

Multinational Force Integration: The ROK Army's Integration with the US Army in the Vietnam War

A Monograph

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Abstract

Multinational Force Integration: The ROK Army's Integration with the US Army in the Vietnam War, by MAJ Michael Liscano Jr., US Army, 68 pages

The US Army will continue to be part of multinational operations in the future. The Vietnam War was the US Army's first test in conducting conventional and counterinsurgency operations on a grand scale post-World War II. In 1964, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) began to integrate Free World Forces (FWF) into a US lead multinational forces to conduct combat operations against the North Vietnamese Forces. The Republic of Korea (ROK) Army was largest and most critical of the FWF contributing over 324,000 troops from 1964 to 1973, enabling MACV to transition to offensive operations. This study examines the successes and challenges of MACV integrating the ROK army early in the Vietnam War.

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Acronyms

ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
AEF	American Expeditionary Forces
AOC	Army Operating Concept
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
C2	Command and Control
CENTCOM	Central Command
CFLCC	Coalition Forces Land Component Command
CFSOCC	Coalition Forces Special Operation Component Command
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group
CJSOTF	Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force
COMUSFK	Commander United States Forces, Korea
COMUSMACV	Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
CPT	Captain
CTZ	Corps Tactical Zone
DOD	Department of Defense
FF	Field Force
FM	Field Manual
FWF	Free World Forces
FWMAF	Free World Military Assistance Forces
GEN	General
HLZ	Helicopter Landing Zone
HQ	Headquarters
JP	Joint Publication
LZ	Landing Zone

LTG	Lieutenant General
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MAAG	Military Advisory Assistance Group, Vietnam
MASH	Mobile Army Surgical Hospital
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Forces
MG	Major General
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OPCON	Operational Control
PAVN	People's Army of Vietnam
ROK	Republic of Korea (South Korea)
ROKFORV	Republic of Korea Forces Vietnam
RVN	Republic of Vietnam
RVNAF	Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
TACON	Tactical Control
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organization
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces
SOF	Special Operations Forces
ULO	Unified Land Operations
US	United States
VC	Viet Cong
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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Operation Paul Revere II: The Battle of Landing Zone 27 Victor

The key to the Koreans' success is the individual ROK soldier. He is undoubtedly one of the best soldiers in the Free World. Tough, aggressive, well disciplined, patient, persistent, and thorough, he keeps his equipment in top condition and responds almost instinctively to orders and instructions. One veteran US officer, who has served with the US infantry units in three conflicts, called him "the epitome of a soldier, almost faultless.

MAJ Ronald R. Rasmussen, "ROK Operations in Central Vietnam" *Military Review*¹

On 9 August 1966, 9th Company, 3d Battalion, 1st Cavalry Regiment of the Republic of Korea's (ROK) Capital Infantry Division, led by their company commander, Captain (CPT) Lee, returned from a two day long combat patrol back to their tactical assembly area, designated as Landing Zone 27 Victor (LZ 27V) with no significant contact from enemy forces.² A ROK platoon-sized element and US tank platoon of five M48A3 Patton tanks from A Company, 1st Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment had stayed behind to secure LZ 27V while 9th Company executed patrols along the Cambodian-South Vietnamese border in the Pleiku provinces attempting to engage in battle with the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Viet Cong (VC) units operating within the area with no success. The ROK soldiers were exhausted but relieved to finally be back to their secured defensive positions in LZ 27V to rest and refit from the long and treacherous patrol through the hot and humid dense jungle near the Cambodian border. CPT Lee's company along with the rest of ROK combat forces operated alongside of American and South Vietnamese forces since their arrival back in September 1965 as part of US President

¹ Ronald R. Rasmussen, "ROK Operations in Central Vietnam," *Military Review* (January 1968), 54. MAJ Ronald Rasmussen served as an infantry officer with the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and the I Field Force that operated next to the ROK forces in the II Corp Tactical Zone in Vietnam.

² John M. Carland, *Combat Operations: Stemming the Tide, May 1965 to October 1966* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2000), 297-298; Stanley R Larsen. and James L. Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies: Allied Participation in Vietnam* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2005), 130.

Lyndon Johnson's "The Free World Assistance Program," or more commonly known as "The More Flags Program."³ For this mission, CPT Lee's company was taking part of Operation Paul Revere, which was a large American driven operations to actively search along the Cambodian-South Vietnamese border for enemy infiltration routes to prevent the NVA from building up their forces.⁴

CPT Lee set the priorities of work with his platoons and attached American tank platoon, who he had tactical command (TACON) relationship with, to properly securing LZ 27V since they were the most vulnerable that night having returned from a two day long patrol.⁵ The most important task he issued was emplacement of three listening post established approximately two hundred meters from the perimeter for early warning of an oncoming enemy attack.⁶

Shortly before midnight of 9 August, CPT Lee's company, with the attached US tank platoon, were set in the defensive perimeter on LZ 27V when a listening post reported digging

³ Robert M. Blackburn, *Mercenaries and Lyndon Johnson's "More Flags": The Hiring of Korean, Filipino and Thai Soldiers in the Vietnam War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1994), 1-3,10-11.

⁴ Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (HQ, USMACV), "Command History 1966," 30 June 1967. Since July 9th, 9th Company and its parent battalion, 3d Battalion of the 1st Cavalry Regiment of the ROK's Tiger Division, joined alongside three battalions from the US 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and 3d Brigade of the 25th Division as part of Operation Paul Revere, which began on 10 May. I Field Force Commander, Lieutenant General Stanley R. Larsen, responsible for II Corp Tactical Zone II (CTZ) which included Pleiku and Kontum provinces, greatest concern was a massive coordinated multipronged enemy offensive in widely scattered areas. He feared friendly reaction forces in II CTZ would have difficulty or be unable to effectively counter widely scattered attacks against isolated outposts in difficult terrain. Larsen attempted to mitigate this by sending out forces to actively search along the border for enemy infiltration and supply routes to prevent the NVA from effectively building up their forces.

⁵ Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1-02, *Terms and Military Symbols* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 1-18, 1-89. Tactical control (TACON) is the authority over forces that is limited to the detailed direction and control of movements or maneuvers within the operational area necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned.

⁶ Carland, *Combat Operations*, 298.

sounds and five minutes later a trip flare was set off.⁷ Anticipating an attack, CPT Lee called in all three listening posts and raised the alert status of his company. A M48A3 tank turned on its searchlight to scan the tree line for enemy activity. Then, with its coaxial machine gun the tank fired off short burst of rounds into the tree line and immediately the tree line burst with NVA heavy machine gun fire.⁸ This set off a nearly five hour battle with attacks on all sides of LZ 27V. As the battle progressed through the night, the NVA intensified the volume of fire with heavy automatic machine gun fire, mortars, rocket propelled grenades, and recoilless rifles along with multiple frontal assaults at different areas of the perimeter attempting to penetrate the defensive lines with no success.⁹

The ROK infantry and the Patton tank platoons fought side by side in a coordinated effort to repulse each attack. CPT Lee called for fire support receiving extensive artillery fires from both US and ROK artillery batteries.¹⁰ Time and again, the severely outnumbered combined allied force on LZ 27V coordinated the fires of small arms, machine guns, tanks, mortars, and artillery, massing their effects to destroy wave after wave of NVA attempting to penetrate the perimeter.

The battle ended at approximately 6:00 A.M. with surviving enemy forces withdrawing.¹¹ The battle resulted in at least 197 NVA killed in action (KIA) from the 88th Regiment. In

⁷ Carland, *Combat Operations*, 298.

⁸ Lewis Sorely, "Adaptation and Impact: Mounted Combat in Vietnam," *Camp Colt to Desert Storm: the History of U.S. Armored Forces*, ed. George Hofman and Donn Starry (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 339.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 340.; Carland, *Combat Operations*, 297-298. Francis J. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies: U.S. Army Special Forces 1961-1971* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2004), 14-22, 96-99.

¹¹ Carland, *Combat Operations*, 299.

contrast, Lee's company suffered only seven KIA, with no casualties in the tank platoon. This was the 9th Company's first major battle as an integrated allied partner and the combined efforts of ROK infantry, US tanks and both US and ROK artillery enabled its victory in the Battle of LZ 27V, and ROK Army's contributions to the overall operation. The combined US-ROK force proved itself effective as a capable, cooperative, and integrated team working with a unity of effort to achieve victory and this was recognized, with both the ROK 9th Infantry Company and US tank platoon receiving the Presidential Unit Citation.¹²

The US Army has participated in multinational forces throughout its history, beginning with a partnership with French allies during the American Revolution, and will likely continue to do so in the future. The 2015 US National Security Strategy (NSS) highlights America's continued participation in a multinational force stating:

We embrace our responsibilities for underwriting international security because it serves our interests, upholds our commitments to allies and partners, and addresses threats that are truly global ... It also requires a global security posture in which our unique capabilities are employed within diverse international coalitions and in support of local partners.¹³

The current edition of the US Army Operating Concept expands upon the NSS's emphasis on multinational operations stating, "The Army cannot predict who it will fight, where it will fight,

¹² Sorely, "Adaptation and Impact," 340. The Presidential Unit Citation is the highest unit award. The unit must display such gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission as to set it apart from and above other units participating in the same campaign.

¹³ The President, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2015), 7.

and with what coalition it will fight. To win in a complex world the Army must... integrate the efforts of multiple partners.”¹⁴

The Vietnam War provides one example of partnership in modern warfare where the US army led a coalition force conducting decisive action in a unified effort towards a strategic objective.¹⁵ In Vietnam, the ROK Army played a crucial part in the US Army’s operations to support the host nation’s army in fighting against its enemies, and by 1972, outnumbered their American partners.¹⁶ Ultimately, the ROK Army’s contribution to US-led multinational operations enabled the multinational force to expand its operational reach throughout South Vietnam to combat the North Vietnamese Army and its guerrilla wing, the Viet Cong.

This study examines how the US Army integrates foreign armies into multinational operations, using the ROK Army’s integration into US-led combat operations during the Vietnam War to explore some of the keys to success. The US Army’s success in integrating ROK forces during the Vietnam War resulted from the creation of mutual trust and confidence between the two forces, feelings that were the product of MACV’s approach to command and control, intelligence sharing, and the incorporation of ROK forces into the planning and execution of

¹⁴ TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept (AOC): Win in a Complex World* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), iii-iv. The AOC describes the US Army’s ability to provides *foundational* capabilities for integration of multinational efforts to *project national power* in future conflicts.

¹⁵ Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 2-2. ADRP 3-0 defines decisive action as the continuous, simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks.

¹⁶ The ROK Ministry of National Defense, *The History of the ROK-US Alliance, 1953-2013* (Institute for Military History Compilation, Ministry of National Defense, South Korea, 2014), 100, 106, 107; The American War Library, “Vietnam War: Allied Troop Levels 1960-73,” accessed September 27, 2015, <http://www.americanwarlibrary.com/vietnam/vwatl.htm>. By 1972, 29,655 US troops remained in Vietnam while ROK forces numbered at 37,438 of two infantry divisions and maintain that force strength until the Paris Peace Accord took effect on 29 January 1973 requiring international military forces to begin withdrawing from South Vietnam.

combat operations at the tactical level.¹⁷ While MACV made key decisions that facilitated the integration of the ROK Army, the level of cooperation and coordination between the ROK Army and US forces in Vietnam was also underpinned by a two-decades long relationship between the two militaries.

The benefit resulting from multinational operations is not just determined by the number of participants but how participants are incorporated into a coalition structure and integrated into planning and operations. Sir Lawrence Freedman, British military theorist, described the significance in creating a coalition to conduct multinational operations and achieve strategic victory. In his book *Strategy: A History* he argued, “When it came to victory, what mattered most was how coalitions were formed, came together, and were disrupted.”¹⁸ He saw the initial domination of Europe by the German Wehrmacht in World War II, fueled by a mastery of armored warfare, but suggested that Germany’s domination was never complete because “it was settled by the logic of alliances as much as military prowess.”¹⁹ In the end, the combined weight of the United States, Soviet Union, and British Empire overwhelmed Germany. The sheer might of the alliance, with their military and industrial capacities, and unity of effort, allowed each to benefit one another.

The US Army expects that it will routinely operate as part of a multinational force. Field Manual (FM) 3-16, *The Army in Multinational Operations* highlights the significance of

¹⁷ Field Manual (FM) 3-16, *The Army in Multinational Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 1-2 - 1-3. FM 3-16 list the tenants of mutual confidence are rapport, respect, knowledge of partners, team building, patience, and trust are intangible considerations that guide all participants actions, especially for senior commanders, for successful multinational operations. These tenants were all present with the US and ROK relationship established through the continuous combined military exercises.

¹⁸ Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 143.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 139.

multinational forces participation stating, “U.S. commanders expect to conduct military operations as a part of a multinational force...It demands full staff integration into multinational activities and the understanding, intent, and execution of every Soldier or agency.”²⁰ Furthermore, the US Army can expect to be the lead agency in prosecuting expeditionary operations to fulfill national and international mandates—from humanitarian relief efforts to defeating enemies that threatens the United States, its national interest, and allies. Integrating a multinational force into a coalition framework is a tremendous force multiplier for the US Army in unified land operations conducted to achieve strategic goals.²¹

The integration of multinational forces into a coalition has several advantages for US forces. The coalition can potentially perform vital missions in more locations, allowing US troops to employ concentrated combat power to more volatile areas in the operational environment. The different partnering nations bring unique skill sets, capabilities, and regional expertise to specific operations. Additionally, they can provide diverse approaches to planning and executing operations.²² More importantly at the strategic level, being part of a multinational force strengthens long-standing military cooperation with allies and helps to dispel claims of neocolonialism, thus enhancing the United States’ legitimacy in pursuing a mission in the area that it is, or will be, operating in and in the eyes of the global community.²³ It validates a unified

²⁰ FM 3-16, *The Army in Multinational Operations*, vii.

²¹ ADRP 3-0, 1-1. Unified land operations describes how the Army seizes, retains, and exploits the initiative to gain and maintain a position of relative advantage in in sustained land operations through simultaneous offensive, defensive, and stability operations in order to prevent or deter conflict, prevail in war, and create the conditions for favorable conflict resolution.

²² Stephen A. Carney, *Allied Participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 2011), 2.

²³ *Ibid.*, 3.

front with partners around the world who join to confront and defeat threats to international security and peace.²⁴

The Vietnam War was the US Army's first test in conducting conventional and counterinsurgency operations on a grand scale in a post-World War II.²⁵ The effort began with an advisory force of 16,300 in 1963 and increased to over 385,000 soldiers for combat operations by fall of 1966.²⁶ However, that number was insufficient. The US Army required a coalition of nations to assist with a vast array of combat and noncombat military operations throughout South Vietnam. South Korea contributed the second highest number of troops for combat operations. The ROK Army employed 48,500 combat troops in the same period and, by the end of the war, contributed over 324,000 Soldiers total.²⁷ By comparison, in January of 1967, Australia was the

²⁴ FM 3-16, vi, vii. The US Army anticipates that in the future, multinational operations will continue to be the standard and the US Army will have to integrate an array of different Armies that range in size, capabilities, and national caveat constraints into its operations.

²⁵ Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 189; Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 4-7.

²⁶ Robert D. Ramsey III, *OP 18: Advising Indigenous Forces: American Advisors in Korea, Vietnam, and El Salvador* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press), 28-29; The American War Library, "Vietnam War: Allied Troop Levels 1960-73," accessed September 27, 2015, <http://www.americanwarlibrary.com/vietnam/vwatl.htm>.

²⁷ Tae Y. Kwak, "The Anvil of War: The Legacies of Korean Participation in the Vietnam War" (PhD diss, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard, 2006), 84. In 1966, The ROK ground forces include 40,534 soldiers and 4,295 marines. This does not include 722 sailors and 54 airmen; Kil-Joo Ban "The Reliable Promise of Middle Power Fighters: The ROK Military's COIN Success in Vietnam and Iraq" (PhD diss, Arizona State University, 2011), 60. The main ROK units were the Capital "Tiger" Infantry Division, 9th "White Horse" Infantry Division, and the Marine Corps' 2nd "Blue Dragon" Brigade.

third highest contributing nation, sending a little over 6,800 troops, and 37,400 by the end of the war.²⁸

The US Army gained valuable experiences from the ROK Army's integration into operations in Vietnam: experiences on incorporating a large multinational partner into a maturing theater; exercising formal and informal command and control; dissemination of intelligence, and incorporation of complex operations ranging in offense, defense, and stability. These experiences highlight the reoccurring processes in forming and integrating a multinational force for operations.²⁹ The US Army's doctrine has addressed the reoccurring challenges experienced in multinational force integration, incorporating lessons from those wars in current doctrine. In the Vietnam War, the US Army successfully integrated a foreign army into a multinational force under a unified headquarters, through a mix of formal and informal command relationships, but also experienced points of friction. Neither these successes nor points of friction can be fully appreciated in current doctrine unless expanded upon through historical examples. Unfortunately, the US Army's efforts to streamline their doctrine has resulted in the removal of most historical vignettes from these manuals. This study helps to fill that intellectual gap.

This study focuses on a single coalition partner—the ROK Army—and its integration into military operations in the Vietnam War from 1965-1967, employing three criteria from the US Army's current doctrine guiding the conduct of multinational operations, FM 3-16, *The Army*

²⁸ Blackburn, *Mercenaries and Lyndon Johnson's "More Flags,"* 130; The American War Library, "Vietnam War: Allied Troop Levels 1960-73," last modified December 6, 2008, accessed September 27, 2015, <http://www.americanwarlibrary.com/vietnam/vwatl.htm>. Although the author compares troop contributions between ROK and Australia (with New Zealander troop contributions), Australian forces nonetheless fought valiantly continuing to serve and die in the Vietnam War up to the end of the war demonstrating their commitment to the coalition.

²⁹ TRADOC G2, *Operational Environments to 2028: The Strategic Environment for Unified Land Operations* (Fort Eustis, VA: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2012), 35, 37, 87-92. The US Army anticipates challenges in operating in a complex environments as a part of a coalition with varying capabilities. These challenges are made more difficult if the US Army does not have experiences with operating with particular militaries.

in Multinational Operations. These three criteria—command and control, intelligence sharing and operational planning—were selected because of their centrality to creating relationships between multinational partners needed to achieve unity of effort in the planning, preparation, and execution of military operations. The case study analysis of multinational operations in the Vietnam War delivers a historical narrative evaluated by the doctrinal criteria to provide an in-depth analysis of applying those principles to the relationship between the US and the ROK Army.

FM 3-16 provides the US Army a doctrinal foundation for the conduct of multinational operations consisting of 168 pages of detailed guidance. Although it is not directive in nature, the FM provides broad guidance and a check list for commanders and staffs in developing solutions to create an effective fighting force concerning planning, preparing, and executing multinational operations. The ROK Army was chosen for this study due to its contribution of the largest quantity of forces above all troop contributing nations in the More Flags program during the Vietnam War, which created a series of challenges for the US Army to address. Along with the ROK Army's contribution Vietnam, the military cooperation between the two countries dating to just after World War II makes this case of integrating ROK forces particularly interesting.

Section one examines types of multinational cooperation and methods of organization. Three short case studies on American involvement in multinational operations in World War I, World War II, and Operation Iraqi Freedom illustrate the ways in which command of multinational forces can be exercised. Given war's nature as an inherently political exercise, the establishment of command structures for multinational forces must include political as well as military considerations. While the three different command structures examined in these three cases—parallel, unified, and lead nation—may reflect the political concerns of the participants involved, none of them are necessarily a barrier to close cooperation or integration. However, understanding these different organizations is essential to appreciating differences in the

authorities associated with each, and with potential obstacles to integration. The World War I case study, an example of parallel command, is of particular interest because it is through this type of arrangement that the United States coordinated with, rather than commanded, ROK Army forces in the Vietnam War. This section also defines and describes terms associated with coalition warfare—multinational operations, multinational forces, alliances, and coalitions—using the definitions provided in current US Army doctrine. These terms are often used interchangeably, though each has a very specific meaning. Clarifying this terminology and the command structures used to guide multinational operations provides a framework for understanding the fundamental aspects of multinational operations found in the case study.

Section two examines the historical context of the Vietnam War starting with America's military advisory role to the ARVN in 1955 then escalating into combat operations in 1965. The US Army operated with small teams of advisors under the Military Advisory Assistance Group, Vietnam (MAAG) with nearly 700 advisors. Each team's responsibilities were to train and mentor the ARVN in their operations against the Vietminh, later known as the Viet Cong. This role changed with the US Congress' passage of the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution evolving America's role to combat operations transitioning Military Advisory Assistance Group, Vietnam to Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). During this transition and escalation, the US Army required and received additional help from other nation's armies to increase the size of the coalition to include the ROK Army. The integration of the ROK Army to secure key locations and participate in combined operations presented the US Army and ARVN with opportunities to transition from defensive to offensive operations. The ROK's entrance not only presented opportunities but also challenges as a significant third party contributor in the America's effort in the Vietnam War. MACV faced the challenges of incorporating the ROK Army into command and control structure that was politically and militarily acceptable, share intelligence in a manner

that would not violate national policy, and conduct planning and execution of combined military operations.

Section three examines the command and control relationship between MACV, I Field Force, and the ROK Army. Unlike the desired lead nation command structure, the US Army has grown accustomed to in recent coalitions, in Vietnam the US had to settle for a parallel command structure. The ROK Army did not allow itself to be officially subordinate to MACV or subsequent headquarters, which presented a unique challenge of incorporating the ROK Army in a manner to achieve unity of effort. Examining command and control (C2) requires analyzing the command structure established to provide oversight of coalition forces, assessing the coalition's ability to achieve unity of effort, and exploring issues of interoperability between the ROK Army and the US Army's higher HQ.³⁰ FM 3-16 highlights the importance of establishing C2 as the foundation for any multinational force. It emphasizes, "A successful multinational operation establishes unity of effort, if not unity of command. The success of a multinational operation begins with the authority to direct operations of all assigned or attached military forces."³¹ Without proper C2 integration, a multinational force cannot attain a unity of effort thus a likelihood of operational failure to achieve the strategic objective may occur.

Section four examines intelligence sharing between MACV, I Field Force and ROKFORV. MACV understood the critical nature of intelligence sharing within the multinational force to combat not only the North Vietnamese Army but also the Viet Cong guerrillas operating in and around local population centers. MACV developed policies to ease the burden of intelligence classification restrictions imposed on it and its subordinate headquarters to downgrade and release intelligence without violating US national policy. FM 3-16 highlights the

³⁰ FM 3-16, 2-1 – 2-4.

³¹ Ibid., 2-1.

critical nature of intelligence sharing stating, “The multinational forces synchronize its intelligence efforts with unified action partners to achieve unity of effort and to meet the multinational commander’s intent. Intelligence unity of effort is critical to accomplish the mission. Unified action partners are important to intelligence in all operations.”³² The collecting, processing, and dissemination of information are crucial on the battlefield because it provides army organizations a better situational awareness and develop operational objectives in their area of operations in order to achieve the strategic objective. The challenges of intelligences sharing in coalition relate to the various classification levels. The high classification levels prevent sharing intelligence with foreign militaries due to limitations imposed by national policy. With careful selection and tailoring of intelligence for specific missions, the US Army has the ability to release intelligence to coalition partners without violating national policy.

Section five examines the combined US-ROK-ARVN operation in Operation Irving.³³ Operation Irving took place between September 23th - October 24th with the US 1st Cavalry Division, ROK Capital Division, and the ARVN 22nd Division in a successfully coordinated attack against the NVA 3rd Division located in and around the Phu Cat Mountains.³⁴ This operation demonstrates that the integration of a foreign army into an appropriately constructed multinational command structure and the use of shared intelligence can result in effective cooperative planning and execution of major operations through the development of mutual confidence and trust.³⁵ FM 3-16 highlights the importance of combined operational planning and

³² Ibid., 4-1 – 4-2.

³³ FM 3-16, 5-1 – 5-6.

³⁴ Carland, *Combat Operations*, 260-261.

³⁵ FM 3-16, 2-1 – 2-2. FM 3-16 describes mutual confidence as stemming from tangible actions and entities and intangible human factors. This manual addresses tangible considerations such as liaisons, cultures, religions, customs, and languages. The intangible considerations that guide the actions of all participants, especially the senior commander, are rapport, respect,

execution stating, “Operations conducted by a multinational force require coordination among all entities. Coordination occurs in all phases of the operation from planning and deployment to redeployment.”³⁶ Operational planning is a critical function necessary for ensuring the unity of effort of the multinational forces aligning the tactical actions in time, space, and purpose to achieve the strategic objective.

The final section concludes the analysis with implications for the US Army in future operations as well as with existing shortfalls and a recommendation for future editions of FM 3-16 tied to the lessons of the ROK’s integration in Vietnam. This study demonstrates that the United States Army has had success in integrating multinational forces into US-led operations and that the case of the ROK Army in Vietnam provides a suitable case for study. The US was able to establish a high level of mutual confidence between US and ROK forces because of the approach taken by General Westmoreland and MACV to establish a command structure that respected individual national interests and develop trust through intelligence sharing. This confidence bolstered an existing strong relationship between the two militaries, but more importantly, fostered a level of integration that allowed effective planning and execution of major operations to take place despite the lack of direct command authority. As such, the effectiveness of the ROK Army’s integration highlights issues or lingering challenges with command and control, intelligence sharing, and coordination in military actions when integrating a foreign army in American military operations.

knowledge of partners, team building, patience, and trust.

³⁶ Ibid., 5-1.

Doctrinal Definitions and Command Structures in Multinational Operations

There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies, and that is fighting without them.

—Sir Winston S. Churchill³⁷

The terms coalition, alliance, partnered nations, allies, coalition forces, coalition partners, and multinational forces used interchangeably of when referring to non-US forces that take part of a United States-led military operation.³⁸ The terms multinational operations, multinational forces, alliance, and coalition will be addressed and used in this paper due to their official recognition in the US Army's FM 3-16 as well as in joint publications on multinational forces, such as Joint Publication (JP) 3-16 *Multinational Operations*.³⁹ These terms can fall under three types of C2 structures: integrated command structure, lead nation command structure, and parallel command structure. These C2 structures determine the type of relationship between the multinational HQ and generally accepted definitions and descriptions, in particularly North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members and US non-NATO allies. These terms are important to understand in their application to the ROK army's involvement in the Vietnam War.

FM 3-16 defines multinational operations as “a collective term to describe military actions conducted by forces of two or more nations, usually undertaken with the structure of the

³⁷ Churchill College Cambridge, “Sir Winston Churchill: Biography,” accessed September 19, 2015, <https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/collections/churchill-papers/churchill-biography/>

³⁸ Carney, *Allied Participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 1, 2.

³⁹ US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-16, *Multinational Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013). As it states on page i, JP 3-16 is the joint United States doctrine “to govern the activities and performance of the Armed Forces of the United States in joint operations and provides the doctrinal basis for US military coordination with other US Government departments and agencies during operations and for US military involvement in multinational operations.” This document is broad in nature set for strategic and operational level of focus with multifaceted military and non-military organizations. The author chose FM 3-16 for this paper due to its focus on ground forces at the operational to tactical level.

coalition or alliance.”⁴⁰ This is a generic all-encompassing definition that informs the reader that the US military is partnered with one or several foreign military forces in executing combat and non-combat operations and this partnership is either in an alliance or coalition. Likewise, multinational force implies the US military is simply partnered with two or more foreign militaries in either an alliance or coalition.

The terms alliance and coalition give the specificity to the type of relationship between militaries in multinational operations. FM 3-16 defines alliance as “the relationship that results from a formal agreement between two or more nations for broad, long-term objectives that further the common interests of the member.”⁴¹ An example of such an alliance is the United Nations alliance in the Second World War. Early in the war, British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill recognized the need for more allies, the United States in particular, to build a cooperative arrangement for battling Germany, Italy, and Japan, referred to as the “Axis Powers.”⁴² The Soviet Union agreed to join an alliance with Great Britain after Germany’s Operation Barbarossa attack in June 1941 left the communist state in a life and death struggle against Germany. Germany appeared unbeatable at the time, defeating the Soviet army in every battle. Churchill needed the United States to become involved in the alliance to pool military resources in a unified strategy to defeat Axis powers. Once the United States became involved in the Second World War in 1941 and allied itself to Great Britain, Russia, and other supporting nations, it became a

⁴⁰ FM 3-16, 1-1. This definition is the same in JP 3-16.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Churchill College Cambridge, “Sir Winston Churchill: Biography,” <https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/collections/churchill-papers/churchill-biography/>

part of the Allied Powers, known as the “United Nations” following a joint declaration published in January, 1942.⁴³

The United States and Great Britain developed a unified command HQ in an “integrated command structure” to command all Allied forces in Western Europe called the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) to defeat the Axis forces in Western Europe while the Soviet Union defeats the Axis forces in Eastern Europe (see figure 1).⁴⁴ US doctrine describes an integrated command structure as “an alliance, a coalition or UN-mandated operation, the entire staff is an integrated command structure... Using an integrated command structure in an alliance provides unity of command.”⁴⁵ The staff integration of both American and British officer in SHAEF allowed for a unity of command and unity of effort to employ forces effectively and efficiently under the direction one commander of a contributing nation.

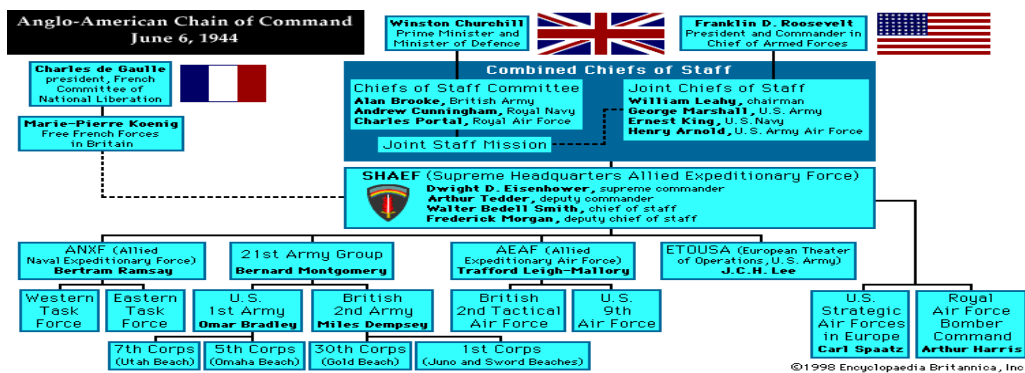


Figure 1. SHAEF Anglo-American Chain of Command, June 1944

Source: *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Anglo-American Chain of Command in Western Europe, June 1944,” accessed December 28, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Anglo-American-Chain-of-Command-in-Western-Europe-June-1944-1673115>.

⁴³ Churchill College Cambridge, “Sir Winston Churchill: Biography,” <https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/archives/collections/churchill-papers/churchill-biography/>

⁴⁴ Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum and Boyhood Home, “Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, Office of Secretary, General Staff: Records, 1943-45,” http://eisenhower.archives.gov/Research/Finding_Aids/pdf/SHAEF_SGS_Records.pdf. accessed December 20, 2015, 2.

⁴⁵ FM 3-16, 2-3.

In Army doctrine, a coalition is defined as “an arrangement between two or more nations for a common action. This action is a multinational action outside the bounds of an established alliance... Coalition exists for a limited purpose and time.”⁴⁶ Thus, a coalition is *ad hoc* given its rapid formation for a short term limited military and political objectives, and not tied to specific multilateral treaty organizations or unilateral agreements to support allied nations.⁴⁷ An example of a modern coalition is the US-led coalition that invaded and occupied Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in 2003.⁴⁸ US President George W. Bush declared that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had to disarm his country of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and long-range missiles or military action would be taken against Iraq to force disarmament. The United Nations Security Council subsequently declared similarly that Iraq had to disarm all of its WMD and long-range missiles, but the UN did not endorse the formation and employment of military force against Iraq.⁴⁹ In response, the United States developed a coalition outside the normal United Nations procedures and prepared for conducting military actions with a coalition formed from allied partners willing to take part in military operations against Iraq. In total, four nations contributed troops to the so-called “Coalition of the Willing” for the actual invasion: the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Poland.⁵⁰

For OIF, the United States developed a “lead nation command structure,” placing all multinational ground invasion forces under the C2 of the commander of the United States Central

⁴⁶ FM 3-16, 1-2.

⁴⁷ Carney, *Allied Participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 2; FM 3-16, 1-2.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Command (CENTCOM).⁵¹ FM 3-16 describes a lead nation command structure as “one nation has the lead role and its C2 dominates. Normally, the lead nation is the country that provides the largest number of forces and resources for the operations...The lead nation determines the appropriate C2 procedures and works closely with the other national contingent.”⁵² For the initial invasion of Iraq, CENTCOM used this command structure to develop two sub-command components to C2 the conventional ground forces and the special operations forces: Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) and Coalition Forces Special Operations Component Command (CFSOCC) (see figure 2).

Chart 1—Coalition Forces Land Component Command and U.S. Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command as of May 2003

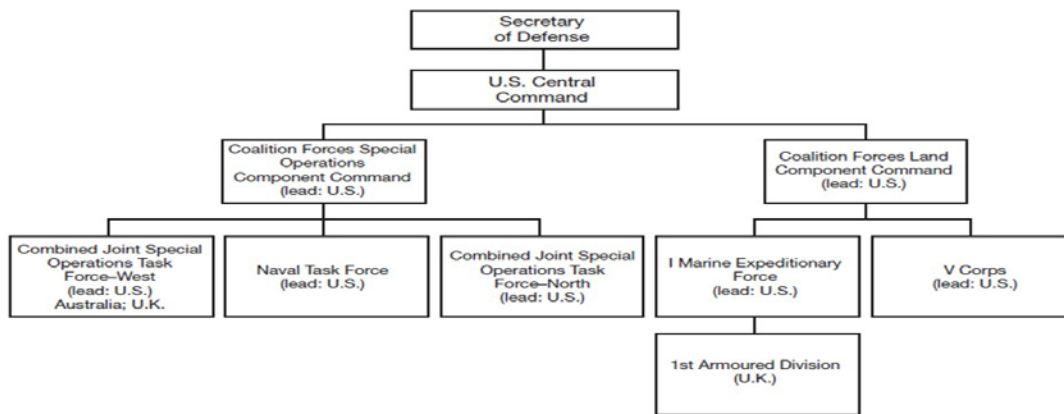


Figure 2. Coalition Forces Land Component Command and U.S. Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command as of May 2003.

Source: Stephen A. Carney, *Allied Participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 2011), 8.

⁵¹ Carney, *Allied Participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 6.; United States Central Command, “About U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM),” accessed December 28, 2015, <http://www.centcom.mil/en/about-centcom-en>. According to CENTCOM’s official website: CENTCOM is one of nine unified commands. CENTCOM, have an area of responsibility covers the “central” area of the globe and consists of mainly Middle Eastern countries.

⁵² FM 3-16, 2-3. In addition to the lead nation command structure is the necessity for appropriate level of liaison personnel to the lead nation headquarters to develop and maintain unity of effort in coalition operations.

The CFLCC command and control (C2) framework consisted of the U.S. Army V Corps and the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), along with the British 1st Armoured Division serving directly under I MEF.⁵³ The coalition's special operations command consisted of the special operations forces of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Poland that formed into three Combined Joint Special Operations Task Forces (CJSOTFs): CJSOTF-North operating in northern Iraq, CJSOTF-West operating in western Iraq, and a third designated as Naval Task Force that operated along the southern coast.⁵⁴ Unlike SHAEF's integrated staff structure, neither CENTCOM nor its subordinate functional commands had a robust integrated staff of planners from contributing member nations. Instead, CFLCC relied on liaison personnel and minimum staff augmentation to assist the headquarters if expertise was required to deal with a coalition partner's specific organization or capabilities.⁵⁵ Even without a truly integrated command, CENTCOM's lead nation command structure successfully exercised command and control over coalition forces. Central Command defeated Iraq's forces in twenty-one days, maintaining unity of command and effort as the battlefield conditions evolved throughout the course of the ground invasion.

Parallel command structures, which are an alternative to the lead nation structure, are the least preferred type. Unlike integrated and lead nation command structures, where there is a unity of command exercised through the authority of a single commander, a parallel command structure is formed when contributing nations are reluctant to grant total control of their forces to the lead

⁵³ Carney, *Allied Participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 6. V Corps and the I MEF are both corps level headquarters. US corps typically consists of two or more divisions.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6, 8, 9.

⁵⁵ Carney, *Allied Participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, 2-4; FM 3-16, 2-3.

nation. Under a parallel command structure, contributing nations prefer to have their forces coordinate and cooperate with the lead nation rather than be commanded directly by it (see figure 3). FM 3-16 describes the parallel command structure as “an alternative to the lead nation concept. There is no single coalition commander...The multinational leadership coordinates among the participants to attain unity of effort.”⁵⁶ This type of command structure can lead to friction within the multinational force because the forces of contributing nations are not under the direct command of the lead nation, and may, in theory, ignore requests to conduct military operations if they disagree with those operations. This is not to suggest that contributing nation(s) do not desire to cooperate with the multinational force in achieving greater military and strategic objectives, but that domestic political constraints can limit their integration into multinational force structures and operations. When establishing such a command arrangement, the creation of a coordination center can facilitate collaboration in planning and coordination in military actions to achieve unity of effort.

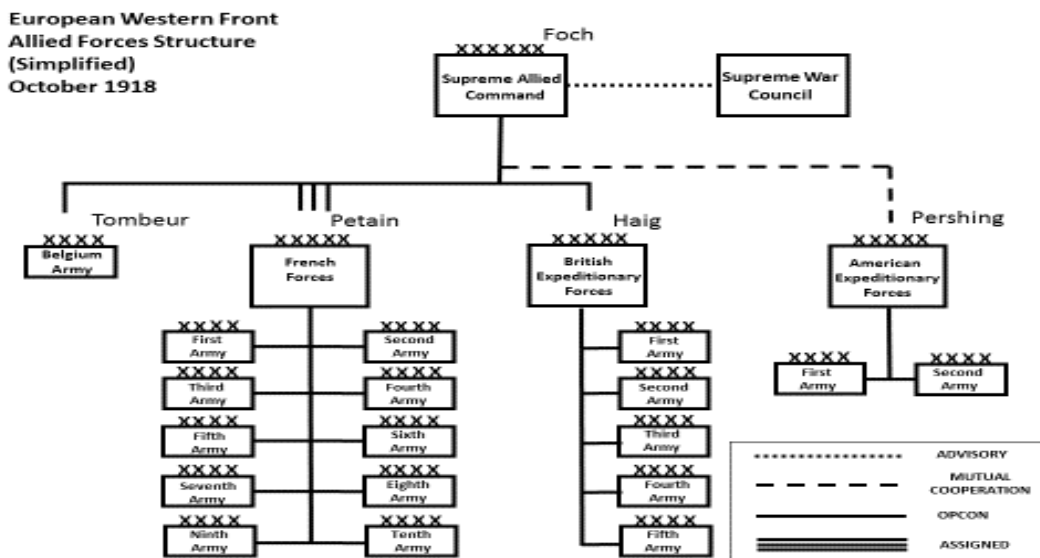


Figure 3. European Western Front Allied Force Structure October 1918

Sources: Created by author

⁵⁶ FM 3-16, 2-3.

The participation of American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), under the command of General (GEN) John “Black Jack” Pershing, in World War I is an example of parallel command structure. The AEF collaborated, cooperated, and coordinated with the Allied Powers in multinational operations—conducted primarily by the French and British—in their fight against Germany and Austria-Hungary in Europe. The Allied Powers used the lead nation command structure with France as the lead nation and the French General Ferdinand Foch as the Allied Supreme Commander. The British and French wanted to use the Americas to augment their forces by placing American battalions and regiments directly into their armies under the lead nation construct.⁵⁷

Placing American units into allied armies would have increased the size of their forces, bolstered allied morale, allowed for the direct C2 of American forces, and would have likely reduced the strategic role American leadership would have in both the war and the peace that followed.⁵⁸ Pershing rejected this idea seeing this would be affront to national pride and insult to the professional American officer corps many of whom had experience fighting in the Spanish-American War, Philippine-American War, and Mexico Punitive Expedition.⁵⁹ US Secretary of War Newton Baker told Pershing “your authority in France will be supreme” giving Pershing the full authority to develop and employ American ground forces to contribute to the European war efforts and retaining a “separate and distinct force.”⁶⁰ Pershing used the opportunity and authority from mid-1917 to late 1918 to gain the necessary time in France to modernize solely US military.

⁵⁷ Richard W. Stewart, *American Military History, vol. II*, Second Edition (Washington, DC: Army Center of Military History, 2010), 9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁵⁹ Mark E. Grotelueschen, *The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in World War I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 11-12.

⁶⁰ Stewart, *American Military History*, 11, 28, 29.

He organized and trained two new army groups under the AEF, totaling over two million troops, before committing American forces in mass to cooperate alongside the Allies in large-scale offensives.⁶¹

Although the Allies were frustrated with the Americans' unwillingness to rapidly enter battle when they first entered the European theater, they had no choice but to tolerate Pershing's goals of employing the AEF when he determined it was ready to enter combat of the authority empowered to him.⁶² Pershing built an independent force that tipped the balance on the battlefield, beginning with the Meuse-Argonne Offensive starting 26 September 1918 and ending on 11 November 1918.⁶³ During the Allies' Meuse-Argonne Offensive, German military forces were surprised and nearly overwhelmed with the combined might of the French-British-American offensive. Germany sued for peace with an armistice on 11 November, halting the offensive.⁶⁴

Pershing's efforts to retain control of American forces paid off with an organized, trained, and equipped American Army fighting independently alongside the Allies in a large-scale attack that turned the tide in the Western Front and gave credibility to American diplomats in their quest to have a major role in post-war negotiations. Thus, while parallel command structures may not be desirable, if there is mutual trust, understanding, rapport, and support in the relationship—especially if there is already an established relationship between allies—such an

⁶¹ Stewart, *American Military History*, 25, 26, 52. Although Pershing was unwilling to commit large corps size American units in battle, he sent divisional unit to pair with French and British divisions for training and experience on the battlefield limited durations of time for three or four months to learn tactics in trench and open warfare.

⁶² David F. Trask, *The AEF and Coalition Warming, 1917-1918*, Modern War Studies (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 16-19. US President Woodrow Wilson, Secretary of War Newton Backer, and Army Chief of Staff General Tasker Bliss provided General Pershing with complete freedom and discretion to command the AEF as he saw necessary.

⁶³ Stewart, *American Military History*, 13, 29, 40.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 51, 52.

arrangement can still be effective toward fostering unity of effort to achieve the strategic objective as seen with the Allied Powers in World War I.

Understanding the type of command structures used in multinational operations is important because these structures define both the types of command authorities associated with each partner and the degree of formal cooperation within the partnership. From December 1943 until the end of World War II, the Allied Powers operated within an alliance that used the integrated command structure of SHAEF to achieve the strategic objective of defeating the Axis Powers and re-establish global stability. In the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003, the United States formed a coalition with a lead nation command structure to defeat the Iraqi military, topple the Saddam Hussein's regime, prevent the proliferation of WMD, and establish a democratic US-friendly country in the Middle East. In World War I, the United States was part of an alliance using a parallel command structure, with an Allied Supreme Commander coordinating military operations to defeat the Central Powers and re-establish global order.

These types of multinational forces and command structures are not mutually exclusive but mixed and matched depending the political and military objectives of its member nations. What is crucial is achieving unity of effort towards the agreed upon strategic objective by partnered nations. In the Vietnam War, the ROK army decided that it would not participate in the US lead nation command structure as it had in the Korean War. As with the AEF during World War I, Korea's national and military leadership wanted the ROK army to be its own separate and distinct force. They saw their first major expeditionary operation since the nineteenth century, as a means to gain international prestige and domestic pride, and as a way to payback the United States for its contribution to the Korean War.⁶⁵ The ROK army arranged a parallel command

⁶⁵ Graham A. Cosmas, *MACV: the Joint Command in the Years of Escalation, 1962-1967* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2006), 345; Blackburn, *Mercenaries and Lyndon Johnson's "More Flags,"* 130.

structure with US forces to coordinate military actions for unity of effort. This arrangement, although not preferred, was effective in performing independent and multinational operations.

Integration of the ROK Army in the Vietnam War

In any assessment of the Koreans' contribution in South Vietnam, it must be underlined that they provided the man-to-man equivalent of the Americans in the Southeast Asian country. In other words, every Korean soldier sent to South Vietnam saved sending an American or other allied soldier. The Koreans, who asked for very little credit, have received almost no recognition in the US press and it is doubtful if many Americans fully appreciate their contribution in South Vietnam.

*Vietnam Studies: Allied Participation in Vietnam*⁶⁶

In its early campaign in South Vietnam, the US Army found its role expanding. Starting in 1955, the Military Advisory Assistance Group, Vietnam (MAAG-V) was in charge of small teams of military advisors with the maximum force strength of 692 embedded with the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVAF).⁶⁷ From 1946 to 1954, in attempts to reclaim their lost colony of French Indochina, French military forces battled the Vietnamese communist nationalist group, Vietminh.⁶⁸ The French abandoned their goal of to reclaim their former colony and withdrew their military forces. The United States sent military advisors who were responsible in the training and mentoring the RVAF in their fight against the Vietminh to prevent the communist takeover of Southern Vietnam. The US policy to support the French and RVAF stemmed from the belief that if one country in a region came under communist influence, then surrounding countries might follow suit—the so called “domino theory.” US officials formulated this theory after seeing China fall to communism with the communist People’s Liberation Army defeat of the

⁶⁶ Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 145. The ROK’s participation saved approximately 50,000 US troops from being deployed to South Vietnam. The alleviated the burden of US forces providing security and protection to the South Vietnamese for a distance of several hundred miles in their area of responsibility along the coast which preventing harassment and domination by NVA and VC.

⁶⁷ Ramsey III, *OP 18*, 27.

⁶⁸ H R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 30-36.

Nationalist Republican Government of China in 1949, and the subsequent establishment of the People's Republic of China. Similarly, the United States observed the Soviet Union's conversion of North Korea into a communist state following World War II and North Korea's effort to subjugate South Korea during the Korean War to control the entire Korean peninsula under communist rule. These events hardened America's resolve to stop communism from spreading throughout Southeast Asia.⁶⁹ Thus, US policy was to contain communism and prevent countries "from passing into the communist orbit, and to assist them to develop will and ability to resist communism from within and without."⁷⁰

From 1955 to 1960, MAAG-V worked to build a conventional force RVAF to defend the northern border against North Vietnamese invasion. Yet even after five years of effort, the RVAF remained largely ineffective.⁷¹ This ineffectiveness resulted from incompetence in its officer corps, corruption, poor command structures, lack of unit cohesion, and ill-trained soldiers in understrength units to prepared to fight counterinsurgency operations.⁷² The situation further deteriorated between 1961 and 1964 when increased activity by the NVA and VC prompted the United States to steadily increase military support to South Vietnam with additional advisors, equipment, and supplies.⁷³ US involvement continued to escalate with the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident. The incident involved an attack on a US Navy destroyer in the Gulf of Tonkin by North Vietnamese, which spurred the passage of Gulf of Tonkin Resolution through the US Congress

⁶⁹ H R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 34-35.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁷¹ Ramsey III, *OP 18*, 27-28. MAAG-V worked with the South Vietnamese government in building 7 infantry divisions, an airborne brigade, a marine group, 4 armor battalions, a coastal naval force, and a small air force.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 28.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

authorizing the buildup and employment of conventional forces in South Vietnam.⁷⁴

By 1965, regular US combat units entered South Vietnam and began combat operations. The US Army expanded its role into combat operations replacing MAAG-V with the creation the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) with a combat troop strength of 184,000 and rising annually.⁷⁵ MACV coordinated all American and multinational forces operations. While MAAG-V had focused primarily on advising the RVAF in fighting an insurgency, MACV shifted those efforts primarily to the execution of major combat operations throughout the entire country, hoping to prevent the communist NVA and main VC units from toppling the South Vietnamese government.⁷⁶

Even with the significant increase of US troops, the US Army found itself unable to cover vast areas in which enemy forces operated along the South Vietnamese border without risking the loss of security in MACV's logistical lines of communication along the coastal areas.⁷⁷ The additional forces from coalition nations significantly improved the US Army's ability to project ground forces inland close to the North Vietnam-Lao-Cambodian borders—volatile areas with high North Vietnamese troop and Viet Cong activities—and retain areas already secured by transferring those areas to coalition forces.⁷⁸ South Korea contributed with over 325,000 soldiers 1964 to 1973, forces that enabled the US to focus combat power at critical points.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 135-138.

⁷⁵ Ramsey III, *OP 18*, 28-29.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ HQ, USMACV, "Command History 1966," 346.

⁷⁸ Headquarters, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (HQ, USMACV), "Command History 1965," 20 April 1966, 58-59.

⁷⁹ Ban, "The Reliable Promise of Middle Power Fighters," 60-61, 99-101.; Tae Y. Kwak "The Anvil of War: The Legacies of Korean Participation in the Vietnam War" (PhD diss, Harvard, 2006), iii.

As America's involvement escalated from 1961 to deployment of conventional force in 1965, it initially found itself strategically wanting a coalition of nations, especially from the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), in order to obtain legitimate international consensus for its Vietnam policy.⁸⁰ The United States developed and implemented the "Free World Assistance Program," or more commonly known as the "More Flags" program on May 1, 1964, a program meant to serve as a visible symbol of free world support for its Vietnamese policies.⁸¹ The US government requested support from allied countries who had the ability to participate in the More Flags program. Only Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, and South Korea would participate with the United States in combat operations in South Vietnam.⁸² Committed coalition troops participating in the Vietnam War were commonly known as "Free World Forces" (FWF).⁸³ The United States could not convince its other allies to participate due to the widespread unpopularity of the war across the international community.⁸⁴

South Korea initially sent non-combat units from May 1964 to June 1965, providing medical support in the form of a 130-man Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH), a

⁸⁰ Blackburn, *Mercenaries and Lyndon Johnson's "More Flags,"* 11-13, 22, 23; Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 1-3, 172, 173. SEATO was an organization for collective defense in Southeast Asia from communist aggression from 1954 to 1977 with membership of Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. SEATO was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) equivalent. Of the SEATO members, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand and the United States sent troops to play a direct combat role in South Vietnam. South Korea was not a member of SEATO although attended and dialogued in SEATO conference and with SEATO members.

⁸¹ Blackburn, *Mercenaries and Lyndon Johnson's "More Flags,"* 1-3,10-11. On 1 May, 1964, President Lyndon Johnson officially established The Free World Assistance Program to solicit assistance from "nations of the Free World" to obtain military and nonmilitary aid and troops to support South Vietnamese Government.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 18, 22, 31, 67, 95, 117.

⁸³ Larsen and Collins., *Vietnam Studies*, 7-10.

⁸⁴ Blackburn, *Mercenaries and Lyndon Johnson's "More Flags,"* 21.

Taekwondo teaching team of ten officers, and a construction support group of 2,416 engineers and transportation troops called the “Peace Dove Unit.”⁸⁵ On June 21, 1965, the South Vietnamese government made an official request to South Korea, at the behest of the US government, for the deployment of ROK combat troops.⁸⁶ The South Korean government agreed to deploy combat divisions and a Marine brigade. From September through late November 1965, the ROK Army began entering Vietnam with its Capital “Tiger” Division and 2nd Marine “Blue Dragon” Brigade totaling 18,212 troops.⁸⁷ When ROK combat units entered South Vietnam and began organizing for combat operations, there were no clear formal agreements how the ROK combat forces would fit into the US lead command structure and to what extent the ROK army would assist in combat operations. There were also no formal South Korean national caveats or diplomatic agreements on the employment of ROK forces in existence.⁸⁸ While this presented opportunities for MACV’s commander, General William Westmoreland, to employ the ROK Army as necessary, it also presented a challenge to negotiate a politically acceptable command relationship with the commander of all ROK forces in Vietnam (ROKFORV), Major General Chae Myung Shin.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ The ROK Ministry of National Defense, *The History of the ROK-US Alliance, 1953-2013*, 98; Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 122. The Peace Dove Unit consisted of a Korean construction support group, a Korean Marine Corps engineer company, Korean Navy Landing Ship Tanks (LST’s) and Landing Ship Mediums (LSM’s), and a Korean Army security company. Peace Dove Unit expanded South Korea’s commitment to assist RAAF in restoring war-damaged areas as part of the Vietnamese pacification efforts.

⁸⁶ The ROK Ministry of National Defense, *The History of the ROK-US Alliance, 1953-2013*, 99; Blackburn, *Mercenaries and Lyndon Johnson's "More Flags,"* 32-34. South Korea presented its aid offer to participate in the Vietnam War to the United States first and negotiated with the United States and later informing the South Vietnamese government. The United States pressured the South Vietnamese to send a request, regardless if they agreed to it, for more aid in the form of combat forces to the South Korean government for formality purpose.

⁸⁷ Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 128.

⁸⁸ Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 134, 146.

⁸⁹ Cosmas, *MACV*, 345, 346.

Command and Control: MACV, I Field Force, and ROKFORV

In early 1965, additional divisions were needed to secure the coastal plain of the II Corps Tactical Zone (II CTZ) to free US and ARVN forces to conduct operations inland towards the Central Highland.⁹⁰ Westmoreland expected the ROK forces to secure major population centers, seaports, and Highway 1.⁹¹ As ROK combat forces entered South Vietnam starting with the ROK Capital Division in late 1965, there was no clarity to how they would be integrated into the coalition. While MACV did integrate the ROK forces in terms of command structure, and the integration was overall effective, some issues did exist. Primarily, ROK combat forces did not agree with MACV's preferred lead nation command structure for unity of command.

Korea's non-combat forces, which began arriving in mid-1964, were not to fire unless attacked, could not fire on or pursue the enemy outside their assigned area, and were prohibited from acting against civil demonstrations unless authorized by a Vietnam army liaison officer.⁹² There were no formal agreements on operational control (OPCON) of these non-combat units by the US-led MACV. However, it was implied between the two nations that the senior Vietnam Army officers would exercise control of ROK units and coordinate combined military efforts if combat action occurred.⁹³ By late 1964, the South Vietnamese government wanted to transfer full OPCON of all Free World Military Assistance Forces to include ROK units to its Army Corps. However, the South Korea government declared that non-combat ROK units could not accept

⁹⁰ HQ, USMACV, "Command History 1965," 44.

⁹¹ Cosmas, *MACV*, 234-236, 246. ROK forces were tasked to secure the coastal logistical bases at Qui Nhon, Cam Rahn Bay, and Nha Trang and portions of the vital north-south route of Highway 1 that connects the entire country together.

⁹² Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 122.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 122-123.; ADRP 1-02, *Terms and Military Symbols*, 1-68. Operational control (OPCON) is the authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission.

control by any national authority other than the United States and used the precedent that the initial non-combat ROK units were placed OPCON to General Westmoreland's MACV.⁹⁴

On 8 February 1965, an agreement between RVAF, MACV, and ROK established the non-combat ROK units OPCON to MACV and they would be responsible to the senior American or Vietnamese commander in any given area of operations.⁹⁵ For the time being, this agreement effectively ended the dispute on the command relationship with this small non-combat ROK force but it did not address further command structure issues, especially with introduced with the arrival of nearly 19,000 ROK combat forces that began in September 1965.

In May 1965, Johnson administration officials negotiated with South Korean officials from President Park's administration for Korean combat units consisting at a size of a regimental combat team of 4,000 troops, and later expanded the requirement to include a ROK division of 20,000 troops.⁹⁶ The commitment to introduce ROK combat units to South Vietnam was solidified with the invitation acceptance and visit of President Park Chung Hee to the White House to meet with President Lyndon Johnson.⁹⁷ From 17-18 May, the two presidents, and their staffs, negotiated general terms for long-term commitments of all US-Korea treaty and military obligations on the Korean peninsula, economic and technological assistance to South Korea, modernization of all ROK forces, and South Korea's deployment of combat forces to South Vietnam.⁹⁸ Strategically, these negotiations were a success for the United States. It gained a

⁹⁴ Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 123.

⁹⁵ Ibid.; Cosmas, *MACV*, 343-345.

⁹⁶ Blackburn, *Mercenaries and Lyndon Johnson's "More Flags,"* 47, 53.

⁹⁷ Republic of Korea (ROK), *Korea and Vietnam*, (Seoul: Ministry of Public Information, Republic of Korea, 1967), 11.

⁹⁸ ROK, *Korea and Vietnam*, 11-12; Blackburn, *Mercenaries and Lyndon Johnson's "More Flags,"* 47-50. President Johnson would later visit South Korea at the invitation of President Park between 31 October to 2 November to further the ongoing close relationship between the United States and South Korea as more American and Korean combat forces entered into South Vietnam and combat operations began to escalate.

coalition member willing to contribute tens of thousands of combat troops with essentially no operational limitations on their employment as long as the agreed upon strategic obligations were met. These negotiations contained failures as well, as the US and ROK had not clearly defined expectations on command relationships and authorities between the two partners or what “national caveats” might be placed on the employment of ROK forces. These oversights ultimately had impacts at the operational level, with MACV scrambling to create a command relationship acceptable to the Koreans and then forced to develop lines of operation through unity of effort rather than unity of command.

From September through November 1965, ROK forces began to flood into South Vietnam under the initial control of MACV to manage their force flow, the consolidation of units, combat equipment and supply distribution, and finally, assignment to their tactical areas of responsibilities. This initial deployment included the ROK Capital Division, the 2nd Marine “Blue Dragon” Brigade, and their support units, totaling 18,904 troops altogether.⁹⁹ The South Korean government placed the Capital Division Commander, MG Chae, in charge of all ROK forces entering into South Vietnam. Westmoreland engaged with Chae about exercising formal OPCON of all ROK combat forces as he had done with Australian, New Zealand, Thailand and to a degree with Philippine, but MG Chae refused.¹⁰⁰

Without a formal agreement established at the strategic level on how the ROK forces integration into the command structure and the command authority in MACV might occur, senior military leaders in Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) in the Pentagon along with MACV initially

⁹⁹ Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 128, 131.

¹⁰⁰ Cosmas, *MACV*, 344-345.

assumed ROK combat forces might eventually be OPCON to MACV.¹⁰¹ The basis of this assumption rested with the experience of the Korean War and its aftermath. The United States had OPCON and lead nation status of all United Nation (UN) forces, comprised of sixteen nations, including Korea.¹⁰² After the signing of the 1953 Armistice freezing hostilities between the belligerents, South Korea and America signed the ROK-US Mutual Defense Treaty granting the UN Forces Commander, who was also the Commander of US Forces in Korea (COMUSFK), OPCON authority of ROK forces for the defense of South Korea.¹⁰³

The ROK Army grew from a poorly organized internal security forces of eight divisions totaling over 100,000 troops in 1950 to a competent well-organized force of 645,000 troops, organized in twenty divisions spread across three army corps, by 1954.¹⁰⁴ The ROK Army's military partnership with the US Army, which had existed since World War II, allowed it to gain familiarity with American organizational structure, equipment, training. This long term relationship had also fostered trust, understanding, and mutual respect that continued to grow between the two nations. Because of this extended relationship between the United States and South Korea, and precedent set by the existing ROK-US military alliance on the Korean peninsula, the JCS and MACV leadership assumed the ROK combat forces entering Vietnam would fall OPCON to MACV.

General Chae however, asserted that on the grounds of national sovereignty and prestige, he could not formally place his combat troops under Westmoreland's operational control, though

¹⁰¹ Carland, *Combat Operations*, 46-50; HQ, USMACV, "Command History 1965," 72; Cosmas, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam*, 301, 302.

¹⁰² *The History of the ROK-US Alliance, 1953-2013*, 43.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 34,72. Ramsey III, *OP 18*, 5-7.

he would honor any “requests” made of his forces.¹⁰⁵ Chae wanted his forces to be treated as independent, distinct, and similar to those of American and South Vietnamese armies through a parallel command structure that coordinated operations in a manner similar to that of the American Expeditionary Forces with the British and French during World War I.¹⁰⁶ Chae wanted to avoid a potentially politically embarrassing appearance of ROK forces subordinate to and acting as mercenaries for the United States rather than being seen as a “Free World” defender assisting a fellow democratic Asian country through equal partnership.¹⁰⁷

Westmoreland’s predicament with Chae highlights the political challenges that US commanders must handle in a coalition balancing the operational preferences of a foreign army and international diplomacy with its state. Westmoreland masterfully handled this situation working closely with Chae to arrange a mutually beneficial relationship demonstrating the trust, patience, and understanding necessary to integrate ROK forces into MACV under a mutually agreed upon informal OPCON status.¹⁰⁸ As the Commander, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV), Westmoreland recognized the domestic and international political significance of the ROK army as an independent and distinct force participating in the Vietnam War to South Korea. For the first time in modern history, South Korea’s forces were participating as a separate and distinct expeditionary force, but also were supporting the United States in fighting against communist aggression and supporting the interests of their Southeast Asian

¹⁰⁵ Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 134.

¹⁰⁶ Cosmas, *MACV*, 345.

¹⁰⁷ Jo, “Fighting for Peanuts,” 63-64; Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 134.

¹⁰⁸ FM 3-16, 2-7. The parent national commander retains the command less operational control of the national forces. The designated national commander of the respective nations in the multinational force exercises this command less operational control. The multinational commander and national commanders discuss and clarify their mutual understanding of the command authorities they receive. This clarification ensures there is common understanding of those authorities. It also precludes potential misunderstandings.

neighbors.¹⁰⁹ With awareness of the political sensitivities and Chae's personal pledge of honoring requests from MACV as orders, Westmoreland felt comfortable with the arrangement that MG Chae's forces would be in a *de facto* OPCON status to MACV and to its subordinate commands, in this case I Field Force, while the official command structure would reflected a unity of effort through coordinating lines (see figure 4).¹¹⁰ This resulted in enhanced trust and support between Chae and Westmoreland, highlighting Sir Lawrence Freedman theory of coalition warfare that, "When it came to victory, what mattered most was how coalitions were formed, came together, and were disrupted."¹¹¹ Westmoreland had to form a C2 structure with the ROK forces and bring the ROK forces into combat operations with US and ARVN forces with all the necessary support they needed and prevent military or diplomatic friction and the enemy from disrupting the coalition.

¹⁰⁹ Ban, "The Reliable Promise of Middle Power Fighters," 78-84. Senior ROK leaders recognized its participation in the Vietnam War would elevate its status and influence in the international community and raise domestic national pride and morale in its military and population that was lacking due a poor economy and political instability post Korean War.

¹¹⁰ Cosmas, *MACV*, 248, 249; Graham A. Cosmas, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam, 1960-1968*, Part 2 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint History Office, 2012), 434-435.

¹¹¹ Freedman, *Strategy*, 143.

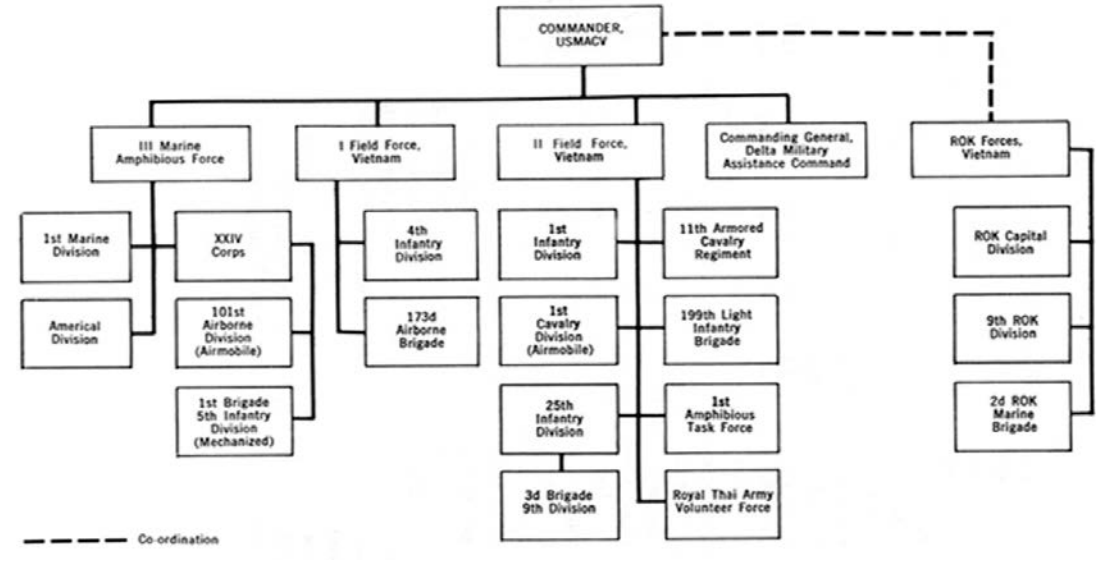


Figure 4. United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam's Ground Combat Command Structure

Source: George S. Eckhardt, *Vietnam Studies: Command and Control, 1950-1969* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1991), 83.

With the unique OPCON issue resolved through an informal agreement of tactical cooperation through formal “requests,” C2 interoperability was the next challenge faced in achieving unity of effort. The location of organizational headquarters (HQ) and establishment of standard operating procedures (SOP) were key factors for coordinating efficient and effective operations.¹¹² These two factors were intertwined for they allow open and continuous communication among the HQs in multinational operations and prevent misunderstanding and accidents.

Recognizing the need for Chae to better control his forces and coordinate ROK actions alongside US forces, Westmoreland recommended that Chae develop and establish a corps level

¹¹² FM 3-16, 2-9.

headquarters alongside the I Field Force HQ.¹¹³ This would be advantageous not only for Chae to command and control ROK army units but also ensure coordination for unity of effort. I Field Force, located in Nha Trang, would have *de facto* OPCON of ROK forces, to rapidly facilitate C2 of all ROK forces in their tactical area of responsibility within the II Corps Tactical Zone (II CTZ).¹¹⁴ Chae agreed and established a corps headquarters called ROK Force Vietnam Forces Command (ROKFVFC) a quarter mile from LTG Stanley R. Larsen's I Field Force HQ (see figure 5).

¹¹³ Carland, *Combat Operations*, 250; Kwak, "The Anvil of War," 84; Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 133; Cosmas, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the War in Vietnam*, 434-435. Between 5 September to 8 October 1966, the ROK 9th Division and support force numbering a total of 23,865 arrived into South Vietnam placed under Chae. By the end of 1966, ROK combat forces, to include the Capital Division that arrived in September 1965, the Peace Dove Unit, and additional support units, amounted to nearly 48,500 deployed along nearly 200 miles coastal area of II CTZ. ROK forces relieved US and RVA forces of securing heavily populated regions that contained major ports, allied bases, and routes required for logistical lines of communication.

¹¹⁴ Reginald Hathorn, *Here There Are Tigers: the Secret Air War in Laos and North Vietnam, 1968-69* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2008), 16-21. The ROK corps HQ has responsibility of the Capital Division and 9th Division. Its areas encompasses the central coast of II CTZ, from Phan Rang to Qui Khon.; Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 138. LTG Chae decided, in addition to the creation of the ROK corps HQ in Nha Trang, to establish the Republic of Korea Forces, Vietnam (ROKFORV) HQ in Saigon that was USMACV equivalent on August 1966. ROKFORV had responsibilities of all ROK military forces in Vietnam in terms of navy, army, air force, marines, and civilian logistics contractors.

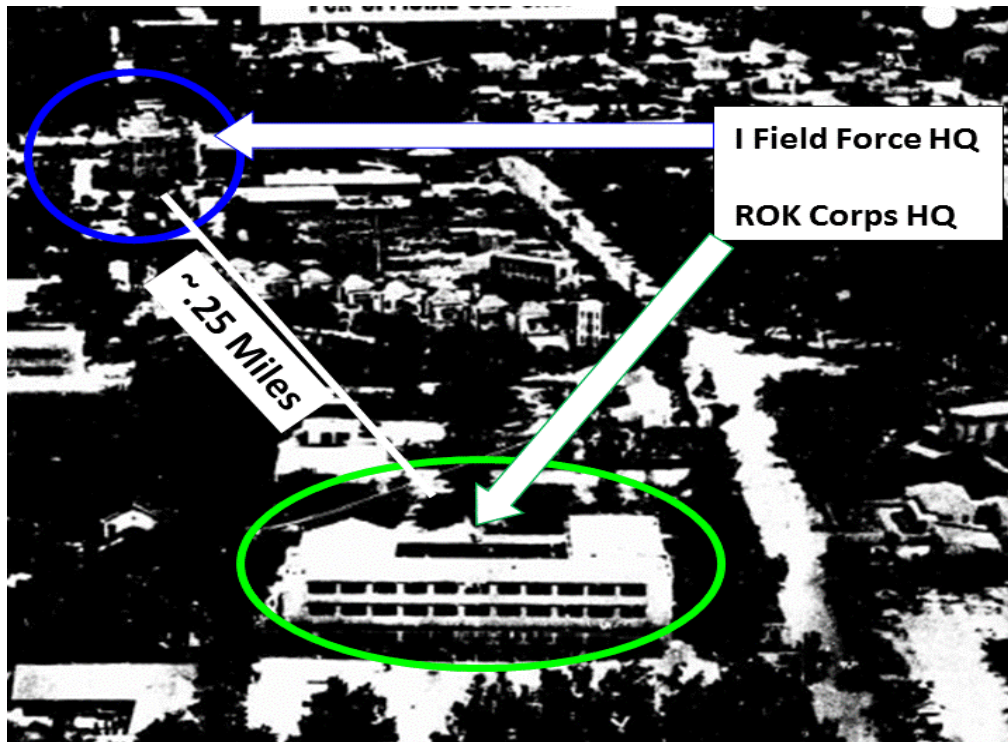


Figure 5. Headquarters, I Field Force Command Structure

Sources: Headquarters, I Field Force, Vietnam, "Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, Period Ending 31 October 1966," 14 March 1967, 87.

I Field Force was responsible for the II CTZ in its entirety and even though ROK divisions and logistics units operated in zone, it had no official command authority over them. This created a potential problem of duplicating operations or worse, fratricide. These issues were mitigated through the close proximity of the HQs and embedded liaison officers that allowed for continuous coordination of operations between the two organizations. Embedded liaison officers were a key asset to both HQs because they facilitated continuous dialogue to coordinate the logistics required to sustain ROK ground forces in conducting operations as well as actual tactical matters.¹¹⁵ LTG Larsen's I Field Force was organized in parallel command structure with that of

¹¹⁵ Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 138.

LTG Chae, whose responsibilities equaled a corps commander in planning and executing operation throughout II CTZ with US and ARVN units (see figure 6).

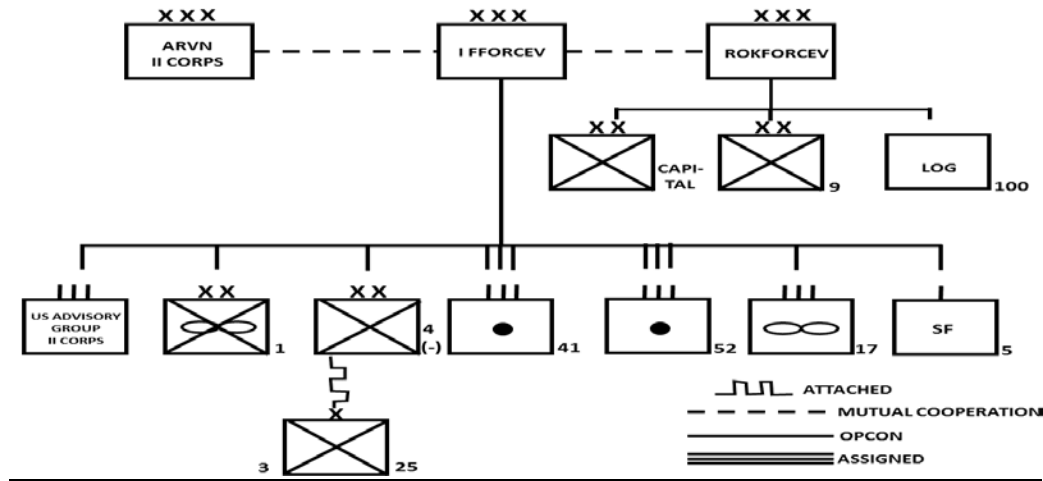


Figure 6. Headquarters, I Field Force Command Structure

Source: Headquarters, I Field Force, Vietnam, “Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, Period Ending 30 April 1967,” 17 November 1967, 90.

Current Army doctrine suggests that the ability for a US command to establish a SOP in a multinational force to conduct multinational operations greatly enhances unity of effort and this assertion is borne out in the case of the ROKFVFC.¹¹⁶ The ROK headquarters’ close proximity to I Field Force HQ was useful, but it was the similarity in corps structure that provided a level of familiarity to both commanders and staffs, enhancing mutual understanding of how each unit

¹¹⁶ FM 3-16, 2-9. All multinational force troops understand the mission, goals, and objectives of the operation. The G-3/S-3 develops SOPs whenever appropriate these SOPs should be easy to understand and address multinational procedures, not single-nation procedures. The lead nation uses its SOPs for most purposes. Even with SOPs, the lead nation provides a forum for deconflicting and resolving misunderstandings. A robust liaison team bridges command and control interoperability gaps; Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 138, 139.

operated and improving communications between the two.¹¹⁷ This benefit dated back to post-WWII, when the US partnered with the Koreans to develop and train the ROK Army, including the creation of multiple ROK corps HQs along with the ROK subordinate level units.¹¹⁸ With almost two decades of close partnership prior to the Vietnam War, the ROK Army had a similar organizational structure and doctrine to fit in with the US Army and also allowed for ease of standardization of operating procedures. In addition to similar organizational structures, doctrine, and basic operating procedures, the use of liaison officers enabled continuous dialogue and provided understanding of capabilities and limitations that were duplicated between the ROK and US HQs in Vietnam.¹¹⁹ This made its organization compatible to the US Army at the tactical and operational levels.

The Korean corps and I Field Force were closely tied in Nha Trang. Each of the related staff section of both corps were in continuous contact with one another through a combination of telephonic communication, secure radio teletype, tactical radios, liaison officers and translators,

¹¹⁷ FM 3-94, *Theater Army, Corps, and Division Operations*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 4-1, 4-12, 4-13. The corps HQ is organized, trained, and equipped to serve as the Army Forces in campaigns and major operations, with command of two or more Army divisions, together with supporting theater-level organizations, across the range of military operations. The corps' command post controls current operations, performs detailed analysis, and plans future operations. It included command group and most of the coordinating, special, and personal staff. The staff organizes into five functionally focused cells (intelligence, movement and maneuver, fires, protection, and sustainment) with broad responsibilities for coordinating these warfighting functions across the corps. Liaison elements from higher, adjacent, and subordinate units locate at the main command post. Corp HQ's basic structure has not changed since the Korean War to current date with the required inclusion of special staff, G-1 – G9 sections, liaison elements, and air and fire support coordination centers.

¹¹⁸ Ramsey III, *OP 18*, 5-8. The United States Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea (KMAG) were partnered with the ROK army to train, advise, and assist during the Korean War and afterwards, the The ROK and US Armies continued combined training exercises to improve their interoperability.

¹¹⁹ James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War*, Vol. 3rd v., *Policy and Direction: the First Year* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1992), 62-71; Cosmas, *MACV*, 345; Larsen. and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 122, 134.

and direct coordination meetings.¹²⁰ A set battle-rhythm of meetings was established where the officers from their respective staff sections of both I Field Force and ROKFVFC met four or five times a week.¹²¹ These combined staff meetings covered topics spanning from sharing intelligence and “requesting” and synchronizing operations, to coordinating for support in logistics, helicopter gunships, artillery, air forces, naval gunfire, and heliborne lift.¹²² In addition to the combined staff meetings, Larsen and Chae, along with GEN Vinh Loc, Vietnam II Corps Commander, and their staffs met every six months to plan the next six months of operations and campaign strategy.¹²³ The informal and formal operating procedures between the staffs for sharing intelligence, requesting and synchronizing operation, coordinating for support, and planning operations and campaigns strategy permitted a unity of effort. It allowed for the multinational force to understand the missions, goals, and objectives as well as deconflicted and resolved misunderstanding.

¹²⁰ Headquarters, I Field Force, Vietnam (HQ I FFV), “Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, Period Ending 31 October 1966,” 34, 57, 58; Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 138, 139.

¹²¹ Larsen. and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 138, 139; Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 5-0, *Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012) 1-14. ADRP 5-0 describes “battle rhythm as a deliberate daily cycle of command, staff, and unit activities intended to synchronize current and future operations. The unit’s battle rhythm sequences the actions and events within a headquarters that are regulated by the flow and sharing of information that supports decision-making. An effective battle rhythm establishes a routine for staff interaction and coordination, facilitates interaction between the commander, staff, and subordinate units and facilitates planning by the staff and decision-making by the commander. These established routines take place in daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly meetings or briefings.

¹²² George L. MacGarrigle, *Combat Operations: Taking the Offensive, October 1966 to October 1967* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1998), 433; HQ I FFV, “Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, Period Ending 30 April 1967,” 17 November 1967, 29; HQ, USMACV, “Command History 1965,” 177; Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 138, 139, 152.

¹²³ Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 139.

The evolution of the United States involvement in Vietnam, from advisors in MAAG-V to combat operations in MACV to support South Vietnam's fight against communist VC and NVA forces, brought with it a growing need for "more flags" to assist US and ARVN forces. The integration of foreign armies into a multinational force was required for MACV to shift from a defensive to offensive operations, and to break away from its coastal bases and begin to attack the NVA and VC at their inland safe havens. The entry of ROK army combat forces was critical in bolstering the coalition numbers to a sufficient strength to enable MACV to start the transition to the offensive. However, before this could be done, the issues of C2, command authority, and interoperability had to be addressed. The ROK army integration into MACV and I Field Force's C2 structure started with uncertainty due to the lack of strategic formal agreements. While LTG Chae refused a formal agreement with GEN Westmoreland for ROKFORV to be OPCON to MACV, he agreed to be *de facto* OPCON to MACV and I Field Force through a more informal arrangement. Chae knew the political risks for ROKFORV to fall under direct control of MACV. He understood the advantages of being an independent and distinct, yet comparable, force in a parallel command structure similar to the AEF in its initial entry to World War I.

FM 3-16 states, "A successful multinational operation establishes unity of effort, if not unity of command. The success of a multinational operation begins with the authority to direct operations of all assigned or attached military forces."¹²⁴ Westmoreland established such a unity of effort and understood the informal nature of the command relationship between his forces and Chae's forces. He understood the politics involved and was comfortable with the "gentlemen's agreement" with Chae because of the trust and understanding built between the US and ROK forces dating two decades prior. Although Westmoreland's masterful handling of C2 relationship had a large part in building a cooperative parallel command structure, the continuous partnership

¹²⁴ FM 3-16, 2-1.

through two decades also eased of C2 integration. The creation of the ROKFVFC, with its similarity in organizational structures and SOPs, enabled efficient and effective interoperability with I Field Force. More importantly, trust and understanding between the US and ROK armies enabled cooperation and commitment between the forces, and such trust was vital to the planning and execution of combat operations.

Intelligence Sharing Among Multinational Forces in Vietnam

From 1965 to 1966, the US military dramatically increased its support from 184,000 to 385,000 troops, not including Free World Forces troop numbers.¹²⁵ Free World Forces troop numbers totaled roughly 53,626 with ROK troops contributing the bulk at 45,605.¹²⁶ The Korean's tactical area of operations within II CTZ was nearly 200 miles in length from Phu Cat Mountain down to Phan Rang (See figure 7).¹²⁷ With this significant amount of ROK forces responsible for security of vast coastal areas against VC and NVA incursions, MACV had the dilemma of providing sensitive intelligence to the ROK Army that was designated as classified without violating US national law. Intelligence sharing was vital to enable the ROK Army to effectively secure their area of operations from VC and NVA threats. FM 3-16 highlights the critical nature of intelligence sharing stating, "The multinational forces synchronize its intelligence efforts with unified action partners to achieve unity of effort and to meet the multinational commander's intent. Intelligence unity of effort is critical to accomplish the mission. Unified action partners are important to intelligence in all operations."¹²⁸ MACV and Field Force I instituted actions to enable intelligence sharing, gaining approval for the dissemination of vital classified intelligence and holding intelligence conferences with its multinational partners. These two actions significantly improved the unity of effort to combat both NVA and VC, as well as fostered trust, mutual respect, and confidence within the coalition.

¹²⁵ Ramsey III, *OP 18*, 29.

¹²⁶ Ban, *The Reliable Promise of Middle Power Fighters*, 60. By 1966, the ROK combat forces consisted of two infantry divisions and a marine brigade. After the ROK forces, Australia, with 4,525 troops, and Philippine, with 2,061, were the next highest troop contributors.

¹²⁷ Larsen. and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 140

¹²⁸ FM 3-16, 4-1 – 4-2.

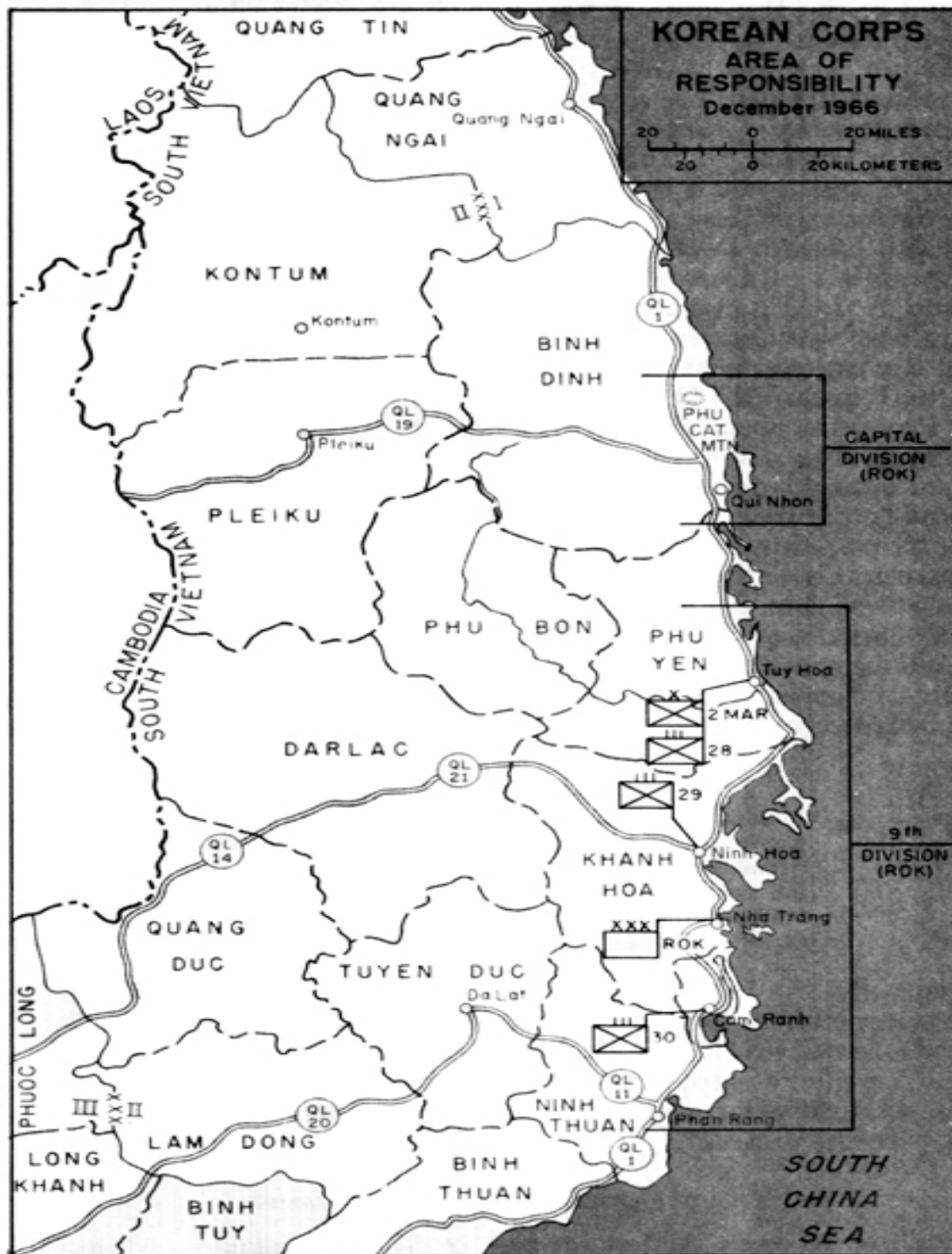


Figure 7. Map of Korean Corps Area of Responsibility in December 1966

Source: Stanley R. Larson and James L. Collins, Jr. *Allied Participation in Vietnam* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2005) 133.

In the beginning of 1965, MG Joseph A. McChristian became the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (J2, MACV).¹²⁹ He was tasked by Westmoreland to develop MACV's intelligence organization, one capable of supporting strategic planning as well as tactical operations for the joint multinational force.¹³⁰ He not only understood the critical nature of the collection, analysis, and distribution of intelligence to US forces, but also the importance of integrating intelligence operations with the multinational partners for the sake of unity of effort. McChristian created a combined American and South Vietnamese intelligence organization that consisted of four centers under J2 MACV: the Combined Military Interrogation Center, the Combined Document Exploitation Center, the Combined Material Exploitation Center, and the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam.¹³¹ McChristian designed the centers to have American and Vietnamese co-directors and a staff of intelligence specialist, technicians, translators, and clerical personnel of both nationalities.¹³² This allowed both US and South Vietnamese personnel to exploit each other's strengths with familiarities in handling intelligence, language, and culture.

Once the intelligence products were received and organized by the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam, for use by MACV, it was ready for distribution to subordinate headquarters. The obstacle lays in releasing classified intelligence products to the multinational partners. FM 3-16 states, "Classification presents a problem in releasing information, but keeping

¹²⁹ Joseph A. McChristian, *Vietnam Studies: The Role of Military Intelligence, 1965-1967* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1994), 13.

¹³⁰ Cosmas, *MACV*, 285.; McChristian, *Vietnam Studies*, 13.

¹³¹ McChristian, *Vietnam Studies*, 14-16. the Combined Military Interrogation Center, which questioned selected enemy prisoners; the Combined Document Exploitation Center which evaluated and translated enemy documents; the Combined Material Exploitation Center that examined captured enemy equipment; and the Combined Intelligence Center, Vietnam which brought together the products of all the other centers for use by MACV.

¹³² Cosmas, *MACV*, 286.

as much unclassified as possible improves interoperability, trust, and operational effectiveness in a multinational force.”¹³³ McChristian sought for and secured, with support from Westmoreland, an exception to national law from Department of Defense that gave Westmoreland broad authority to disclose intelligence information classified through top secret.¹³⁴ Westmoreland used the disclosure authority to empower McChristian to develop a disclosure program for MACV.

McChristian’s policy in J2 MACV states the disclosure programs policy as follows:

Our policy was based on the concept that the combined intelligence program demanded a free exchange of classified information among all participants-that intelligences personnel sitting side by side, working on the same project, and fighting the same enemy should have equal access to all available data. A lesser policy could only hinder our efforts to seek out the enemy, foster mistrust, and inhibit the maintenance of mutual respect and confidence.¹³⁵

The disclosure program ensured that classified information could be shared between MACV and the appropriate multinational partner headquarters to which the information was relevant. It prevented the combined centers from maintaining classified information that it could not release to multinational partners. Information designated as NOFORN (no foreign dissemination) was the only information prohibited from distribution. However, even with this designation, McChristian developed procedures for J2 MACV to have those documents reviewed and approved for release by the Defense Intelligence Agency, which happened in most cases.¹³⁶ McChristian’s efforts for the widest most distribution of intelligence to MACV’s multinational partners enabled subordinate headquarters to conduct monthly intelligence conferences with their ARVN and FWF counterparts. These conference were key to passing and receiving intelligence of mutual interest to support the planning of future offensive operations against the VC and NVA.

¹³³ FM 3-16, 4-1.

¹³⁴ McChristian, *Vietnam Studies*, 142,143.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

With the establishment of this disclosure program enabling intelligence sharing amongst the multinational forces, the I Field Force and ROKFVFC staffs were able to meet four to five times a week, but also held monthly intelligence conferences with intelligence staff sections from multiple organizations. These monthly intelligence staff conferences typically were held at I Field Force HQ and were designed to improve the production and dissemination of intelligence.¹³⁷ Intelligence products were released to relevant multinational headquarters such as the ROKFVFC but attending a conference with multiple organization provided organizations the ability to interact with each other, enabling better understanding of the overall situation. The typical attendees were the senior intelligence officer and their supporting intelligence staff members within each organization, which included I Field Force's G2, ROKFVFC G2, II ARV Corps' G2, and representatives from various intelligence agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency.¹³⁸ The subjects discussed included general enemy situations, interrogation reports, distribution of intelligence summaries between ARVN, ROK and US units, and aerial reconnaissance imagery of suspected enemy locations and activities.¹³⁹ These conferences proved beneficial in allowing intelligence sections of various organizations to foster unity of effort through sharing intelligence and thus ensuring that each had the most timely, relevant, accurate, and predictive assessments and products for each to act upon. This also provided a holistic assessment for the entire II CTZ, along with areas of interest outside its military boundaries.

¹³⁷ HQ I FFV "Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, Period Ending 31 October 1967," 5.

¹³⁸ Ibid.; HQ I FFV, "Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, Period Ending 31 October 1966," 3.

¹³⁹ HQ I FFV "Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, Period Ending 31 October 1967," 5, 6.

Overall, MACV's intelligence sharing proved effective in providing its multinational partners with intelligence in a timely manner and improving intelligence coordination overall. The increasing build up of not only US forces but also FWF caused MACV to develop an intelligence organization with four centers and policies to enable J2 MACV and subordinate headquarters to share classified intelligence. MG Joseph A. McChristian was instrumental in the growth of the MACV's intelligence organization. He secured exception to US national policy from the Department of Defense for MACV to release classified intelligence to multinational partners. McChristian developed MACV's policy of "a free exchange of classified information among all participants" that enabled subordinate US headquarters to conduct monthly intelligence staff conferences with their multinational partners to openly discuss and share intelligence between each other which contributed toward a unity of effort.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, the ROK Army's similar organizational structure and SOPs allowed for it to process the intelligence efficiently and effectively, further aiding in mutual understanding and cooperation. I Field Force and ROKFVFC headquarters benefited greatly with these regular intelligence conferences, gaining a holistic understanding the operational environment in II CTZ. These conferences supported the planning and execution of significant multinational operations, including Operation Irving, which took place between September 23rd through October 24th.

Multinational Combat Operations in Vietnam - Operation Irving

In summer of 1966, Generals Larsen, Chae, Loc, and their staffs met for their semi-annual combined commanders and staff meetings to plan the next six months of operations and campaign strategy.¹⁴⁰ During this meeting, intelligence was discussed regarding the NVA 3rd Division's regiments operating in the Phu Cat Mountains located in Binh Dinh Province, which was the most northern tactical area of responsibility of the ROK Army.¹⁴¹ An agreement was made by the multinational commanders to conduct a major combined campaign to clear the Phu Cat Mountains of the NVA 3rd Division starting in September using a division from each of their forces. There was continued cooperative operational planning to coordinate and synchronize this combined operation. The US 1st Cavalry Division, ROK Capital Division, and ARVN 22nd Division were selected to conduct this operation, officially titled Operation Irving.¹⁴² This meeting highlights successful cooperation and planning of multinational operations in FM 3-16 which states, "Operations conducted by a multinational force require coordination among all entities. Coordination occurs in all phases of the operations from planning and deployment... involves their multinational partners as much as needed."¹⁴³ During Operation Irving, the ROK Capital Division achieved significant success, defeating the NVA on Phu Cat Mountain, in large

¹⁴⁰ Larsen and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 139.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.; Carland, *Combat Operations*, 260, 262.

¹⁴² HQ I FFV, "Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, Period Ending 31 October 1966," 23. Note that officially Operation Irving began on October 2, 1966 but unofficially it was a two phased planned operations. Phase one started with the ROK Army on September 23rd, then while the ROK Army continued operations, US and ARVN Armies began phase two on October 3rd in a coordinated and synchronized method to attack the same enemy in different directions. This was due to the possible political backlash of the ROK Army under command of the US Army that the it was designed this way. This paper uses the unofficial start date because the operation was a coordinated and synchronized between forces but I Field Force was primarily in charge.

¹⁴³ FM 3-16, 5-1.

part because of its ability to be integrated at the division level for combined operations with the US Army employing US Army tactical doctrine.

Following the summer semi-annual combined commanders and staff meetings, two intelligence staff conferences took place, one on August 10th and the other on September 23rd, which was the start of Operation Irving.¹⁴⁴ These two conferences continued to refine the general enemy situation throughout II CTZ but more so in the Phu Cat Mountains in Bin Dinh Province. The intelligence reports indicated that the NVA 3rd Division forces consisted of the 2nd People's Liberation Armed Forces (PLAF) Regiment, the 12th North Vietnamese Regiment, and portions of the 22nd North Vietnamese Regiments.¹⁴⁵

Using intelligence identifying type and location of units available, Larsen developed a three-pronged approach that allowed the US, ROK, and ARVN divisions to operate independently while coordinating their action as a part of the overall operations to achieve unity of effort.¹⁴⁶ Larsen considered the political problem of the ROK and ARVN divisions under an American single command, especially with Chae's position that the ROK Army must be an independent and co-equal partner. He developed a two-phased operation, which required each independent force execute their specific mission based on a fixed start date, while the end date was to be determined by the defeat of the NVA.¹⁴⁷ He designed the operation to have a hammer

¹⁴⁴ HQ I FFV, "Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, Period Ending 31 October 1966," 3.

¹⁴⁵ Larsen. and Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies*, 139; HQ I FFV, "Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, Period Ending 31 October 1966," 7, 22, 23. The People's Liberation Armed Forces were the Viet Cong organized in large military formation. The 12th North Vietnamese Regiment was also known as the 18th North Vietnamese Regiment. This designation was most likely to deceive US intelligence in classifying NVA units.

¹⁴⁶ Carland, *Combat Operations*, 262.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

hitting an anvil effect.¹⁴⁸ Phase I consisted of the ROK division in the anvil role, clearing Phu Cat Mountain and blocking the NVA's south area. Phase II consisted of the ARVN division, with the use of advisors, attacking from the west and southwest to prevent the NVA from escaping inland. Simultaneously, the US divisions, in the hammer role, led the main attack moving from south of the Mieu Mountains towards the northern base of Phu Cat Mountains striking the trapped NVA units.

Phase I of Operation Irving, designated as Operation Maeng Ho 6 by the ROK Army, started September 23rd with the ROK Capital Division attacking north in to the Phu Cat Mountains.¹⁴⁹ Larsen's plan for the ROK Capital Division was to establish the conditions for the main attack by the 1st Cavalry Division. For nine days, as the US 1st Cavalry Division and ARVN 22nd Division set in their attack positions, the ROK Capital Division with US artillery and air support conducted intensive clearing operations to the north through the mountains engaging elements of 2nd PLAF retreating.¹⁵⁰ The ROK's tactics and employment of fire support to clear the Phu Cat Mountains and set blocking positions achieved success causing the 2nd PLAF to retreat north and lose their critical logistical bases.¹⁵¹

Phase II began October 2nd, with the US 1st Cavalry Division and ARVN 22nd Division executing their attacks while the ROK Capital Division continued to block and defend north of the Phu Cat Mountains just as Larsen had planned. The ARVN 22nd Division blocked west and prevented the NVA from escaping, allowing the 1st Cavalry Division, as the hammer, to

¹⁴⁸ HQ I FFV, "Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, Period Ending 31 October 1966, 24.

¹⁴⁹ Ban, *The Reliable Promise of Middle Power Fighters*, 62-64.

¹⁵⁰ HQ I FFV, "Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, Period Ending 31 October 1966, 24.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

successfully attack the 12th North Vietnamese Regiment and 2nd PLAF Regiment near Hoa Hoi (see figure 8).¹⁵² The operation ended October 24th with a combined multinational count of 2,063 enemy killed and 1,409 captured.¹⁵³ Of those numbers, the Capital Division accounted for 1,161 enemy dead and 518 captured with a loss of 30 ROK soldiers. This equated to a kill ratio of 39:1.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Carland, *Combat Operations*, 269, 270.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 272.

¹⁵⁴ Ban, *The Reliable Promise of Middle Power Fighters*, 63.

The tactical success in conducting a combined operation such as Operation Irving with the ROK Army rested greatly on its ability to be integrated into US planned operations. The ROK Army's successfully ability to be integrated at the division level for combined operations and its tactical level executions in ground combat was a second and third order effect stemming from the cooperative command and control, military intelligence sharing, and combined planning conducted at the corps level. The ROK Army tactical level planning and execution was eased by its understanding and familiarity with US Army tactical doctrine that mirrored its own. As with the similar organizational structure of the US Army, the ROK Army trained and employed US Army tactical doctrine employed in the Vietnam War it to its own operations, which highlights the ease of transition from a long and continuous partnership.¹⁵⁵ An US Army 32-man team was set out to observe ROK Army units conducting offensive operation and recorded their observations from March 16th to 30th 1967.¹⁵⁶ Their assessment states:

ROK units, without exception, employed tactics in line with established US Army Doctrine. Squad, company, and battalion operations were characterized by skillful use of fire and maneuver and by strict fire discipline...It should be noted that regardless of the type of operation or formation used, the actions were characterized by patience, a thorough estimate of the situation, use of fire and maneuver, and search and counter-search of suspected areas...This persistence paid off time and again in rooting out the VC and finding his weapons and equipment.¹⁵⁷

The summary portion of the operational report states the ROK Army's "Adherence to tactical doctrine as it is taught at US service schools and is written in US manuals" and "demonstrated

¹⁵⁵ Ramsey III, *OP 18*, 7-10.; The ROK Ministry of National Defense, *The History of the ROK-US Alliance, 1953-2013*, 86-89.

¹⁵⁶ HQ I FFV, "Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam, Period Ending 30 April 1967, 95-100.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 96, 97.

that their grasp and practice of tactical fundamentals... were laudatory.”¹⁵⁸ Due to the continuous relationship between the US and ROK Army, the ROK was able to be integrated into a major operation and successfully perform alongside the US Army.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 99, 100.

Conclusion

This study focused on the US Army's integration of multinational forces into a developing theater of war. The ROK was selected for the study because it was America's most vital partner among the Free World Forces committed during the Vietnam War and held a continuous military relationship that began just after World War II. In the early stages of the MACV's buildup of US Army combat forces in 1965, it had challenges in assimilating inbound ROK Army forces into US-led operations because of a lack of formal command relationships. Fortunately, MACV Commander General William Westmoreland's diplomatic handling of command structure and authority with ROKFORV Commander Lieutenant General Chae Myung Shin along with the established military relationship helped to develop mutual confidence between the armies. Furthermore, the US Army's military partnership with ROK Army during the period allowed for the ROK Army to be familiar with the US Army operations thus easing its ability to adapt to be compatible with the US Army in organizational structure and doctrine. These factors resulted in the overall successful integration of the ROK Army.

This case study analysis examined three aspects of the integration of the ROK Army into MACV using criteria from Field Manual 3-16, *The Army in Multinational Operations*. It delivers a historical narrative evaluated by the doctrinal criteria to provide an in-depth analysis of applying those principles to the relationship between the US and the ROK Army. The first was the establishment of a command and control relationship with multinational partners using the lead nation, integrated, or parallel command structures and their associated authorities command authorities. The second was intelligence sharing to ensure critical intelligence is distributed to multinational partners. The last criteria was combined operational planning and execution of a significant operations. Each of these three criteria were selected due to their logical connection in forming a multinational force with a command structure focused on achieving unity of effort, sharing actionable intelligence in support of military operations, and from that actionable

intelligence, employing multinational forces in the planning and execution of a combined operation such as Operation Irving. With each evaluation criteria focusing on a specific aspect of the integration of the ROK Army into MACV, lessons emerge from each along with gaps within FM 3-16.

The establishment of the parallel command and control relationship between MACV, I Field Force, and the ROK Army was not the doctrinally desirable lead nation command structure. FM 3-16 implies the lead nation command structure is most desirable with one nation in the lead role and its command and control is dominate with a single commander.¹⁵⁹ This allowed for an effective and efficient unity of command and efforts. Additionally, it states, “A successful multinational operation establishes unity of effort, if not unity of command. The success of a multinational operation begins with the authority to direct operations of all assigned or attached military forces.”¹⁶⁰

Westmoreland expected Chae’s forces to be subordinated to MACV and I Field Force. When Chae refused and demanded that the ROK Army be a separate and co-equal force in a cooperative relationship with MACV and I Field Force, Westmoreland developed a unique arrangement. Westmoreland solution was a parallel command structure and co-locations of ROK Army headquarters near their US Army equivalents which facilitated mutual support and cooperation among the armies. The implication for the US Army in the future is that continued military partnership will involve similar parallel command structures to accommodate and satisfy foreign armies’ political and military leaderships thus developing cooperation from operational to tactical levels to build a high level of trust and mutual respect between each force. This will

¹⁵⁹ FM 3-16, 2-3.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 2-1.

enable effective command and control even if it is not in the preferred lead nation command structure.

MACV needed to develop an intelligence sharing system. It understood the critical nature of sharing intelligence with its multinational partners. MACV developed policies to ease the burden of intelligence classification restrictions imposed on it and its subordinate headquarters to downgrade and release intelligence without violating US national law FM 3-16 states, “The multinational forces synchronize its intelligence efforts with unified action partners to achieve unity of effort and to meet the multinational commander’s intent. Intelligence unity of effort is critical to accomplish the mission. Unified action partners are important to intelligence in all operations.”¹⁶¹

Upon becoming J2 MACV, MG Joseph A. McChristian recognized the importance of free exchange of classified information. He secured exceptions to US national policy from the Department of Defense for MACV to release classified intelligence to multinational partners. McChristian developed MACV’s intelligence policies that had the second and third order effects for subordinate US headquarters at lower echelons. These US headquarters, such as I Field Force, that conducted weekly intelligence staff meetings and monthly intelligence staff conferences with their multinational partners where they openly discussed and shared intelligence between each other which contributed toward a unity of effort. The ROK Army’s similar organizational structure and understanding of US Army operating procedures allowed for it to process the intelligence more efficiently and effectively. The implication for the US Army in the future is that allowing classified intelligence, which is not harmful to US national interest and national security, be rapidly distributed to multinational partners to allow for unity of effort. This builds

¹⁶¹ FM 3-16, 4-1 – 4-2.

trust and respect amongst the multinational force increasing cooperation and collaboration in military operations.

An effective command and control relationship and intelligence sharing led to the successful planning and execution of Operation Irving. The combined US-ROK-ARVN operation in Operation Irving resulted in the defeat of the NVA 3rd Division's 12th NVA Regiment and 2nd PLAF Regiment and control Phu Cat Mountains and surrounding areas. FM 3-16 states, "Operations conducted by a multinational force require coordination among all entities. Coordination occurs in all phases of the operation from planning and deployment to redeployment."¹⁶² Operational planning and execution is a critical function to ensuring the unity of effort aligning the tactical actions of the multinational forces in time, space, resources, and purpose to achieve the operational objectives.

I Field Force Commander LTG Stanley Larsen's understood the restraints of the parallel command structure to the ROK Army as well as the ARVN. With this in mind, he was able to develop Operation Irving into a two-phased operation in which each independent force executes their specific mission based on a start dates but coordinate their actions with each other for a unity of effort. He designed the operation to have a hammer hitting an anvil effect with the ROK Army clearing and blocking north of Phu Cat Mountains, the ARVN blocking from the west, and the US Army from north to south to defeat the exposed enemy forces. ROK Army had tremendous success achieving all their objectives and causing heavy casualties to 2nd PLAF Regiment. The ROK Army's success in Operation Irving is due to the cooperative nature of the command relationship, the the timely and accurate intelligence provided, and the combined planning with Field Force I and MACV. The ROK Army's familiarity with US Army operations, organizational structure, SOPs, and tactical doctrine also eased the intergration due to the long

¹⁶² FM 3-16, 5-1.

and continuous military cooperation that overall made Operation Irving a success. The implication for the US Army is that cooperation with operational leaders to develop an mutually agreeable command structure with open dialogue between staff section, especially in the military intelligence and operations planning, will result in ease of combined planning and execution of tactical operations. By establishing military cooperations between various armies, the US Army can avoid hasty crisis-driven military cooperation where the US and foreign armies are working together for the first time in a major operation. Not only will each army have challenges to adapt themselves to bridge capabilities gap, but they will not have developed the mutual trust, respect, and understanding needed to effective and efficient cooperation.

Although FM 3-16 is designed to provide broad guidance, it could improve to provide expanded details on parallel command structures in planning multinational command structures. FM 3-16 does not provide the appropriate level of details on parallel command structures. It describes parallel command structure in one paragraph as follows:

The parallel command structure is an alternative to the lead nation concept. There is no single coalition commander under this structure. The multinational leadership coordinates among the participants to attain unity of effort. This is not the preferred structure because of the absence of a single coalition commander and lack of unity of command.¹⁶³

Other than the description, no other details are presented to provide further clarity of the parallel command structures. Parallel command structures are the least desirable multinational force relying on unity of effort versus unity of command, which can be problematic with each multinational partner having varying strategic objectives. Fortunately, Westmoreland was able to quickly develop an informal command structure coordinating with Chae's ROK Army based on military relationship established previously. This may not be the case for future coalitions. It is recommended that future versions of FM 3-16 expands its descriptions in parallel command structure, providing a method of formulating a coalition with such archetype, its limitations and

¹⁶³ FM 3-16, 2-3.

constraints, and a block and wire parallel command structure diagram to provide a visual depiction of one as an example.

Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom are recent examples of multinational operations where a coalition of countries contributed to support a US-led multinational force. As a result of the US and coalition's contributions, Afghanistan and Iraq were able to form national governments and have trained and equipped security forces. However, the conflicts are still too recent as for the time of this study and many applicable military documents in multinational integration with combat operations are not available due to their current classification levels. In addition, the author feels that most current historical writing on both conflicts are not mature in details and analysis about integration of foreign armies for the same reasons. These military documents are not expected to be declassified until government and military officials believe the declassification and release of the related documents will no longer have the possibility of domestic and international political repercussions for all nations involved. The author focuses solely on the Vietnam War with the understanding the lesson learned in that conflict are universal and relate to future conflicts. In the future, when classified documents are declassified and released to the public, the author recommends future researchers conduct a comparative analysis of the integration of the ROK Army's integration into the US-led coalition in Vietnam War to the ROK Army integration into the US-led coalition in Operation Iraqi Freedom. This comparative analysis will have demonstrated the US Army's strengths and continued challenges of integrations of multinational forces that can improve future multinational doctrines.

Overall, The Vietnam War provides an example of multinational partnership in modern warfare, where the US Army was part of a multinational force conducting decisive action in a unified effort towards a strategic objective. The US Army's overall success in integrating the ROK Army during the Vietnam War was due to MACV's approach to command and control,

intelligence sharing, and the incorporation of ROK forces combat operation at the tactical level. MACV's ability to achieve such success in these areas was largely the result of mutual confidence and trust built on the ground, but underpinned by a two-decade long military relationship built prior to the Vietnam War. This is an example the US Army should follow in conducting future multinational operations. As Sir Lawrence Freedman, expressed in his book *Strategy: A History* "When it came to victory, what mattered most was how coalitions were formed, came together, and were disrupted."¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History*, 143.

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