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



**COALITION OPERATIONAL COMMAND AND CONTROL –  
LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE RELIEF OF PEKING DURING THE BOXER  
REBELLION**

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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 and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

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**17 May 2005**

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## **Abstract**

### **COALITION OPERATIONAL COMMAND AND CONTROL – LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE RELIEF OF PEKING DURING THE BOXER REBELLION**

In 1900, the eight most powerful nations in the world formed a coalition during the Boxer Rebellion to rescue their besieged citizens in Peking. This coalition is a historical precursor to recent ad hoc coalitions and provides lessons learned on coalition command and control that are still applicable today. The coalition formed for the Relief of Peking used a parallel command structure where each nation retained operational command of its own forces. With no unity of command, unity of effort was achieved throughout most of the operation due to the common objectives of all member nations. The Relief of Peking coalition is similar in numerous ways to the recent ad hoc coalitions formed during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Desert Storm. Command and control comparisons can be used to derive lessons learned pertaining to command structure, unity of command/effort, and cooperation of coalition members. A broad international coalition was vital during the Relief of Peking because of the requirement to rapidly mass sufficient forces to achieve success. Today, coalitions are no less vital for success; however, the key contribution that coalition members provide to U.S.-led operations is not direct involvement in the major combat phase of the conflicts. Instead, coalitions provide basing and over-flight rights and other logistics support as well as establishing international legitimacy for the operations.

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For years I'd studied the strategy and tactics of past wars. As my staff and I reviewed our options in September 2001, I could not think of a historical parallel for the military campaign under consideration.

-Tommy Franks, American Soldier

The only thing worse than fighting with allies is fighting without them.

-Winston Churchill

## **Introduction**

A symbol of western power is viciously and violently attacked by a group of religious extremists that was previously unknown to most of the world. The Western world, fed by vivid press coverage of the attacks, is shocked and outraged. The world's most powerful country organizes an unprecedented coalition consisting of numerous nations. As military expeditionary forces from the coalition nations form, this "coalition of the willing" prepares to advance to the interior of the country to capture the capital city of the nation that is protecting and supporting these extremists.

This incident applies with some degree of accuracy to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan in 2001-2002. There are also strong similarities to Operation Desert Shield/Storm in 1990-1991 and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in 2003. The Relief of Peking during the Boxer Rebellion is the actual event described. In 1900, a mystical secret society was determined to rid China of foreign influence and laid siege to the international legation area of Peking with active support from the Chinese government. The eight great powers of the world under the nominal leadership of the British formed a coalition to save their citizens. Though the operational commander of OEF, General Tommy Franks, could not find a historical parallel for his operation (as noted in the quotation that opens this paper), the Relief of Peking during the Boxer Rebellion has many similarities to the "coalitions of the willing" in OEF, OIF and the Gulf War.

## **Thesis**

Ad hoc coalitions provide the operational commander with numerous challenges as evidenced by the Relief of Peking and more recent U.S.-led coalitions. Coalitions often do not achieve unity of effort, much less unity of command, due to reasons that are largely beyond the control of the commanders. The operational commander must recognize that coalition forces can be counter-productive if not properly utilized and he must strive for effective cooperation to achieve unity of effort when unity of command is not possible. Despite numerous problems in the command structure during the Relief of Peking, the coalition was vital to mass the forces required to achieve success. Today, coalitions are essential for the success of U.S.-led operations; however, the vital support that coalition members provide is of a markedly different nature than the combat support of the past.

This paper will study the Relief of Peking during the Boxer Rebellion as an early “coalition of the willing” with a focus on operational command and control. Current joint doctrine will be reviewed and command and control during the Relief of Peking will be examined. The paper will analyze coalition command and control in three recent coalitions (OIF, OEF, and the Gulf War) to identify similarities to the Boxer Rebellion.<sup>1</sup> Finally, lessons learned will be proposed concerning coalition command and control.

### **Doctrine and Principles of War on Coalition Command and Control**

Before analyzing historical examples of coalition command and control, it is useful to review how doctrine views coalitions. U.S. joint doctrine defines a coalition as “an ad hoc arrangement between two or more nations for common action.”<sup>2</sup> Joint doctrine also describes the different types of coalition command structures: parallel command where each nation retains control of its deployed forces (Figure 1, p. 21), lead nation command where the

nation with the preponderance of the forces and resources typically provides the commander of the coalition force (Figure 2, p. 22), or a combination of the two as was used in Operation Desert Storm (Figure 3, p. 23). Joint doctrine recognizes that “establishing command relationships and operating procedures within the multinational force often is challenging.”<sup>3</sup>

Operational command and control is usually listed as the first operational function since it “binds together all other functions with the joint forces and assets deployed in a given theater.”<sup>4</sup> “Sound command and control should ensure unity of effort, provide for centralized direction and decentralized execution, provide an environment for applying command doctrine, and ensure interoperability.”<sup>5</sup> To achieve unity of effort, unity of command is sought which means having one commander in charge of all coalition forces. Because of differing political goals and national pride, it is unusual for a coalition to strictly realize unity of command. Though an effective command structure is vital to implementing all principles of war (objective, offensive, mass, movement, surprise, security, economy of force, cooperation, and simplicity), the principle of war of cooperation most closely applies.<sup>6</sup> “Cooperation implies correct organization at the top, mutual confidence and respect, mutual knowledge of the powers and limitation of the other arms and services, and above all combined training.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Historical Background - Relief of Peking During the Boxer Rebellion**

In 1900, the Boxers surrounded and laid siege to the legation area of Peking that housed international communities. The Boxers (Righteous Harmonious Fists) arose from secret societies, had a mystical element (i.e., they believed that they were impervious to bullets), and had the goal of removing foreign influence from China. The Boxers had the support of the dowager empress, and the Chinese Imperial Army participated in the attacks



against the Peking legations and the coalition relief forces. From June to August 1900, a small international force of 400 men defended the legations in Peking while the coalition attempted to reach Peking to save their citizens. With the common objective of rescuing their citizens and quelling further Boxer insurrection, an unprecedented alliance was formed between the eight major powers of the world (Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the United States). Though many of the coalition countries were not on good terms with one another, they agreed to work together militarily to achieve common objectives. After one unsuccessful attempt, the coalition reached Peking before the legations were overrun by the Boxers and the Imperial Chinese Army.

### **Coalitions and Commanders in the Relief of Peking**

The Relief of Peking could be considered one operation with numerous phases, including the first relief expedition, the attack on the Taku forts, the siege at Tientsin, and the second and ultimately successful relief expedition.<sup>8</sup> There was no overall theater commander and all nations did not participate in all actions; instead, the operational commander changed as the situation warranted. The phases were not planned but were a result of coalition forces reacting to developing situations.

The first relief effort was hastily organized by international forces that were readily available in local garrisons or from ships currently located in China. Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Seymour, the commander of the British China Station, was considered the operational commander of this unsuccessful attempt.<sup>9</sup> Seymour's forces consisted of 2,066 men including 915 British, 450 Germans, 312 Russian, 158 French, 112 Americans, 54 Japanese, 40 Italians, and 25 Austrians.<sup>10</sup>

After the failure of Seymour's relief expedition, a large international relief force was organized and a German, Count Alfred von Waldersee, was named overall commander by agreement of the governments of the participating coalition members. Von Waldersee did not arrive in China until late September, after Peking had been relieved.<sup>11</sup> Because of the deteriorating situation in Peking, the coalition representatives decided to act prior to von Waldersee's arrival. General Sir Alfred Gaselee, the British expeditionary force commander, was the senior officer among the nations present so he took overall command of the successful Relief of Peking effort. The forces on this effort consisted of approximately 20,000 personnel with 9,000 Japanese, 2,900 Russians, 2,900 British, 2,200 Americans, and smaller forces from France, Germany, Austria and Italy.<sup>12</sup> In addition, 23,000 men, primarily Russians and Japanese, guarded the rear area.<sup>13</sup>

### **Command Relationships in the Relief of Peking**

Both relief expeditions had a parallel command structure (Figure 4, p. 24). Both had nominal British commanders though the British commanders only exercised command authority over their own nation's forces. Seymour, the senior officer present at the time of the first expedition, received the unanimous appointment to take "command of the international force."<sup>14</sup> However, each country retained the authority to direct their own forces and decided how to utilize them. Seymour could not act without consensus of coalition members. Seymour states that he felt that it was his responsibility to initiate proceedings therefore, "He invited the other commanding officers on board his flagship and urged that they work in concert. They agreed that if necessary an allied naval brigade should be landed to advance on Peking."<sup>15</sup> After an initial attack on the railroad trains that carried the first relief effort forces, an American officer noted, "Up to this time, there was no

organization of the various contingents to guarantee our common and mutual protection. The little episode of the afternoon demonstrated the necessity for such an organization.”<sup>16</sup>

Describing the second relief effort, Colonel A. S. Daggett, who commanded the U.S. 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment during the effort, stated, “As no officer, whatever his rank, could give orders to officers of any other army, it was decided that a conference of commanders should be held every evening, or when necessary, to determine the movements of the following day or days, and that a majority should rule.”<sup>17</sup> These meetings functioned as what would now be called a coalition coordination communication integration center (C3IC).

### **Unity of Command/Unity of Effort in the Relief of Peking**

Both coalitions were formed quickly and the coalition representatives did not have time to consult their national leadership to determine acceptable coalition command relationships. Due to the distance and lack of timely communication, each commander was given broad latitude to act according to his own judgment. The commander of U.S. forces on the second relief effort, Major General Adna R. Chafee, received these instructions from the secretary of war, which was likely typical of the expectations placed on all commanders:

Confer freely with commanders of other national forces, act concurrently with them, and seek harmony of action along the lines of similar purpose and interest. There should be full and free conference as to operations before they are entered upon. You are at liberty to agree with them from time to time as to a common official direction of the various forces in their combined operations, preserving, however, the integrity of your own American division, ready to be used as a separate and complete organization. Much must be left to your wise discretion. . . .<sup>18</sup>

Thus, a parallel command structure was in place and conferences of commanders with the majority ruling served the purpose of the coordination center. This structure did not achieve unity of command but it appears that unity of effort was largely intact through cooperation due to the common goal of all nations – the rescuing of their citizens in Peking.

## **Coalition Cooperation in the Relief of Peking**

If unity of effort was not allowed to be achieved through unity of command, cooperation could still provide the necessary unity of effort for success. The first expedition failed as the expedition encountered heavy opposition on the approach to Peking and was forced to conduct a fighting retreat to Tientsin, suffering 62 dead and 232 wounded of a total force of 2,066.<sup>19</sup> The reasons for the failure were numerous, but the key failings were poor planning and underestimation of the enemy, which led to Seymour's belief that they could travel unopposed to Peking by train. Seymour's performance is controversial since he was criticized for his lack of planning, his failure to anticipate the enemy, and his poor understanding of ground operations. The opposing view was stated by a participant who credits Seymour for excellent organization of the coalition forces and for achieving "efficient cooperation in a common cause without causing jealousies."<sup>20</sup> After the coordination conference was established by Seymour in the first expedition, it appears that adequate cooperation and hence unity of effort was achieved. This was a small scale effort of only 2066 personnel, and the military organization of space simply consisted of loading four trains and departing for Peking. After the lines were cut and the coalition was attacked by large units of the Boxers and the Imperial Chinese Army, the expedition became a desperate retreat to safety in Tientsin.

The second expedition is more useful to review as a military operation. The coalition's members were given defined geographic sectors in the approach to Peking. For example, as the forces started on the relief effort, "The general idea was that the Japanese, British, and Americans should operate along the right bank [of the Peiho River], while the other allies should act on the left side of the river."<sup>21</sup> Though this assignment of coalition

forces was in effect until the final attack on Peking, problems did arise. Friendly fire incidents were common. In one case, French soldiers fired upon American soldiers and in another instance, either Russian or British gunners fired artillery into American forces killing eight and wounding nine.<sup>22</sup> Another failure of cooperation occurred when Gaselee requested American assistance, “General Chafee considered the clearing of his right front of great importance, and hesitated to abandon the movement then in progress . . . On receiving a second and urgent message, he reluctantly changed the direction of his battery and marines. . . .”<sup>23</sup>

Cooperation finally collapsed in the second relief effort as coalition forces prepared for the final assault on Peking. A conference was held on 12 August where coalition members agreed that the advance would proceed in four columns and that there would be another meeting prior to the planned 15 August attack of Peking.<sup>24</sup> The Russian forces, in an apparent attempt to capture Peking alone thus gaining international prestige, failed to halt as previously agreed, continued their advance, and attacked the city wall. Gaselee noted in an official report that “owing to the premature advance of the Russians, the intended concentration was abandoned, and the troops were all hurried forward to assault the city of Peking.”<sup>25</sup> As the Russians “were met by a hot fire, and becoming involved had to continue the fight, whereupon all the allies pushed forward to the attack, each advancing as rapidly as possible on the particular gate that lay in their line of march.”<sup>26</sup> This early advance by the Russians forces disrupted the plan for a simultaneous attack on numerous points of the Peking city defenses. This compromise of the principles of war of mass and surprise most likely resulted in higher than necessary casualties among coalition members.

## **Recent Ad Hoc Coalitions**

Shifting focus from the Boxer Rebellion, there are three modern operations where world powers, led this time by the United States, attacked a weaker nation after organizing an ad hoc coalition of willing nations. In these three operations, coalition command structure will be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of cooperation.

### **Operation Iraqi Freedom Coalition Command and Control**

In the Iraq war, “only the United States and Britain contributed significant combat forces for the war (Australia and Poland committed token forces), making it essentially an Anglo-American attack on an Arab state. The rest of the coalition consisted mostly of nominal political supporters. . . .”<sup>27</sup> Unlike the Boxer Rebellion, the countries that contributed directly to combat in the major combat operations phase were close allies of the United States and agreed to place their countries forces under operational or tactical control of the United States. It is much too soon after the conflict for balanced historic documentation of the major hostilities phase of OIF, but the consensus among the early histories of this war is that coalition cooperation was excellent.<sup>28</sup> The integration of the one country that provided major combat power, Great Britain, into the U.S.-led coalition was highly successful:

This represented almost unprecedented international cooperation under actual combat conditions—a U.S. tactical unit subordinated to a British division which was in turn subordinated to an American MEF headquarters. Throughout the Iraq War the level of cooperation between I MEF and the British 1<sup>st</sup> Armoured Division was exemplary, furthered to a great extent by similarities in doctrine and a consistent willingness to delegate responsibility to subordinates—in other words, a decentralized approach to command and control of units. . . .<sup>29</sup>

Thus, OIF was a textbook case of successful integration of coalition forces during major combat operations. Using a highly trained and modern coalition partner with similar

doctrine, and more importantly, consistent strategic goals, a lead nation command structure was formed and unity of effort through unity of command was achieved.

Throughout the conflict, coalition members provided non-combat support such as over-flight rights, basing rights, and logistics support. In addition, the United States sought aggressively to expand the coalition in the post-major combat operations phase, in large part to boost international legitimacy for the Iraqi regime change. During the post-major combat operations phase, U.S. Central Command boasted that 31 nations provided coalition combat forces in their area of responsibility.<sup>30</sup> Critics of the Bush administration's policy in Iraq have cynically called this a "coalition of the billing" for the financial or other benefits that many of these nations have gained from participation in the U.S.-led coalition.<sup>31</sup> From an operational point of view, this large number of countries, all with militaries of differing doctrine and competence, would have been extremely difficult to successfully integrate into the coalition during the major combat phase.

### **Operation Enduring Freedom Coalition Command and Control**

The coalition command structure for OEF was similar to that of OIF. OEF also had a lead nation command structure where coalition members agreed to place forces under tactical or operational control of the United States (Figure 5, p. 25). But in contrast to OIF where few nations agreed to participate in major combat operations, the United States was flooded with offers of support in the wake of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. In forming this coalition, military necessity was the driver – the coalition would not be increased for political reasons. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld "didn't want other forces included for cosmetic purposes. Some German battalion or a French frigate could get in the way of his operation. The coalition had to fit the conflict and not the other way around."<sup>32</sup> Eventually,

active military participation on the ground was provided only by European, Canadian, and Australian Special Operations Forces as well as aviation and naval support from several nations.<sup>33</sup> A unique aspect of this coalition is that the anti-Taliban forces of the Northern Alliance conducted most of the ground fighting. In effect, the U.S.-led coalition provided support to a war of national liberation.

OIF illustrates a significant difference between the Relief of Peking coalition and modern coalitions. In the Relief of Peking, forces were not employed for cosmetic purposes; instead, all coalition countries were needed to mass the required forces on short notice to successfully relieve the legations. One hundred years later, the complexity of warfare dictates that manpower for its own sake is no longer necessarily useful. The benefits that coalition now provide to the United States, with few exceptions such as the U.K. and Australia, are international legitimacy, crucial non-combat support such as over-flight rights and basing, and support for post-major conflict stabilization and nation-building operations. That coalitions are not necessarily needed for major combat roles does not diminish their importance. Basing and over-flight rights were vital to the successful regime change in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

### **Gulf War Coalition Command and Control**

The Gulf War of 1990-1991 provides the most fruitful comparison to the Relief of Peking. As in the Boxer Rebellion, this was a large coalition made up of forces from numerous nations including some that were not usually allied with the United States. Numerous coalition member nations had significant combat roles. Many nations would not agree to a lead nation command structure, and so a coordination mechanism was established



for coalition communication and decision-making. As in the Boxer Rebellion, numerous problems arose but the coalition was ultimately effective and the operation succeeded.

Unlike the Boxer Rebellion, many of the coalition members provided symbolic combat assistance and their presence was detrimental to operational effectiveness. As in OIF and OEF, the major tangible contribution of many coalition nations, especially the Islamic nation members, was logistics support such as basing and over-flight rights. Most importantly, this broad coalition conferred international legitimacy on the operation by the active participation of the numerous nations, particularly the Islamic nations.

The coalition command structure during the Gulf War was a combination lead nation and parallel structure (Figure 3, p. 23). For example, British and French forces served under tactical control of the United States, but the Islamic nations' forces served under Saudi Arabian Lieutenant General Prince Khalid bin Sultan's Joint Forces Command (JFC).<sup>34</sup> Because of sensitivities of the United States commanding the militaries of Islamic states, the U.S. Secretary of State, James Baker, reached an agreement with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia where General Norman Schwarzkopf, commanding "all U.S. forces in the Gulf, would work in tandem with Saudi Lieutenant General Khalid bin Sultan, who commanded all Saudi and Arab forces there. All allied forces in the Gulf would be under one of these two headquarters."<sup>35</sup> Without unity of command, unity of effort was sought through close cooperation between Schwarzkopf and Khalid, establishment of a Joint Military Committee that matched U.S. component commanders with their equivalent Saudi service component commanders, the establishment of a Coalition Communication Coordination Integration Center (C3IC) headed by U.S. Major General Paul Schwartz, and the provision of U.S. liaison officers to the JFC.

Despite all efforts to achieve effective cooperation, the strains were numerous. In the lead up to Desert Storm, the coalition leadership's doubts that proper cooperation could be achieved were so grave that Schwarzkopf proposed the following command relationship clarification, which Secretary of State Baker presented to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia: "Command and Control: should military operations commence, a joint command as currently exists will continue; however, the commander of the U.S. forces will have final approval authority for all military operations."<sup>36</sup> King Fahd agreed to this document.

Unlike in OIF and OEF, the coalition forces played key combat roles in the major combat phase, and each occupied assigned sectors on the front. The French division was assigned the far left sector, protecting the U.S. Army's flank. The Arab forces were assigned two sectors: JFC-East was assigned the far right sector, protecting Marines' right flank, and JFC-North was assigned to the left of U.S. Marine Forces (Figure 6, p. 26). When hostilities commenced, the Marines' quick advance compared to the Arab forces left them with an exposed left flank and forcing them to stop their drive.<sup>37</sup> Schwarzkopf had anticipated this problem and held the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division in reserve in case Arab forces were ineffective. When Syrian and Egyptian forces failed to move, the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division filled the hole in the coalition lines.<sup>38</sup> On the opposite sector, the French, considered to have a mobile, highly trained, and experienced army division participating in the conflict, caused problems for the Army ground commander by moving insufficiently quickly to keep up with the U.S. Army.<sup>39</sup>

Even with clearly assigned sectors and numerous cooperation initiatives, there were failures of cooperation. A short list of these problems would include command and control over the French, who initially refused to be under the tactical control of the United States but

who later reversed themselves;<sup>40</sup> the Syrian forces, who first refused to cross the border and then agreed to attack only as rear guard;<sup>41</sup> the Saudi Arabian forces, who were unable to communicate with the Marines when the Iraqis attacked the Saudi Arabian sector prior to the start of Desert Storm in the Battle of Khafji;<sup>42</sup> and Saudi Arabia forces who refused to allow the Marines to attack into Kuwait through the JFC-East sector.<sup>43</sup> Most illustrative of coalition failures of cooperation was the final ceremonial liberation of Kuwait. Once the Marines had secured the city, the Islamic coalition forces were to be the first to enter the center of Kuwait City thus gaining the credit for liberating Kuwait, but these forces initially refused to enter the city. Egyptian President Mubarak had to directly order the Egyptian forces into Kuwait. “After an embarrassing interlude, the Egyptians marched in parade formation with other Arab contingents of the coalition and officially decreed Kuwait City liberated.”<sup>44</sup>

The military forces of the United Kingdom performed superbly, but even this close ally of the United States provided the operational commander with unity of effort issues. A British armored division was initially placed under the tactical control of the Marines but British leadership was dissatisfied with this assignment. The Marines were to be a supporting effort to fix the enemy forces while the U.S. Army swept northward from the left and destroyed the Iraqi army. The British requested to shift their troops from the Marines to the U.S. Army:

“It was a high priority for London and reflected a concern over the welfare of its troops. The duties of CENTCOM commander were political as well as military. Part of Schwarzkopf’s job was to help hold the coalition together. While Schwarzkopf did not agree with the British request, he felt he had little choice but to accept it.”<sup>45</sup>

The U.S. forces also provided serious problems for the British forces. Most of the 24 British deaths in combat were not from Iraqi forces, rather they were victims of the United States friendly fire from the U.S. Forces.<sup>46</sup>

The coalition was successful in spite of a seemingly endless list of coordination problems. With lack of unity of command and a deterioration in unity of effort, the coalition held together long enough to defeat Iraq and liberate Kuwait. Notwithstanding the excellent efforts of the British, the coalition ground forces were a net negative to the commander. Fortunately<sup>47</sup> for the coalition, the Iraqi military was overrated and the coalition coordination difficulties did not prevent the crushing defeat of the enemy. Indeed, the broad coalition conferred international legitimacy and without the essential basing, logistics, and over-flight support provided by the coalition, the victory may not have been possible.

### **Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

Much has changed in warfare in the more than one hundred years since the Boxer Rebellion. A hundred years ago, Britannia may have ruled the waves, but the German, French, Russian, or Japanese armies could rival that of Britain. Now, there is one superpower whose military far exceeds all others. A hundred years ago, the world's great powers fought against each other or in small wars in the name of empire. Now, trans-national or stateless actors threaten world powers, and nations seek to develop asymmetric methods to combat the overwhelming military strength of the United States.

However, the last hundred years has left some principles unchanged. Countries are still reticent to place their forces under the command of a foreign power. National interests will always take precedence over coalition goals if they are in conflict. Coalitions, as they were in the Boxer Rebellion, are still vital for success in major conflicts.

From this comparison of the command and control of past and present coalitions, some lessons learned that have application to future U.S. coalition operations can be derived.

1. To ensure unity of effort, lead nation command structure is preferable to parallel or mixed command structure. As in the Relief of Peking and the Gulf War, lead nation command structure is not always possible because nations may not allow their troops to be under the command of another nation. If a parallel structure must be used, close coordination must be obtained through the formation of a coordinating cell and other efforts. This coordination should allow for significant interaction between coalition commanders and throughout all levels of the coalition.

2. Unity of effort is in danger where coalition considerations do not allow for unity of command. Especially during the final portion of an operation, divergent national motives are likely to jeopardize unity of effort. In the Relief of Peking, the coalition fractured prior to the final approach to Peking and during the Gulf War, Islamic coalition members were reticent to advance into Kuwait. The operational commander must be sensitive to coalition members' changing priorities as the operation nears conclusion and seek to minimize the negative effects of this through close coordination throughout the operation.

3. With coalition warfare, opportunity for friendly fire incidents dramatically increases as illustrated by the high proportion of British friendly fire deaths to total deaths in the Gulf War and the numerous incidents during the Relief of Peking. An operational commander must seek effective ways to organize operations into zones or sectors to minimize friendly fire incidents among coalition members.

4. In coalitions, countries may have national goals that are not closely aligned with those of the United States. Coalition members' militaries may not be advanced or their

doctrine may not be compatible with U.S. doctrine. If these countries have important sectors or an important combat role in major combat operations, the success of the operation could be jeopardized. A symbolic or non-combat intensive role should be sought out for these nations such as rear area security or post major-hostilities operations. Countries that have high quality militaries and shared common national goals with the United States can effectively participate in major combat actions. In the Boxer rebellion, all coalition members had common national goals and similar military capabilities allowing for effective combat employment of all members. In OIF, OEF, and the Gulf War, only the British could effectively provide large-scale fire-power to the U.S.-led coalitions.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Could the Relief of Peking have been accomplished without a coalition? The answer is clearly no. Though the first effort failed, a broad coalition was required to mass sufficient forces to defeat the Boxers and the Chinese Imperial Army. Without the cooperation of all available forces on very short notice, it is probable that the legations would have fallen before any one country could have assembled the forces required for individual success.

Could the United States have achieved success in the Gulf War, OEF, or OIF without a coalition? Because direct combat forces from other nations did not provide significant effective offensive capability (with the exception of the British forces), the United States could probably have won the major offensive phase of each conflict without direct combat support from other nations. In all three conflicts, the coalitions were absolutely vital in indirect support – over-flight rights, basing, and other logistics support. When this indirect support is added to the national strategic benefit that broad coalitions provide through international legitimacy, it is clear that the coalitions were vital to success.

In response to the attacks of September 11, 2001, General Tommy Franks stated, “The world did indeed move through a crease in history in September 2001. Never again will democracies fight alone. This Coalition represents the way of war for the future.”

<sup>48</sup>Coalitions present numerous challenges to the operational commander; however, three recent coalitions during major operations have provided a strong baseline on which to learn. As previewed one hundred years ago in the Relief of Peking during the Boxer Rebellion, broad coalitions will remain vital for the United States to win wars well into the future.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Because of space limitations, this paper will focus on the ground campaign of the major combat phase of all operations. A more thorough treatment could discuss coalition participation in naval operations and post-major hostilities phases.

<sup>2</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Operations, Joint Pub 3-0 (Washington, DC: 10 September 2001), VI-1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, VI-7.

<sup>4</sup> Milan N. Vego, Operational Warfare (Newport RI: Naval War College, 2000), 187.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> C. R. Brown, “The Principles of War,” U. S Naval Institute Proceedings (June 1949): 624.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 631.

<sup>8</sup> In addition to the relief expeditions discussed in this paper and the siege in Peking, other ad hoc coalitions were formed during the Boxer Rebellion. The two most significant were the attack on the Taku forts and the siege of Tientsin. Naval forces made up of British, German, Russian, French, and Japanese ships attacked and captured the forts near the city of Taku, at the mouth of the Peiho River. These forts protected the river approaches to the city of Tientsin. The Americans took no “active part in the attack on the forts. Rear-Admiral Kempff, of the U.S. Navy, informed Rear-Admiral Bruce [of the British Navy] that he was not authorized to initiate any act of war with a country with whom his country was at peace; both by regulations and under recent instructions from both the department and from the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Naval force on the Asiatic station, he was confined to protecting American interests.” (Arnold Henry Savage Lander, China and the Allies: Volume 1 [New York, NY: Scribner, 1901], 120.)

<sup>9</sup> Captain John Jellicoe, Commander David Beatty, and Lieutenant Roger Keyes served with the British navy as part of the Peking Relief Effort. Jellicoe served as Flag Captain to Admiral Seymour and was seriously injured in the retreat to Tientsin. All three officers would achieve fame in World War I. American participants in the Relief of Peking included 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Smedley Butler who would later win two medals of honor, and future president Herbert Hoover who was present at the siege of Tientsin as a civilian civil engineer and constructed city defenses.

<sup>10</sup> John D. Long, Report of the Secretary of the Navy. Miscellaneous Reports (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office: 1900). <http://www.history.navy.mil/docs/boxer1.htm> [18 April 2005].

<sup>11</sup> After his arrival in Peking, von Waldersee took charge of the coalition in China. With the legations in Peking safe, the coalition shifted to punitive actions against the hostile forces and destroying the Boxer movement. Each country’s primary goal was to further their interests in China. Many of the coalition forces were exceedingly brutal during this period. For a good account of post-major hostility actions, see: Diana Preston, The Boxer Rebellion (New York, NY: Walker & Company, 1999), 253-311.



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- <sup>12</sup> Peter Harrington, Peking 1900: The Boxer Rebellion (Oxford: Osprey Publishing Limited, 2001), 75-76.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.
- <sup>14</sup> Arnold Henry Savage Lander, China and the Allies, Vol. 1 (New York, NY: Scribner, 1901), 83.
- <sup>15</sup> Diana Preston, The Boxer Rebellion (New York, NY: Walker & Company, 1999), 89.
- <sup>16</sup> J.K. Taussig, "Experiences during the Boxer Rebellion," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings (April 1927): 410.
- <sup>17</sup> A. S. Daggett, American in the China Relief Expedition (Kansas City, MO: Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Company, 1903), 55.
- <sup>18</sup> Monro MacCloskey, Reilly's Battery; a Story of the Boxer Rebellion (New York, NY: R. Rosen Press, 1969), 124.
- <sup>19</sup> Harrington, 37.
- <sup>20</sup> Taussig, 414.
- <sup>21</sup> War Department, Reports on Military Operations in South Africa and China (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, July 1901), 570.
- <sup>22</sup> Lander, 362-363.
- <sup>23</sup> Daggett, 66-67.
- <sup>24</sup> War Department, 574.
- <sup>25</sup> Frederick Brown, From Tientsin to Peking with the Allied Forces (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1902. Reprint, New York, NY: Arno Press Inc., 1970), 102.
- <sup>26</sup> War Department, 575.
- <sup>27</sup> Jeffrey Record, Dark Victory. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 93.
- <sup>28</sup> Histories of the Iraq War that have already been published include: Bob Woodward, Plan of Attack (New York, NY: Simon and Shuster, 2004); Ray L Smith and Bing West, The March Up, Taking Baghdad with the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division (New York, NY: Bantam Dell, 2003); Jeffrey Record, Dark Victory (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2004); Todd S. Purdum, A Time of Our Choosing (New York, NY: Times Books, 2003); Williamson Murray and Robert H. Scales, Jr., The Iraq War (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2003); John Keegan, The Iraq War (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004); Anthony H. Cordesman, The Iraq War (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003); and Walter J. Boyne, Operation Iraqi Freedom (New York, NY: Tom Doherty Associates, 2003).
- <sup>29</sup> Williamson Murray and Robert H. Scales, Jr., The Iraq War (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2003), 69.
- <sup>30</sup> Central Command, "International Contributions to the War on Terror", U.S. Central Command Website <<http://www.centcom.mil/Operations/Coalition/joint.htm>> [9 May 2005].

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<sup>31</sup> Todd S. Purdum, A Time of Our Choosing (New York, NY: Times Books, 2003), 101.

<sup>32</sup> Bob Woodward, Bush at War (New York, NY: Simon and Shuster, 2002) 180.

<sup>33</sup> Tommy Franks, American Soldier (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. 2004), 270.

<sup>34</sup> In all, 40 nations contributed 200,000 friendly forces to the Gulf War coalition. Islamic forces in the coalition included eight armored and mechanized brigades of the Saudi Army and two mechanized brigades of the Saudi National Guard, the surviving brigades of the Kuwaiti Army, a Moroccan mechanized battalion, a Corps from Egypt, and a division and a brigade from Syria and units from Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Republic Emirates, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Niger, and Senegal. Non-Islamic nations in the coalition that provided either ground, air or naval assets included Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, France, Canada, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Italy, Spain and Greece. See Harry G. Summers, Jr., On Strategy II: A Critical Analysis of the Gulf War (New York, NY: Dell Publishing, 1992), 237-238.

<sup>35</sup> Harry G. Summers, Jr., On Strategy II: A Critical Analysis of the Gulf War (New York, NY: Dell Publishing, 1992), 240.

<sup>36</sup> H. Norman Schwarzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero (New York, NY: Bantam Books, October 1992; Bantam Paperback Books, October 1993), 434.

<sup>37</sup> Rick Atkinson, Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993), 427.

<sup>38</sup> Theresa L. Kraus, and Frank N. Schubert, eds. The Whirlwind War: The United States Army in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM (U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1 August 2000), 183.

<<http://www.army.mil/cmh/books/www/Wwindx.htm>> [28 April 05].

<sup>39</sup> Atkinson, 381-382.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 382.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 391.

<sup>42</sup> Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainer, The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 274.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 171-172.

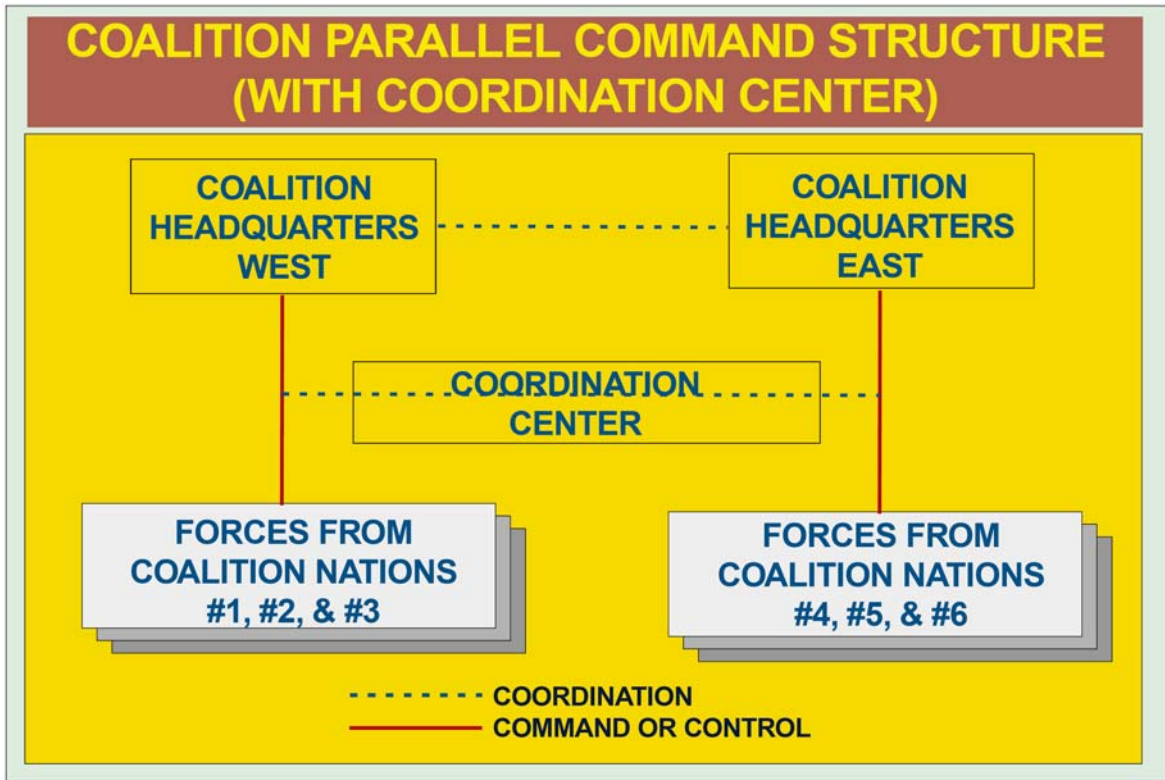
<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 373.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>46</sup> Atkinson, 464.

<sup>47</sup> Franks, 539.

Figure 1



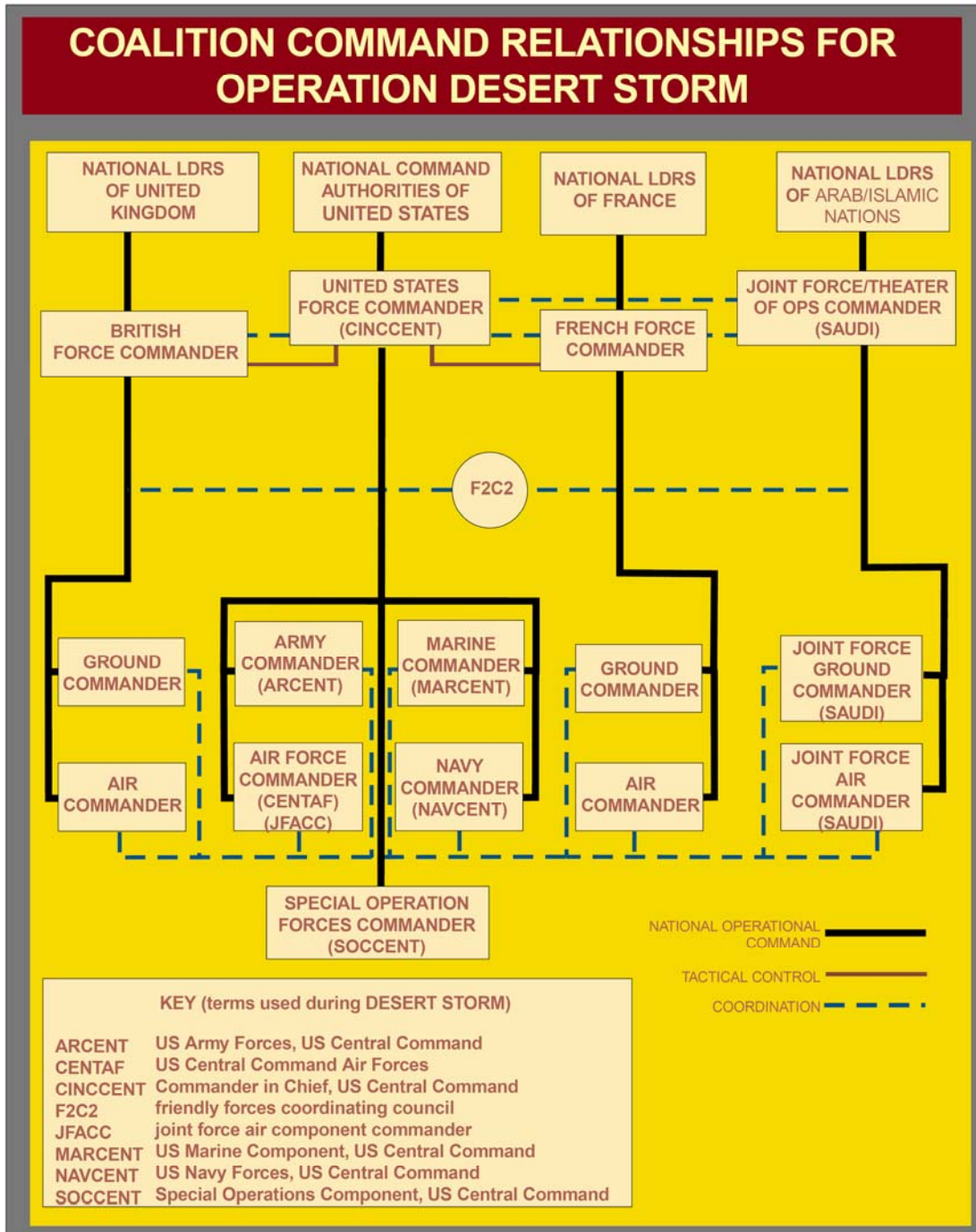
**Coalition Parallel Command Structure.** This command structure has no overall operational commander and each country retains control of its own forces through the national chain of command. Unity of effort is sought through the cooperation of member nations and is facilitated through a coordination center. Figure Source: Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Multinational Operations, Joint Pub 3-16 (Washington, DC: 5 April 2000), II-11.

Figure 2



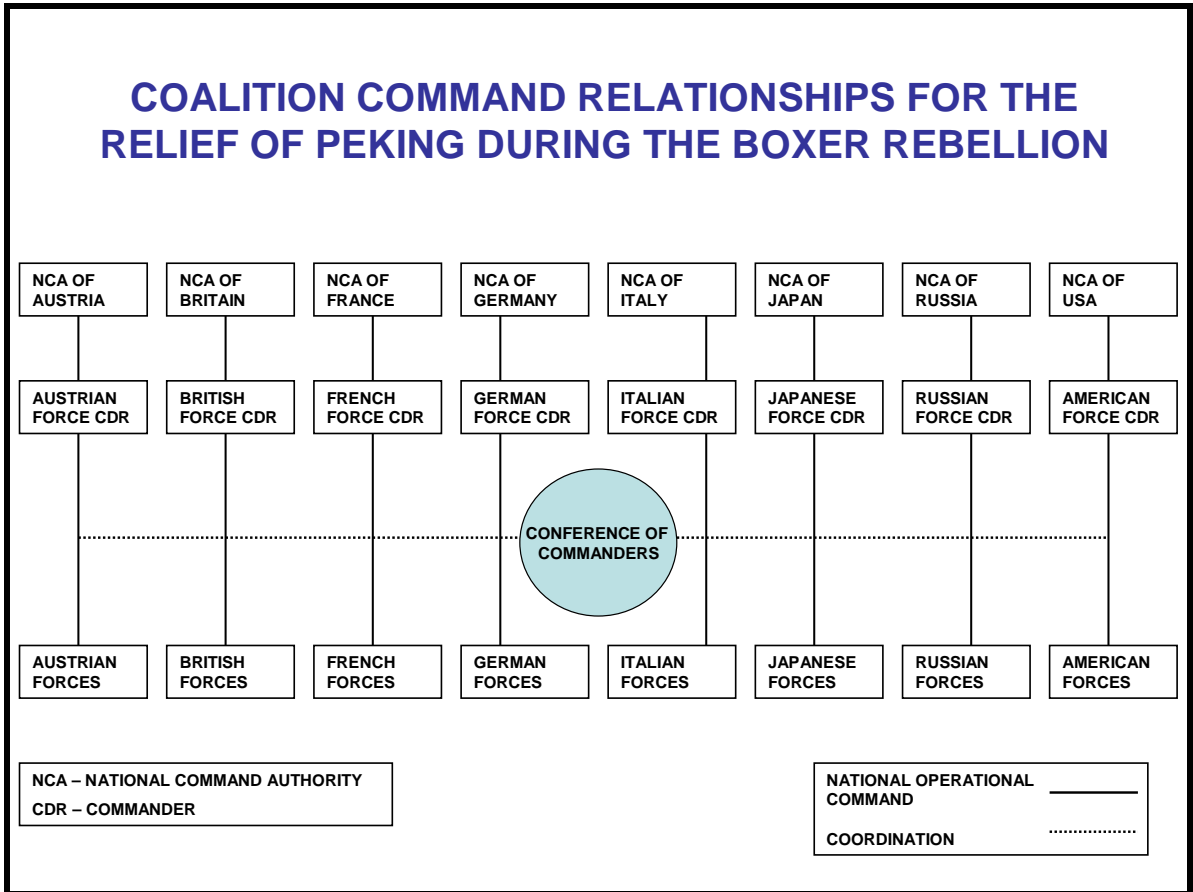
**Lead Nation Command Structure.** In this coalition command structure, the nation that provides a preponderance of the forces to the coalition usually provides the overall coalition commander. Unity of effort is achieved through unity of command. Figure Source: Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Multinational Operations, Joint Pub 3-16 (Washington, DC: 5 April 2000), II-10.

Figure 3



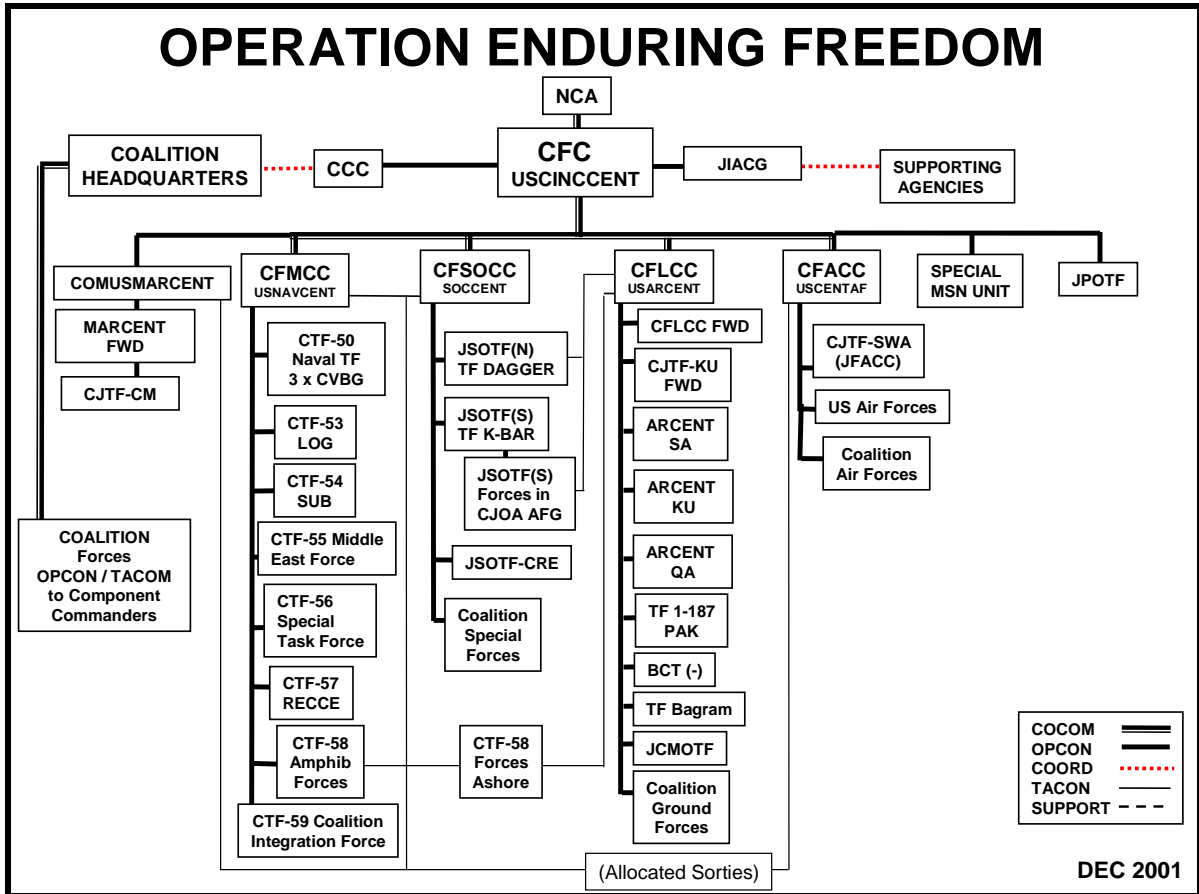
**Coalition Command Relationship for Operation Desert Storm.** This command structure was a mixed structure where British, French, and other forces were under a lead nation command structure with the U.S. acting as lead nation. Islamic nations were under a lead nation structure known as Joint Forces Command (JFC) with Saudi Arabia serving as the lead nation. The U.S. force commander and the Joint Forces commander formed a parallel relationship. A coordination cell was formed to coordinate between the U.S. forces commander and the JFC commander. Figure Source: Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Multinational Operations, Joint Pub 3-16 (Washington, DC: 5 April 2000), II-12.

Figure 4



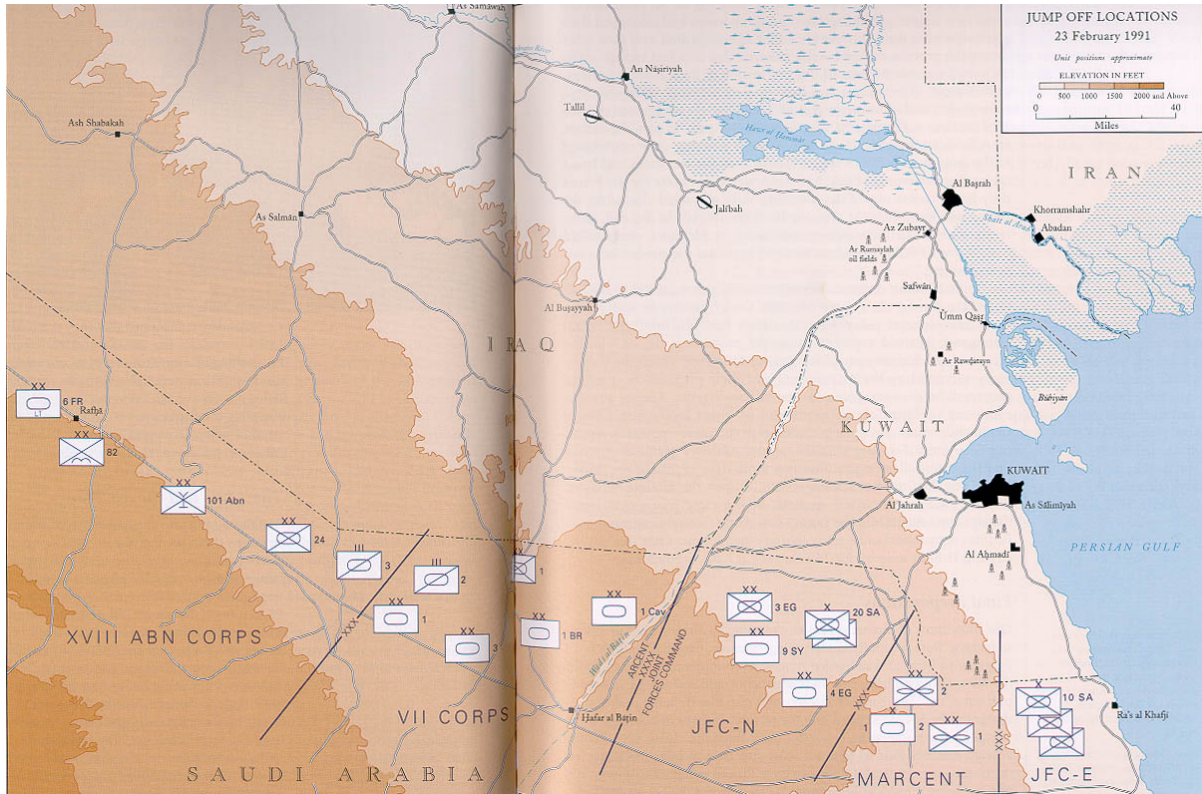
**Coalition Command Relationships for the Relief of Peking During the Boxer Rebellion.** During the Boxer Rebellion, each nation retained control of its national forces. Decisions were made through cooperation during periodic conferences held by the commanders of the national forces. This constituted a parallel command structure.

Figure 5



**Command Relationships for Operation Enduring Freedom.** This operation used a lead nation command structure with the United States acting as lead nation. On the upper left part of the chart, coalition forces are shown with a coordination line to the coalition coordination cell (CCC). In the block on the center left of the figure, coalition forces are designated as under operational control (OPCON) or tactical control (TACON) to the component commanders. Figure Source: Army War College, "Operation Enduring Freedom Command and Control Brief" (Carlisle Barracks, PA: 17 June 2004), 4.

**Figure 6**



**Jump Off Locations on 23 February 1991 – Operation Desert Storm.** This chart shows sector assignments prior to the start of offensive operations in the Gulf War. The French were assigned the far left sector under XVIII Corps. The Islamic nations formed two sectors with Joint Forces Command-North (JFC-N) and Joint Forces Command-East (JFC-E). These two sectors were separated by the U.S. Marine Corps sector. British forces were assigned positions within the VII Corps sector. [Figure Source - Theresa L. Kraus, and Frank N. Schubert, eds. The Whirlwind War: The United States Army in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM \(U.S. Army Center of Military History, 7 June 2001\), 169-169. <http://www.army.mil/cmh/books/www/Wwindx.htm> \[28 April 05\].](http://www.army.mil/cmh/books/www/Wwindx.htm)



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