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Advantages of Combined Forces Operations

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Thesis: Unity in conflict and combined unity in political wills are some of the advantages to combined forces operations.

Advantages

- I. Take fight to enemy
 - A. Leap-frog to areas of importance
 - B. Additional capabilities
- II. Reduction of Safe-Havens
 - A. Political cooperation
 - B. Financial and economic cooperation
- III. Unified Conflict
 - A. Reduce strain on one army
 - B. Unique skills
 - C. Train others
- IV. Increased political unity between nations
 - A. Share responsibilities
 - B. Strengthen security
- V. Fight multi-conflicts abroad

Advantages of Combined Forces Operations

Combined forces operation enables the combatant commander to fight in a conflict with many advantages. The advantages of waging war with other partners greatly outweigh the challenges and disadvantages greatly. By forging coalitions of countries that have the same objectives, the force multiplier of collaborating countries sharing information, political and military goals, and responsibilities presents the combatant commander with seemingly endless opportunities. The key is knowing how to manage coalition partners who can join to provide the strength of numbers or technological superiority for the pursuit of a common goal or goals. The commander of a multinational force can use cohesion and mutual support to gain operational success in the campaign.

Allied forces train together to increase efficiency and cohesion. During these times of training, which are done often in allied host countries, the visiting countries already have forces forward to project to areas of importance. Training may be done in the name of supplementing a police force or assisting in managing a drug trafficking issue, but the fact remains that a force is closer to a possible target. This allows a country to springboard into another location with greater speed or use other countries to assist in transit of military cargos. Therefore, response times to conflicts will be greatly reduced. This allows armies to be more alert and agile in the world theater of operations.

Just as in life, cooperation with others increases the ability to accomplish things better. In combined forces operation each country brings a unique skill set to the operation. In the *Coalition Dynamics in the War Against Terrorism*, it states:

“Some actors may also bring specific “niche” capabilities, allowing them to make a contribution to international efforts of a relatively important kind, despite

otherwise modest resources. Thus, Norway as a leading source of maritime intelligence, has been able to assist in monitoring the movement of shipping with possible Al Qaeda connections. States of the former Soviet Union, and some in Central and Eastern Europe, have considerable expertise regarding chemical, biological and nuclear matters. Malta, Cyprus, Switzerland and Bermuda, along with a host of small states, have extensive practical involvement in international financial transactions, and their cooperation may be instrumental in the attempt to monitor and interdict terrorist funding. In sum, new patterns of terrorism will see new and non-traditional dynamics in counter-terrorism cooperation” (Lesser, 2002, p. 6).

Training and cooperating with other countries gives a coalition force a greater understanding of worldwide cultures, and in the end, a greater capacity to wage war. As stated by GEN Peter Pace, Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in his posture statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee (2006) “As we move ahead in combating terror, we do so increasingly in combination with other nations who understand the danger terrorism poses to their citizens” (p. 7).

Training together also ensure that communication skills between the forces is enhanced. Working side by side through difficult exercises allow each coalition country army to better understand the nuances and jargon that each uses in its operations. This understanding is of the utmost during periods of intense activity. Countries that were once enemies, but are now coalition partners can use this training time to overcome suspicions of techniques and tactics. Training together to defeat an enemy should not be done for the first time on the battlefield. Time spent training together also allows doctrine to be wrote and revised before lives depend on

execution. This training time gives the individual Soldier a better sense of who is to his right or left. Knowing that coalition partners have the same goals and commitments gives the individual Soldier a better sense of comfort, and could even enhance performance of the Soldier and his or her unit.

Not only are there strength in numbers, but unity of friendly forces presents a formidable foe to the enemy, militarily and geopolitically. Countries that have alliances between each other train together, have cooperative agreement to send representatives to the other nations, military schools, and share equipment knowledge. This enables the combined forces team to fight seamlessly and overcome obstacles easily. This shows opponents that the force has unity in conflict and in peace.

As countries continue to form alliances and make commitments, the number of safe-havens for the opposing force shrinks exponentially. Countries have alliances with other countries that in turn have alliances with other countries, and the system continues. As more partnerships form, the places for “unfriendly” to feel comfortable will continue to get smaller and smaller. This process is done through the political process, not militarily.

As politicians become involved, they are able to exert additional pressure through their governments in the form of financial and economic actions. Even during World War I at the Paris Conference held in March of 1916, the allied governments “adopted resolutions affirming unity of military, economic, and diplomatic action looking to the accomplishment of their unshaken purpose to achieve victory for the common cause” (New York Times, ¶ 1). Even now in the global war against terrorism in Afghanistan, this point is emphasized by Donald Rumsfeld, then Secretary of Defense, in a 2002 press conference with Kyrgyzstan President Askar Akaev. The United States and Kyrgyzstan share the same goals for Afghanistan, Rumsfeld said: “that it

no longer be a haven for terrorists or terrorist training camps; that its neighbors permit it to grow, prosper and recover from drought, war and the difficulties it has faced” (Kozaryn, L.D., 2002).

Conducting large-scale military operations can be extremely burdensome on the finances and people of a nation. Forming a coalition to conduct combined forces operations can help defray costs for all parties involved. “During the Gulf War, strong political leadership also underlay important international financial support to the war effort, including large financial contributions from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Japan, Germany, South Korea and others to help defray U.S. incremental costs” (Principle Deputy Under Secretary (Strategy And Resources), p.26). “This spread the financial burden of the war and helped to cushion the U.S. economy from its effects” (Principle Deputy Under Secretary (Strategy And Resources), p.26).

Accomplishing the mission of large-scale warfare relies heavily on a steadfast coalition. Such support can alleviate some difficulties of reconstruction and of military distribution for all countries involved.

Combined forces operations present the ability to present a unified front in the international aspect as well. If international law is violated, as in the Kosovo conflict, the strength of the force becomes greater than the force itself. GEN Wesley Clark (Ret.) stated, “When you stack international law with strength of diplomacy and military power, it allows decisive strategic results to be achieved without decisive military force.” This shows the opposing force that not only do we have the ability, we have the support of the international community behind us (2003).

As countries continue to form alliances, the advantages continue to increase. Economic stability is created, assurances for assistance when needed are created,

strengthened security for partner nations, and a long lasting relationship built on mutual respect and understanding is fostered. The United States Navy is currently trying to forge this relationship in Southeast Asia by training militarily and exercising cooperation that extends into the political area. This is apparent in the efforts during disasters.

In today's intertwined world of politics and economics it is extremely difficult for a country to maintain an atmosphere of individualism and must learn to use the advantages of combined forces operations to exert extra pressure on its opposition. Soldiers training and fighting in combined forces operations can also become more satisfied working with other citizens of the world and productivity can even increase. The cultural, economic, political, and military advantages are endless and can be ominous to opposing forces. Combined forces operations characterize forces of enduring relevance in meeting the global military challenges.

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