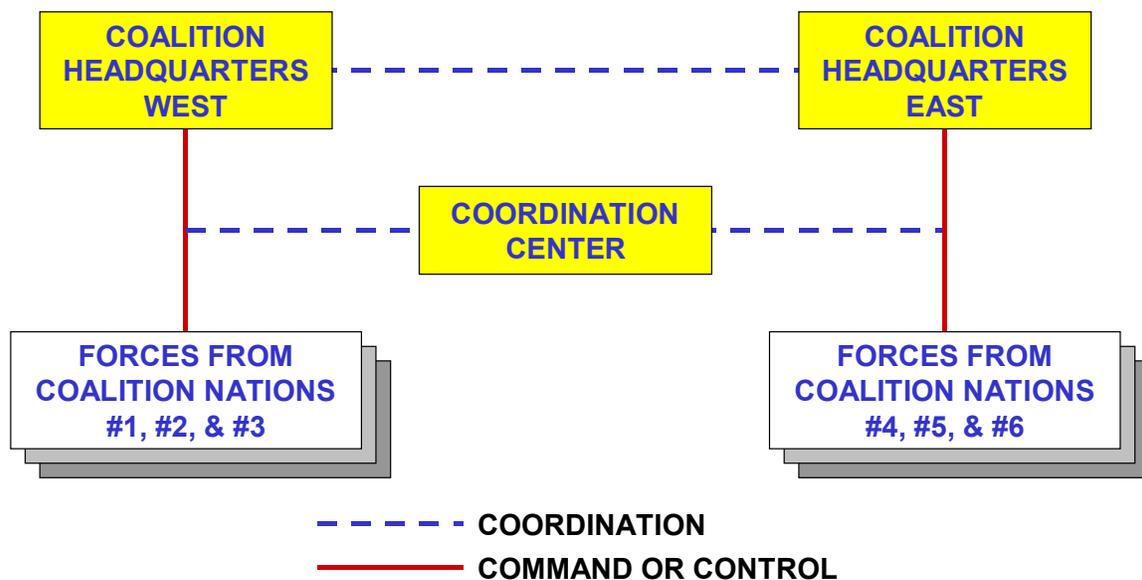
- Rice, Colonel Anthony J., “Command and Control: The Essence of Coalition Warfare”, *Parameters*, Spring 1997, pp. 152-67 (13 pages)

View:

- View: DOCNET segment, *Multinational Operations*, “U. S. Command and Control” and “Multinational Command and Control,” (26 minutes). Refer to Joint Pub 3-16, *Joint Doctrine for Multinational Operations*, 5 April 2000, Chapter 2, pp. II-1 to II-15 (15 pages)

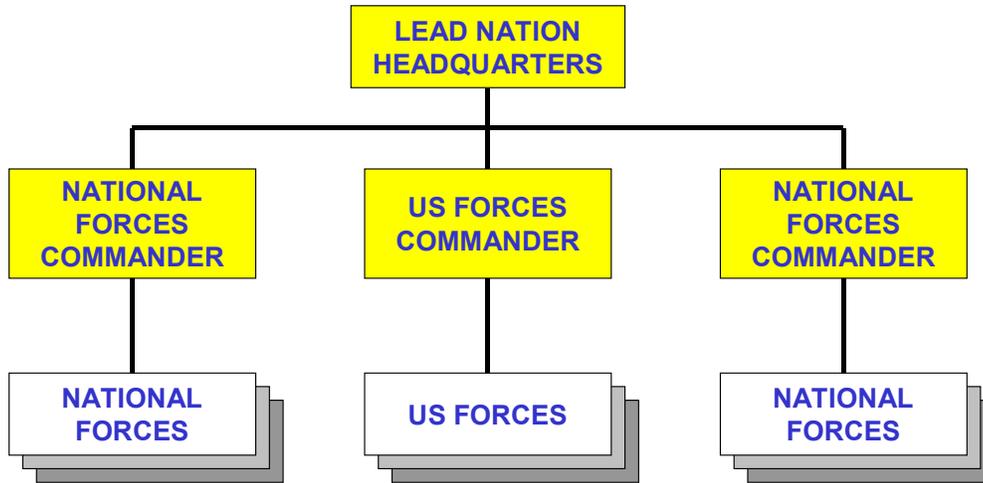
All throughout joint doctrine one finds that unity of effort not unity of command is one of the most desirable factors we can achieve in multinational operations. Colonel Rice, in his article, argues that unity of command can and should be the goal. He claims, through the use of several historical examples, that unity of effort is just not enough. Colonel Rice believes that unity of command is seen by some as a surrender of sovereignty, which, unless a nation is in peril, should not be attempted. He feels it is the military leader's responsibility to inform policymakers of the potential risks of not achieving unity of command in a coalition.

Joint doctrine offers three potential ways to command coalitions: parallel command, lead nation command, or a combination of the two. Parallel command exists when nations retain control of their own deployed forces. This is the easiest and simplest structure to use in multinational operations. Coalition forces control operations through previously established and existing chains of command. Although often effective, this structure may also experience problems due to its having no single commander and thus no unity of command. This makes gaining unity of effort among the force very challenging. By its very nature, the parallel command structure creates dynamics for coalition forces, which introduces additional friction within the force. Coordination centers tend to work very well under the parallel command structure.



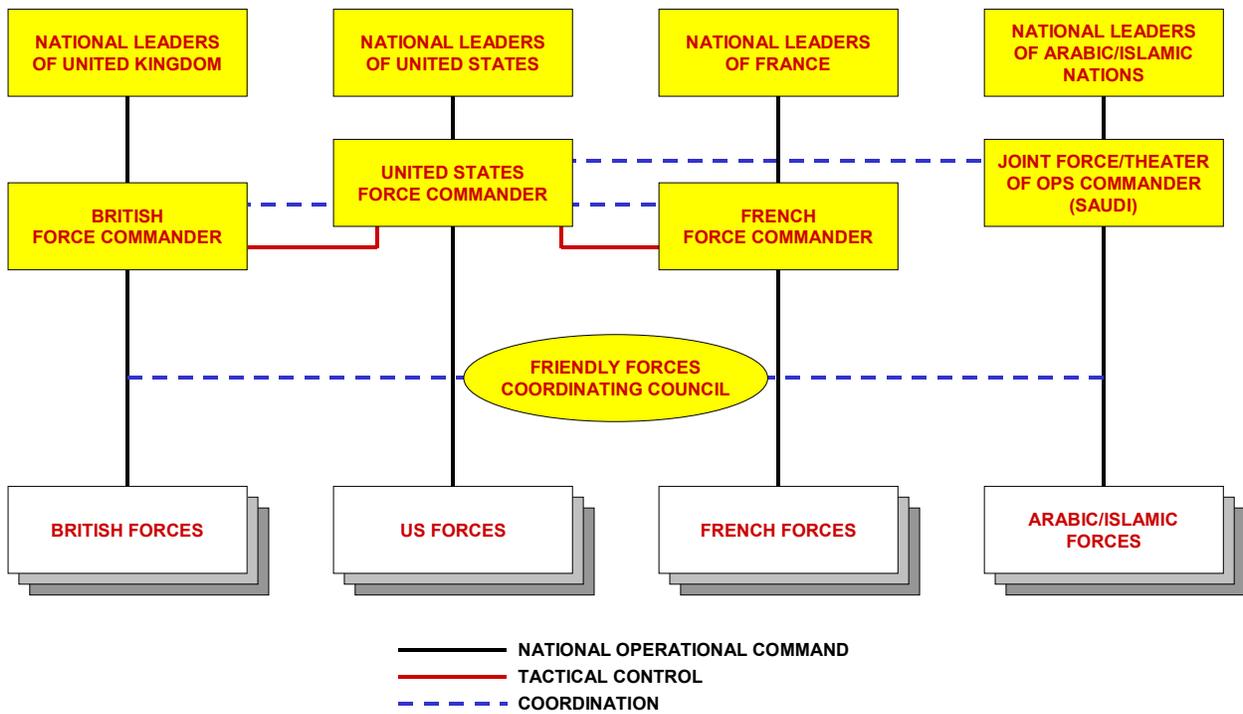
**Parallel Command Structure (with Coordination Center).**

Lead nation command is used when the nation providing the preponderance of forces and resources typically provides the commander for the force. Normally, the lead nation retains its organic C<sup>2</sup> structure, while some degree of staff integration with subordinate forces also takes place. Many nations will shy away from the lead nation command structure because they choose not to subordinate their forces. Other nations will agree to the lead nation structure and hold back some level of subordination, thus retaining some level of autonomy. Either way, the national command line will always go from a country's national government directly to the senior commander of the country's force, regardless of size.



**Lead Nation Command Structure.**

Lead nation and parallel command structures can exist simultaneously within a coalition. This occurs when two or more nations serve as controlling elements for a mix of international forces. This command arrangement was used in Operation Desert Storm.



**Combination Parallel/Lead Nation Command Structure (Operation Desert Storm).**

A significant use of liaison officers occurs in all types of command structures as well. Use of liaison networks or coordination centers in the multinational environment can do the following:

- Foster understanding of nations' tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- Facilitate the transfer of vital information.
- Enhance mutual trust among participating partners.
- Develop teamwork.

The role of a liaison officer within a coalition is absolutely critical. Liaison officers must be operationally proficient; innovative and capable of operating independently; tenacious and aggressive; yet diplomatic and culturally sensitive. Again – everyone does not possess these characteristics or capabilities. Liaison officers should be handpicked. They also need to be provided with the resources required to be successful – including technical equipment (for example, radios, vehicles, etc.), access to the commander or appropriate decisionmaker when required, and a competent translator, if needed.

By nature, multinational operations can only be successfully planned and executed from a basis of partnership and mutual respect by all forces involved. This cohesion is similar to the relationship that prevails among the U.S. Armed Forces in the conduct of joint warfare. However, the situation is far more complex in multinational operations because the nature and composition of multinational partnerships will vary greatly from case to case. In most foreseeable cases in the future, U.S. leadership of the international effort may be inevitable. This may logically lead one to conclude that the U.S. military will also provide the senior commander(s) of the multinational force. Even in these cases, the predominant attitude must be one that recognizes the essential equality of all partners.

On the other hand, there will be times when our forces may very well be subordinated to a multinational commander. This happened in East Timor, where U.S. forces were subordinate to an Australian commander of the International Force East Timor (INTERFET). U.S. forces, primarily from Okinawa, Japan, provided logistical and communication support to the operation. Although receiving considerable scrutiny from the U.S. Congress, there is nothing in U.S. law that prevents situations such as this from occurring. We should be prepared to accept and support this arrangement as a possible aspect of coalition warfare where the national interests of all participants are at stake and common objectives have been agreed upon.

### **Requirement 3**

Objective 6. Describe the planning considerations of employing multinational forces at the operational level. [JPME Areas 2(a), 3(a)(c)]

Objective 7. Discuss how the U.S. military is organized to plan, execute, sustain, and train for joint and multinational operations. [JPME Area 1(e), 2(a), 3(a)]

Read:

- Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, 10 Sep 2001, pp. VI-5 (begin at paragraph 4. Considerations During the Planning and Execution of Multinational Operations) to VI-13 (7 pages)

- Rand RB-72-AF (2001), “Operation Allied Force: Lessons for Future Coalition Operations,” 2001, pp. 1 to 5 (4 pages)

View:

- View: DOCNET segment, *Multinational Operations*, “Planning Considerations I” and “Planning Considerations II,” (27 minutes). Refer to Joint Pub 3-16, *Joint Doctrine for Multinational Operations*, 5 Apr 2000, Chapter 3, pp. III-1 to III-22 (22 pages)
- Air Command & Staff College video, “Multinational Planning Considerations” by Lieutenant Colonel John Schneider USAF (20 minutes).

The primary planning considerations for multinational operations are as follow: national-strategic goals and objectives; cultural differences; military doctrine and training; equipment; language; rules of engagement (ROE); command and control relationships; dealing with the media; local law enforcement; simple and clearly defined objectives; the development and sharing of intelligence; and logistical support. This list, of course, is not complete.

### **National-Strategic Goals and Objectives**

No two nations share the exact same reasons for entering into a coalition or alliance. Furthermore, each nation’s motivation tends to change during the life of the union. National goals can be harmonized with an agreed-upon strategy, but often the words used in expressing goals and objectives intentionally gloss over differences. Even in the best of circumstances, nations act according to their own national interests. Differing goals, often unstated, cause each nation to measure progress differently.

Thus, participating nations in the coalition must agree to clearly defined and mutually attainable objectives. Successful coalitions and alliances build upon common purpose in combined operations. By emphasizing commonalities, coalitions can reduce friction and hold themselves together for the duration of operations. Maintaining cohesion and unity of effort requires understanding and adjustment to the perceptions of all allied nations, allowing them to perform those tasks with which they feel politically and militarily comfortable. Maintaining such cohesion among a coalition is an important factor for the combined force commander to consider in both planning and conducting operations.

### **Cultural Differences**

Each partner in combined operations possesses a unique cultural identity, the result of language, values, religious systems, and economic and social outlooks. Nations with similar cultures are more likely to have similar aspirations. Furthermore, their armed forces will face fewer obstacles to interoperability in a combined force structure.

Nations with divergent cultural outlooks have to overcome greater obstacles in a coalition or alliance. Military forces reflect the national cultures that influence the way they operate. Sources of national pride and cultural sensitivities will vary widely, yet the combined force commander must accommodate them. Differences in work ethic, standards of living, religion, and discipline affect the way nations approach war. Commanders cannot ignore these differences because they represent potential major problems. Even seemingly minor differences, such as dietary restrictions or officer/soldier relationships, can have great impact. Commanders

may have to accommodate religious holidays, prayer calls, and other unique cultural traditions that are important to allies.

### **Military Doctrine and Training**

All nations have different vital interests and military capabilities. Thus, their strategic aims and military doctrines vary. The armed forces of one nation may possess a doctrine with a full treatment of strategic, operational, and tactical issues.

Other nations may possess a doctrine for forces of brigade-size or smaller. U.S. military Service doctrine endeavors to be compatible with joint and combined operations requirements. Other nations' doctrines may focus on a single Service. Some doctrines emphasize offensive operations, others, defensive. Some nations prepare for highly mobile, mechanized operations; others concern themselves with insurgent or other forms of warfare. U.S. military Service doctrine stresses rapid, agile operations emphasizing ingenuity and improvisation within the guidelines provided by the commander's intent. Others discard this approach as too risky. Training, equipment, and technologies vary. Commanders carefully consider which national units are best suited for particular missions. In combined operations, as in unilateral operations, U.S. commanders employ units according to their capabilities or advise the senior allied commander of the need to do likewise with U.S. units.

### **Equipment**

Commanders consider equipment capabilities when employing allied units. Among nations, equipment will vary in modernization levels, maintenance standards, mobility, and degree of interoperability. Commanders of combined units may face a large technological disparity between units, resulting in a mixture of systems.

They can exploit interoperability by placing like units with similar capabilities adjacent to, or reinforcing, one another. Nonetheless, they will usually have to overcome some measure of incompatibility. Selected coalition units may have some systems similar to that of the enemy, making measures to preclude fratricide vital. Operational planners should expect difficulties such as incompatible communications and differences in the cross-country mobility of vehicles. Commanders must understand the actual capabilities of allied or coalition partners.

### **Language**

Language barriers represent a significant challenge. Because Americans are used to English-speaking counterparts, they generally do not understand the difficulties faced by non-English-speaking allies. Specifying the official coalition language may be a sensitive issue.

One should not assume the language will automatically be English. After a language is selected, all written documents must be translated for tactical execution by units of different nations. The effort detracts from planning time and has the potential for mistakes or misunderstanding. Few linguists have both the technical expertise and depth of understanding to cross both language and doctrinal boundaries and be fully understood. Loss of meaning in translation can be high. The problems that can arise due to miscommunication are potentially disastrous. A possible solution is a significant resource commitment to dedicated liaison and linguist teams.

## **Maneuver**

To best achieve strategic and operational aims, plans should reflect the special capabilities of each national contingent in the assignment of missions. Mobility, intelligence collection assets, size, and sustainability of formations, air defenses, capabilities for long-range fires, SOF, training for operations in special environments, and preparation for operations involving nuclear and chemical weapons are among the significant factors at this level. To overcome differences in doctrine, training, or equipment, leaders may assign selected functions to the forces of a smaller group of allied or coalition partners.

The combined commander, for example, may assign rear area security missions to home-defense or police-type forces. The commander may also entrust one member of the combined force with air defense, coastal defense, or some special operation, based on that force's special capabilities. In fact, some coalition partners might not provide army, air force, or naval forces at all but contribute through alternative means such as the political power provided by their membership in the coalition. Tactical cooperation requires more precision since it deals with immediate combat actions. Among the disparities that adjacent and supporting commanders must reconcile are dissimilar TACON measures, differences in tactical methods and operating procedures, differences in using other service capabilities such as CAS, varying organizations and capabilities of units, and differences in equipment. Liaison, equipment exchanges, and training can offset some of these problems. Combining staffs, rather than just exchanging liaison parties, is another option.

## **Intelligence**

The collection, production, and dissemination of intelligence are major challenges. Allied and coalition partners normally operate separate intelligence systems in support of their own policy and military forces.

These national systems may vary widely in sophistication and focus. Most allies cannot approach the range of U.S. capabilities to collect and process intelligence. Nonetheless, each nation can contribute human intelligence. Commanders of combined units should rapidly establish a system that takes advantage of each nation's contributions and provides all units an accurate intelligence picture. For operational and tactical purposes, commanders arrange for the rapid dissemination of military intelligence and the use of available intelligence assets by all partners. This arrangement usually requires the formation of a combined intelligence staff at theater level. It also necessitates establishing an intelligence network with dedicated communications and liaison officers to link various headquarters. Few nations will have the technical means to link with U.S. systems. The provision of the appropriate interfaces will be an early and major concern.

## **Logistics**

Combined logistics present a major challenge. Problems include differences in logistics doctrine, stockage levels, logistics mobility, interoperability, and infrastructure and national resource limitations. Nonetheless, allied and coalition commanders have to coordinate the use of facilities such as highways, rail lines, ports, and airfields in such a way as to ensure mission accomplishment.

The concept that logistics is primarily a national responsibility cannot supplant detailed logistics planning within a theater of operations. For these reasons, combined commanders should form a combined logistics staff section as early as possible. Movement control, operation of ports and airfields, theater logistical communications, and specific supply functions are significant matters often coordinated above the level of national contingents. To assure coordination and prevent duplication, commanders of combined forces establish clear responsibilities for such functions.

The U.S. often supplies allied and coalition forces with materiel and receives combat support or combat service support in exchange. This exchange can lead to significant economies of force and effort. U.S. forces seek such support agreements early in a combined operation. When allies or coalition partners use similar equipment, they plan for resupply, maintenance, or other support operations across national lines.

### **Treaties and Conventions**

In multinational operations, differences in treaties and conventions can often have a direct impact on the makeup of the coalition as well as operational and tactical issues across the spectrum of conflict. At the political level, these differences may readily impact the participation in or types of contributions a nation may make to a given operation. At the operational level, these issues often influence the proposed courses of action. In low-end conflict operations, taskings and orders may have to be tailored to the political and cultural characteristics of the participating nation, allowing for rules of engagement that will meet the legal requirements for that country. This may prevent the best or most proficient force from being used for a particular mission or task due to legal or political reasons.

In some operations, the question might be: which laws do we follow or operate under? Do we follow U.S. laws? The host nation's law? What about our coalition partners? Do they follow their own respective laws within their assigned area of operations? These are legal questions that should be addressed up front, prior to forces being deployed. This is why a lawyer is present as a special staff officer on most (if not all) combined, joint, and Service staffs.

### **Rules of Engagement**

As with unilateral operations, various factors affect ROE development for multinational operations, including humanitarian issues, actions by higher authorities, concern for risks, and technological capabilities. Before specifying the exact ROE for a multinational force, it is helpful to consider the principles that may influence their development: unity of purpose, negotiation, commonality, flexibility, adaptability, and simplicity.

The glue that holds a multinational force together is unity of effort, not necessarily unity of command. Unity of effort implies that political and military objectives are harmonized and that a coalition is dedicated to mission accomplishment.

Developing ROE requires negotiation and consensus, not dictation by a dominant partner. A commander must create an atmosphere in which multinational members will set aside sovereignty issues and make concessions to benefit the greater whole.

The goal of multinational ROE development is commonality. Ideally, a single set of rules that applies to all members in the theater of operations is best understood, is easier to implement, and increases interoperability.

If commonality cannot be achieved, flexibility is key. Accommodation and work-arounds may be needed because of irreconcilable differences in equipment, doctrine, capabilities, or political objectives. Separating forces or tasks geographically or functionally may resolve such issues.

Probably the most important principle is simplicity. Make ROE clear and brief. Avoid excessive language. Tailor the language to the multinational force. Assure they are easily understood, remembered, and applied. Simplicity is even more important in operations where multinational force will be called upon to make split-second decisions. For a set of rules to be understood by troops who speak different languages and come from different cultures, ROE must be simple.

ROE also need to be based on international law. Individual nations' laws, constitutions, religion, and culture will all have a tremendous effect on what ROE will look like. In fact, one multinational operation may have several different ROE. Certain nations will develop their own ROE based on the factors mentioned above. This can cause tremendous friction within the force. It may also be a determining factor of how a particular partner will be used within the overall scheme of the campaign plan. Regardless, challenges such as these make operating in the multinational operational environment complicated and trying.

## **Lesson Summary**

Arguably, the U.S. will always conduct military operations within a multinational environment. Even U.S. homeland security is conducted in conjunction with our northern neighbor, Canada. U.S. experiences in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom demonstrate that we operate globally and are inexplicably linked to allies and neighboring nations based on our national political and security interests. Forward basing, over-flight rights, and host- or near-nation support necessities alone require a level of multinational support. Every MAGTF officer must view their role within the larger context of multinational operations. Everything taught in the CSCDEP must be placed in the broader context of a global environment filled with nations wanting to participate for a myriad of reasons. The four tenets of multinational cooperation—respect, rapport, knowledge of partners, and patience—facilitate the mutual trust and confidence between nations that is so vital for multinational mission success.

*“In war it is not always possible to have everything go exactly as one likes. In working with allies it sometimes happens that they develop opinions of their own.”*

—Sir Winston Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate*, 1950

**JPME Summary**

AREA 1					AREA 2				AREA 3					AREA 4					AREA 5			
A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D
	X			X	X				X		X											