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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.**

**MARITIME COALITIONS:**

**WHEN IS UNITY OF COMMAND REQUIRED?**

**By**

**Gregory J. Gahlinger**

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature:\_\_\_\_\_**

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## **Abstract**

### *Maritime Coalitions: When is Unity of Command Required?*

Coalitions are a fact of life in modern diplomatic and military endeavors. Nations will seek to join or establish coalitions to maximize collective military power and establish legitimacy for the objectives they seek. Command and Control (C2) of maritime coalitions is a distinct facet of coalition operations based on the nature of naval operations. The concepts of Unity of Command, Unity of Effort, and Parallel, Lead Nation, or Integrated Coalition command structures are viable across a broad spectrum of maritime coalition operations but do have ideal applications within the Range of Military Operations. This paper will define the different terms associated with C2 in maritime coalitions and explain their application in the context of historic and recent maritime coalitions, paying particular attention to the concept of Unity of Command. The paper will then analyze the application of Unity of Command in the context of the Range of Military Operations and draw conclusions and recommendations for ideal employment of these concepts in forming maritime coalitions.

## **Introduction**

*It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world. Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.*  
President George Washington<sup>1</sup>

*Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations – entangling alliances with none.*  
President Thomas Jefferson<sup>2</sup>

*We are also guided by the conviction that no nation can build a safer, better world alone. Alliances and multilateral institutions can multiply the strength of freedom-loving nations. The United States is committed to lasting institutions like the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the Organization of American States, and NATO as well as other long-standing alliances. Coalitions of the willing can augment these permanent institutions.*  
President George W. Bush<sup>3</sup>

In the past 100 years of American political and military policy, the United States has departed from the isolationist vision of our first President and his immediate successors. The collective experiences of two World Wars, the founding of the United Nations, the polarization of nations during the Cold War, and the development of the interdependent global economy have shaped and altered our modern American vision of foreign diplomatic and military cooperation. In this new millennium, the American government and its armed forces have sought to form and join numerous coalitions (and maintain existing alliances) in order to best accomplish diplomatic and military objectives.

These coalitions and alliances have proven to be indispensable for establishing legitimacy in foreign missions and have become the medium by which all nations are able to promote and contribute to peace and stability collectively. The United States and its traditional allies have all recognized the value of coalitions and almost all have dramatically altered and updated their military doctrine to emphasize the importance of multinational

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<sup>1</sup> From his Farewell Address to the People of the United States, 17 September 1796.

<sup>2</sup> From his Inaugural Address, 4 March 1801.

<sup>3</sup> From his introduction to *The National Security Strategy of the United States*, 17 September 2002.

operations over unilateral action.<sup>4</sup> In today's realm of almost "*ordinary emergencies*" and routine crisis actions, most nations consider multinational participation a necessity for success even if previously established alliance organizations are available to take on a task. As such, many of those nations are developing the tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) to quickly stand up coalitions with countries possessing vastly divergent capabilities.

As a result of numerous complicating factors in coalition building, many recent and emerging doctrinal publications on the subject emphasize Unity of Effort as most important for success. The concept of Unity of Command is generally desirable but is considered unattainable in most coalition settings as it is usually deemed too difficult. As will be discussed further, there are instances in which Unity of Command has been successfully employed in maritime coalitions and alliances. Of most interest for further exploration is the relevance or even the necessity for Unity of Command in existing and future maritime coalitions.

**The Problem of Maritime Coalition Command and Control:**  
**Unity of Command versus Unity of Effort**

*Little is done where many command.*  
Dutch Proverb

In keeping with general concepts and assumptions regarding coalitions and alliances, the doctrine and TTP for maritime coalitions continues to evolve to suit unique situations as they develop. Maritime coalitions share most of the complicating factors that their land and air counterparts experience: limits on information sharing, interoperability issues, logistics, language barriers, rules of engagement, and different national objectives among many others. Some writers on the subject believe that each of the major components (ground, air,

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<sup>4</sup> See U.S. JP 3-0 Chapter II, U.K. JWP 0-01 Chapter 3-8.

maritime) of a coalition are more or less receptive to integration with comparable foreign forces based on factors such as their size, complexity, and familiarization with the concepts of either Unity of Command and/or Unity of Effort. Most notable in this regard is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which, as a long standing formal alliance between 26 technologically and economically advanced democratic nations, plans on establishing Unity of Command in most of its military activities.

With this in mind, Colonel Anthony Rice of the British Army has written the following on Naval (maritime) forces as distinct from ground and air counterparts:

*“Naval forces have in many respects achieved a level of integration unmatched among the services. Most Western navies subscribe to the concept of the composite warfare commander (CWC) in a task group for a particular discipline, such as anti-surface or anti-aircraft warfare. This principle has allowed the assembly of multinational task groups as seen in the NATO Standing Naval Forces, the Gulf War, and operations in the Adriatic. As a result of the larger NATO navies routinely conducting exercises with many other navies during their worldwide deployments, NATO doctrine and procedures have become almost the common currency in multinational maritime operations. Command arrangements for naval operations are also simplified to an extent by the limited number of ships involved in them and by the fact that each ship is a self-contained unit, albeit with a significant logistic liability.”*<sup>5</sup>

While most of the previous observation is very true, it is hard to quantify exactly how the universal acceptance of the CWC concept and adoption of NATO doctrine/procedures is able to overcome the myriad of other factors that impinge the establishment of Unity of Command in multinational maritime coalitions outside of a NATO exclusive operation.

The more relevant topic is Unity of Command outside of formal alliances. The question that will be explored is “When is Unity of Command possible and/or required in maritime coalition operations?”

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<sup>5</sup> “Command and Control: The Essence of Coalition Warfare”, *Parameters*, Spring 1997, page 165.

### **Why Maritime Coalitions merit special study**

*Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.*

President Woodrow Wilson<sup>6</sup>

While almost all modern multinational coalitions and alliances are centered around achieving objectives on land, the maritime dimension (along with airspace) is usually a critical realm in support of ground-focused operations. The oceans and seas border the majority of the world's nations and nearly 70% of the earth's population lives within 100 miles of a major body of water. Maritime commerce and related industries directly or indirectly provide a livelihood for much of the world's population and are critical for the stability of the global economy. All nations, even landlocked ones, are dependent on oceans and adjoining seas for the transfer of trade and the extraction of natural resources.

In the diplomatic and military dimensions, strong maritime nations can influence events ashore by their control or denial of the use of the seas in conflicts ranging from sanctions blockades (often called "Maritime Interdiction Operations" in modern terminology) up to major war and attacks on enemy commerce and naval power. Additionally, the oceans and seas can also be used for lower-scale nefarious activities such as smuggling, piracy, and terrorism which threaten security at sea and ashore alike. More often than not, there will always be a maritime dimension in the Range of Military Operations (ROMO) as described in contemporary doctrine.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Point 2 of his 14 points, from his speech before congress on 08 January 1918.

<sup>7</sup> JP 3-0 "Joint Operations", Page I-13. The range of military operations encompass military engagement, security cooperation and deterrence.

## **How Maritime Coalitions Establish Command and Control**

*At the higher levels of command in multinational coalition operations, the function is more one of coordination than one of control, more one of cooperation than command. We need to develop doctrine to reflect and facilitate this reality.*

Vice-Admiral Peter Cairns, Canadian Forces<sup>8</sup>

Because of the importance of the oceans and seas, a coalition operation which includes a maritime dimension will usually, though not always, designate a Coalition or Combined Force Maritime Component Commander (CFMCC). The CFMCC is charged with securing or shaping the maritime realm to support overall mission objectives and exercises Command and Control in a variety of ways. From Joint Pub 3-32, “Command and Control for Joint Maritime Operations”:

*Maritime power is employed to gain or exploit command of the sea, maintain sea control, and/or project power and defense from the sea. This can be accomplished unilaterally, in conjunction with, or to support other joint or multinational, air, land, sea, space, and special operations, or interagency activities. The qualities that characterize maritime forces include readiness, flexibility, self-sustainability, and mobility.<sup>9</sup>*

Of most pressing concern to a maritime coalition, whether a CFMCC is designated or not, is the method of Command and Control (C2) that can be established and the limits by which a commander can employ multinational forces. Generally, three core organizational constructs for coalition C2 are understood and described in Joint Pub 3-16 “Multinational Operations”:

- 1) Parallel Command- forces operate under separate national command in the cooperative pursuit of coalition objectives.
- 2) Lead Nation Command- one partner is designated the overall commander and the other participants follow the concepts and the direction of the lead nation, which may rotate among the coalition participants.

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<sup>8</sup> Multinational Maritime Operations, 1996. page 3-1

<sup>9</sup> JP 3-32 “Command and Control for Joint Maritime Operations”, Page I-2.

3) Integrated Command- a single commander with a staff composed of representatives from all member nations commands the operation.<sup>10</sup>

Ideally, the CFMCC would be given the authority to establish a unified command construct which would permit greater authority to direct forces in achieving objectives. From Joint Pub 1 “Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States”, Unity of Command is described as:

*...all forces operate under a single commander with the requisite authority to direct all forces employed in pursuit of a common purpose.*<sup>11</sup>

Put another way, Unity of Command means that a single commander has the exclusive authority to employ forces assigned as he or she deems necessary to accomplish the stated objective. Further, the Commander may have limits imposed by higher authorities which restrict the administrative authority over subordinate forces or the duration of time those forces will be assigned, but, in essence, he or she can employ them as he sees fit as long as the methods are directed at the objectives. For many reasons which will be discussed later, Unity of Command is very rarely attained or agreed to and requires a degree of trust and cooperation that is hard to establish in most ad hoc coalitions or multinational operations, even amongst nations which are allied in more formal treaties elsewhere.

In lieu of Unity of Command, the default requirement in coalitions is Unity of Effort.

From Joint Publication 1 “Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States”:

*Unity of effort, however, requires coordination and cooperation among all forces toward a commonly recognized objective, although they are not necessarily part of the same command structure. During multinational operations and interagency coordination, unity of command may not be possible, but the requirement for unity of effort becomes paramount. Unity of effort — coordination through cooperation and common interests — is an essential complement to unity of command.*<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> JP 3-16 “Multinational Operations”, Chapter II, pages II-5 to II-9.

<sup>11</sup> JP 1 “Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States”, Appendix B, Page B-2.

<sup>12</sup> JP 1 “Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States”, Appendix B, page B-2.

### **A Historical Precedent: The British Pacific Fleet in World War II**

In the Spring and Summer of 1945, the U.S. Pacific Fleet closed on the Japanese home islands in a sustained campaign to destroy the remnants of the Imperial Navy and Air Force. The fleet's core objective was to obtain sea control and set the conditions for the eventual invasion and occupation of Japan by 1946. By this stage of the war, U.S. industrial might had produced a military force of immense capacity and the U.S. Navy was operating at nearly 5 times its pre-war strength in tonnage of vessels afloat.<sup>13</sup> The U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Fleets that closed on Japan shared a core naval force of over 1200 ships of all types which, although impressive by today's standards, was barely 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the entire U.S. Navy by the war's end. Almost forgotten to history during those momentous days was the inclusion of the British Pacific Fleet (BPF) within the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Despite initial objections by Prime Minister Churchill earlier in the war, a Unity of Command arrangement was ultimately established with the BPF placed under the operational command of the United States Pacific Fleet when at sea.<sup>14</sup>

The BPF, under the command of Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, joined the U.S. 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet as Task Force 57 (intermittently known as Task Force 37 when chopped to 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet) in March 1945 to support the Okinawa invasion. The BPF stayed through all subsequent actions up to the signing of the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1945. On average, Task Force 57 offered a robust Royal Navy force of 125 warships and nearly 80 supply, repair and hospital ships (known as the "Fleet Train") to support them. The BPF offered a highly capable strike force centered on 4 fleet carriers and 6 light carriers operating

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<sup>13</sup> The Decline and Renaissance of the Navy, 1922-1944. page 7.

<sup>14</sup> *Task Force 57: The British Pacific Fleet, 1944-45*, various chapters and pages.

the most advanced American carrier aircraft of the day. On the surface and in the air, it looked and acted like an American naval task force as a good deal of its ships and aircraft were provided under the Lend-Lease agreement between the U.S. and Great Britain. To its credit, the BPF did inflict substantial damage on the enemy, particularly in helping to repel the kamikaze onslaught, throughout its five months of operations but problems with planned integration and employment arose from its inception in late 1943/early 1944.<sup>15</sup>

At the heart was the desire of Prime Minister Churchill and some senior personnel at the British Admiralty for the BPF to remain a cohesive force under British Operational Control throughout its term of employment in the Pacific. Initially, Churchill desired a parallel command structure in which the BPF would engage the Japanese to set the stage for the re-conquest of British Pacific colonial possessions being occupied by the enemy. As such, Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, the second most senior British Admiral and arguably the most operationally experienced amongst his cohorts in the Royal Navy, was put in command and planned to operate at sea with the BPF from a flagship.<sup>16</sup>

As a full Admiral in charge of some 200 plus ships, Fraser was senior by date of rank and position to the American Admirals (Halsey in 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet, Spruance in 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet) who were controlling a fleet with six times the strength of the BPF. The response from senior U.S. Admirals in Washington was less than enthusiastic. The Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Admiral Earnest J. King, had been opposed to any Royal Navy intrusion into the Pacific on the grounds that their unique logistics requirements, lack of a self-sufficient Fleet Train, inexperience with American style fast carrier task force operations, and the general British way of doing things would be a drain on the American effort. This was at a time when the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

U.S. Pacific Fleet was just beginning a sustained advance in the Central Pacific and was limited by its own logistics constraints and heavy workload ahead.

Further, the Royal Navy had been driven from the Pacific in early 1942, during the Japanese onslaught toward Malaysia and Singapore and was forced to focus its remaining strength in European waters. The BPF was shaped by its leadership's experiences running convoys and fighting small actions against German submarines and Luftwaffe air attacks. It started with a uniquely British system of signaling and encryption, had weapons and tactics suited for fighting in the Mediterranean and North Atlantic, and rarely spent more than ten days at sea on operations without stopping at fortified logistics bases such as Gibraltar, Malta, and Scapa Flow.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the obstacles between the American and British Navies, solutions were found and an effective C2 organization was formed in time for the operations against Okinawa. In early 1944, the Royal Navy actively sought to conduct combined operations and limited strikes with U.S. Carriers in the Indian Ocean. From these events, revised tactics were developed, new signaling methods and codes were adopted, newer American carrier planes were acquired, and logistical expertise in operating for extended periods away from port was gained.<sup>18</sup>

Most importantly, Admiral Fraser recognized the awkwardness of his situation vis-à-vis the U.S. command structure and established himself ashore in Sydney to command the BPF much in the way Admiral Nimitz ran the U.S. efforts from Pearl Harbor. Vice Admiral Sir Bernard Rawlings was put in charge of CTF 57 where he took direct tasking from Halsey or Spruance when operating in forward areas with the American fleet. Admiral Fraser and

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

his staff ashore in Sydney would coordinate strategic-operational level planning and logistics directly with Admiral Nimitz but the operational-tactical employment of the BPF was subordinated to the U.S. Third or Fifth Fleet Commander. Further, Admiral Fraser was insistent on the placement of capable liaison officers on all American staffs and actively sought American counterparts to augment his ships and squadrons, particularly communications officers and enlisted ratings.<sup>19</sup>

The experience of Task Force 57 in the U.S. fleet was a success story that would lay the foundations for future naval command structures within alliances and has implications for modern maritime coalitions which may someday be faced with a comparable threat. The key lessons learned were:

- 1) Unity of Command was recognized as essential by the Theater Strategic and Operational leaders in the Pacific (Nimitz, Fraser, Spruance, Halsey and Rawlings).
- 2) The level (full war) of the naval campaign against Japan dictated that the smaller BPF adopt the lead nation (U.S.) doctrine and TTP to most effectively integrate with their numerically superior ally for the common objective and mutual benefit of all.
- 3) In addition to the fact that they formed a bi-national versus multinational force, the common language, cultural heritage, and equipment made the integration of the BPF into the U.S. Fleet much simpler and more palatable to all.

### **A Modern Maritime Coalition: Task Force 158 in the North Arabian Gulf**

Today, a maritime coalition comprising forces of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Iraq, and intermittently, Singapore is conducting Maritime Security Operations (MSO) in the North Arabian Gulf (NAG). These forces comprise Combined Task Force (CTF) 158 and are subordinate to the Combined Force Maritime Component Commander

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

(CFMCC) headed by the United States Navy's Fifth Fleet. CTF 158 evolved from previous task forces (CTF 55 and later CTF 58) which began operating in the NAG during the Major Combat Operations phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. From the CFMCC's internet website<sup>20</sup>, CTF 158's primary mission in the NAG is:

*Maintaining security in and around both the Al Basrah and Khawr Al Amaya Oil Terminals (ABOT and KAAOT, respectively), in support of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546. This resolution charges the multinational force with the responsibility and authority to maintain security and stability in the Iraqi territorial waters and also supports the Iraqi government's request for security support.*

CTF 158 is organized in a Lead Nation Command structure in which one of the participating countries provides a commander and supporting staff on a rotating basis to lead and direct the efforts of all in protecting the critical Iraqi oil terminals and perform general MSO duties in the assigned water space. MSO encompasses counter-terrorism and security efforts by performing activities such as assistance to mariners in distress, Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations on suspicious vessels, and training with regional and other coalition navies to improve interoperability.<sup>21</sup> On any given day, the CTF 158 commander has several warships and small boats patrolling the area of responsibility. He also commands security teams on the oil terminals to provide point defense against attacks. Despite differences in some force capabilities between assets and limits on national authority to conduct specialized portions of the MSO mission<sup>22</sup>, the CTF 158 commander exercises Tactical Control (TACON)<sup>23</sup> over assigned forces and has the authority to direct the use of

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.cusnc.navy.mil/command/ctf158.html>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.cusnc.navy.mil/mission/rhumblines.html>

<sup>22</sup> "Security Operations in the Persian Gulf Require a Broad Coalition", National Defense, June 2005, page 45.

<sup>23</sup> From Joint Pub 1-02 "DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms"

**Tactical Control** — Command authority over assigned or attached forces or commands, or military capability or forces made available for tasking, that is limited to the detailed direction and control of movements or maneuvers within the operational area necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned.. Tactical control provides sufficient authority for controlling and directing the application of force or tactical use of combat support assets within the assigned mission or task. Also called TACON.

force in accomplishment of the mission. Each nation's forces remain under their national Operational Control (OPCON)<sup>24</sup> but assign TACON to CTF 158 when at-sea in the NAG.

Since the CFMCC is located nearby in Bahrain and is organized as an integrated command with coalition personnel placed in several key positions, higher level direction to the CTF 158 Commander is vetted through each participant's national authorities and coordination at the operational level is worked out well before any new forces arrive for tasking. The advantage of the permanent CFMCC organization with its integrated staff is that corporate knowledge of the MSO missions remains constant and emergent changes can quickly be discussed and reviewed by authorities in theater who can either make a decision on the spot or can rapidly get direction from home if required.

Key to all this planning and coordination is the common use of two primary C2 systems: Coalition Wide Area Network (COWAN) and Common Enterprise Regional Information Exchange System (CENTRIX). Both are computer based systems which permit the exchange of secure email and access to coalition websites and real time chat rooms. All the CTF 158 participating nations have purchased these systems and placed them both on their deployed ships as well as at national navy C2 nodes back in the respective countries.<sup>25</sup>

At the tactical level, CTF 158 C2 execution is simplified by the fact that each of the participating nations speaks English as a native language (with the exception of Iraq, Singapore uses it as one of four official languages and its personnel speak English fluently).

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24 Ibid, Operational Control — Command authority that may be exercised by commanders at any echelon at or below the level of combatant command. Operational control is inherent in combatant command (command authority) and may be delegated within the command.

Operational control normally provides full authority to organize commands and forces and to employ those forces as the commander in operational control considers necessary to accomplish assigned missions; it does not, in and of itself, include authoritative direction for logistics or matters of administration, discipline, internal organization, or unit training.

25 "Security Operations in the Persian Gulf Require a Broad Coalition", National Defense, June 2005, page 45.

Additionally, the U.S., U.K., Australia and Singapore have a long history of allied maritime operations and close ties that have resulted in fairly common doctrine, TTP and standard operating procedures (SOPs). Lastly, the ships each country employs in the NAG are equipped with compatible radio and data link systems that allow for near real time exchange of tactical information. There are always technical kinks in the tactical C2 architecture but redundancy and work around solutions are fairly common. The new Iraqi navy and Marine Corps is gaining valuable experience from working with CTF 158 and the ultimate ambition of the CFMCC is to turn over full responsibility for the NAG MSO mission to Iraq when they are sufficiently equipped and trained.<sup>26</sup>

Unity of Command is established within CTF 158 and is directly a result of the following factors:

- 2) The participating coalition nations recognize the severity of the threat to MSO in the NAG region and agreed early on to a common objective with similar Rules of Engagement and authority granted to their forces. They are committed to the mission and provide recurring forces.
- 3) With the exception of Iraq, all member navies have long standing relationships and common operating procedures and TTP that permit easy transfer of TACON to any CTF 158 Commander.
- 4) The CTF 158 area of responsibility is small enough to require frequent interaction and close maneuvering of coalition ships and supporting aircraft. A Unity of Command arrangement is virtually a necessity to prevent mutual interference and ensure economy of force is applied.

**Another Modern Maritime Coalition: Task Force 150 in the Gulf of Oman,  
North Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean, and Red Sea**

Also subordinate to the CFMCC in Bahrain is Combined Task Force 150 which covers the vast maritime area of everything within the CFMCC's Area of Responsibility not

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

including the Arabian Gulf. CTF 150 was established in 2002 shortly after the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the Global War on Terror (GWOT). It conducts Maritime Security Operations to deny the use of its water space to terrorist organizations, weapons and human smugglers, and piracy. It also interacts with regional navies and coast guards to enhance regional security and interoperability.

Since its inception, CTF 150 has been commanded by the United States, United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Pakistan.<sup>27</sup> Naval ships and aircraft from those countries plus Canada, Spain, Denmark, Greece, Italy, New Zealand, South Korea and Belgium have at one time or another been assigned to the task force but none maintain a permanent presence. Additionally, the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force does not provide ships under the control of CTF 150 but does maintain a logistics task force in the AOR which directly support the CTF 150 forces by providing replenishment at sea.<sup>28</sup>

Although CTF 150 is subordinate to the same CFMCC as CTF 158 and routinely takes TACON of U.S., U.K. and Australian forces that operate in the 150 water space, the two CTFs do not share the same command structure or common TTP/SOP at the tactical level. Rather, CTF 150 more closely resembles the ad hoc nature of modern maritime coalitions in that it strives for Unity of Effort above all else. To be clear, CTF 150 does have a single designated Commander who provides operational and tactical coordination and takes TACON of assigned coalition forces but several key factors make the establishment of full Unity of Command problematic.

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.cusnc.navy.mil/command/ctf150.html>

<sup>28</sup> Much of the information provided on CTF 150 is based on the author's personal experience while at sea on a ship assigned to CTF 150 and later while on staff at the CFMCC headquarters. A detailed history and description of CTF 150 activities is not presently available in an unclassified source.

First, the large number of participating coalition nations means that the nature of the coalition changes frequently based on who is available to contribute. While many of the nations are NATO members and do share common doctrine, TTP, and compatible systems, the fact remains that they each approach the mission of MSO within CTF 150 slightly differently. Several nations represented do not support the ongoing U.S. lead operations in Iraq and do not want to be associated with OEF or the U.S. led GWOT. Therefore, they come with restrictive ROE that does not support all facets of the CTF 150 MSO mission. One former commander of CTF 150, Commodore Hank Ort of the Royal Netherlands Navy, stated, “One needs continuous awareness of each other’s ROE, but once you’ve got that, it is workable to plan different tasks for different units from different nations.”<sup>29</sup>

The concept of “National Tasking” is a term undefined within U.S. joint or service doctrine but has a unique place within the CFMCC lexicon. As all coalition forces remain OPCON to their own national authorities and are only TACON when formally tasked to join a coalition CTF, a special category known as “National Tasking” is invoked when a maritime asset is not directly operating under the TACON of a coalition commander. Furthermore, a ship on “National Tasking” may be at sea in the established AOR for a specific CTF but switches in and out of TACON to conduct missions directed by national C2. This is not to imply that “National Tasking” is necessarily a bad thing. Every coalition navy invokes it from time to time but it does lead to concerns for the CTF 150 commander when an asset that he has planned for and tasked to perform a mission suddenly departs from his control without prior knowledge and consent. The aforementioned situation is rare but does occur and has degraded the effectiveness of some CTF 150 MSO missions.

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Jane’s Navy International, 01 May 2006.

Lastly, the broad expanse of the CTF 150 AOR quickly limits the Commander's options when restrictions are placed on the stationing of coalition ships. Certain nations desire to keep their ships and aircraft limited to specific regions within the CTF water space due to political sensitivities or tethers to logistical bases. Therefore, although the ships are TACON to CTF 150 and performing MSO missions as assigned, the Commander may be limited in how he can respond to emergent tasking if it is outside the area boundaries for one of his assets.

Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that CTF 150 primarily executes a Unity of Effort construct based on the following factors:

- 2) Large number of participating coalition nations who arrive and depart frequently make establishment of consistent SOP difficult.
- 3) Nations with restrictive ROE and divergent national objectives for participation in the maritime coalition limit the Commander's options for employment of assigned forces.
- 4) "Competition" with the naval units national authorities for use of the ship frustrates long range planning and control of the asset for the coalition commander.
- 5) A large area of responsibility coupled with geographical restrictions ("tethers" or boundaries) imposed by the national authorities of assigned coalition assets further limit the Commanders options for employment.

### **Analysis of the importance of Unity of Command in Maritime Coalitions**

Unity of Command is difficult to achieve and has been made more so by the nature of modern maritime coalitions. In the age of new concepts such as the "1000 Ship Navy" (and its evolution to the "Global Maritime Partnership"),<sup>30</sup> coupled with the perceived success of such maritime coalitions such as CTF 150, the impetus seems to be to establish broad

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<sup>30</sup> "Global Maritime Partnership Gaining Steam at Home and with International Navies" *Defense Daily International*, 27 October 2006, page 1.

coalitions with little real centralized authority and mission sets that entail little or no risk.

The motive seems to be more for political expediency to maintain ties with member nations versus accomplishing viable goals in the maritime realm.

This is not to say that those concepts or CTF 150 are useless, but it should be clear that a Unity of Effort focused maritime coalition is generally only successful in the lower end of the Range of Military Operations, namely, ones where the threat to friendly forces is low and the mission is not overly complex or controversial. Unity of Effort is fine in benign MSO missions for which the foremost task is to monitor the maritime spectrum and occasionally act on intelligence that may enhance security and cooperation amongst partners. In a higher end application of the ROMO, Unity of Effort could be sufficient if the coalition partners were operating in geographically separated areas to accomplish a common objective in which Unity of Command was not practical or necessary. The U.S. and British naval efforts to combat the German U-boat campaign in WWII is one example.

Rather, Unity of Command in maritime coalitions seems imperative when the mission requires high levels of coordination in confined or combined operating areas for maritime forces. As compared to the ROMO, this generally means that kinetic combat operations are a possibility, and risk to all friendly forces can be reduced if a single commander has at least tactical control to effectively shape his assets for maximum effect on the enemy. In the BPF example, it was not an operational or mission requirement for the Royal Navy to integrate and sail with the U.S. fleet into harm's way in order to defeat Japan. Since they did, however, receive direction to do this from British command authorities, Unity of Command was imperative for mutual success of the two fleets.

### **Conclusion: Unity of Command is Required for more Complex Maritime Coalitions**

*Nothing is so important in war as an undivided command.*

Napoleon I<sup>31</sup>

Coalitions are a fact of life in modern diplomatic and military endeavors. Nations will seek to join or establish coalitions to maximize collective military power and establish legitimacy for the objectives they seek. Command and Control of maritime coalitions is a distinct facet of coalition operations based on the nature of naval operations. The concepts of Unity of Command, Unity of Effort, and Parallel, Lead Nation, or Integrated coalition command structures are viable across a broad spectrum of maritime coalition operations but do have ideal applications within the Range of Military Operations.

Unity of Effort is suitable for lower end operations or geographically separated forces which operate under their national command structures. Unity of Command is necessary in higher risk maritime coalitions operations where the implications of failure are more severe and can be mitigated by having a single commander with the authority to direct forces in a concerted effort.

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<sup>31</sup> From Maxims of War, 1831

## **Recommendations**

Neither Unity of Command nor Unity of Effort are the solution to all maritime coalitions; a concerted effort needs to be made to further evaluate the issues relating to command and control and the following recommendations should be specifically addressed:

- 1) Unity of Command and Unity of Effort should have standardized definitions in joint, service and multinational doctrine and TTP.
- 2) C2 and planning doctrine for maritime coalitions should have better analysis tools to provide templates against which command and control constructs can be evaluated and selected as appropriate.
- 3) Naval leaders must be able to recognize the true objective when forming maritime coalitions and adequately assess risks in lieu of value returned. If a maritime coalition is ineffective, then it either needs a better command structure or should be dissolved.

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