

Imperatives for Successful Information Operations in a Coalition Setting – An Australian Perspective

Captain Jeff Malone MA(WA)
Directorate of Information Operations Policy and Capabilities
Capability Staff – Australian Defence Headquarters
R1-3-A001
Russell Offices
Department of Defence
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia
Telephone: (+61) (2) 6266-7640; Fax: (+61) (2) 6265-3601
Email: jeffrey.malone@cbr.defence.gov.au

Abstract

Research Problem:

The emerging environment of the post-Cold War world has been, and is likely to remain, characterised by conflict and tension, both within and between states, over a variety of issues. Additionally, conflict has tended to manifest itself in the form of contingencies that fall within the scope of Operations Other Than War (OOTW) or Stability and Support Operations (SASO), rather than conventional operations. In response to this contemporary environment of conflict, states (in particular within the Western community) have demonstrated an increased willingness to employ military force, in order to resolve conflicts or to respond to humanitarian or other emergencies. Yet despite this increased tendency to employ military force, there exists considerable countervailing pressure against this trend.

The increasing expense of the military instrument, as well as other pressures on government expenditure, confront national security decision-makers with the need to find ways to contain the cost of military undertakings. Furthermore, force draw-downs and budgetary cuts have affected both the size and capability of the armed forces of many states, thereby limiting their ability to undertake unilateral action. Domestic and international public opinion, informed and shaped by the increasing transparency of military activities to the global media, further militates against unilateral action, and encourages military activity in concert with others. In sum, the contemporary environment for the employment of military force tends towards multilateral or coalition operations.

Coincident with this rise in the importance of coalition operations, and in part resulting from similar factors, is the increasing prominence of Information Operations (IO). In the wake of the Gulf War (itself a major example of a coalition operation), there has been increasing recognition across the globe, of the value of the integrated employment of a variety of information-based capabilities to support or achieve military objectives. Furthermore, both the nature of the contemporary conflict environment, and the increased reluctance of the population of Western states to accept any casualties (including adversary casualties) in a armed conflict, have given further emphasis to the employment of non-lethal means to achieve military objectives and provide force protection. Accordingly, the importance of IO as a means to support and achieve military objectives will only continue to grow.

Yet the realities of coalition formation and management often stand in conflict with the requirements of effective planning and conduct of IO. Thus, in order to

employ IO within the confines of a coalition setting, there is a growing and pressing need to identify sound principles or imperatives for the employment of IO within a coalition environment. It is toward this issue, then, that this paper is directed.

Relevance to C2:

The identification and implementation of imperatives for success for IO in a coalition environment are vital for the effective C2 of military operations, given the increasing significance of both coalition operations and IO to the contemporary conflict environment faced by military organisations.

Approach to problem:

The paper approaches the problem from an Australian perspective, and draws on both Australian and international experiences in planning and conducting IO within a coalition framework. The paper employs a combination of qualitative content analysis with the case study methodologies, and draws on doctrinal publications and open source reporting of recent coalition operations for source data.

Results:

The paper proposes principles or imperatives for success for IO in a coalition setting that maximise the prospects for success of IO in a coalition setting, and minimises the conflict between the requirements of successful IO and the limitations imposed by the coalition environment.

Outline Structure of Paper:

- 1.0 - INTRODUCTION (5% of paper)
 - 1.1 Define Coalition Operations
 - 1.2 Statement of methodology/approach
- 2.0 - SCENE-SETTING (10% of paper)
 - 2.1 Current ADF C2 arrangements (include JTF concept)
 - 2.2 Australian approach to Information Operations
 - 2.3 Australian approach to Coalition Operations
- 3.0 - COMPARISON/DISCUSSION/DEVELOPMENT OF IMPERATIVES (75% of paper)
 - 3.1 Requirements for successful IO in unilateral operations, drawn from current doctrine
 - 3.2 Examination of current doctrine against recent coalition operations
 - 3.3 Distillation of principles / imperative for successful IO in a Coalition setting
- 4.0 –CONCLUSION (10% of paper)