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BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE DIVISION  
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR CONSTRUCTION

BY

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United States Army



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**BUILDING COALITIONS FOR HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS  
OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT**

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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## ABSTRACT

**AUTHOR:** Donald G. Goff, COL, USA  
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Over one million Iraqi Kurds fled the military reprisals of Saddam Hussein following their uprising in northern Iraq immediately after DESERT STORM. Reports reaching the world indicated that two thousand Kurds died each day in the harsh cold mountains along the Turkish-Iraqi border. On 5 April 1991, in cooperation with other allied nations, President Bush ordered American military forces to begin airlifting humanitarian supplies to the Kurdish refugees. This Presidential decision established the largest military coalition ever formed in support of humanitarian operations. OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT was the code name used for the worldwide outpouring of humanitarian assistance provided to the Kurdish displaced persons. The coalition formed to support this operation consisted of army, navy, marine, air force, governmental and non-governmental agencies from thirteen nations. Time was critical. The coalition had to be formed quickly to provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to stop the dying in the mountains. The process of developing a military coalition to support humanitarian operations is described in this individual study project. The conclusion presents key considerations in coalition building in the area of command relationships, rules of engagement and unit capabilities. Recommendations are made in response to the key considerations. Building coalitions to support humanitarian operations will continue into the 21st century and the United States must be prepared to lead in the formation of coalitions.

## INTRODUCTION

### OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT

In early 1991, as OPERATION DESERT STORM ended, the world press reported that nearly 2,000 Kurdish men, women and children were dying each day in the harsh cold of the Turkish-Iraqi mountains. Scenes of bare feet and poorly clothed Kurdish women and children showed them walking in snow and frigid temperatures to escape Saddam Hussein's vengeance as he crushed their short-lived Kurdish nationalist uprising.<sup>1</sup> Kurdish leaders reported three million Kurds had fled into the 8,000-foot mountains.<sup>2</sup> World opinion and public concern for the plight of the Kurdish people forced democratic nations to build a military coalition to provide humanitarian assistance to ease the suffering of the Kurds. The code name for this humanitarian operation was OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT (OPC).

On 5 April 1991, President Bush ordered the United States military to begin airlifting food and medical supplies to the Kurdish refugees trapped in the mountains along the Iraq-Turkey border.<sup>3</sup> American military cargo aircraft flying from Europe and escorted by jet fighters began dropping food, blankets, tents and medical supplies to the Kurds along the 206-mile border area on 7 April 1991.<sup>4</sup> During April and May 1991, over 40,000 soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen deployed from thirteen countries to

support OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT. Besides food, water, medical care, shelter and clothing, these coalition forces provided the Kurds a safe area in northern Iraq that allowed them to return to their homes in peace. In turn, the military coalition handed the humanitarian mission over to the United Nations and civilian relief organizations.

This paper will examine several facets of OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT to show how and why the military coalition formed to care for the Kurds. First is the political-military setting and chronology of how the Kurds ended up in the cold, harsh mountains of eastern Turkey. Second is the building a coalition command structure to support the humanitarian mission during OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT. Third are the command relationships, the rules of engagement and the integration of unit capabilities which plays an important part of coalition building. Finally, a conclusion on coalition building for future humanitarian operations is presented.

## **POLITICAL-MILITARY SETTING/CHRONOLOGY**

### **HOW THE KURDS ENDED UP IN THE MOUNTAINS**

Soon after the DESERT STORM victory, based on misreading U.S. intentions, the Iraqi Kurds took the initiative and began to eliminate Iraqi control over the northern provinces. President Bush's press statements at the time gave hope to both the Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south of Iraq that they had the support of the United States.<sup>5</sup> The Kurds interpreted this support

to be American military muscle to help overthrow Saddam Hussein, while President Bush intended only to offer moral support. The Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) clandestine radio station in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, made announcements that also gave encouragement that the United States would support their overthrow of Saddam Hussein.<sup>6</sup> On 5 March 1991, Masoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), committed Kurdish guerrilla

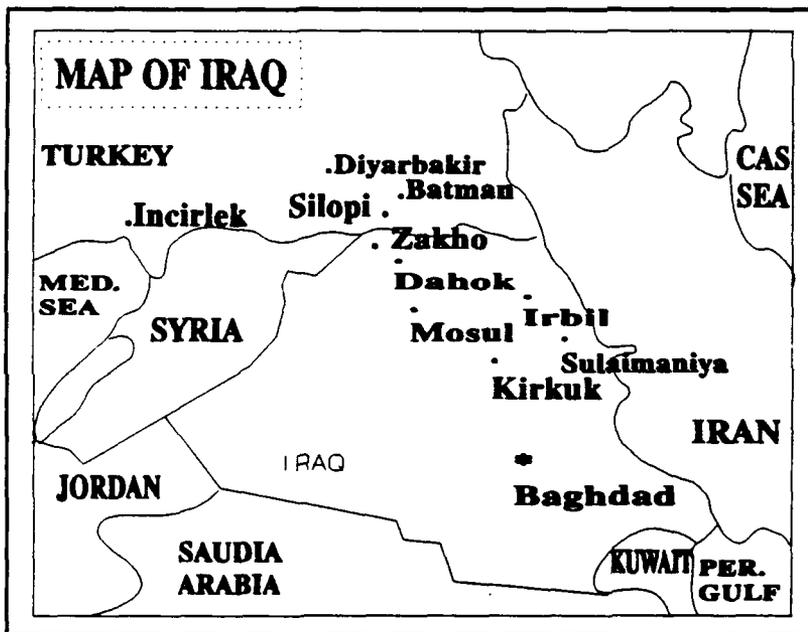


Figure 1

fighters against the Iraqis. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) also committed guerrilla fighters against the Iraqi military. The Kurds attacked Iraqi forces and defeated scattered garrisons throughout northern Iraq.<sup>7</sup> On 14 March 1991, Jalal Talabani, leader of the PUK, announced that Kurdish groups controlled the Dahok, Mosul, Irbil, and Sulaymaniyal provinces in northern Iraq.<sup>8</sup> President Bush warned the Iraqi government not to use attack helicopters against rebel forces because this would complicate efforts for a permanent cease-fire negotiated after DESERT STORM.<sup>9</sup>

Saddam Hussein's speech of 16 March 1991 said that Iraqi

armed forces would crush Kurdish forces with the use of attack helicopters, airplanes and chemical weapons.<sup>10</sup> The United States government response came ten days later, during a White House press conference on 26 March 1991, when Bush administration officials strongly reaffirmed U.S. neutrality in the battles raging in Iraq. American military force would not be used to protect civilian and armed rebel groups seeking to topple the government of Saddam Hussein. "We don't intend to involve ourselves in the internal conflicts in Iraq," said Marlin Fitzwater, the President's spokesman.<sup>11</sup> This signaled that the United States had no intention to intervene in the struggle. Saddam Hussein, based on this signal, started his offensive against the Kurds. A State Department representative admitted on 29 March 1991 that the Baghdad government had started a major assault against Kurdish held regions.<sup>12</sup> Reorganized Iraqi Republican Guard units moved into northern Iraq to attack the Kurds.<sup>13</sup>

The KUP leader, Jalal Talabani, appealed to President Bush and the United Nations to stop the annihilation of the Kurdish people by Iraqi military forces.<sup>14</sup> On 1 April 1991, Masoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), reported that three million Kurds had fled into the northern mountains with little food and inadequate shelter. Barzani requested the United States, United Kingdom, and France to send aid to the people. He also requested that these three countries also stop the genocide against the Kurds. He reported that 1,000-1,500 Kurds were dying each day from disease, cold and hunger in the mountain camps. On this day, Radio

Baghdad reported to have recaptured the towns of Dahok, Irbil, Kirkuk and Zakho.<sup>15</sup> On 2 April 1991, Turkey and France asked the United Nations Security Council to condemn Saddam Hussein for the repression of the Kurds.

Iraqi senior officials announced on 5 April 1991 that they had crushed the Kurdish rebellion and regained control of northern Iraq.<sup>16</sup> The same day, President Bush ordered the American military forces to begin airlift of food and medicines. The first airdrop was food stuffs on 7 April 1991. The United States would provide ten million dollars for the humanitarian aid.<sup>17</sup>

On 8 April 1991, European leaders agreed to provide \$180 million worth of economic aid to the Kurds. Prime Minister John Majors of the United Kingdom proposed to secure a Kurdish safe haven area in northern Iraq by using United Nation troops. Majors also said that the West should be prepared to support a UN presence as long as necessary to secure proper treatment for the Kurds.<sup>18</sup>

Department of Defense Secretary Cheney supported the establishment of a safe haven for Kurds in northern Iraq proposed by Mr. Majors. Iraq had expressed fierce opposition to Mr. Majors' proposal. On 10 April 1991, the Bush administration backed away from the proposal of establishing safe havens in Iraq to protect the fleeing refugees. Administrative officials had told the Iraqi government to avoid military operations in the air north of the Thirty-sixth Parallel.<sup>19</sup>

After a meeting with European leaders on 12 April 1991, President Bush agreed to the creation of a safe zone in Iraq where

Kurdish refugees would be protected. He also ordered a massive helicopter airlift organized to speed the humanitarian relief efforts to the Kurds. Helicopters from the U.S., Germany, Turkey and United Kingdom deployed to Turkey to support the effort.<sup>20</sup>

Lionel A. Rosenblatt, President of Refugees International, said that the world faced the greatest challenge in the history of refugee relief. There were no comprehensive figures on deaths, but relief officials estimated that 1,000 people were dying daily. Relief officials expected the daily death rate to double or triple if the needed humanitarian assistance was not provided.<sup>21</sup>

## **BUILDING A COMMAND STRUCTURE**

### **JOINT TASK FORCE-PROVIDE COMFORT**

On 5 April 1991, President Bush announced the United States military would provide humanitarian assistance to the suffering Kurds. The Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff selected the United States European Command (EUCOM) to execute the mission. EUCOM immediately formed Joint Task Force-PROVIDE COMFORT (JTF-PC) and ordered the JTF to deploy to Incirlek Air Base, Turkey, to provide humanitarian support to the Kurdish refugees. EUCOM selected Air Force Major General James L. Jamerson as the commander of JTF-PC. General Jamerson was serving as the Deputy Commander of U.S. Air Forces Europe. Initially, EUCOM envisioned only American military forces would provide help to the Kurds. Therefore, only a joint task force was formed versus a combined task force.

The JTF-PC was established at the U.S. Air Base in Incirlek, Turkey, on 6 April 1991. The initial components of JTF-PC were air forces (AFFOR) and special operations forces (SOF). Both component headquarters deployed to Incirlek Air Base on 6 April 1991 and co-located with JTF-PC headquarters. AFFOR was under the command of Air Force Brigadier General James L. Hobson, Jr. The SOF forces were under the command of Army Brigadier General Richard W. Potter, Jr.

The initial mission of JTF-PC was to provide humanitarian relief of food and other necessities by airdrop. JTF-PC air forces

(AFFOR) consisting of C-130's and fighter escort aircraft conducted the first airdrops of twenty-seven tons of supplies to the Kurds located in the mountains on 7 April 1991.<sup>22</sup> Fighter aircraft escorted the airdrops to ensure Iraqi military forces would not interfere with their delivery. The headquarters and air elements of AFFOR were stationed at Incirlek Air Base.

<b>KURD MOUNTAIN CAMPS</b>	
<b>CAMPS</b>	<b># KURDS</b>
Cukurca	115,000
Isikerven	80,000
Kayadibi	12,000
New Haj	20,000
Pirinceken	12,000
Schendili	10,000
Sinat	6,000
Uzumla	60,000
Yekmal	71,000
Yesilova	6,000
Unnamed Camps	60,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>452,000</b>

**Figure 2**

Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) under the command of General Potter provided the SOF forces for JTF-PC. The SOF forces were initially called Joint Task Force-Express Care. The Express Care name was latter changed to Joint Task Force-Alpha (JTF-A). JTF-A consisted of the Army's 10th Special Forces Group (10 SFG) and the Air Force's 39th Special Operations Wing (39 SOW).

The 39 SOW deployed its aircraft and personnel to three airfields located in Eastern Turkey--Incirlek Air Base, Batman Air Base and Diyarbakir Air Base. The 39 SOW flew air drop and helicopter resupply missions to drop zones and landing zones in the Kurdish mountain camps. The 10 SFG deployed company sized units into the make shift camps of the Kurds. On 9 April, the SOF mission

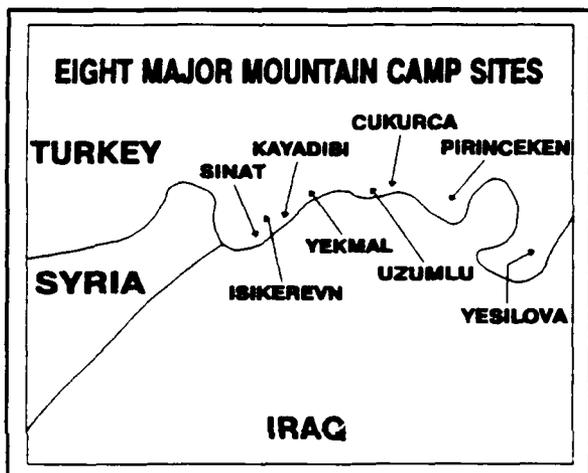


Figure 3

expanded to include supervision of airdrops. This stopped the Kurdish refugees from being injured while rushing onto the drop zones toward the parachuted supplies. The SOF forces were to organize the eight major camps and forty-three separate locations isolated in the 8,000-foot mountains along the 206-mile

Turkish-Iraqi border.<sup>23</sup> The SOF area of operations straddled the entire length of the Turkish-Iraqi border. The area included fifteen kilometers inside Iraq and fifteen kilometers inside Turkey.

The third component joining JTF-PC on 10 April 1991 was naval forces (NAVFOR). The Carrier Battle Group Teddy Roosevelt (TF 60), located in the Mediterranean Sea, formed the NAVFOR. TF 60 was to enforce the President's 10 April 1991 warning to Iraq not to fly any Iraqi aircraft or helicopters north of the Thirty-sixth Parallel. NAVFOR under the command of Navy Rear Admiral Robert J.

Spane, provided combat air patrol (CAP) north of the Thirty-sixth Parallel beginning on 11 April 1991.

The enormous task of providing helicopter airlift for humanitarian supplies exceeded the 39 SOW capability. The Mediterranean Amphibious Ready Group, with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (24 MEU) and its helicopter squadron with 4 CH-53s and 12 CH-46s, reported to General Potter on 13 April 1991.<sup>24</sup> These helicopters went into immediate service supporting the airlift.

On 12 April 1991, President Bush agreed with European leaders on a six-point coalition humanitarian program for the Kurds: (1) Assist the survival of the Kurdish displaced civilians. (2) Provide protection and shelter to the Kurds. (3) Establish a "Safe Haven" inside Iraq. (4) Assimilate the Kurds back into their home areas. (5) Transfer relief operations to civilian agencies. (6) Withdraw coalition military forces.<sup>25</sup> After the 12 April European leaders' meeting, many nations were notifying both the United Nations and the American government that they were going to participate in the relief operations for the Kurds in support of the six-point program. The United States government worked hard to encourage multinational participation in the coalition. The first multinational forces began to arrive 13-14 April 1991 and the last on 1 May 1991. The participation in the humanitarian relief operations by other nations formed COMBINED TASK FORCE-PROVIDE COMFORT.

**COMBINED TASK FORCE-PROVIDE COMFORT**

<b>MILITARY COALITION MEMBERS</b>	
AUSTRALIA	BELGIUM
CANADA	FRANCE
GERMANY	ITALY
LUXEMBOURG	NETHERLANDS
PORTUGAL	SPAIN
TURKEY	UNITED KINGDOM
	UNITED STATES

**Figure 4**

The formation of COMBINED TASK FORCE-PROVIDE COMFORT (CTF-PC) occurred on 16 April 1991 with the arrival of multinational forces. The development of CTF-PROVIDE COMFORT organizational structure and

therefore the command and control (C2) was evolutionary. American Lieutenant General John M. Shalikashvili was appointed as the commander of CTF-PC. When notified of his new appointment, General Shalikashvili was the Deputy Commander of United States Army Europe (USAREUR). He arrived at the Headquarters at Incirlek, Turkey, on 17 April 1991. General Jamerson became the Deputy

Commander of CTF-PC. Brigadier General Anthony C. Zinni, USMC, was the Chief of staff. General Zinni served as United States European Command's Deputy J3.

<b>NATIONS PROVIDING SUPPLIES</b>	
AUSTRALIA	AUSTRIA
BELGIUM	BULGARIA
CANADA	CZECHOSLOVAKIA
DENMARK	FINLAND
FRANCE	GERMANY
GREECE	HUNGARY
ICELAND	IRELAND
ISRAEL	ITALY
JAPAN	JORDAN
LUXEMBOURG	NETHERLANDS
NEW ZEALAND	NORWAY
PAKISTAN	PORTUGAL
ROMANIA	SAUDI ARABIA
SPAIN	SWEDEN
	UNITED KINGDOM
	UNITED STATES

**Figure 5**

Thirteen nations joined the military coalition and thirty nations provided humanitarian supplies.<sup>26</sup> During April and May these nations deployed air, naval, ground forces and civilian relief

organizations in support of OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT. The initial staff of CTF-PC was American. The staff was an ad hoc organization

formed by personnel from EUCOM and it's component Commands. As other national units joined the coalition, the staff became multinational.

Because an American lieutenant general was the commander of CTF-PC, coalition partners assigned a one or two star general as the commander of their national forces. Coalition partners co-

located their national headquarters with the CTF-PC headquarters at Incirlek Air Base, Turkey. These headquarters reported to respective national governments for all matters on policy and execution for the humanitarian

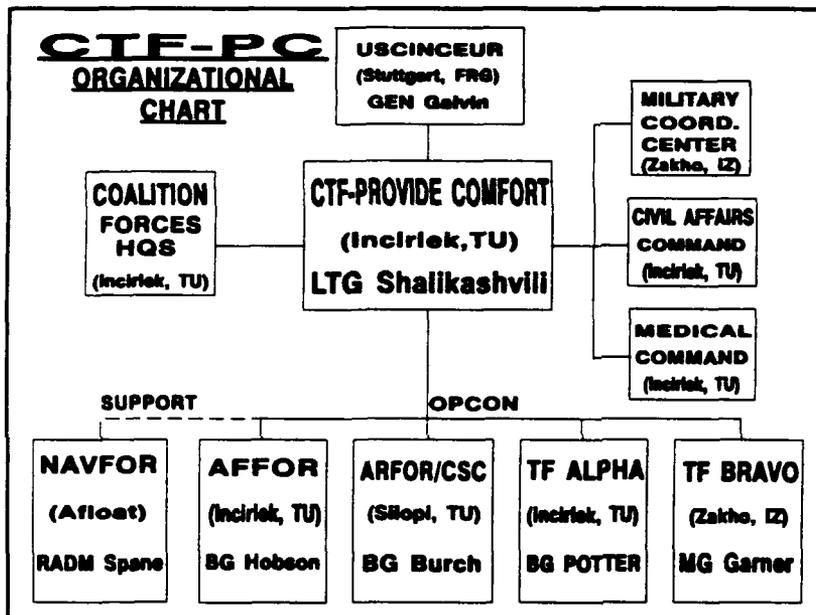


FIGURE 6

mission. The commander of the national forces had his own staff to handle the administration and logistics required to support his forces deployed on OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT. The coalition commander also provided coalition officers to the CTF-PC staff. The assignment of a unit to the subordinate CTF-PC headquarters in the tactical control (TACON) role was a national decision. Tactical control was defined as the local direction and control of movements or maneuvers necessary to accomplish missions or tasks

assigned.<sup>27</sup> The tactical and humanitarian requirements determine the subordinate CTF-PC headquarters assignment. The coalition governments made the decision on how to use their forces for the operation.

For example, Major General Robin Ross, British Royal Marines, commanded the United Kingdom (UK) forces. General Ross provided Colonel Brian Holt, British Army, to be the operations officer (C3) for CTF-PC. Other UK junior officers served on the CTF-PC staff. The United Kingdom contingent included Army, Air and Marine forces. Selected units from the UK contingent were under TACON of CTF-PC subordinate headquarters. The remaining UK units were under the control of General Ross. These mainly consisted of administrative, logistical and air elements.<sup>28</sup>

<b>COMMAND STRUCTURE EVOLUTION</b>	
<b>UNIT</b>	<b>JOINED OPC</b>
JTF-PC	6 APR 91
AFFOR	6 APR 91
JTF-A	6 APR 91
NAVFOR	10 APR 91
CTF-PC	16 APR 91
COALITION HQS	16 APR-1 MAY 91
JTF-B	17 APR 91
MCC	19 APR 91
CA CMD	22 APR 91
MED CMD	28 APR 91
CSC	1 MAY 91

**Figure 7**

The establishment of CTF-PC and the integration of multinational forces into the coalition took place on 16 April 1991. The AFFOR, NAVFOR and JTF-A, subordinate headquarters under JTF-PC, were transferred to CTF-PC. Both AFFOR and JTF-A had TACON of coalition forces.<sup>29</sup>

Two additional subordinate headquarters deployed to meet the requirements of OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT. Joint Task Force-Encourage Hope, later changed to Joint Task Force-Bravo (JTF-B), was established on 17 April 1991 to secure a safe haven and

resettle the Kurds in northern Iraq. JTF-B was a U.S. joint staff headquarters with TACON of coalition forces under the command of Army Major General Jay M. Garner. This was an ad hoc headquarters formed by personnel from the United States Fifth Corps and subordinate units deployed from Germany.

CTF-PC established the Combined Support Command (CSC) to handle all of the logistical requirements of providing humanitarian and coalition supplies. CSC was established on 1 May 1991 under the command of Army Brigadier General Harold E. Burch. The staff was an ad hoc organization formed by personnel from the 21st Theater Army Area Command located in Germany. CSC had tactical control over coalition units to execute its mission.<sup>30</sup>

The Military Coordination Center (MCC) was established in negotiations between General Shalikashvili and Iraqi Major General Saber on 19 April 1991 at the Turkey-Iraqi border customs house. The mission of the MCC was to have daily communications with the Iraqi military and civilian authorities to reduce potential conflicts with the establishment of JTF-B in northern Iraq on 20 April 1991. The first meeting of the MCC was on 21 April 1991 between General Garner and Iraqi Brigadier General Danoun Nashwan in Zakho, Iraq.<sup>31</sup>

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the United States Military Liaison Mission (USMLM) in Potsdam, East Germany, had little work to do. Therefore, General Galvin deployed the USMLM to Zakho, Iraq, to form the MCC. The MCC negotiated with the Iraqi military and government leaders to resolve incidents ranging from direct

coalition/Iraqi confrontations to spraying the wheat crop using Polish contract helicopters in northern Iraq.

The Civil Affairs Command and the Medical Command provided the civil affairs units and medical facilities necessary to resettle the Kurds. These two headquarters coordinated the fifty non-governmental or volunteer agency support for humanitarian assistance.

The United States European Command issued the operation order to CTF-PC on 16 April 1991 that supported the European leaders' six-point coalition humanitarian program. The operation order had nine military missions to be executed: (1) Identify site locations for temporary shelter out of the mountains. (2) Erect temporary living facilities. (3) Relocate Iraqi (Kurd) displaced civilians to locations supportable by them. (4) Prepare to receive United Kingdom, French and Turkish forces; (5) Establish a Security Zone inside northern Iraq. (6) Prepare to reinforce multinational security forces in Iraq. (6) Prepare to operate unilaterally, maintain, and secure facilities. (7) Provide airborne combat air patrol (CAP) as necessary. (8) Identify additional forces as required. (9) Transfer administration and support functions to civilian organizations.<sup>32</sup>

The concept of operations for PROVIDE COMFORT was a three-phase operation. Phase One would be air and ground delivery of relief supplies facilitated by Special Forces Teams and establish a CAP beginning on 6 April 1991. Phase Two would include integrating multinational forces, establishing a safe haven in

northern Iraq, stabilizing and rebuilding an infrastructure as required, facilitating the movement of displaced persons to new camps, making a transition to multinational civilian organization control, and returning displaced persons to their original homes. Phase Three would remove U.S. and other multinational forces from Iraq and Turkey.<sup>33</sup> This three-phased operation was to be completed by 15 July 1991 when the last coalition soldiers departed northern Iraq.

## **KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN COALITION OPERATIONS**

### **DEVELOPING COMMAND RELATIONS**

The development of command relationships for a coalition depends on two factors. One factor is the mission requirements and duration of the operation. The other factor is the political sensitivity or agenda of the coalition partners. The European leaders' six-point agreement and the follow-on EUCOM operation order clarified the first factor of developing a coalition. The second factor of the political agenda is not as easy to grasp and understand as the first. The coalition military partners receive guidance and policy from their governments on their role in the coalition. This guidance includes instructions on how to interact with the other members of the coalition. The political agenda defines the linkage or who works for whom in the command and control (C2) structure.

DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM showed successful handling of these two factors. General H. Norman Schwarzkopf's command and control

system for DESERT STORM developed over time to meet the political needs of the coalition members. The results of DESERT STORM proved that the coalition was extremely effective in combining the political agendas of the member states to meet the mission of ejecting Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The recent Joint Chiefs Of Staff publication, Joint Warfare Of The US Armed Forces, has highlighted the need for the United States to approach coalition operations with acute political sensitivity and mutual respect.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the two aspects of mission and political agenda must be accommodated in a coalition C2 structure.

There is no one correct C2 structure that can be applied in every coalition situation. The cookie-cutter approach to developing a C2 structure will not always meet the political agenda of coalition partners or the mission requirements of the operation. The C2 structure is customized for each operation by the participating members of the coalition. The United States may not have the lead in the coalition as in DESERT STORM or PROVIDE COMFORT. The American military forces may be subordinate to another nation which commands the coalition. The political agenda of the United States and the mission for the operation will be defined by the President. The American military leaders will execute the political agenda and accomplish the mission as a coalition partner.

As multinational forces arrived to participate in the operation, the organizational structure grew to accommodate them and their political agenda.<sup>35</sup> The mission to provide humanitarian

assistance to the Kurds and the coalition partners' political agendas developed the C2 structure. By the end of April 1991 the organizational structure was set and follow-on national forces fell in on that structure. The structure accommodated the political agendas of all follow-on coalition partners.

The political agenda of each nation was accepted by the coalition leaders and molded their personal relationships when national policy or guidance was lacking. These relationships and the professionalism of the national military leader made the coalition effective. Most of the decisions made during OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT were not covered by national policy or guidance. The national military leader on the scene through his professionalism and personal relationships with other coalition military leaders forged the success of operation.

The coalition governments had the option to review all operation orders for their units before complying with the order. During OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT, this review process worked well. The key was to develop the operation order early. This allows the multinational forces to forward their comments/concerns to their national governments. The coalition headquarters received guidance from their government on adjustments, if any, needed to be made on the use of their forces. The CTF-PC staff was then able to publish the final operations order with the approval of the multinational forces.

#### **RULES OF ENGAGEMENT**

The development of coalition rules of engagement (ROE) is

essential to the success of the operation. All participating members of a coalition receive their ROE from their governments. Both military and civilian leaders of the participating nations must establish a common ROE to have a level playing field. The level playing field requirement exists whether the mission is war or humanitarian operations. A number of factors can make doing this far more difficult than might be apparent.

For example, the United States European Command, with the approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), developed the CTF-PC Rules Of Engagement (ROE).<sup>36</sup> These were U.S.-only rules. Each

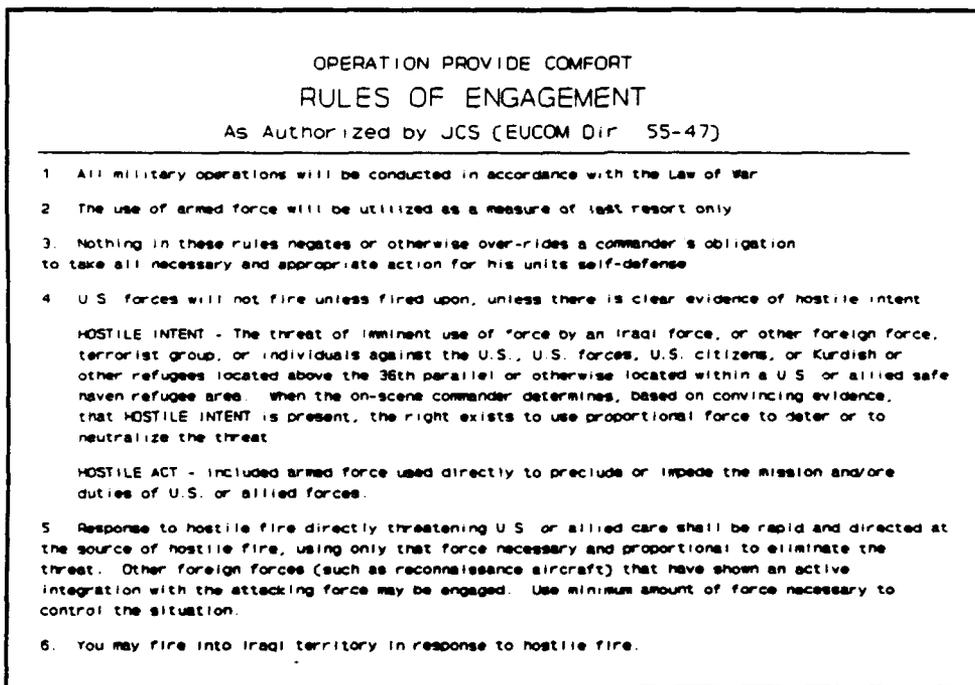


Figure 8

coalition  
military  
force  
deployed for  
OPERATION  
PROVIDE  
COMFORT had  
its own  
national ROE.  
Usually, the  
coalition  
military  
force later

adopted the U.S. ROE. Many nations used their own military ROE that was more restrictive than the U.S. ROE. This makes an uneven playing field. Coalition forces responded differently to a

developing situation. It also affected the coalition force integration to accomplish the assigned mission. French, British and Dutch examples were instructive.

The French rules of engagement allowed a French infantry platoon to fight for an individual coalition soldier who may be under Iraqi or Kurd attack. However, the French infantry platoon could not aid another coalition platoon under attack because of their national ROE. This initially required resolution through the French government before a coalition unit could be TACON under French control.<sup>37</sup>

The British had similar problems with artillery. They had deployed a 105mm Howitzer battalion to Silopi, Turkey. The British national ROE would not allow the deployment of the artillery

battalion into northern Iraq to support coalition or their own forces. The British government believed that, since OPERATION PROVIDE

OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT  
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (CONT)

---

7. You may fire into another nation's territory in response to hostile fire only if the cognizant government is unable or unwilling to stop that force's hostile acts effectively and promptly.

8. Surface-to-air missiles will engage hostile aircraft flying north of the 36th parallel.

9. Surface-to-air missiles will engage hostile aircraft south of the 36th parallel only when they demonstrate hostile or commit a hostile act. Except in cases of self-defense, authority for such engagement rests with the designated air defense commander. Warning bursts may be fired ahead of foreign aircraft to deter hostile acts.

10. In the event U.S. forces are attacked or threatened by UNARMED hostile elements, mobs, or rioters, the responsibility for the protection of U.S. forces rests with the U.S. commanding officer. On scene commander will employ the following to overcome the threat:

- a. Warnings to demonstrators
- b. Show of force, including use of riot control formations
- c. Warning shots fired over the heads of hostile elements
- d. Other reasonable uses of force necessary under circumstances and proportional to the threat

11. Use the following guidelines when applying these rules:

- a. Use of force only to protect lives
- b. Use of minimum force necessary
- c. Pursuit will not be taken to retaliate, however, immediate pursuit may begin and continue for as long as there is an imminent threat to U.S. forces. In the absence of JCS approval, U.S. forces should not pursue any hostile force into another nation's territory.
- d. If necessary and proportional, use all available weapons to deter, neutralize, or destroy threat as required.

Figure 9

COMFORT was a humanitarian operation, there was no need for deployed artillery. The hostile activities of the Iraqi military, however, generated the requirement for the guns. The Turkish rules of engagement would not allow the British artillery battalion to deploy to firing positions inside Turkey to shoot artillery fire support for coalition forces in northern Iraq. The personal and professional relationship between General Shalikashvili and General Ross aided in the British commander securing his national government's approval to deploy the artillery into northern Iraq. General Shalikashvili had deployed American artillery into northern Iraq to support the coalition forces.<sup>38</sup>

The Royal Netherlands Marine battalion deployed as part of the British 3rd Royal Marine Commando Brigade. CTF-PC was not a NATO command structure but a coalition of thirteen nations. The Netherlands commander had to work first through his government and then through the British Military to adopt the U.S. rules of engagement.<sup>39</sup>

#### **UNIT CAPABILITIES**

AirLand Battle operations are not the standard doctrine for all future potential coalition partners. This may seem obvious, but is often overlooked by military planners. Whether the mission is to fight a war as in DESERT STORM or provide humanitarian assistance, not all coalition nations support AirLand Battle operations. The American AirLand Battle doctrine not only provides the guidance on how to fight, but it is also provides the basis for equipping the force. Again that is a statement of the obvious, but

all coalition militaries are not created equal.

When national military forces deploy in support of coalitions, they also do not have the same capabilities. An infantry unit of one nation may have anti-tank weapons, whereas another nation's infantry platoon may not. Not all units have the same mobility, communications, medical, or high-tech weapons. This inequality can cause problems when integrating coalition nations into a cohesive fighting or humanitarian force.

The JTF-B mission in northern Iraq required the development of a cohesive defense in response to a possible Iraqi attack and to provide humanitarian assistance to the displaced Kurds. The commander had to integrate multinational forces to take advantage of unit strengths and offset the limitations. The integration of unit capabilities is a key activity in the coalition building process. The commander of JTF-B considered two options on how to deploy his coalition forces for the defense of the security zone and for humanitarian operations for the Kurds.

The first option was to deploy pure national forces into a national sector within the security zone established inside northern Iraq. Because coalition unit capabilities were not equal, this option did not meet the needs of a cohesive defense or humanitarian assistance requirements. For example, the French parachute brigade, TACON to JTF-B, had no anti-tank weapons or artillery needed for a cohesive defense. They also did not have civil affairs units that could administer a relief assistance program for the Kurds. The French national decision deployed the

brigade without its organic anti-tank or artillery assets. This limited the JTF-B commander's ability in developing national sectors inside northern Iraq.<sup>40</sup>

The second option was to establish sectors within the security zone and provide a command and control headquarters for that sector.<sup>41</sup> The forces provided to the sector commander would be

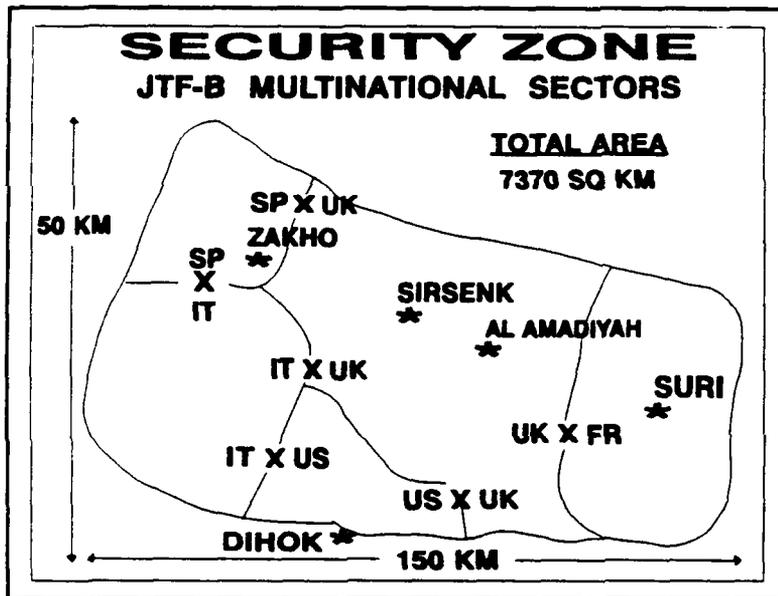


FIGURE 10

multinational and give that commander the capability to execute both defensive and humanitarian operations. This allowed the JTF-B commander to integrate the coalition forces and take advantage of the multinational capabilities. This

option also allowed for the weaving of a true coalition for both the defensive and humanitarian missions. By integrating coalition units, the commander was able to enhance the unit capabilities of all coalition partners.

In the French example, the French brigade commander had responsibility for a sector within the security zone. He had his own brigade to meet the dual missions of defense and relief assistance. For the humanitarian mission, Spanish and Belgian medical units provided medical coverage for the displaced Kurds in

the sector. An American civil affairs battalion aided in the resettlement of the Kurds within the sector. An American military police unit provided the law enforcement and convoy control requirements.

For the defensive mission, the French commander received both artillery support and anti-tank support by coalition units. The British provided the artillery support within his sector. An American anti-tank element provided the needed tank killing capability. To add an additional tank killing punch if required, an American Apache helicopter battalion was fifteen minutes flying time away. The French commander had extensive close air support provided by the U.S. Air Force from air bases in Turkey and the U.S. Navy flying off an aircraft carrier located in the Mediterranean Sea. The U.S. Marine Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) team provided the capability to call for artillery, close air and attack helicopter support. This ANGLICO team also provided the liaison function for the JTF-B commander. The JTF-B reserve consisting of air assault elements was also available for insertion within his sector. For reconnaissance, the French brigade commander had Italian special forces teams deployed in his sector for early warning of an Iraqi attack. Any coalition unit positioned within the French sector was under the French commander's tactical control.

The building of multinational sectors within the security zone took advantage of all coalition unit capabilities. All multinational sectors were similar to the French example. The

multinational sectors were built through the professionalism, personal relationships, and willingness of the military partners to be team players in obtaining a common goal. This cooperative spirit enhanced and speeded the relief efforts for the displaced Kurdish people. The integration of the unit capabilities allowed the JTF-B commander to weave a totally capable coalition to accomplish his mission. The national commanders received policy guidance from their governments that allowed the building of multinational sectors.

Another aspect of multinational integration of capabilities

and resources occurred with the

fifty private volunteer organizations (PVO) and non-governmental organizations (NGO).<sup>42</sup>

These organizations provided an outstanding level of expertise and capability in humanitarian relief and assistance for the Combined Task Force-PROVIDE COMFORT. There was, initially, no command and control structure in charge or that could organize the PVO/NGO's. These organizations, in some instances, arrived in the mountain camps along the Turkish border before coalition military forces arrived. Most of

- | <u>PVO/NGO AGENCIES</u>    |
|----------------------------|
| ACTION NORD-SVD            |
| ADVENTIST AGENCY           |
| AMERICAN FRIENDS           |
| AMERICAN RED CROSS         |
| AMERICAN REFUGEE CTE       |
| AMHURT                     |
| CARE                       |
| CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE    |
| CHRISTIAN OUTREACH CONCERN |
| DANISH CHURCH AID          |
| DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS    |
| DOCTORS OF THE WORLD       |
| EQUILIBRE                  |
| GERMAN BERGWACHT           |
| GERMAN RED CROSS           |
| GLOBAL PARTNERS            |
| HELO MISSION               |
| HULP AAN KUTERDAN          |
| INTL ACTION AGAINST HUNGER |
| INTL CTE OF THE RED CROSS  |
| INTL MEDICAL CORPS         |
| INTL REFUGEE YEAR TRUST    |
| INTL RESCUE CTE            |
| IRISH CONCERN              |
| ITALIAN RED CROSS          |

FIGURE 11

PVO/NGO AGENCIES (CONT)

JAPAN SOTOSHU RELIEF CTE  
MALTESE HILFS DEINST  
MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS INTL  
MIDWEST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES  
OPERATION MERCY  
OXFAM  
RED CROSS & RED CRESCENT  
RED CROSS OF MALTA  
SAMARITANS PULSE  
SAVE THE CHILDREN  
SWEDISH NAT'L RESCUE BOARD  
SWEDISH RESCUE SERVICE  
SWISS CHARITY TEAM  
SWISS MISSION  
SWISS PROJECT OF EMER HELP  
TEAR FUND/UK  
TURKISH RED CRESCENT  
UNITED NATIONS  
UNICEF  
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES  
WORLD FOOD PROGRAM  
WORLD RELIEF INTL  
WORLD VISION RELIEF & DEVP  
WORLD VISION, AUSTRALIA

FIGURE 12

them have provided relief care for many disasters throughout the world. Their vast experience in providing relief to people in disasters far exceeded the experience of the coalition military commanders.

The CTF-PC coalition command and control structure accommodated the fifty relief organizations deployed in Turkey and northern Iraq. The CTF-PC found a humanitarian need and then worked with the relief agencies to identify a PVO/NGO that could provide the required support. The task of

dealing with the PVO/NGO's was monumental due to the sheer numbers of the different agencies. All of the agencies expected and received the full cooperation and support of the coalition. The Civil Affairs (CA) Command at Incirlek and CA units in northern Iraq sorted out the humanitarian needs and coordinated with the PVO/NGO's to find an agency who would provide the support. The coalition provided the command, control and communications needed for the PVO/NGO's. The military coalition provided or coordinated nearly all of the transportation requirements for the civilian relief organizations. The relief agencies required some logistical support from the coalition, but generally were self-sustaining.

The military coalition was able to use its strengths of command and control, intelligence gathering, organization, communications, and transportation in the integration process of finding a humanitarian need and applying the necessary non-governmental or private volunteer organization to that need. The coalition military partners and the civilian relief agencies integrated their capabilities and enhanced the humanitarian relief provided to the Kurds.

## CONCLUSION

Combined Task Force-PROVIDE COMFORT completed its mission of sustaining the lives of over one million displaced Kurdish people in northern Iraq in 100 days. During the 100 days the world poured out its generosity and humanity toward the Kurds. The accomplishments of CTF-PC proved that a military coalition is an extremely effective organization in providing humanitarian assistance and security. The fast action lifesaving has set a model for coalition and civilian relief agencies in future humanitarian operations.

The building of a military coalition requires trust and mutual respect in the personal relationships of the coalition partners. There is no one correct, cookie-cutter approach for the developing the command and control structure. The political agendas and the mission requirements must be accommodated within the coalition. All coalition partners will generally be professionally competent. Coalition humanitarian operations should include the development of

memoranda of understandings between military partners. The development of MOUs between coalition members could go a long way to further mutual understanding.

The use of tactical control (TACON) as a method for employing coalition forces will be the standard into the 21st century. Coalition nations will maintain control of their forces deployed on the battlefield. The coalition commander must work with TACON relationships and still accomplish his mission.

The rules of engagement are a critical part of any military coalition. They need to pass the common sense test among all members of the coalition. One way for them to be common for all members is for governments to develop and agree on the ROE before deployment on an operation. Common ROE make a seamless coalition.

Integrating unit capabilities will always be required when national military forces deploy on an operation. All coalition forces are not equipped or organized in the same fashion as the United States. The vast capabilities of the American armed forces should be used to fill the voids that may exist in a coalition. Whether the U.S. is the leader of the coalition or a member, the capabilities that currently exist in our military will carry any coalition on any mission into the 21st century.

When combined with private volunteer and non-governmental organizations, the multinational coalition develops a synergism that can accomplish any mission assigned. Work must be done by our civil affairs units to understand, organize and operate with PVO/NGO's. The State Department, through the Disaster Assistance

Response Team (DART), possess some capability to sort through the PVO/NGO situation. The proliferation of these humanitarian organizations can quickly overwhelm an organization unless a commander is prepared to deal with them. DART and civil affairs units are the best ones to interact with them. The PVO/NGO organizations are fearless and will deploy into any battlefield or situation to provide humanitarian assistance.

Opportunities to practice coalition humanitarian operations will arise. In December 1991, the United Nations accused the Iraqi government of driving 200,000 Kurds from their homes into the hills with what a senior UN official has described as "strategic and discriminate artillery shelling." Even though Iraqis in turn accused the UN High Commissioner For Refugees (UNHCR) of deliberately lying to serve the Americans, another military coalition to provide humanitarian assistance to the Kurds could already be in the making.<sup>43</sup>

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