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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN AN INTERNATIONAL COALITION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

**MAJOR PIERRE DE LASSUS SAINT-GENIES
FRENCH MARINE CORPS**

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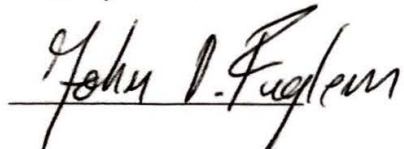
Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: **Dr. Lon Strauss**

Date: 25 April 18

Approved: 

Oral Defense Committee Member: **LTC John Fuglem (Norway), Military Faculty Advisor**

Date: 25 Apr 18

Approved: 

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Executive Summary

Title: Effective Leadership in an International Coalition

Author: Major Pierre de LASSUS SAINT-GENIES, French Marine Corps

Thesis: A military coalition is a heterogeneous force with troops having various levels of training and with diverse cultures or procedures. Moreover, it is a force created in a brief period to fight against an emerging threat. Furthermore, since the common goal of the coalition members is to neutralize this menace, the contributive countries can have very distinct visions in other domains. However, despite those differences in shared values or interests, a coalition will have to implement a strong cohesion to achieve an indispensable unity of effort. Indeed, without a common vision, it will not be possible to achieve the indispensable consensus to make any effective and successful decisions. Therefore, the unity of the coalition will be its center of gravity.

Discussion: Those specific characteristics will require the coalition leader to adapt his leadership to this particular force to steer it efficiently. Thus, he will have to develop diplomatic skills to deal efficiently with the troops of the different contributive countries.¹ Moreover, to employ those units adequately and to anticipate any contingency, he will have to focus as well on the political aspects of the mission and especially on the domestic motivations of the different countries for being in the coalition. That will require him to have some political skills to deal with the political leaders of the different countries involved in the coalition. Then, to preserve the cohesion within this multinational force, the coalition leader will have to decide and act while preserving this delicate equilibrium. Therefore, he will have to learn to make decisions in dealing with little flexibility and in giving the prevalence to the consensus on operational efficiency. Thus, to implement, maintain, and strengthen the delicate equilibrium of unity within the coalition, despite the differences, it will be a day-to-day basic concern for the coalition leader. That will require him to act as a diplomat to manage the different troops with discernment and to make each give its best for the coalition.

Conclusion:

Commanding a coalition presents challenges that are different from those of a national force. As it is a favored tool for political leaders, military commanders should prepare for such challenges in developing specific skills that will be appropriate for steering efficiently in an international context. Civilian managerial sciences, in developing a more indirect leadership, should be a good inspiration for best practices in military coalitions.

¹ To avoid awkward phrasing, the traditional 'he' will be used to refer to human beings of either sex or both sexes.

Introduction

“All coalitions are made up by different cultures which need to be understood and respected. We must all work hard to understand each other.”²

Nick Parker

Since the end of the Cold War, lots of nations have increased their commitment to military coalitions to help solve crises or regional conflicts.³ Indeed, coalition forces have lots of advantages, such as adding legitimacy to the force through an increase in the number of nations participating or sharing the burden of the operation. However, a coalition is a very heterogeneous force that can involve several countries with very different backgrounds and cultures, as well as possible competing interests. Moreover, as a coalition is a force created in a short period of time, usually after a threat has emerged, the participating countries have very little time to learn how to work together. That is why a military coalition requires a very special leadership and requires developing very specific skills.⁴ Indeed, being an effective leader in a coalition requires a range of leadership skills that are different from those required for operations in a national military environment. And since coalitions are more prevalent and do not appear to be diminishing, it is important to determine what main skills future coalition leaders should develop to be successful.

² Nick Parker, “In Bed With An Elephant: Personal Observations on Coalition Operations in the Contemporary Operating Environment,” *Military Review*, July-August 2011, 83.

³ Report of a French-German-UK-US Working Group, *Coalition Military Operations, The Way Ahead Through Cooperability*, Arlington: U.S.-Center for Research & Education on Strategy and Technology, 2000, xv.

⁴ The leadership should be understood as the ability to “convince others to collaborate effectively in a common endeavor.”, Richard M. Swain and Albert C. Pierce, *The Armed Forces Officer*, NDU Press, 2017, 57.

It is the ability to smooth out disparities that will allow the coalition leader to effectively operate a multinational coalition. Indeed, as a coalition is a heterogeneous force, it **requires a specific type of leadership (A)** to make it work efficiently. Consequently, coalition leaders will have to possess the ability **to federate to achieve a unity of effort (B)**. Moreover, for steering it efficiently, they will have **to develop political skills (C)** and be prepared **to compromise (D)**.

A. Coalition: a very Specific Force that Requires Specific Leadership

“I have much less admiration for Napoleon since I commanded a coalition.”

Marshal Foch

A military coalition has very specific characteristics that make it unique. Indeed, it is a **force created in a short period of time (a)** after the emergence of a major threat. Moreover, it is a **heterogeneous force (b)** gathering troops with various levels of training, various procedures, and diverse values. Furthermore, if the coalition’s nations share a **common purpose, they are likely to have very different interests in other domains (c)**.

a. A Force Created in a Short Period of Time

A coalition is “a grouping of like-minded states that agree on the need for joint actions on a specific problem at a particular time with no commitment to a durable relationship.”⁵

⁵ Andrew Pierre, *Coalitions: Building and Maintenance*, Washington, D.C.: The Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 2002, 2.

Consequently, each coalition is unique and built for a specific situation. Indeed, a coalition appears with a threat and often disappears once that threat has ended. Contrary to an alliance that is established for the long term, and first to deter a threat from occurring, a coalition is built for a short term and to deal with a specific and imminent threat.⁶ That means that most of the time, a coalition has little time to prepare before fighting against the threat. Indeed, military coalitions do not have permanent structures. That signifies that coalition leaders must create all of this from scratch. Therefore, members of a coalition will have little time prior to the initial engagement to train together and create unit cohesion. Thus, it will be more difficult to create buy-in among coalition members prior to the onset of the coalition's deployment. For instance, when the United States created the coalition after the Kuwait invasion in 1990 to fight against Iraq, they had less than two months to gather all the troops and military hardware from thirty-three different participating countries before they kicked off the operation. Most of those who joined had little operational experience together, which generated some difficulties for the American leadership because it was a crunch time with no slot to coordinate tactical procedures or harmonize tactical know-how.⁷ Indeed, contrary to an alliance that has time to organize common training, to establish common procedures, and share common interests, a coalition is a force created in a short period of time and has little time to organize common training prior to the operations. Consequently, a coalition leader will have to adapt his leadership in considering the lack of mutual knowledge and training that are characteristic of a loosely formed military coalition.

⁶ An alliance is “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 members.” *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations*, GL-5.

⁷ James Addison Baker and Thomas M. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace, 1989–1992*, New York: Putnam, 1995.

b. A very Heterogeneous Force

For the sake of legitimacy, politicians can accept some nations in the coalition, even with few or weak military capacities. Indeed, “the structure of a coalition is often more important for its political effect than its military capability.”⁸ Moreover, the number of participating nations makes for a strong coalition since it increases its legitimacy. But that means that “commanders may have to accept a suboptimal tactical organization to achieve key strategic objectives.”⁹ Indeed, along with this legitimacy, the number increases the complexity of a military force, especially if the troops do not have common training or compatible military doctrine. For instance, the first coalition to fight against the threat that the new French first Republic represented, gathered eleven European powers in 1792.¹⁰ But this multinational force was not successful in defeating France, even though it outnumbered the French military, because the participating countries had dissimilar tactical procedures and levels of training.¹¹ Moreover, the Command and Control (C2) structure was very different that generated lots of difficulties to establish a unity of effort. Consequently, despite its size and its willingness to defeat a common enemy, the coalition failed to crush the Revolution because it was too eclectic to coordinate efficiently and fight successfully. Therefore, some military leaders could be unenthusiastic about increasing the number of countries participating in a coalition. For instance, after 9/11 when the United States decided to invade Iraq, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was reluctant to put much effort into creating a coalition since he feared that would impede his freedom of action.¹²

⁸ Colonel Larry M. Forster, “Coalition Leadership Imperatives,” *Military Review*, November-December 2000, 55.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Arthur William Holland, "French Revolution, The," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (11th ed.), Cambridge University Press.

¹¹ Noah Shusterman, *The French Revolution. Faith, Desire, and Politics*, Routledge, London/New York, 2014, 271-312.

¹² Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005, 180.

Indeed, unilateral, full spectrum operations are very complex and adding foreign armed forces would compound that complexity because each has a different approach to warfare with different procedures.¹³ Hence, coalition leaders will have to be flexible and to comply with the political decisions in working with different countries having disparate background.

c. A Common Purpose but Different Interests

“It is therefore a mistake to believe that all members of a coalition share a common reason for participation.”¹⁴

Russell W. Glenn

Since the number is part of the legitimacy in a coalition, political leaders will tend to accept countries even if they have different backgrounds or interests. Thus, after 9/11 for instance, Condoleezza Rice, as the National Security Advisor, tried to incorporate into the military plans, for the invasion of Iraq, all the volunteer Nations to get the largest support, and therefore legitimacy, from the international community.¹⁵ But it is not because the coalition’s countries share a mutual goal against a common threat, that they have same interests in other domains. This is why Donald Rumsfeld disagreed with Condoleezza Rice about the coalition in Iraq since he feared that a larger force with competing interests would hamper tactical actions.¹⁶

¹³ Robert RisCassi, “Principles for Coalition Warfare,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, Summer 1993, 59.

¹⁴ Russell W. Glenn, *Band of Brothers or Dysfunctional Family? A Military Perspective on Coalition Challenges During Stability Operations*, RAND Corporation, 2011, 31.

¹⁵ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005, 180.

¹⁶ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005, 180.

It is probably the main difference with an alliance where the countries share a strategic vision and work on it in the long term. In a coalition, the mutual interest is unique and short term: to destroy a common threat. Thus, the coalition will not focus on the other interests of the participative countries. It could even try to gather countries which were enemies, or at least adversaries, prior to the uprising of the common threat. This was the case in Europe in 1813 with the coalition that arose against Napoleon. Indeed, the divergence between the United Kingdom and its allies over the question of maritime rights was put aside to fight together against the more important threat that represented the Emperor. But those difference of interests had some consequences on the manner to lead the war. Thus, in 1794, although the British navy maintained its supremacy at sea, it did not support effectively any land operations after the fall of the Belgian provinces.¹⁷ Consequently, the Prussians were slowly defeated and retired from the war by the end of the year. Thus, it appears that within the coalition, countries can have a mutual willingness to neutralize a common threat while keeping different interests in other domains. And this applies as well to “superpowered” coalitions. Indeed, in the same way that in a non-competitive business, internal power games tend to take precedence over other considerations, in the very strong coalitions some participating nations could be more attentive to the political benefits to be gained from participation than the success of the operation.¹⁸ That will be an important difficulty for the coalition leader because it will be difficult for him to maintain the necessary unity of effort during the whole period of operations. A common purpose does not mean a collective understanding on the situation nor a similar point of view about the ways to use to work out with a solution. Thus, in Mali for instance, Paris and Bamako share the same

¹⁷ Arthur William Holland, *The French Revolution*, In Chisholm, Hugh, Encyclopædia Britannica (11th ed.), Cambridge University Press,

¹⁸ Michel Goya, *Fiches d'histoire*, 123.

purpose but they do not have the same vision of the enemy and that has a strong influence on the leadership of the coalition leader and on the attitude to adopt with the Malian military. Indeed, France fights against the enemy in the north of the country because they are Islamic, but Malians fight them because they are Tuareg. For the Malian government, the jihadists do not constitute an existential enemy, unlike the Tuareg who want the partition of the country. Furthermore, motivations for participating in the coalition can be very different. Hence, some countries will be willing to participate in a coalition, but without taking any risks. This was the case in the Gulf War where the German military offered to provide money to the coalition but did not deploy any soldiers on the ground.¹⁹ Thus, according to the politician Harold Nicolson, who was a member of the Churchill's 1940 wartime government of national unity, "The basis of a coalition is an agreement between two or more sovereign states to subordinate their separate interests to a single purpose."²⁰ But it does not mean that those countries will go against their domestic interests. And that is likely to have influence on the conflict management as well as conflict termination.

A coalition is a disparate force created in a hurry that shares one common purpose, but different interests. Those three characteristics will require coalition leaders to have very specific skills to gain the respect and support of all coalition subordinates, whatever their citizenship. For that, coalition leaders will have to be able to move from a national specific leadership to a more diplomatic one to be able to make the coalition work efficiently and in the same way.

¹⁹ Freedman, Lawrence, and Efraim Karsh. *The Gulf Conflict 1990–1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993. Print.

²⁰ Harold Nicolson, *The Congress of Vienna, A Study in Allied Unity: 1812-1822*, Grove Press, 2000, 51.

B. Federate to Achieve a Unity of Effort

“In alliances, the center of gravity lies in the unity formed by common interests.”²¹

Carl von Clausewitz

As a coalition is a disparate force with different interests, **the cohesion will be its center of gravity (a)**. That means that the first thing a coalition leader will have to focus on will be to **implement and maintain the cohesion of the force (b)** in order to make it efficient as soon as possible. Moreover, as this force is very eclectic and can gather countries with diverse cultures, the coalition commander will have to **develop a diplomatic style of leadership (c)** to maintain the cohesion of this multinational force.

a. The Cohesion is the Center of Gravity of a Military Coalition

The most sensitive point of a military coalition is its aptitude to get each country to work together, regardless of the differences of culture, procedure, interests, or chain of command. Indeed, the great heterogeneity of a coalition can quickly hamper its ability to make any decision. A common purpose does not mean a common vision about how to solve the problem. The coalition with France and Brittany during Operation Musketeer in 1956 is a notable example of the importance of a common point of view. Indeed, on November 5, 1956, when the British unilaterally decided to stop military operations a few hours before the cease-fire came into effect, the French had no choices but to accept. And this dissension happened because Paris and London had not the same strategic purpose. Indeed, as the British wanted to regain its influence on the

²¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Penguin Classics, 1982, 595–596.

Canal, the French wanted to depose Nasser because he supported the insurgents in Algeria. Thus, when London realized they could not achieve their purpose, they decided to end the military action regardless of the consequences for France. Because there was no real cohesion within the coalition, Operation Musketeer failed very shortly after its onset. This is why the cohesion of the coalition must be the priority of the coalition leader. Without cohesion, there is no common vision and unity of effort is lacking. Therefore, the cohesion of a military coalition is its center of gravity and will depend on the willingness of each member to work together despite the differences that can exist between them. This requires the coalition leader to spend a lot of time protecting and maintaining it. General Eisenhower recognized that maintaining a coalition's cohesion was vital. He stated that "it added to my personal burden" but it was indispensable to maintain coalition's aptitude to act.²² To a certain extent, it can be said that fighting the enemy should be a second priority of the coalition commander after the cohesion of the force. Indeed, without consensus it is very difficult for the coalition to make any decision together and, hence, to perform missions. Moreover, this cohesion does not only concern the internal forces of the coalition, but it has importance at the political level as well. Indeed, dealing with political counterparts of different contributive countries will be necessary although very time-consuming. General Eisenhower had to do this several times during the Second World War. As the supreme allied commander, he had to deal with numerous politicians, which was a strain on his time that he could not spend preparing the operations. Before the launching of operation Overlord, for instance, Prime Minister Winston Churchill requested to observe the landing from a warship.²³ General Eisenhower said that he accepted not because he agreed with this request, but because he wanted to be sure not to lose the full endorsement of a country of the coalition at a crucial

²² Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, Doubleday and Company, 1948, 251.

²³ *Ibid.*, 251.

moment. This is why “the coalition leaders must develop a means for coordination among the participants to attain unity of effort.”²⁴

b. Implement and Maintain the Cohesion of the Force

Since a coalition leader will have to create a cohesive fighting force from a disparate group of multinational forces, he will need to focus first on how to implement cohesion, then maintain it. To implement it, he will have first to concentrate on the human factors. Indeed, “The first task of a commander in combined operations must be to establish complete harmony with and between the various personalities of the senior commanders of the services of the various nations under command.”²⁵ The US doctrine develops those points in its Joint Publication 3-16 *Multinational Operations* and highlights the importance of respect, patience, indulgence, and more.²⁶ General Eisenhower is a great example on this point. Indeed, he had an “extraordinary ability to work with others, to get along with them, to encourage them, to mediate among them, to direct them, to encourage them and to correct them.”²⁷ Moreover, some countries could easily feel isolated because they do not share the same culture, the same language, or are in minority. That is why it will be one of the tasks of the coalition leader to be sure that no counterparts are “virtually isolated” within the staff.²⁸

Then, after succeeding to create the buy-in, the coalition leader will have to maintain it. That will have to be a day-to-day basic concern. Indeed, as he reminds in this book Colonel

²⁴ Joint Publication 3-16, *Multinational Operations*, I-4.

²⁵ Jacob L. Devers, “Major Problems Confronting a Theater Commander in Combined Operations,” *Military Review*, January-February 1997, 157.

²⁶ Joint Publication 3-16, *Multinational Operations*, I-4.

²⁷ Alan Axelrod, *Eisenhower on Leadership*, Jossey-Bass, 2006, 10.

²⁸ Colonel Larry M. Forster, “Coalition Leadership Imperatives,” *Military Review*, November-December 2000, 55.

Larry M. Forster, who served as Commander of the Multinational Force and Observers (FMO) in Sinai from June 1998 to July 1999, “coalition commanders often head a symbolic presence as well as a physical force. However, the greatest operational challenge is often internal – maintaining intra-coalition unity.”²⁹ That is why the coalition leaders will have to develop warm and personal relationships with their direct subordinates. Though this applies to all good leaders, it appears that more than elsewhere, having good relationships with his direct subordinates will help the coalition leaders to lead efficiently and avoid making things that could hurt his subordinates or create misunderstanding. Indeed, more than in a national military, it is the personality of the leader that will help him to build and strengthen its authority. His ability to establish warm relations with his subordinates, showing a real attention for their interests and concerns, will be the enablers that make his subordinates accept his authority. As general Devers, who was involved in the organization, planning, and leadership of Operation Dragoon in August 1944, explains in his book, the first concern of a good coalition leader must be “the complete analysis and understanding of the characteristics, capabilities, personalities, ambitions, and personal and professional habits of his various senior commanders. A complete understanding of this problem is the very essence of successful leadership.”³⁰ By doing so, General Devers succeeded in maintaining a very strong cohesion within the allies. Indeed, as he developed warm relationships with his direct subordinates, he managed to achieve a successful unity of effort that facilitated the crushing success of the Operation Anvil that drove the Germans from the

²⁹ Larry M. Forster, “Coalition Leadership Imperatives,” *Military Review*, November-December 2000, 55.

³⁰ Jacob L. Devers, “Major Problems Confronting a Theater Commander in Combined Operations,” *Military Review*, January-February 1997, 157.

Southeast of France.³¹ In effect, in maintaining a cohesion around a common strategy, he avoided internal tensions that would have hampered his ability to act rapidly and efficiently.

Moreover, in a military coalition, as each contributive country will have a double chain of command (C2), that will exacerbate again the difficulties of the leadership. Indeed, each troop is likely to keep its national chain of command during the operation.³² That is why the coalition leader will have to pay attention to this parallel authority because it could quickly hamper his actions if some of his decisions go against the main interests of some nations. Indeed, it will be easy for a subordinate to find some good reasons coming from his national chain of command for not obeying an order from the coalition leader. That is why, as observed Major General Carter, the British commander of the multinational Regional Command South in Afghanistan from November 2009 to November 2010: “much of what is achieved in Afghanistan is down to personal relations.”³³ Indeed, he paid lots of attention to earn the trust of his subordinates and was very understanding of the constraints of their countries. Thus, the dialogue was truer which led to a better integration of the different interests and therefore to a better unity of action.

Furthermore, a coalition will have its own culture created by the merging of the contributive countries’ values and habits. For instance, the opinion of some countries about gender relationships, gender theories, place of the women in the society, level of religious devotion within the military, etc., will have influence on the inter-categories relationships in the military and consequently on the leadership. For instance, in Mali, to avoid any problem in the relation between units, MINSUMA implements gender instruction to ensure that each soldier

³¹ Jeffrey J. Clarke, Robert Ross Smith, *Riviera to the Rhine*, Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, October 2015, 194-198.

³² *Joint Publication 3-16, Multinational Operations*, I-4.

³³ Nick Carter, “Lessons Learned Post Tour Interview”, *United Kingdom Ministry of Defence*, November 2010, 3.

respects the UN chart and will not hamper the cohesion of the coalition by wrong behaviors.³⁴ Therefore, the coalition leader will have to understand quickly those differences and adapt his leadership accordingly because “once cultures are formed they influence what kind of leadership is possible”.³⁵ Indeed, even if some practices do not represent the values of the coalition leader, he will have to avoid imposing his ideas of normalcy because cultural norms and traditions can be very different between countries. Moreover, the purpose of a coalition is not to make the shared values or the domestic cultures change but only to be effective so as to be successful. This is why leading a coalition requires being open to diversity and accepting working with soldiers having different backgrounds and culture.³⁶ The sensitive point for the coalition leader will be to tolerate other values without denying or challenging his own. Moreover, as some habits popular in some countries could appear very hurtful in other ones, that will require for the coalition leader to manage those differences with diplomacy and tolerance.

c. Develop a very Diplomatic Leadership

The characteristics of a military coalition require to implement a diplomatic leadership. Indeed, with the same citizenship, the authority is easier to implement because the subordinates must obey to the commander but in an international context, the authority of the coalition leader could be easily challenged (notably by the existence of two C2). That is why a coalition leader will have to steer with tact and diplomatic in persuading or convincing if necessary. Consequently, the more he will know his subordinates and will be cohesive with them, the easier it will be for him to convince them and succeed to make them in board with his ideas. To retake

³⁴ MINUSMA: United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, <https://minusma.unmissions.org/en/mandate-gender-unit>

³⁵ Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Broché, August 2010.

³⁶ Alan Axelrod, *Eisenhower on Leadership*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006, 2.

the title of a book, the coalition leader will have to “ask and not tell.”³⁷ The retired Lieutenant General Walter F. Ulmer, who commanded the 3rd Armored Division in Germany, stated that direct leadership is successful at the tactical level in a national context, but it is often dysfunctional at a strategic level and especially in an international context that requests nuance, diplomacy, patience, open-mindedness and compromise.³⁸ Indeed, to maintain his authority despite the diversity of his unit, he adapted his leadership and acted more as an orchestrator than a boss. Thus, he managed more than he ordered because the upfront and direct leadership, that is common in some countries, can be hurtful for foreign troops which are not accustomed to such a leadership. By doing this, he succeeded to enhance his authority even on the units with dissimilar culture. Therefore, leading a coalition demands a range of skills that are more consultative than direct in their approach.³⁹

To reach such a unity of effort in so mixed a force, the temperament of the coalition leader will be more than important. Indeed, as leading a coalition requires adapting its leadership, the coalition leader will have to be able to change some of his habits built and sharpened during his military career to implement a new leadership specific to the coalition. But succeed in creating the buy-in and develop his diplomatic skills will not be enough to make a coalition work efficiently. Undeniably, the coalition leader will have to focus as well on the political aspects of the mission to enhance the cohesion at the political level.

³⁷ Edgar H. Schein, *Humble Inquiry: The Gentle Art of Asking Instead of Telling*, Paperback, September 2013.

³⁸ Walter F. Ulmer, “Military Leadership into the 21st Century: Another Bridge Too Far?” *Parameters*, Spring 1998, 20.

³⁹ Colonel Mark J Thornhill, *Coalition Warfare: The leadership challenges*, SAMS USACGSC, iii.

C. Develop Political Skills to Deal with the Coalitions' Countries

“I think my first point would be that coalitions are not military by nature; they are political by nature... And if we misunderstand that then we risk forgetting that a fundamental requirement is the need to maintain the coalition. Sometimes the “flag on the map” is far more important than whether a division or three dog handlers turn up... We all need to remember that as military officers... To that end, military leaders of coalition need to remember that they are holding together a political entity and that cohesion will have a value all of its own.”⁴⁰

LtCol Tom Copinger-Symes, British Army

To maintain the efficiency of a multinational force, a coalition leader will have to focus on the political aspects of the mission. Indeed, contrary to a national operation where this duty depends more on the Defense Department, in a military coalition the coalition leaders and especially the commander of the coalition will have to **understand the political motivations of each participating country (a)**. Moreover, he will have to **develop a political behavior (b)** to exchange at the appropriate level with the political representatives of the different countries. Furthermore, he will have to **manage the direct interferences from countries to their troops on the ground (c)**.

⁴⁰ Russell W. Glenn, *Band of Brothers or Dysfunctional Family? A Military Perspective on Coalition Challenges During Stability Operations*, RAND Corporation, 2011, 31.

a. Understand the Political Motivations of each Participating Country

It is not because contributive nations will give the priority to the coalition's purpose that they will accept going against their domestic interests. Consequently, a coalition leader will have to comprehend the domestic motivations that push the different nations to participate in the coalition. Thus, General Rupert Smits who demonstrated his leadership as a senior commander during the Gulf and Bosnian Wars, said that "Each of the allies is in the coalition for its own reward and the nature of this reward must be understood by the commander."⁴¹ Consequently, he spent a lot of time developing his personal grasp of the diverse political impetus that strongly helped him to deal efficiently with the political leaders. Indeed, the domestic interests can have a strong influence on the possible ways for solving the crisis and they can generate some pressures within the coalition. For instance, during World War II, there were some tensions between British and Americans about the spot of the first amphibious operation in Europe (in the South of France or in the South of Italy). Thus, during some discussion in Washington, the US Secretary Simpson declared that implement the British idea would be "another diversion in the interests of the British Empire and contrary to our American interests."⁴² In effect, through the coalition, each country will keep in mind its own interests and will try to tilt the course of operations in their favor.

Moreover, those domestic interests could promptly have an influence on the operational capabilities of the coalition. Thus, if no attention is given to the domestic interests of the contributive countries, it will be difficult to anticipate some contingency that could hamper coalition forces capacities. Indeed, some nations could refuse to perform kind missions or even

⁴¹ Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force*, New York: Vintage Books, 2008, 304.

⁴² Mark Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000, 172.

decide to remove swiftly their troops from the coalition if some coalition's decisions go strongly against their domestic interests or if they no longer have any benefit to participate in the coalition. This is what happened in 2004 with the coalition in Iraq shortly after the presidential elections in Spain. In effect, Madrid decided promptly to leave the coalition and removed its 3,000 soldiers in less than three months.⁴³ That generated an important capacity gap that required time to be totally backfilled. As General Rupert Smith, who was a senior commander during the Gulf War, stated: "Each of the allies is in it for their own reward."⁴⁴ And when a country dooms to lose its interests, it can leave the coalition very quickly.

Therefore, the coalition leader will have to focus on the domestic motivations of the contributive countries to understand and anticipate any contingency reactions. Moreover, he will have to make decisions in considering the possible consequences on the domestic level of the countries involved in the coalition. Thus, General Devers, who was the commander of the 6th Army Group in 1944, stated that the coalition commander "must first know the several national problems and aspirations in detail before he can hope to deal with his commanders. It must be thoroughly appreciated by him that no commander, regardless of the position he may occupy in the world of allied powers, will submerge his national pride and aspirations for what appears to be the benefit of another. Some compromises will be arrived at through diplomacy."⁴⁵ As he explained in his book, his day to day basic investment to grasp the objectives of the different countries help him dramatically to deal efficiently with the political leaders. Consequently, this is

⁴³ Marlise Simons, "Spanish premier orders soldiers home from Iraq," *New York Times*, April 19, 2004, <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/19/world/spanish-premier-orders-soldiers-home-from-iraq.html>.

⁴⁴ Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force*, Vintage Books, 2008, 304.

⁴⁵ Jacob L. Devers, "Major Problems Confronting a Theater Commander in Combined Operations," *Military Review* January-February 1997, 150.

a domain the coalition leader will have to consider deeply to ensure the full and seamless cooperation of all coalition forces.

b. Learn to Deal with Political Leaders from the Contributive Countries

Then, the coalition leader will have to develop specific skills to deal efficiently and at the appropriate level with the political leaders of the contributive countries of the coalition. Indeed, as a major actor of the operational art, he will have to “links the tactical employment of forces to national and military strategic objectives.”⁴⁶ Consequently, he will have to be able to deal with the strategic decision makers of the countries involved in the mission to understand and orient the political dynamics for the sake of the objectives of the coalition. Moreover, as the strategic environment is uncertain, complex, and can change rapidly, he will have to maintain a permanent commitment with his multinational partners. If he neglects this part of his mission and focus only on the military part of the mission, he could easily hamper the efficiency of the coalition.

General Clark, who was commander of the coalition in Kosovo in 1999, explained this idea very clearly: “I talked to everybody. I talked to diplomats, NATO political leaders, national political leaders, and national chiefs of defense. There was a constant round of telephone calls, pushing and shoving and bargaining and cajoling.”⁴⁷ He recognized that, to achieve military goals, he had to be more than a military leader to create the buy-in among the different political leaders and maintain their agreement. Thus, he spent more time acting as a diplomat or as an ambassador than as a military leader. In sum, in the very complex environment of an international force, the

⁴⁶ United States Department of Defense, *Joint Operations, JP 3-0*, , Types of Military Operations, I-14.

⁴⁷ General Wesley Clark, interview with Frontline, *PBS*, March 29, 2011, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/clark.html>.

coalition leader will have to spend more time to struggle to defend his ideas at the political level than to fight against the enemy. Consequently, possessing political skills will be very useful and necessary for a coalition leader to steer efficiently a multinational force with several different political interactions.

c. Manage Direct Interferences from Countries to their Troops on the Ground

Moreover, because of the existence of two chains of command (C2) and the countries' concerns for preserving their domestic interests, heads of governments will maintain a direct relation with their national commander in the coalition. Indeed, during the Gulf War, several field commanders recognized that they were in direct communication with the head of their government.⁴⁸ That means for the coalition leader that he will have to consider permanently that his order will be screened by his subordinates with the prism of their domestic interests. Consequently, for avoiding any tensions, the coalition leader will have to keep in mind the domestic concerns of the contributive countries and will have to coordinate with senior national representatives to ensure that the missions consider caveats of the troops on the ground. And that will have some consequences on the tempo and on the manner to perform the mission for the troops on the ground. Indeed, since the interests of the different contributive countries are not the same, the level of commitment of the nations within the mission is likely to be unequal. In effect, some countries are involved in a coalition for political or financial reasons but will not want to take any risk during the operations. Consequently, the coalition leader will have to be very vigilant to ensure that each unit will perform the missions as requested by the coalition and not

⁴⁸ Brigadier J.P. Riley, "The partnership of unequal: A short discussion on coalition war", *Defence Studies*, 2002, 103-118.

as required by their domestic interests. And for being successful in this domain, he will have to inculcate a common vision within the coalition.

D. Compromise to Reach an Indispensable Consensus

“Patience, tolerance, frankness, absolute honesty in all dealings, particularly with all persons of the opposite nationality, and firmness, are absolutely essential.”⁴⁹

Alfred D. Chandler

After having implemented a cohesion within the coalition and understood the diverse motivations of the contributive countries, the coalition leader will have to decide and act while preserving this delicate equilibrium. Therefore, he will have to learn to make decision in **dealing with reduced flexibility (a)**, through the **slow coalition decision making process (b)** and in **prioritizing consensus on tactical efficiency (c)**.

a. Learn to Deal with Reduced Flexibility

Another difficulty the coalition leader will have to deal with are the restrictions of caveats, that are, “a set of limitations to the use of a country's armed forces in a multinational setting.”⁵⁰ Indeed, they reflect the level of interest of the countries and the risks they are ready to take for the mission. Thus, some caveats could diminish the coalition’s effectiveness and could

⁴⁹ Alfred D. Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower: The War Years III*, The John Hopkins University Press, 1970, 1420.

⁵⁰ Olivier Schmitt, *L'union ou la force ? Les défis des opérations multinationales contemporaines*, IFRI Laboratoire de Recherche sur la Défense, March 2015, 28.

create some resentments between the units because some will feel to burden a greater load than other. Consequently, the cohesion of the coalition could be easily challenged by some nations that are seen as “rations-consumers”⁵¹ because they use the resource but do not perform properly the job. Moreover, those caveats will reduce the freedom of action of the coalition. For instance, in September 2006 in Afghanistan, a besieged British-Afghan Combat Troops fell into an ambush and got several casualties. As it was running out of ammunitions, it requested urgently reinforcement. But when the coalition leader requested other allied troops stationed in the same area (Netherlands, Australia and Denmark) to reinforce the overwhelmed unit, those units could not intervene because they were limited by caveats (geographical, regional and combat caveats) which prevented them from deploying to assist the trapped unit. And this event had, as one can imagine, very bad consequences on the cohesion of the coalition. Consequently, the coalition leader had to spend a lot of time explaining, appeasing and focusing on some positive behaviors from those units for the sake of the unity of the coalition. Therefore, it will be important for the coalition leader to understand why some countries enforce caveats and what to do to mitigate their negative effects. Thus, US Army Colonel Douglas Mastriano, who made some research about the challenges that caveats poses to coalitions, argues that strategic leaders must operate with what nations are willing to give and thereby leverage troops where they can do the most good.⁵² But that will be an important constraint for the coalition. This is why, after 9/11, for instance, the United States wanted first to intervene unilaterally because “they wanted support from the rest of the world, but they did not want to tie their hands.”⁵³ Thus, when national legal

⁵¹ Stephen Saideman, “Nato at War: Understanding the Challenges of Caveats in Afghanistan”, *ResearchGate*, January 2009, 3.

⁵² Douglas Mastriano, "Faust and the Padshah Sphinx: Reshaping the NATO Alliance to Win in Afghanistan ", USAWC, June 2010, <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA518150>.

⁵³ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005, 48.

restrictions or other obstacles will hinder an optimum utilization of some troops, the coalition leader will have to do his best to find a solution and mitigate any ill-will for the sake of the coalition's cohesion.

b. Learn to Deal with the Slowness of a Collective Decision-making Process

The decision-making process is very long in a coalition because of the permanent concern to seek the consensus in respecting the willingness and the exigences of the contributive countries. And this slowness can be very frustrating and engender some tensions within the coalition especially in warfare where decisions must sometimes be taken swiftly to seize an opportunity or to react promptly to an emergency. Similarly, the long delays engendered by the caveats can create controversy in an emergency situation that requires prompt action to save the lives of military personnel, civilian aid workers, or local indigenous civilians in the mission's Area of Responsibility. Indeed, in warfare, part of the success depends on the ability to act or react quickly. Otherwise, the "bushfire" that could have been stopped by a rapid intervention then becomes a "fire" and requires much larger means and therefore possibly negotiations, etc.⁵⁴ Thus, in 2004 in Kabul for instance, the General Jocelyn Lacroix, in command of the Kabul Multinational Brigade, frequently found himself in "the galling of needing to find an alternative to the Canadian contingent while waiting for deliberations in Ottawa" because of their caveats.⁵⁵ Indeed, those forces were available to be deployed but some Area of Operations limitation caveats required explicit government approval that halted highly their effectiveness. Consequently, he had to deal several times with delay during some contingency because of those

⁵⁴ Michel Goya, *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, avril 2013, 235.

⁵⁵ Stephen Saideman, "NATO at War: Understanding the Challenges of Caveats in Afghanistan", *ResearchGate*, January 2009, 16.

constraints. But as soon as he implemented a battle rhythm for the operation that was appropriate for all the contingents, he succeeded to mitigate those drawbacks and avoided to much frustrations or tensions within the coalition. Therefore, despite those limitations, it will be the coalition leader's duty to come up with solutions that will respect those constraints while maintain the troops' efficiency on the ground and their responsiveness as well as their cohesion.

c. Consensus versus Effectiveness

As the cohesion of the force is its center of gravity, the coalition leader will have to do his best to preserve this fragile equilibrium. And for that, he will have to seek first the consensus of the coalition prior to its tactical effectiveness. Indeed, without consensus no possibility to make any decision and then to act. And to achieve this common agreement, the coalition leader will have to take over the constraints of the whole participative countries and keep in mind their domestic interests. Indeed, if a decision respects caveats but go again national interests, a country could find some good reasons for not being on board. Consequently, that will necessitate to implement not the best solution but only the one that will have achieved a consensus. In effect, the coalition leader can be "compelled to accept less desirable solutions to tactical and logistical problems in order to secure that complete harmony that is so essential among commanders in the successful pursuit of a campaign."⁵⁶ And that can be difficult to accept for a military leader who has been trained all along his carrier to seek the best solution so as to defeat the enemy as soon as possible. Moreover, that will require a good understanding of the main purpose of the coalition in order not to be able to compromise without jeopardizing the strategic goal of the coalition. General Clark, who was commander of the NATO coalition in Kosovo, recounted that "we

⁵⁶ Jacob L. Devers, "Major Problems Confronting a Theater Commander in Combined Operations", *Military Review* January-February 1997, 157.

would have wanted to conduct a more rapid, overwhelming campaign with more strike power. Our desire to do so, however, had to be balanced with the need to maintain cohesion and unity. The loss of unity would have ended the campaign.”⁵⁷ But as such a situation could easily upset part of the coalition and hamper its cohesion, he spent lots of time to explicate and make political leaders as well as troops of the ground understand that the unity was more important than the speed. Therefore, the coalition leader will have to explain the choices he made and why he did not always choose the best solution to win with the greatest chances of success.

Consequently, it appears that good leadership in a coalition is closer to “civil management” than “military leadership”. Indeed, as Peter Drucker explains: “management is about human beings. Its task is to make people capable of joint performance, to make their strengths effective and their weakness irrelevant.”⁵⁸ Thereby, management skills seem to be more relevant in a multinational force than leadership one. Indeed, behind leadership, there are notions of power and confidence while behind management, there are both ideas of the interests for the personnel and for the result.⁵⁹ It does not mean that leadership will not focus on the personnel but more that, as the manager has less power on the persons, he will have to seek more the consensus with possibly some concessions. John Paul Kotter, who is a well-known thought leader in the fields of business and leadership, gives some more details about those differences: “management is concerned with planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing (e.g. establishing rules and procedures) and controlling and problem solving (e.g. developing initiatives and generating solutions) whereas leadership involves establishing a direction,

⁵⁷ Wesley Clark, James Ellis and Michael Short, *Combined Prepared Statement Before the Senate Armed Services Committee*, United States Senate Committee on Armed Services, October 1999, 6.

⁵⁸ Peter Drucker, *The Essential Drucker*, Harper Business, 2008, 368.

⁵⁹ Concepts developed by several persons as Rensis Likert, Robert Blake and Jane Mouton.

aligning people with organizational goals and motivating and inspiring people to achieve organizational goals.”⁶⁰ Thus, it appears clear that successful leadership in a military coalition must be closer to civil management than military leadership. Consequently, military schools should focus as well on civil managerial sciences to prepare future leaders to hold high responsibility in a more and more prevalent international context.

Conclusion

“Leaders become great not because of their power but because of their ability to empower others.”⁶¹

John Maxwell

Given the growing importance of military coalitions but also their complexity and their heterogeneity, military leaders should prepare for such challenges in honing specific skills and developing competencies that will be appropriate in multinational operations. Indeed, to preserve the indispensable consensus and the essential unity of effort, the future coalition leader will have to demonstrate a strong ability to get everybody on board despite diverse cultural backgrounds, training levels or domestic interests. Indisputably, the character of the coalition leader will be important to gain truth, build consensus, or mediate differences but the civil managerial sciences should be a good means as well to find inspiration for the best practice in military coalition.

⁶⁰ J. P. Kotter, *A Force for Change: How Leadership Differs from Management*. New York : Free Press, 1990.

⁶¹ John Maxwell, “Leadership Ladder”, *Success*, October 9, 2011, <http://www.success.com/article/john-maxwell-leadership-ladder>.

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