

MULTILATERAL MILITARY OPERATIONS-WILLING AND ABLE?

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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by

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ABSTRACT

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Multilateral operations provide the United States a great option for either limited or significant involvement in crisis situations, depending on political and financial constraints, while maintaining international legitimacy. Utilizing lessons learned from small operations where the United States has minimal interest and from larger conflicts like Kosovo can lead to a more tailored and effective way to apply military ways and means to achieve the desired political ends. These lessons learned should include: politics, strategy, national interests and objectives, command and control structure and relationships, interoperability, targeting, and humanitarian operations. At the inception of a coalition, the political will, end state and objectives, command and control structure, and military strategy should be established to set the course for planning and effective execution. Finally, with the daunting tasks the United States asks its military to perform, it should leverage existing institutions like the UN for a political mandate while investing in and relying on organizations like NATO to enable it to achieve the objectives that advance its interests.

MULTILATERAL MILITARY OPERATIONS—WILLING AND ABLE?

Without question, the United States will continue to operate multinationally to support its interests in the future. With few international organizations committed to addressing conflict and human suffering on a global scale, such as the United Nations (UN), the United States will be forced to choose among UN efforts, existing multinational organizations like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), establishing a coalition of the willing, or unilateral action to ensure its national interests are secured. Operating multinationally is nearly always challenging for military operations and is especially difficult if substantial, rapid, and decisive action is required. Multilateral action is not only a U.S. political strategy to gain physical access to certain regions of the world and attain legitimacy for its foreign policy actions, but it is also more favorable for the United States economically in an era of high federal deficits and an ever-increasing national debt. As the world's remaining superpower, the United States is expected to effectively respond to a wide range of time-sensitive crisis situations from natural disasters to large scale conflict. However, it cannot do this alone, thus it is in the best interest of the United States to develop effective multinational operational capability.

To effectively resolve future situations multilaterally, the United States needs to understand the collective landscape of future coalitions and individual partner states or entities. Additionally, the United States should leverage existing lessons learned in key areas of coalition operations: politics, strategy, national interests and objectives, command and control structure and relationships, interoperability, targeting, and humanitarian operations. Some of these lessons learned should come from NATO's

post-Cold War experience in Darfur and Kosovo. Examining these two very different NATO experiences in the order of U.S. interest from lower to higher, and not their chronological order, is deliberate. Interests are inextricably linked to how and why the United States builds coalitions, joins alliances, and joins international organizations.

Resources flow commensurate with the level of U.S. interests involved. Darfur was of minimal interest to the United States and other NATO countries and this was reflected in a limited moral obligation. NATO and the United States' limited interests were matched with minimal actions, including training and logistical support for the African Union (AU) which was directly involved in Darfur through the African Union Mission in Darfur (AMIS). For Kosovo, as in Darfur, NATO member states had varied cultures and interests that translated into a limited moral obligation to respond to the Kosovo crisis. In addition to the limited moral obligation, European NATO countries had an additional interest to assist fellow Europeans in crisis. The United States was concerned with stability in Europe and in Kosovo specifically, but only with limited ways and associated means. Kosovo garnered more interest and resources than Darfur, but not enough to fly NATO air missions at low altitude or deploy NATO ground forces until after the 78 days of bombing were over. To gain the most from these historical examples, it is necessary to further understand NATO's history.

NATO history, including current operations, provides excellent insight into why coalitions form and whether they generate action or almost no action at all. Although technically an alliance, NATO has proven flexible enough to lead missions that include non-NATO members if it enhances mission effectiveness, such as NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. NATO was created on April 4th, 1949

when 12 states from Western Europe and North America signed the North Atlantic Treaty and it has expanded over time; today membership stands at 28 countries. One of its defining characteristics is found in Article 5 of the treaty which states “an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.”¹ In order to more fully understand a smaller scale multinational operation, the limited NATO involvement in Darfur is examined further.

Darfur (Issues and Challenges)

The crisis in Darfur, like most conflicts, was very complicated. In extremely simple terms, the Darfur crisis was a result of civil war, border disputes, Islamist tensions and actions, and ethnic and tribal disputes. The roots of the crisis and associated genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan (west-central Sudan) can be traced back to the Islamist coup d'état of June 1989. The fall of yet another African government to a coup was less than extraordinary and did not receive much attention in the United States or Europe given the magnitude of the end of the Cold War and changing balance of power in the world. It would take five years of deterioration in Sudan to generate enough moral obligation pressure and associated political will for the United States and Europeans to take any real action.²

Sudan's Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) was created after the Islamist coup. The ideological difference between the Islamist government in Khartoum, the RCC, and the indigenous people living in the Darfur region was only part of the trouble. The RCC Islamists considered themselves pure Arabs and in direct lineage from the Prophet Mohammed and, as such, superior to the black or non-Arab Africans, whether Muslim or not, which added a racist component to the mix and provided justification for rape, murder, and marginalization. Further, the newly founded RCC's goal was to

accomplish the Arabization of Sudan despite the fact that less than half of the country's population claimed to be of Arab origin and a third of the population was non-Muslims. The Arabization of the Sudanese people included the imposition of Arabic culture, Islamist ideology, and Arabic language. The revolution did not solely rely on politics to further its agenda.³ In addition to the regular Sudanese Army, the Revolutionary Command Council utilized and discretely supported the Janjawiid Arab militia, which included over 20,000 Chadians.

The main opposition movements in the Darfur region were the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), its military component, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). The SLA was mostly a remnant of the pre-revolution Army of Sudan and is was a fairly professional force. The JEM was comprised of Muslims from the river areas of Darfur and it initially supported the RCC, however its members later backed the opposition movements when they realized they were considered non-Arabs and were marginalized. The SLA and the JEM did not choose to work together except in dire situations requiring a unified effort against the Khartoum forces.⁴

Politics. A political solution through diplomacy was particularly challenging in the Darfur case as it included ordinary grievances like marginalization and discrimination, but also included racism, genocide, rape, and Islamic extremism. This led to a conflict that was extremely difficult to resolve. Additionally, infighting within the SLM, and between the SLA and the JEM, further complicated the diplomatic landscape. Political efforts during the conflict included significant UN efforts, including United Nations

Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1556, and direct involvement by the Nigerian and AU presidents, but all met with little success.⁵

Political pressure to respond to the genocide led both the United States and the EU to push for UN solutions that could be at least partially executed by NATO, if required. “Regional organizations like the African Union (AU) or security organizations like NATO or even coalitions of the willing have intervened when they consider the situation to warrant intervention in the face of deadlock at the UN Security Council.”⁶ The UN Security Council’s actions were severely limited because of China’s dependence on Sudanese oil and Russia’s arms sales to Sudan.⁷ The significant conflict of interest with two permanent members of the UN Security Council led interested parties to look outside the UN for action.

Strategy. The magnitude of suffering was significant as the fighting between the Khartoum forces, whether the Sudanese Army or Janjawiid, and the SLA and JEM intensified in 2002 in Darfur. During this time, the Janjawiid militia would enter a village, kill all of the men, rape the women, and burn the village. By 2004, this resulted in 30,000 dead, millions displaced in Sudan, and 200,000 refugees moving into Chad. JEM and SLA reprisals against the Sudanese Army were severe and killed thousands of troops. The huge number of indigenously displaced persons captured the attention of the UN and other humanitarian organizations. However, both the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and UN humanitarian efforts were either severely restricted or even denied entirely by the Islamist government in Khartoum.⁸ This initial strategy of using USAID and UN humanitarian assistance to relieve suffering in Darfur was less than fully successful.

National Interest and Objectives. The United States and European Union (EU) countries were not interested in unilateral action in Darfur, even with significant pressure to stop the genocide. For the United States, this hesitation was rooted in the fact that it had significant military commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, and possibly even more importantly, it did not want to start operations in yet another Islamic country for fear of further inflaming the Muslim world.⁹

The UN was able to pass UNSCR 1556 on July 30, 2004, with Russia and China abstaining from the vote, which demanded that the Khartoum government cease military action, disarm the Janjawiid militia and arrest their leaders, and report back to the UN within 30 days. In August of 2004, Kofi Annan reported that the government of Sudan had not complied and was not taking the necessary steps to protect civilians. Without any significant military or diplomatic solutions to the conflict, the refugee and humanitarian suffering continued to increase.

Command and Control Structure and Relationships. The NATO framework provided a viable source for action. Although there had been numerous calls for NATO troops, there just was not enough member state support for anything other than training and logistical support to AMIS.¹⁰ This support for AMIS included airlifting additional AU peacekeepers, establishing an AMIS Joint Operations Centre (JOC), and the training of AU personnel, and it lasted from June 2005 through December 2007, after which the mission was turned over to the United Nations African Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). NATO supported AMIS through a Senior Military Liaison Officer Team under Joint Command Lisbon which was under the overall command of Allied Command Operation.

The team operated out of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and was collocated with the AU forces.¹¹

Targeting. There were no targeting operations conducted by the United States or NATO during the Darfur crisis as the focus was on humanitarian assistance, training, and logistical support.

Humanitarian Operations. The UN Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and USAID, in conjunction with 56 non-governmental organizations (NGO) operating in Darfur, provided food aid to approximately 950,000 Indigenously Displaced Persons (IDP) in Darfur, even with enormous complications due to excessive rainfall, impassable roads, and a less than cooperative RCC. By September of 2004, USAID had provided \$204 million in food aid, or 75% of the to-date total of \$265 million, which was still only half the \$531 million in food aid required. A great deal of the difficulties distributing food aid was due to significant administrative barriers erected by the Khartoum government and its sometimes outright refusal to allow relief into rebel controlled areas. Bringing calm to the military side of the equation under ever increasing political pressure would require more concrete action.¹² However, as of 2011, there is no U.S., European, or NATO interest or political will in intervening militarily in Darfur to stop the fighting between Khartoum's forces and the opposition. In contrast to Darfur, the United States had greater interest in Kosovo.

Kosovo (Issues and Challenges)

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia began to unravel, unleashing a cultural and ethnic rift across the Balkans. Kosovo was an autonomous province of Serbia before 1989 with a functioning multi-ethnic government. The president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, developed and enforced policies

promoting Serbian nationalism during the 1980's in an effort to consolidate his power across the region. Milosevic's policies were extreme and disenfranchised Kosovar Albanians from nearly all responsible positions in Kosovo. By 1998, Kosovar Albanians and ethnic Serbs were involved in escalating violence that destabilized the region and cried out for NATO intervention.¹³ Diplomatic efforts by the contact group of the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia included the Rambouillet conference held near Paris in February 1999, which ultimately proved to be unsuccessful. Rambouillet failed due to Serbian concerns over sovereignty issues, which included NATO peacekeeping forces accessing Serbian territory and references to self government in Kosovo.¹⁴ Serbians believed the UN and NATO had no business involving themselves in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation. On March 23rd, 1999, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke gave Milosevic an ultimatum, but he ultimately did not garner any concessions from the effort. As a result, NATO Secretary General Javier Solana gave the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General Wesley Clark, the order to execute bombing operations on March 24th, which initiated OPERATION ALLIED FORCE.¹⁵ Disagreements over highly charged political issues, such as sovereignty, can lead to conflict.

Politics. Political will, driven by national interest, should never be underestimated when states are considering intervening in a sovereign country. The failure of peace negotiations led to the conflict. There is still considerable debate as to whether NATO needed a UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution prior to the bombing campaign in 1999. In most cases, NATO member states prefer having a UNSCR before action. However, in the Kosovo example, a UNSC resolution may well have done more harm

than good. During deliberations on Kosovo, Russia clearly articulated that it would veto any action if it came before the UNSC, but would support if the authority rested outside the UN. Russia's position influenced Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's decision to advise against a separate UNSCR on Kosovo.¹⁶

With a conscious decision to proceed without a specific UNSCR and subsequent UN support, NATO anticipated a possible political backlash for its intervention in Kosovo, making it even more risk averse. NATO needed to make every attempt to prevent the crisis or defuse it at an early stage, but had an inconsistent approach to dealing with Slobodan Milosevic.¹⁷ There were strategy implications from the NATO coalition's timid approach to Kosovo.

Strategy. According to the U.S. Special Adviser to President Bill Clinton and Secretary Albright, "We'll bomb them a little bit, if that doesn't work, we'll bomb them a little bit more, and if that doesn't work, we'll bomb them a little more, and if that doesn't work – ultimately – we have to consider invading. I don't see anything that lacks clarity in that strategy."¹⁸ However, this strategic advice was not entirely implemented and when President Clinton announced that ground forces would not be used in Kosovo, he dramatically affected military strategy for the United States and the other NATO countries. The no ground troops policy dramatically affected the Kosovo strategy. NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General Clark, supported immediately striking fielded Serbian military forces, whereas General Michael Short, USAF NATO Commander, Air Forces Southern Europe, wanted to attack key sites in Belgrade, including bridges on the Danube and the electrical grid from the beginning. Since Milosevic knew a ground offensive would not happen any time soon, he quickly

distributed his assets for force protection and for executing his ethnic cleansing policy after the air strikes began, which initiated a significant refugee flow out of Kosovo.

National Interest and Objectives. Like so many other conflicts, allied objectives changed for Kosovo during the course of the conflict. Initially, U.S. and NATO leaders had the singular goal of stopping Serbian violence against Kosovar Albanians, but this would not remain so for long.¹⁹

An important factor in all NATO operations, as well any multilateral operation, is the impact of national caveats and how, or whether, they limit the achievement of objectives. National caveats are essentially things an individual NATO contributing state will or will not do with its resources, whether military or civilian. These national caveats are driven by domestic politics, culture, and the norms of the contributing state. If NATO leaders ignored their populace, they could find themselves out of office in short order.²⁰ Emerging national caveats included minimizing friendly and civilian casualties and limiting collateral damage in Kosovo and Serbia.²¹

The old adage about wanting your cake and eating it too came into play as NATO members wanted to meet operational objectives without applying ground forces. “In short, NATO wanted to stop the violence, but not without many caveats.”²² Furthermore, political objectives were not clearly articulated until after the air campaign was already underway. In April 1999, NATO published the objectives of the Kosovo campaign which included: “stopping all violence in Kosovo; withdrawing Serb military, police, and paramilitary from the province; stationing an international military presence there; allowing all Kosovar Albanians safe return home; and working toward a political settlement based on talks outside Paris.”²³ This substantial expansion of objectives

without an increase in the means to coerce agreement meant mission success was less likely.

Command and Control Structure and Relationships. Relationships matter. Next to unity of effort, command and control (C2) is the next most important element of a coalition. It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of clear and effective C2 in multilateral warfare as it is the mechanism that keeps it functional. NATO's military operations in Kosovo, named ALLIED FORCE, leveraged a number of existing C2 structures and developed additional structures as the situation developed.

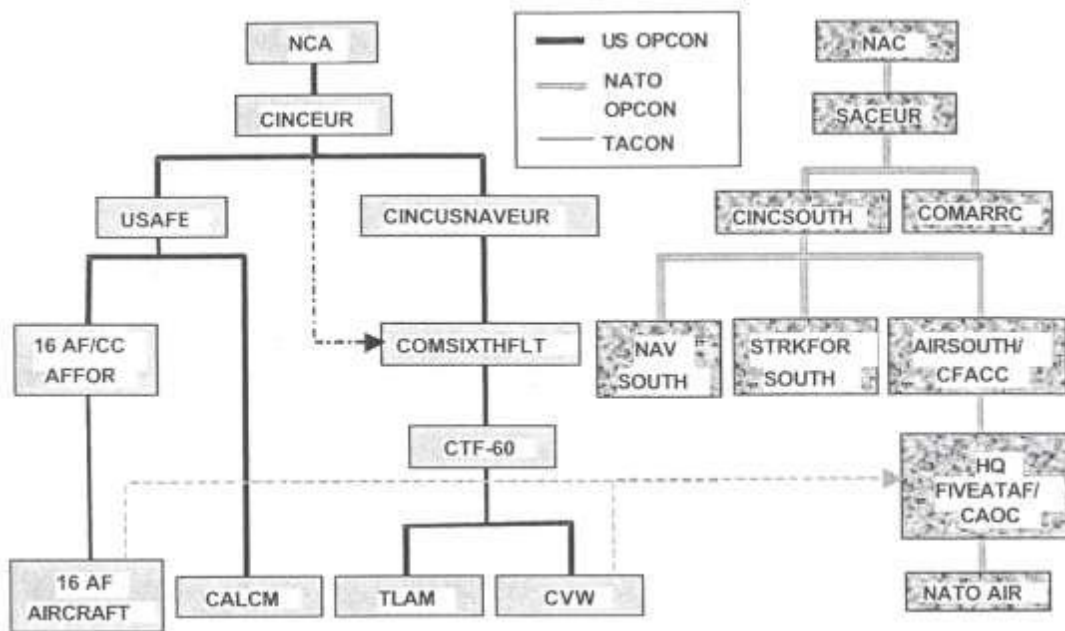


Figure 1: Command Structure Prior to August 1998²⁴

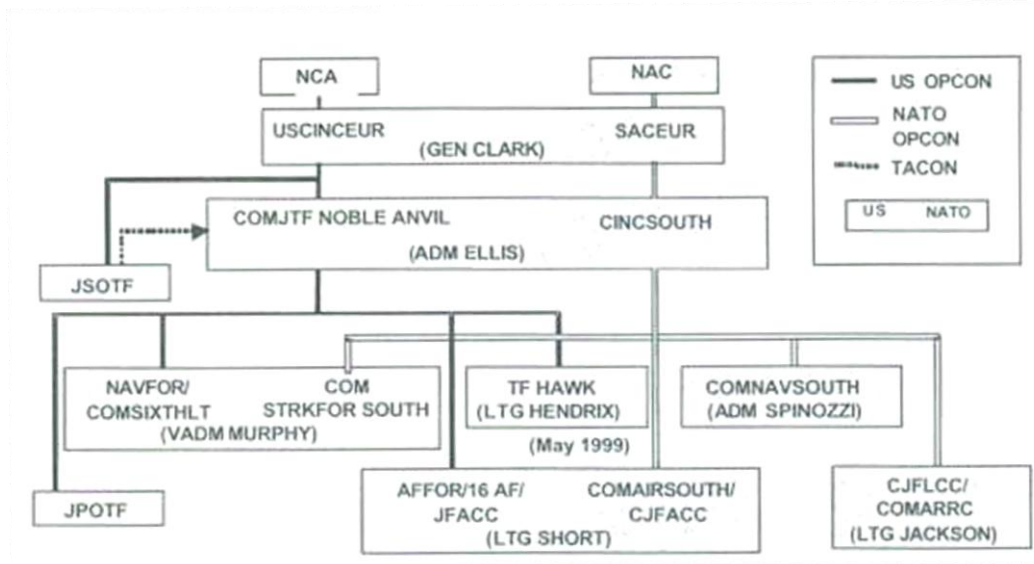


Figure 2: Command Structure January-July 1999²⁵

The pinnacle of NATO's hierarchy is the North Atlantic Council (NAC). The senior political official in the NAC is the Secretary General. The Secretary General at the time of ALLIED FORCE was Javier Solana. On the military side, the NAC's senior military officer is the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). The SACEUR during ALLIED FORCE was General Wesley Clark, U.S. Army, who was also dual-hatted as the commander of U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), where he was titled as CINCEUR. As SACEUR, General Clark reported to the NAC and had operational control of NATO forces. NATO's AIRSOUTH Commander, Lieutenant General Michael Short, was also the Combined Force Air Component Commander (CFACC) and he controlled the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) which had tactical control of NATO aircraft during air missions. Operational control of U.S. aircraft and ships remained with U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) and the U.S. Navy's Sixth Fleet (CINCUSNAVEUR) until August 1998, when the structure was changed to prepare for a possible showdown with Serbia. The modification of the U.S. C2 structure in August of

1998 was a big step in the right direction for effectively controlling combat operations, especially since the allies believed it would be a short campaign.²⁶

The change in U.S. C2 structure removed USAFE and CINCUSNAVEUR from the chain of operational control, and established two new joint task forces which enabled direct reporting and coordination between the combatant commander, General Clark, and the Sixteenth Air Force Commander/Commander Joint Task Force (JTF) Sky Anvil and his equivalent, the Sixth Fleet Commander/Commander JTF Flexible Anvil.²⁷ JTF Flexible Anvil was primarily established to execute Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM) strikes of limited duration, while JTF Sky Anvil was established to execute more extensive strikes if the limited strikes by Flexible Anvil forces were not successful.²⁸

In January 1999, the C2 structure was dramatically altered again due to an evolutionary process. The new JTF Noble Anvil was established to link the U.S. and NATO military organizations and C2 structures. JTF Noble Anvil absorbed Sky Anvil and Flexible Anvil into a single U.S. and NATO organization under Admiral James Ellis who became both the Commander, JTF Noble Anvil and CINCSOUTH. However, operational Control (OPCON) of military assets still ran through U.S. and NATO channels. The change in C2 structure was a significant improvement, even though it was delayed.

Interoperability. Interoperability is a significant challenge for service components within a single nation's armed forces, much less across multiple nations' militaries. NATO operations in Kosovo were no different, with significant challenges in the domains of communications, language, equipment, and other areas, which detracted from both effectiveness and efficiency.

Targeting. The United States set the tone for targeting in Kosovo from the beginning by establishing a top down and laborious targeting process that ran approvals through the senior political leadership of many countries. The targeting process can be the most challenging aspect of coalition warfare. A targeting process can be broken into two parts, or concepts. The deliberate targeting process is usually used for fixed location targets. The emerging targets process addresses fleeting targets, or emerging targets, and can be either fixed or moving. For the U.S. military and many of the NATO countries, individual service components generate targets via an internal process.

A significant part of the targeting process, in addition to target selection, is the target approval process. The level of target approval can range from the lowest tactical level to the senior leader of a country. This is where the process gets challenging in multilateral operations. In ALLIED FORCE, the NATO countries all agreed on the desired objective of removing Serb forces from Kosovo, but they did not all agree on the target selection to meet that end.²⁹ Multilateral cohesiveness is largely based on unity of effort and targeting disputes can take coalitions to the brink of dissolution.

The targeting process for NATO included delegating authority from the NAC through the Secretary General to the SACEUR. At the beginning of the conflict, Secretary General Solana, empowered General Clark to select specific targets as long as they conformed to the NATO targeting guidance developed by NATO's political leaders.³⁰ NATO oversight was challenging enough for General Clark, but his U.S. chain of command was significantly more demanding.

From the beginning, as USCINCEUR, General Clark had to get ALLIED FORCE targets approved by the top of his U.S. chain of command, President Clinton himself.

This approval requirement drove the U.S. targeting process to examine a variety of factors on each target. Analysts had to evaluate each target's location, estimate the military impact, the possibility of casualties and collateral damage, estimate the risk of weapon miss, and more. Other countries had a significant impact on the overall targeting process as well. The United Kingdom began requiring a British attorney to approve any targets struck with assets originating from its territory.³¹

As a result, the targeting process became a burden for the SACEUR and most critically for emerging targets. Consistently, targets of opportunity, or targets of fleeting utility, were not struck expeditiously, due to the lengthy approval process.

Humanitarian Operations. When President Clinton and NATO relayed that there would be no ground troops in Kosovo there were significant second and third order effects. Milosevic was able to disperse his forces for force protection since they would not have to mass to defend against a ground threat. These dispersed forces were able to conduct an ethnic cleansing campaign which significantly increased human suffering and caused a mass refugee movement out of Kosovo. "By 9 May, UNHCR estimated that 407,000 people had crossed the border into Albania, 230,000 into Macedonia, and 62,000 into Montenegro."³² About one third of the refugees entering Albania were assisted by host families that met their immediate needs and provided decent accommodations. Given the political climate leading to the showdown with Milosevic, relief organizations should have recognized that a military conflict was likely and quickly prepared for it, but they did not. Despite the slow initial response, the overall refugee response was adequate and met the basic needs of most of the affected population, resulting in a low death toll.³³

Lessons Learned - Darfur

Politics. Politics matters and certainly do in the case of the crisis in Darfur. The RCC in Sudan, like many other groups, is unlikely to be motivated by a condemnation in an international forum like the UN. What has been missing is the coercive threat of military action, like peace enforcement operations, for noncompliance with UN demands. However, China and Russia are likely to veto any real measures against Sudan in the UN. The United States needs to help build its partners' capacity to defend themselves or follow through with collective security agreements. This can be accomplished through improving existing institutional capabilities. Specifically, the United States should increase its support to NATO and the AU and thus enable more rapid and effective operations across the spectrum of conflict and humanitarian assistance, in the absence of UN actions.

Strategy. The initial strategy to relieve suffering in Darfur was appropriate for cooperative disaster situations, but inadequate for the political realities on the ground. UNHCR and USAID should have recognized the extraordinary difficulties in Darfur more quickly in order to reduce human suffering. This recognition and subsequent pressure from the UNHCR to the UN and from USAID to the U.S. Department of State could have driven a stronger coercive policy toward the Khartoum government. In the future, when a main party actively interferes with humanitarian relief operations, coercive pressure needs to be applied quickly and forcibly to make a difference.

National Interests and Objectives. The Darfur case illustrates a case where the United States and its allies had limited interest and with it limited commitment. It would have been very difficult for the United States or the EU to set up a coalition from scratch to provide logistical support, especially since NATO is an organization with an existing

framework ready to conduct operations of varying size and scope. Working through NATO and the AU was a good way for the United States and European nations to support the operations in Darfur, as it matched their limited commitment. Recognizing the limited interest early and acting in a limited way quickly in the future can provide more rapid and effective relief for human suffering. Additionally, the United States should foster partner capacity to enable rapid and scalable responses to emerging crises which are equal to the level of their interests.

Command and Control Structure and Relationships. The NATO framework for supporting AMIS was mostly successful and should be sustained for the future. It helped to successfully establish the AMIS JOC and train other AU personnel. Additionally, it supported AMIS through an existing NATO resource, the Senior Military Liaison Officer Team, which operated in Ethiopia and was collocated with the AU.

Subsequent to the crisis in Darfur, the United States established U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) to better focus on issues on the continent of Africa. This has been a significant step in the right direction for focused understanding of the region and increased effectiveness of U.S. policy in Africa. This significant structural change for the Department of Defense allows it to work more closely with other U.S. institutions, including the Department of State, and other agencies which represent U.S. power across the diplomatic, information, military, and economic (DIME) spectrum. AFRICOM, like all geographic combatant commands, is a key player executing U.S. policy, including the development of future coalitions.

Interoperability. The traditional concerns for military operations regarding interoperability were not a significant factor for the NATO operations in Darfur since

NATO and the United States were in a supporting role. The true lesson learned from Darfur for interoperability is in how the United States and NATO build the AU's capacity in the future. Standardization of equipment, facilities, terminology, tactics, and procedures will be vital to the AU's success in the future. Additional challenges will include selecting levels of modernization, readiness, and affordability. Even if the AU cannot afford the same level of modernization as NATO, it can use a building block approach to enhance its effectiveness and interoperability over time.

Targeting. There were no targeting lessons learned by the United States or NATO during the Darfur crisis, as the focus was on humanitarian assistance, training, and logistical support.

Humanitarian Operations. The lessons learned in strategy addressed the need to increase coercive pressure if humanitarian relief is discouraged or denied. Efforts by the UNHCR, USAID, and a large number of NGOs had a significant impact on reducing human suffering in Darfur despite the significant challenges. These relief organizations are extremely good at what they do and mostly need a secure environment and free access in order to remain successful in the future.

Lessons Learned - Kosovo

Politics. Secretary Albright said, "Kosovo carries another lesson: political will is more important than additional institutional structures. The problem in Kosovo before we acted together was not the lack of appropriate institutions; it was the lack of agreement to use the institutions we have."³⁴ Secretary Albright brings up a very valuable point that can be applied to future multilateral actions. Even if the structure is in place, as it was in the case of the UN and NATO before the Kosovo crisis, it does not guarantee that the member states will leverage the institution. For the NATO alliance, Article 5 considers

an attack on one as an attack on all, but a country can still choose to either fulfill or renege on its obligation. Furthermore, for non-Article 5 crises there is no guarantee member states will respond. This requires the United States to pay close attention to the political will and interests of its possible future coalition partners. In addition, a major political lesson learned is that multilateral entities need to understand their threshold for action before substantive conflict resolution negotiations begin. Once the conflict starts, both sides have emotional investments that may cloud judgment concerning political objectives. Inflexible negotiations are rarely successful and can lead to unnecessary conflict.

Strategy. Significant lessons learned from NATO's experience in Kosovo are basic concepts related to state interests and relationships. From the beginning, nations should align political and military solutions while addressing the conflict or potential conflict. A multilateral entity needs to establish basics like its willingness to utilize ground forces at the earliest opportunity.³⁵ The United States wields considerable influence within NATO.³⁶ President Clinton's overt restraint on the utilization of ground forces dramatically limited the effectiveness of the air campaign to destroy fielded Serbian forces. If the Serbians thought a ground offensive was possible, they would have had to mass their forces to meet them. The massing of ground forces is essential for effective air interdiction of those forces. As a result of limiting ways to achieve the end state of Serbia pulling out of Kosovo, the overall strategy was fundamentally lacking. At the strategic level, when the campaign began, NATO had no clear idea of how the air campaign would produce the coercive effects desired. At the operational level, it did not have a workable campaign plan to achieve the desired effects.³⁷

National Interests and Objectives. Objectives tied to end states should be established early in the coalition building process to enable planners to match the ways and means to the desired ends. If the NATO planners had understood the substantial expansion of objectives, they may have determined that air and missile strikes were not likely to compel Serbian compliance. Without a general agreement on strong actions and the required political will, NATO tip-toed incrementally into the conflict with little coercive power applied to Milosevic until nearly the end of the 78 days of bombing. Basic coalition objectives were changed during the conflict. If at all possible, objectives should be established at the initiation of coalition operations with their roots firmly tied to the political end states. If not, they are subject to change when emotions are high and investments in blood and treasure are possibly significant which can greatly impact a rational decision to continue. These types of decisions are also affected by the command and control structure of a multilateral entity.

Command and Control Structure and Relationships. The significant change in NATO-U.S. C2 structure represented intelligence and agility in execution, but also, something that should have been considered much earlier. In the future, the C2 arrangements should be established at the formation of the coalition and should be designed to achieve unity of command and unity of effort from the beginning. Since NATO was heading down an overly optimistic path of a quick and limited conflict, it was not fully prepared for the more difficult reality that came with a stubborn Milosevic. If the U.S. and NATO leadership would have considered the best way to control an extended conflict from the beginning, integrated planning and operations between the United

States and NATO could have occurred much earlier, resulting in less friction and possibly more effectiveness in combat.

A benchmark resulting from NATO's Kosovo experience was when it established a formal structure of decision making, called the six-member Contact Group, consisting of the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia. The group enabled streamlined decision making under restrictive timelines. This type of rapid decision making body should be built into the fabric of any future U.S. multinational effort. However, one significant reality even the contact group could not solve was that of national caveats. These individual exceptions for member states became a hindrance to the operation. To mitigate the negative aspects of national caveats in the future, each member state should clearly articulate its position from the start on how and when it will allow its forces and resources to be utilized, instead of waiting for the conflict to begin and adjusting under fire. Although decision making was not always optimal, NATO's process was considered a good one given the number of participants and scope of the operation.³⁸

Interoperability. There were significant issues with interoperability among the participating members in ALLIED FORCE. French Defense Minister Alain Richard said, "In particular, the importance of the communication dimension was underestimated by many of us."³⁹ Even the Russians supporting ethnic Serbian areas noted that they struggled with incompatible equipment and communications challenges.⁴⁰ The Germans noted similar issues when Brigadier General Peter Goebel, the German defense attaché to the United States relayed, "We want to do everything we can as part of command,

control, communications, and computers to keep or get back our capability to work with our allies, and of course the United States (is) playing a major role in this.”⁴¹

Establishing standardized procedures and equipment across the entire globe is reaching way too far, but the concept may drive the need to rely on existing institutions like NATO to support future multilateral operations. To ensure its national interests, the United States should invest heavily in NATO to bring it up to a minimal level of competence in key areas. This should include C2, equipment, and training to ensure truly operational interoperability. With a truly effective NATO backbone, the United States can effectively operate multilaterally from the beginning.

Targeting. Since NATO was planning on a very short coercive campaign in ALLIED FORCE, it ran out of deliberate or preplanned targets in a few days.⁴² Coalitions need to develop targets for extended campaigns before the conflict starts in order to maintain the targeting initiative if they run out of diplomatic options. General Clark said, “Target selection quickly emerged as the toughest issue of the campaign, with most of the military leaders in NATO seeking to strike more high-value targets closer to Belgrade...while a number of foreign ministries were urging cautious and carefully managed escalation...We were quickly learning how difficult it is for a nineteen nation allegiance to wage a coherent military campaign.”⁴³ From the first hint of conflict, a coalition should agree on the most effective targeting and approval process and stick to it to ensure success. The process for selecting targets, although critical, is only part of the targeting equation. The targeting approval process should be developed as early as possible in a coalition to minimize process friction and maximize targeting effectiveness.

Humanitarian Operations. The initial lesson learned for humanitarian operations in the Kosovo crisis is related to politics. Politicians need to consider second and third order effects when establishing policy. It was politically expedient to openly prohibit the application of ground forces in Kosovo, but it likely made the refugee crisis much worse, as a result. Relief organizations had more than adequate time to recognize that conflict was likely in Kosovo and should have prepared earlier and should have spent more time preparing for contingencies. The utilization of host families for about one third of the refugees in Albania proved to be an outstanding course of action. It greatly minimized suffering and should be replicated if at all possible in future refugee situations. Finally, the world is still lacking an international organization that can support large crises and multiple donors. The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) can become such an organization if it is given adequate resources. This would provide the world with a scalable capacity to address future crisis and refugee relief operations.⁴⁴

Conclusion

The United States will ensure its interests are protected by applying appropriate levels of resources to relevant situations. Multilateral operations provide the United States a great option for either limited or significant involvement in crisis situations, depending on political and financial constraints, while maintaining international legitimacy. Utilizing lessons learned from small operations where the United States has minimal interest and from larger conflicts like Kosovo can lead to a more tailored and effective way to apply military ways and means to achieve the desired political ends. At the inception of a coalition, the political will, end state and objectives, command and control structure, and military strategy should be established to set the course for

planning and effective execution. Additionally, key processes like targeting and humanitarian relief operations should be developed or improved upon immediately to attain the desired political end state quickly while minimizing human suffering. Finally, with the daunting tasks the United States asks its military to perform, it should leverage existing institutions like the UN for a political mandate while investing in and relying on organizations like NATO to enable it to achieve the objectives that advance its interests.

Endnotes

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