

Reconnaissance in the Multinational Environment: Successful Integration of Allies and Partners into the Reconnaissance Fight

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Timely and effective communication is paramount to mission success in reconnaissance operations. Commanders require accurate reports to make decisions and adjust their plan to best fit the problem sets the battlefield presents.

At the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) in Hohenfels, Germany, many North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and partners come to train alongside American units. Often multinational elements find themselves under a common headquarters. With limited means of communication due to differing platforms, the transfer of data and valuable priority intelligence requirements (PIRs) becomes a unique challenge that must be solved to achieve key tasks and succeed in multinational operations.

During the past seven rotations, effective methods of multinational integration at the company and battalion levels into reconnaissance operations have emerged.

Plan

The first step in integrating a unit comprised of multinational allies and partners is to understand the capabilities of their formations. The most effective way to do this is to demonstrate and explain the capabilities of forces (especially special-purpose forces) using briefings and static displays. This enables leaders and Soldiers to see what an ally or partner can bring to the fight and how they get it there. This is especially useful in reconnaissance operations, where the ability to observe named areas of interest is directly correlated to answering intelligence gaps and information requirements for the higher command.

To be effectively implemented throughout the planning process, units should focus on the following areas when explaining their capabilities: intelligence-collection procedures, resource constraints and additional support requirements. This will “encourage active collaboration among all organizations affected by the pending operations to build shared understanding”¹ and inevitably lead to a more synchronized operation.



Figure 1. Commanders discuss scheme of maneuver.

Special considerations are made to command-support relationships between multinational allies and partners and their U.S. counterparts. With differing definitions among U.S. doctrine and NATO terminology, the actual mission-command authority can become convoluted. Commanders ensure that appropriate headquarters are assigned to multinational units to enable effective decision-making and incorporation into all levels of planning. “The unit leaders should come to a consensus on which command relationships the brigade will use (U.S. or NATO)”² to ensure all subordinate elements are effectively employed.

Command-support relationships become extremely important when considering sustainment planning. This is because of the unique problem set that differing vehicle variants create among formations. For example, a light-infantry battalion may not be equipped to handle the logistical requirements a tank-company presents. For this reason, leaders at echelon consider what effects a task-organization may have on the parent unit. These considerations are identified during planning and practiced at sustainment rehearsals.

Authority	Full command	NATO operational command	NATO operational control	NATO tactical command	NATO tactical control
Direct authority to deal with nations, diplomatic missions and agencies	X				
Granted to a command	X	X			
Delegated to a command			X	X	X
Set chain of command to forces	X				
Assign mission/designate objective	X	X			
Assign tasks	X	X		X	
Direct/employ forces	X	X	X		
Establish maneuver control measures	X	X	X	X	X
Reassign forces	X				
Retain operational control	X	X			
Delegate operational control	X	X	X		
Assign tactical command	X				
Delegate tactical command	X	X	X		
Retain tactical control	X	X	X		
Deploy force (information / within theater)	X	X	X		
Local direction / control designated forces	X				X
Assign separate deployment of unit components	x	X			
Directive authority for logistics	X				
Direct joint training	X				
Assign / reassign subordinate commanders / officers	X				
Conduct internal discipline / training	X				
The national authority always retains FULL COMMAND by Allied doctrine.					
	Has this authority				
	Denied authority or not specifically granted				

Figure 2. Comparison of U.S. and NATO command relationships (Adapted from Field Manual 3-16).

Effective coordination in reconnaissance between multinational forces requires integrated planning. This begins during mission receipt and the military decision-making process (MDMP). All multinational forces should be included throughout the MDMP or comparable planning process. Though a liaison officer (LNO) can serve adequately as a representative for the unit throughout the planning process, the commander of the attached force should regularly attend key discussions/briefings of the MDMP, including wargaming and the course of action (CoA) approval briefing.

There is no replacement for commander-to-commander dialogue at all levels of operations. This will enable the commander to “assist in developing shared understanding and purpose”³ and to ensure his or her unit is effectively being employed to aid in mission accomplishment and properly resourced to do so. Without being properly included in the CoA’s initial development, multinational partners and allies cannot be fully implemented into the operation’s unity of purpose.

Units conducting reconnaissance operations with multinational allies and partners pay special attention to developing and maintaining the task force's common operating picture (COP). This is imperative due to the increased risk of friendly-fire incidents from improper positive identification of enemy targets.

To maintain an effective COP, units ensure the appropriate maintenance and dissemination of analog graphics. "For clarity and risk reduction, units must use overlays with control measures from a scaled topographical map and distribute overlays to subordinate units."⁴ Graphic control measures such as restrictive fire lines, boundaries, no-fire areas and reconnaissance hand-over/battle hand-over lines are crucial to successful integration of multinational allies and partners. This is because of the risk reduction that they provide to the using force.

Also, operations such as forward-passage-of-lines and rearward-passage-of-lines are constructed using delineated lanes and coordination points to promote adjacent unit coordination and synchronized shifting of area of operations responsibility.



Figure 3. A French Leclerc tank maneuvers. (Photo by Daniel Steger)

Prepare

Joint rehearsals are extremely important in ensuring the planning process has accomplished mission synchronization and shared understanding. All unit commanders should attend brigade- and battalion-level combined-arms rehearsals. During these rehearsals, staffs and commanders determine how the scheme of maneuver fits into time, space and terrain.

Also, commanders discuss how information will be transferred between units because of the importance PIRs play in an operation. "Commanders require timely and accurate information during the execution of operations to maneuver and direct future combat operations against the enemy."⁵ Information flow is an especially delicate part of the operation due to the number of varying communications platforms that may be present throughout different formations. Many multinational forces do not have the capabilities to communicate with U.S. forces unless using a single-channel, plain-text frequency, which is much more vulnerable to interference and outside intelligence-gathering efforts.

This inevitably calls for the co-location of command posts (CPs) or the use of LNOs at both U.S. and multinational command nodes. In reconnaissance operations, timely reporting can directly lead to mission success or failure due to the ramifications of ill-advised decision-making by commanders. By co-locating CPs, commanders at multiple levels can maximize the use of available communication platforms to rapidly share information gathered by adjacent units. This is vitally important in missions such as the screen, where PIR dedicated to the

The upkeep and accurate depiction of the COP is important to ensuring that all subordinate elements have a shared understanding of adjacent unit locations. This may require more analog emphasis due to the lack of compatible digital communication systems in multinational formations. This requires more effort on the part of the commanding unit's staff to ensure that updates to multinational locations and movements are disseminated to all elements of the formation, and vice versa. "Development of the COP is ongoing throughout operations."⁶

To solve the issue of timely and accurate transmission of intelligence, units have historically employed the tactical voice bridge (TVB) within their command nodes. While this is a realistic solution, it does not replace the need for effective liaison operations at all levels due to the language barrier that can divide a U.S. and multinational force. Co-locating digital communication means such as Joint Battlefield Command-Platform (JBCP) and multinational systems may require changes to existing TOC layouts but enables timely and effective transfer of information.

Operators can ensure that as units move or changes are made to graphic control measures, they are perfected on both systems. Units preparing for operations with multinational partners also "establish a command post SOP for each configuration."⁷

Lastly, units "prepare draft communications exercises and digital-exercises plans with the intent of executing the systems validations" of the unit primary, alternate, contingency and emergency communications plan.

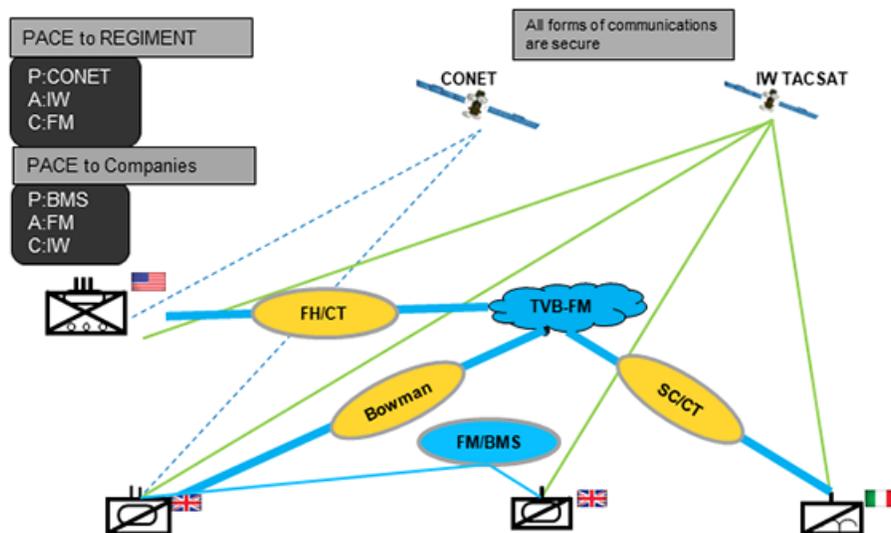


Figure 5. TVB. (Graphic by MAJ Daniel Kempen)

Conclusion

To be effective in a multinational environment, reconnaissance formations first maximize their understanding of attached multinational ally and partner capabilities. Effective operations among U.S. forces, allies and partners require implementation of adjacent units in the planning process as early as possible. In addition to using LNOs among formations, commander-to-commander dialogues and joint rehearsals can ensure shared understanding and operational synchronization.

Lastly, by employing systems such as the TVB, U.S. forces and multinational units can multiply the number of communication platforms they have at their disposal. Success in multinational operations begins before units arrive in theater and hinges heavily on critically thinking through where LNOs, TVBs and CPs should be placed to be most effective. By planning for and employing these considerations, reconnaissance formations enable more effective information flow and overall mission success.

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Notes

¹ Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 5-0, **The Operations Process**.

² Center for Army Lessons-Learned (CALL) Handbook 16-18, **Multinational Interoperability**.

³ ADP 5-0, **The Operations Process**.

⁴ CALL Handbook 16-18, **Multinational Interoperability**.

⁵ Field Manual 3-98, **Reconnaissance and Security Operations**.

⁶ Army Doctrinal Reference Publication 6-0, **Mission Command**.

⁷ CALL Handbook 16-18, **Multinational Interoperability**.

Acronym Quick-Scan

ABCT – armored brigade combat team

ABOLC – Armor Basic Officer Leader's Course

ADP – Army doctrinal publication

BCT – brigade combat team

BfsB – battlefield surveillance brigade

CALL – Center for Army Lessons-Learned

CoA – course of action

COP – common operating picture

CP – command post

JMRC – Joint Multinational Readiness Center

LNO – liaison officer

MDMP – military decision-making process

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

O/C/T – observer/coach/trainer

PIR – priority intelligence requirement

SOP – standard operating procedure

TOC – tactical-operations center

TVB – tactical voice bridge