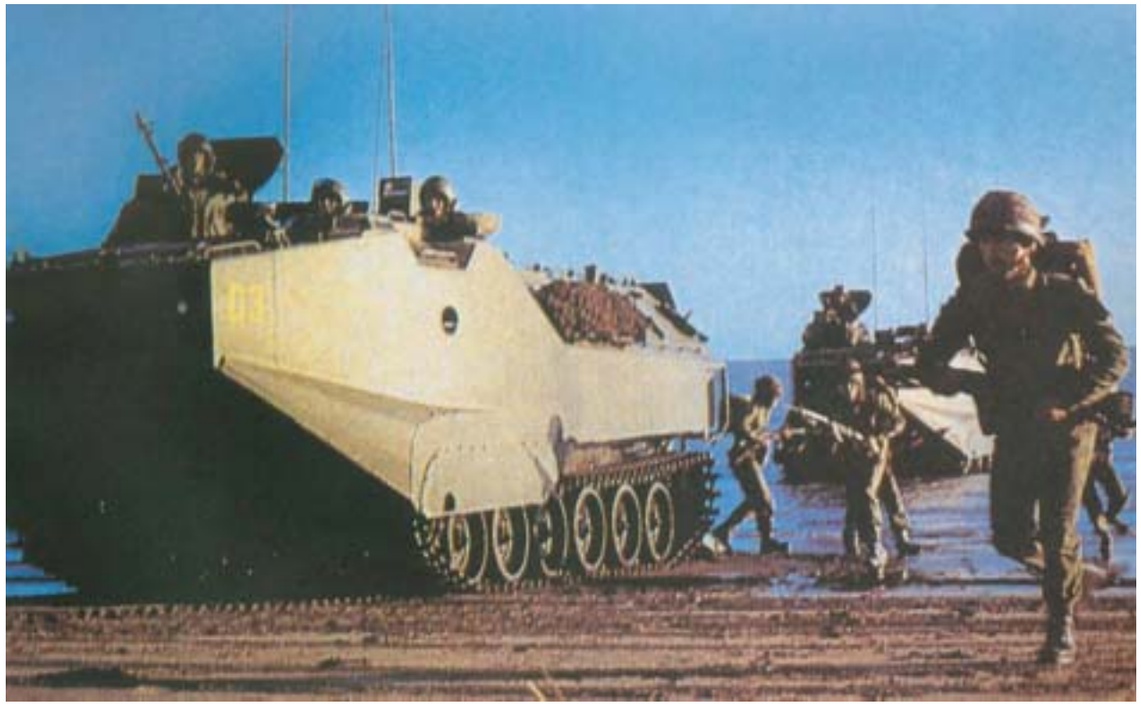
On 2 April 1982, 150 Argentine Special Forces landed just south-west of Port Stanley. This was the beginning of the Argentine take-over of the Falkland Islands.

The Manoeuvrist Approach and Coalition Warfare:

A Re-examination



The fundamental change in international relations resulting from the collapse of the Warsaw Pact has reawakened interest, *inter alia*, in two elements of military thinking: the manoeuvrist approach and coalition warfare. These two strands of military thinking are now sanctioned concurrently by the military and the wider political leadership, but they possess separate pedigrees. Neither is explicitly *primus inter pares*; however, there exists the unspoken assumption that both elements can somehow be fused together in all types of future operation. Together they represent the accepted *modus operandi* of the UK's Armed Forces and, increasingly, by multi-national organizations such as NATO.

Both approaches have claimed credit for, and gained legitimacy from, the military successes of the Gulf War and Balkan campaigns enjoyed by the Western nations since the end of the Cold War. As the underpinning principles of current military thinking, they have a direct influence on doctrine which informs the way we, as a nation, plan to fight. When all foreseeable scenarios are of limited war and limited commitment, these two approaches have been elevated to articles of faith. Can an armed force really serve two masters and still succeed on the battlefield?

This essay will show that manoeuvrism and coalition warfare are uneasy but not impossible bedfellows. Whilst they have co-existed previously, one of the two approaches has usually dominated: neither has automatically guaranteed success. After examining the often mutually contradictory assumptions and methods of the two approaches, this essay will reveal that these contradictions can lead to innovative solutions; moreover, the likely 'asymmetric versus coalition' nature of future conflict could provide the catalyst for their fusion. Ransacking history by taking past campaigns out of context to prove a doctrinal point is a futile exercise; however, this essay aims to discuss the wider lessons of history and to note their contemporary relevance. The essay focuses on the operational level and deals exclusively with warfighting.

Section one analyses the manoeuvrist perspective and asks why this approach is currently in vogue. Bold manoeuvrist actions are inherently risky: witness *Operation Market Garden* during WWII, but, whether resulting in decisive victories or glorious failures, they can capture the public's imagination and stir the military soul. Such events have of them the magic that comes from rising above the mundane, monotonous and predictable. In so doing, the manoeuvrist approach runs contrary to the enduringly turgid characteristics of much of conflict, and herein, perhaps, lies part of its continuing cachet.

Section two reveals that most acclaimed manoeuvrist actions have been inherently independent national operations (albeit often within coalition campaigns) in which delegation of responsibility was offered to, or seized by, the commanders in the field. Contextually, these were normally small to medium-sized operations in which external involvement was noticeably absent. Manoeuvrism implies verve and breathtaking military impertinence whereas coalitions exhort integration, gradualism and burden-sharing. Analysis of past campaigns reveals that manoeuvrism thrives when freedom of action, imaginative leadership, a willingness to take risks and the opportunity for decisive engagements abound.

Section three traces coalition warfare's different bloodline and shows that it is more closely akin to attritional warfare. History reveals that coalitions are formed more often by necessity than choice and are notoriously difficult to manage. Diametrically opposed to the risk-taking and dynamism of the manoeuvrist approach, coalitions engender a more deliberate, studied approach, demanding consensus, co-operation and co-ordination. By combining forces, past coalitions accrued greater military mass with which to wage large-scale attritional warfare in different theatres and on many fronts concurrently. The coalitions of the last hundred years fought the global slogging-matches of the two World Wars and then spent the Cold War years planning and procuring to fight the ultimate attritional battle between East and West. Paraphrasing Karl Marx, coalitions exist because

'quantity has a quality all of its own'. For coalitions, the quality is both military capability and the legitimacy that comes with securing widespread political support.

Section four analyses Operation Allied Force (OAF) as a case study and argues that, despite its individual nations' manoeuvrist preferences, NATO's collective methodology was more attritional than manoeuvrist, but with some modern nuances. Manoeuvre and coalition warfare, as traditionally typecast, exist on opposite ends of the spectrum of conflict. They employ differing psychologies of war, use differing concepts of risk management, and employ different linkages between ends, ways and means. However, modern Western coalitions fighting constrained wars of choice have unwittingly blurred the differences between the two approaches and created new hybrids. Conceptually, OAF could represent the vanguard of this new paradigm.

Section five examines the implications of combining the two approaches and contends that whilst some hybrids are successful, combinations can also create tensions through flawed, or absent, doctrine. Such tensions can lead to coalitions 'making it up as they go along' or conceivably falling apart and losing the war. No approach is inherently right or wrong, circumstances will always best dictate suitability; the trick will be to remain cognizant of their differences and to employ them imaginatively. Nations may wish to fight in a manoeuvrist style and expect to fight as coalitions; however, coalitions will probably become less attritional, more cautious and should anticipate enhanced political involvement. War has always combined attrition and manoeuvre, but in today's climate of selective intervention, media scrutiny, legal awareness and the increasing need for governments to 'market' conflicts to the electorate, it has probably never be so critically necessary to understand the differences, and to get the balance right.

SECTION ONE

What's it all about?

The UK Armed Forces' adoption of an explicitly manoeuvrist approach is complete and there are signs that many other nations are undertaking a similar conversion. The manoeuvrist approach is not an intrinsically late 20th century phenomenon; however, interest in its revival has burgeoned since the end of the Cold War. We may all be manoeuvrists now, but why?

Manoeuvrism means different things to different people and one could be forgiven for thinking that it is easier to state conclusively what it is *not*, rather than what it *is*. Indeed, it could be argued that its widespread acceptability is based, not on consensus about what it stands for, but more on the absolute rejection of attrition. Part of manoeuvrism's popularity lies in its ability to be interpreted differently and subtly manipulated to project unique national agenda. Politicians often find succour in vagueness, and the flexibility and versatility of this shadowy, nefarious approach makes it appealing at the grand strategic level. Manoeuvrism and diplomacy are often ambiguous by design to leave room for flexibility during negotiations, accommodate varying national interpretations, and cater for unforeseen events and unintended consequences.

Manoeuvrism, at its most basic, is the antithesis of attrition. Attritional warfare implies direct confrontation with the enemy and the bludgeoning erosion of his strength until he is forced to discontinue the contest. Attrition seeks to achieve a decisive shift in relative physical strengths by imposing upon the enemy a higher casualty rate than he can sustain.[1] In essence, attrition involves the deliberate, incremental destruction of enemy forces.

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Manoeuvrists aim to avoid such showdowns and seek to destroy the enemy's cohesion and undermine his will to win. More an attitude of mind than a series of conventions, it emphasises the intangibles of war such as morale, shock and initiative. The manoeuvrist avoids an even-handed fair fight, but rather, by using cunning, surprise and innovation, aims to be underhanded and is always on the lookout for some unfair advantage. Defeat is inflicted, not necessarily by destroying the enemy's physical mass, but by exploiting weaknesses rather than by confronting strengths. In essence it involves fighting clever and, where possible, fighting dirty.[2] In modern parlance, manoeuvrism means fighting smart, rather than fighting hard.

Sun Tzu recognised that avoiding attrition was a worthy aim, 'to fight and win 100 battles is not the acme of skill, to subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill'.[3] The roots of the modern manoeuvrist approach can be traced to the British reaction to the horrific attrition of the war to end all wars. In 1928 Fuller identified two ways to destroy an organization: by wearing it down (dissipating it) or by rendering it inoperative (unhinging it).[4]

The horrific scenes of war

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Liddell Hart, keen to avoid repetition of the Pyrrhic victories of the Great War, epitomized this thinking in his Indirect Approach, published in 1927.

Liddell Hart's premise was that while a stroke to the rear of the opposing army has effect on the minds of the enemy troops, a stroke farther back tends to have more effect on the mind of the enemy commander, and it is in the minds of commanders that battles are really decided.[5] As Ardant du Picq so eloquently put it, 'Loss of hope, rather than loss of life, is what decides issues of war'. Liddell Hart used the analogy of a stream overcoming obstacles by probing for cracks to show how nature achieves economy of force by progressively exploiting the soft spots of defences. By identifying the psychological nature of war and the need to minimize attrition by concentrating on outflanking attacks against the enemy's rear, the Indirect Approach laid the foundations of the modern manoeuvrist school.

Liddell Hart said that 'Britishness was indirectness nationalized' and the same argument, that manoeuvrism is somehow part of our psyche, is still advanced today. However, many have questioned whether the manoeuvrist approach has any great tradition in the UK. Past land engagements have tended to follow the model of selective engagement and have relied upon the attritional impact of a favourable correlation of forces rather than a demonstrably manoeuvrist stance. Over the centuries, the UK seems to have depended on maritime operations supported by locally hired troops, with major land campaigns as the last resort.[6] Indeed, the claim for a manoeuvrist pedigree seems to bear little resemblance to reality. Manoeuvrism's support is perhaps more indicative of a reaction to the horrors of attrition and reflects a panoply of modern socio-cultural factors, rather than a long-standing military legacy.

End of deep-freeze

The end of the Cold War was the end of a doctrinal deep-freeze

The end of the Cold War was the end of a doctrinal deep-freeze. This '40 year aberration' saw little in the way of doctrinal development, other than at the tactical level, because of the rigidity of thinking imposed by an unyieldingly fixed strategic overview.[7] The campaigns were planned, war-gamed, and choreographed ad infinitum but, fortunately, never undertaken for real. Doctrine does not thrive under such barren conditions; it should be a living entity which needs the injection of fresh experience and the fertility of a freethinking environment.

The thaw had begun before the end of the Cold War with the acknowledgement of the rigidity of NATO's approach and the need for an alternative conventional defence, other than immediate nuclear retaliation, in case of attack by the Warsaw Pact.[8] The enemy's overwhelming conventional strength was widely recognised, although new advantages were hoped for by exploiting

NATO's qualitative edge in flexibility and striking power. In the mid-1980s, the emergence of Manoeuvre Warfare was linked to the revival of operational art which sought to break away from the sterile Cold War thinking and permit a more dynamic and fluid style of warfighting. The US Army broke its attritional mould (as typified by 'Active Defence' published in the wake of the Vietnam war) and established the new doctrinal agenda by publishing FM 100-5 'The Airland Battle' in 1986.[9] Lind's *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*, written for the USMC in 1985, epitomized the new approach by declaring that 'the purpose of maneuver warfare is to defeat the enemy by disrupting his ability to react, rather than by the physical destruction of his forces'.[10]

A Russian SS-19 silo-based missile

An American 'Peacekeeper'

Comparing manoeuvre warfare to judo, Lind argued that the theory of manoeuvre warfare belonged to Colonel Boyd and his analysis of conflict as time competitive 'observation-orientation-decision-action' or 'OODA' cycles.[11] In 1994 the British Army Staff College, to avoid some of the confusion surrounding the oft-used but rarely defined term manoeuvre warfare, introduced the term 'the manoeuvrist approach' which focused on psychological, rather than mobility-based, conflict. To the manoeuvrist, winning now meant defeating, in the enemy's own mind, his confidence that he could achieve success.

NATO's immediate threat disappeared with the demise of the Warsaw Pact but was left with huge quantities of high-intensity warfighting equipment. Tarred by this leftover Cold War baggage, new doctrine initially tended to be capability-based, written for the available equipment, rather than for better ways of

Manoeuvrism is now the military mirror image of the society we live in, reflecting its beliefs and reinforcing its current norms

conducting warfare.[12] The shift towards more mobile, joint and, latterly, combined expeditionary operations has demanded innovative solutions from military personnel who are now increasingly taught how, and not what, to think. This is in concert with manoeuvrism's insistence that a questioning, imaginative mind is the modern commander's most effective weapon.

Some claim that manoeuvrism is little more than common sense in action; as R Fry has stated 'who would choose to engage an enemy's strengths when his weaknesses are available?'[13] Manoeuvrism is always attractive to a numerically inferior side or to a stronger side which wishes to minimize the resources committed.[14] Modern weapons are expensive and becoming more so; the unit costs of defence have shown a steady increase of 10% per year.[15] Technology can substitute for a lack of mass, but scarce expensive assets need to be carefully husbanded. When trends to fewer military systems are allied to contemporary norms such as the drive to reduce casualties on both sides and minimize collateral damage, it is hard to imagine ever reverting to a doctrine of attrition, especially when engaged in wars of choice. Manoeuvrism is now the military mirror image of the society we live in, reflecting its beliefs and reinforcing its current norms.

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The JSF variant, Lockheed Martin's X-35A

SECTION TWO

'If I must make war I prefer it to be against a coalition.' (Napoleon)

Manoeuvrists in action

Leaders such as Genghis Khan, Hannibal, Marlborough, the Marquis of Montrose, Slim, O'Connor, Patton and others highlight the fact that although great leaders have often been great manoeuvrists, rarely have coalitions managed to achieve the same effect

General S. Patton

Genghis Khan

There are many oft-quoted examples of great manoeuvrists and it is worth examining a selection to search for any lasting parallels between them. Leaders such as Genghis Khan, Hannibal, Marlborough, the Marquis of Montrose, Slim, O'Connor, Patton and others highlight the fact that although great leaders have often been great manoeuvrists, rarely have coalitions managed to achieve the same effect.

In 216 BC, Rome, fighting the Second Punic War against Carthage, was bent on destroying Hannibal whose attacks were causing severe food shortages in the capital.[16] To force a decisive encounter, Rome equipped four fresh legions and, with four legions already deployed, dispatched the force of 80,000 soldiers to track Hannibal down. The largest force that Rome had ever mobilized met Hannibal's forces, half their size, near the Roman supply depot at Cannae which Hannibal, having recently captured, realised was an ideal location from which to fight the larger force. The Romans, hemmed in by the river Aufidus, drew up their forces with a deeper than normal frontage. With twice Rome's cavalry but half the infantry, Hannibal placed his inexperienced infantry in the centre, buttressed on either side by veterans.

Once the centre ranks joined battle, Hannibal slowly retreated allowing the double encirclement of the tightly packed Roman infantry. The Romans, hampered by their own mass, were easy targets for Hannibal's cavalry and experienced infantry; the eight-hour battle resulted in the virtual annihilation of the Roman army with an estimated 50,000 dead and 20,000 captured. Hannibal's skill lay in luring his opponents into battle under favourable circumstances and then manoeuvring his forces with such finesse that the outcome was more than half-decided before the battle was joined. Interestingly, the second Punic War serves to show that being manoeuvrist in itself does not guarantee strategic success. Hannibal's manoeuvrist tactics were ultimately unsuccessful against Rome's attritional strategy and her phenomenal ability to mobilize enormous resources.

Genghis Khan used speed and deception to dislocate and disrupt his opponents, despite often being heavily outnumbered.[17] Fighting the Turks in 1219-1220, Genghis Khan marched 2,000 miles to face 400,000 well-armed adversaries. Having fixed the main body of the Turkish army with a fraction of his force, Genghis Khan advanced through the supposedly impenetrable Kizil Kum desert and attacked the strategically important city of Bukhara, 400 miles behind the Turkish troops. Surprised by this unexpected onslaught, the city fell and Genghis Khan immediately marched further to the Turkish rear. The capital city of Samarkand fell in six days, partly because the defenders, mistaking Khan's many prisoners for Mongol troops, over-estimated his strength, but also because the Turks lost the will to fight having seen Bukhara, a city they assumed to be safe, fall so quickly. Combining mobility with psychological warfare, Khan caused a catastrophic Turkish loss of faith in their ability to win.

The Marquis of Montrose commanded the Royalist Army in Scotland during the Civil Wars of 1644-1652. A one-time supporter of the Covenant Cause, Montrose became disillusioned by its demands and wary of its champion, the Duke of Argyll. Taking up the Royalist cause, Montrose returned to Scotland intent on raising the country for the King. Having formed an army out of a small and unlikely group of highlanders and Irish troops from Antrim, Montrose successfully waged his campaign throughout 1644-45, winning victory after victory against superior odds. In this short period he defeated the Calvinists and Campbells at Tippermuir, Aberdeen, Inverlochy, Auldearn, Alford and Kilsyth by unexpectedly crossing and re-crossing Scotland, outwitting his enemies and raising the loyal clans.[18] Montrose, ultimately unsuccessful in his endeavours, was eventually hanged and disembowelled, but his marauding style of warfare ensured that his manoeuvrist expertise is still recognised today.

In the early C18th, Marlborough's leadership of the British Army against the forces of Louis XIV was revolutionary in its emphasis on firepower, flexibility and manoeuvre as the decisive elements for success.[19] Favouring rapid marches and counter-marches, Marlborough maintained the initiative and kept his enemies constantly off-balance. Despite Marlborough's skill in melding many nationalities into a cohesive force, he alienated some of his allies by rejecting the old order of battle by siege. Fighting with the Dutch, Marlborough believed himself to be fettered by the alliance that frustrated him from maximizing the potential of his novel tactics. In 1704, to engage the French in a decisive battle, Marlborough rid himself of his turgid ally by splitting his forces, knowing that he could best achieve his aim by 'commanding the troops that are in the pay of England.' Marlborough's defeat of the superior French forces at Blenheim was his finest hour and was effected by his mastery of surprise (by attacking in the middle of the night), deception and continual movement which disadvantaged and dispirited his enemies.

The classic example of joint manoeuvrist warfare is the German Blitzkrieg and, in particular, the offensive in the West code-named Case Yellow. The plan involved a daring feint by strong forces through Holland and Belgium whilst the main effort pushed the weight of the German armour through the apparently impassable Ardennes forest to the south. The move had all the elements of the perfect manoeuvrist action, it was daring, risky and controversial. The Allies fell for the deception and allowed the weight of the German armour to pounce on a weakly defended point of the French lines, whilst the vast majority of

Stuka of III/StG 1

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the Allied armies fought a strategically pointless defensive battle in the north.[20] Supported by Stukas, Guderian's XIX Panzer Corps trounced the French reservists at Sedan and Rommel's 7th Panzer Division broke through at Dinant. Within 10 days the Germans had reached the Atlantic coast, the French army was destroyed and the British remnants of the Expeditionary Force compelled to evacuate via Dunkirk. An entire country fell in 10 days, suffering 1,200,000 casualties in the process; the combination of surprise, tempo and superior doctrine paralysed the defenders and destroyed their will to continue.

Equally audacious was Patton's command of the 3rd Army when, on 16 December 1944, a German counter-offensive against the thinly held line in the Ardennes struck the 1st US Army with complete surprise. Hoping to encircle the British 21st Army Group north of the Ardennes, Hitler's plan was to use the last of his reserves in a desperate attempt to breach the Allied lines, take the Belgian port of Antwerp and disintegrate the Western Alliance.[21] It very nearly succeeded. With the US forces encircled at Bastogne, Patton moved three divisions, a corps headquarters and a large number of supporting assets over 150 miles from an eastward to a northward orientation. Patton's initiative, mobility and powerful counter-attack caught the Germans by surprise and ultimately defeated the last major German initiative against the Allies.

There are many more manoeuvrist examples to illustrate these points. Rommel's use of his Afrika Corps, O'Connor's destruction of the Italian 10th Army from Sidi Barrani to Beda Fomm during the winter of 1940-41 (10 enemy divisions destroyed and 130,000 prisoners for the loss of 476 allied lives), or Slim's execution of the Meiktila/Mandalay Campaign, are all recognised as classic manoeuvrist operations. Throughout, certain constants can be seen to emerge. Risk-taking, initiative and creativity abound, but more importantly, so do freedom of thought and action derived from the lack of constraints. As the next section shows, coalitions impose an entirely different set of working conditions on military commanders. Not every coalition commander has enjoyed Marlborough's luxury of being able to ditch a tiresome ally and prosecute the war according to his own instincts – though undoubtedly many have wished to do so!

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SECTION THREE

Ancient Warfare

'History testifies to the ineptitude of coalitions in waging war. Allied failures have been so numerous and their inexcusable blunders so common that professional soldiers had long discounted the possibility of effective allied action unless available resources were so great as to assure victory by inundation.' (Eisenhower)

An RAF helicopter detachment in Kosovo

From the Biblical battles of the Israelites and the worshippers of Baal in 1100 BC to the air war over Kosovo, the tribulations of coalition warfare have exercised the minds of military and political leaders

Coalition warfare is an ancient phenomenon and combined operations have historically been the rule rather than the exception.[22] From the Biblical battles of the Israelites and the worshippers of Baal in 1100 BC to the air war over Kosovo, the tribulations of coalition warfare have exercised the minds of military and political leaders. Coalitions remain a fact of military life; in the 20th century all the major wars have been coalition wars, apart from the Russo-Japanese and Iran-Iraq conflicts.[23] Different circumstances produce different coalitions and there can be no single universally applicable solution.[24] As Ian Nish has stated 'all coalitions are unusual, but some coalitions are more unusual than others.'

Coalitions tend to be transitory, emerging in response to specific threats and normally dissolving once coalition goals have been met. Often politically fragile in nature, they develop out of necessity, sometimes uniting nations without a history of harmonious relations.[25] Nations play widely differing roles as coalition members, from guaranteed inaction, economic and diplomatic support, military assistance, to parallel or combined military operations.[26] Coalitions are formed when nations feel themselves incapable of, or unwilling to undertake, unilateral action. Some are moral crusades, but many are far from altruistic and are based on national survival or furtherance of national interest. Indeed, Churchill wryly observed that he would 'sleep with the devil if survival were at stake'.

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Coalition's over-riding aims can mask a variety of national objectives. During WWII, the Russians joined the allied coalition to divert German troops from the Eastern front, whereas Churchill wanted to block Russian expansion into the Balkans, and US policy was to limit

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Russian influence in Europe.[27] Despite national variations, the will of the coalition is likely to be strongest when the perception of common threat is the greatest.[28]

They are perceived to offer benefits in terms of generating greater resources, be they time, space, forces, capabilities or matériel. Coalitions confer legitimacy on their members in terms of moral, public and diplomatic support; the more participants, the more justifiable the operation appears.[29] Coalitions help democracies justify the use of force, especially when operations lack supra-national support from organizations such as the UN. Today the USA invariably chooses to operate as a coalition, though it has no military need for partners, to protect itself against criticisms of US imperialism.[30]

The fundamental disadvantage of coalitions is that they are notoriously difficult to manage and require careful nurturing. There is no shortage of disparaging quotes from military leaders about the problems of dealing with coalition partners; Simpson, Raglan's successor as British commander in the Crimea, said with typical understatement in 1855:

> *'I feel it very irksome and embarrassing to have to do with these Allies.'*

Differences in language, culture, ethos, goals, equipment, training, logistics, capabilities and doctrine all make concerted coalition action problematic. Coalitions develop their own group-dynamics and power-relationships, which change as the conflict progresses; only rarely does a coalition finish fighting for the same reason that it started. There are inevitably tensions between conflicting member's interests and intentions, sacrifices of sovereign prerogatives, and imbalances between the assets and liabilities of individual nations. Eisenhower recognised these challenges when he stated that:

> *'one of the constant sources of danger to us is the temptation to regard as our first enemy the partner that we must work with in defeating the real enemy.'*

Limiting the discussion to 20th century Europe, coalitions have undergone fundamental changes. Before this period, coalitions were ephemeral, forming during wars and then disintegrating afterwards. During the Napoleonic Wars, seven coalitions were created against France; all were different and Austria, Prussia, Spain and Russia changed sides as the wars progressed.[31] Recent experience has shown a tendency for long-standing peacetime alliances to be moulded into wartime coalitions.[32]

Only the near collapse of the Western Front in March 1918 forced the Allies to tighten a very loose coalition and create unity of command under Foch as the Supreme Allied Commander-in-Chief

The relative strengths and weaknesses of the two World War coalitions deserve further mention as they typify the problems inherent with coalition warfare. In the 20th century the greater resources of the coalitions have tended to make wars longer, and the wider and more various interests of the partners have often

made it more difficult to conclude the conflict and achieve a lasting peace.[33] During WWI, the Allies were for the most part handicapped by age-old animosities and were unable to achieve any real integration. Only the near-collapse of the Western Front in March 1918 forced the Allies to tighten a very loose coalition and create unity of command under Foch as the Supreme Allied Commander-in-Chief.[34] American involvement was welcomed by the Allies who were running out of manpower having fought an extremely costly attritional war. On the Axis side, the German-Turkish forces achieved excellent levels of integration but the Austro-Hungarian Empire was so ethnically diverse (its 1914 mobilization order was communicated in 15 different languages), that its forces were barely able to coordinate with each other, let alone their allies.[35]

WWII saw the creation of a sophisticated coalition against the Third Reich but only after an inauspicious start when it appeared that the British, Belgians and French had forgotten the hard won lessons from WWI. Despite different approaches, Churchill demanded close supervision whereas the Americans believed in a broad delegation of authority; the basic principles of unity of command and integrated combined staffs were agreed by Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa.[36] Despite personality clashes, these practices were refined under the leadership of Eisenhower during the subsequent invasions of Sicily and Italy, and ultimately Operation Overlord. The opportunities for true manoeuvre warfare were constrained by the need to co-ordinate and integrate the mass of allied forces. Interoperability was invariably difficult and joint and combined doctrine was largely conceived on the hoof by visionaries such as Coningham and Tedder.

Shaping the battle space

…the Gulf War was a remarkable 'coalition of the willing' and involved a major shift away from the attritionalist approach

Post WWII western coalitions have fought wars in Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf and latterly in the Balkans. Not all have matched the integration and success achieved during WWII although most have continued in the attritional mould. However, the Gulf War was a remarkable 'coalition of the willing' and involved a major shift away from the attritionalist approach. Manoeuvre warfare was successfully employed; surprise relied heavily on deception and the Iraqis were encouraged to believe that the allies' main effort would be littoral Kuwait. In reality the main effort was the long left hook into the enemy flank through Iraqi territory.

The coalition played to its strengths, used air power to decisively shape the battlespace and broke the Iraqi will to resist prior to the rapid land offensive. Special forces operated deep behind enemy lines and helped engender Iraqi psychological collapse. The political circumstances were unique to the 20th century and were conducive to this manoeuvrist approach by a coalition. Preparation time was plentiful allowing detailed planning and the military leaders, once the coalition had been formed, were left to their own devices. De la Billière has advocated caution from concluding that the Gulf War should be the template for future conflict, believing that the coalition forces were not truly put to

A Tornado GR1 in low-level pursuit

the test.[37] The Iraqis made a number of strategic errors by giving the coalition time to build up forces and then failing to fight effectively once hostilities began.

Even allowing for the brevity of such a canter through the vast topic of coalition warfare, certain generic principles can be seen to emerge. Coalitions are not silver bullets but, being a necessary evil, are likely to be forced upon the military by realpolitik.[38] They are inherently cumbersome and tend to inefficiency because they require so much effort merely to maintain themselves; however, such self-absorption is vital because the coalition's centre of gravity is invariably its own cohesion. Coalition 'lessons learned' have a short half-life and are often re-learned the hard way by trial and error during combat.[39] Whilst most agree on the need for combined doctrine, it is very difficult to craft and, despite the rhetoric, is always hard to create when there is no common and readily identifiable enemy.

Coalition wars therefore tend to be ad-hoc arrangements, with best practice on the day hurriedly being substituted for pre-packaged doctrine

Coalition wars therefore tend to be ad-hoc arrangements, with best practice on the day hurriedly being substituted for pre-packaged doctrine. Often quickly assembled, coalitions tend to improve with time and are most harmonious against a serious threat. Coalitions often find themselves engaged in wars of survival, where to lose is not an option. Being complex and, if dictated by circumstances, risk-averse organizations, coalitions tend to go for what is readily achievable as opposed to what might be the ideal, but more risky, solution. Coalition warfare is very much the art of the possible and problems tend to be managed rather than solved.[40] Above all, coalitions enhance their chances of success by keeping things simple and by relying on centralized command and control (C2) to carefully orchestrate the activities of its elements. Such a hands-on approach reduces the likelihood of error but does call for remarkable qualities of stewardship from the coalition commander.[41] Operational flair and manoeuvrism is much harder, though not impossible, to action, given the need to weave each nation's political restrictions and military capabilities into the fabric of the overall coalition campaign plan.

As Kennedy concludes, 'coalition warfare requires, much more than any unilateral campaign, substantial doses of tolerance, understanding and flexibility' in order to avoid the 'Clausewitzian frictions' which could 'slow down or possibly ruin a wartime campaign.'[42] This oil to keep the coalition moving smoothly is definitely not grist to the manoeuvrist's mill! Coalitions are therefore normally forced, by make-up, circumstance or by political compromise, to pursue attritionalist rather than manoeuvrist approaches.

SECTION FOUR

Operation Allied Force

*'Something very different happened in this war, and to simply pass it off as an aberration is dangerous. (*Meilinger*)*

This section examines NATO's participation in OAF and asks whether this most recent example of coalition warfare was as manoeuvrist in practice as its constituent nations' doctrine would expect it to have been in theory. It is a moot point whether OAF was truly representative of NATO's overarching military approach; differing perspectives have portrayed OAF as both 'a watershed in NATO's history, an overwhelming success,'[43] and 'an exercise in foisting onto the gullible a caricature of war.'[44] In reality, OAF was a limited war fought under severe political constraints by an unwieldy alliance of 19 nations.[45] There was no direct clash of massed forces and it was virtually an air-only war. Yet OAF exists as NATO's sole offensive campaign during its 50-year history and, successful or otherwise, it will undoubtedly play a significant role in determining how coalitions fight – and are fought against – in the future.

To provide a framework for analysis this section takes as its starting point the manoeuvrist approach, as defined in JWP 0-01.1, namely:

> *'An approach to operations in which shattering the enemy's overall cohesion and will to fight is paramount. It calls for an attitude of mind in which doing the unexpected, using initiative and seeking originality is combined with a ruthless determination to succeed.'*

British Defence Doctrine fleshes out this core definition, emphasizing that the crucial difference between it and an attritional strategy involves breaking an opponents will rather than his matériel; pitting strengths against the enemy's known weaknesses; using momentum and tempo to induce shock and surprise; taking the initiative, and applying unacceptable pressure when and where the enemy least expects it. Using these concepts, NATO's performance during OAF will be judged according to its manoeuvrist merits under the 3 headings of overall strategy, campaign planning and execution.

Strategy

President Clinton stated: 'I thought that there was maybe a 50% chance it would be over in a week'. SACEUR exemplified this somewhat limited strategic vision when he declared: 'This really wasn't a war. It was diplomacy backed by force'

Former US President Clinton

Even a cursory examination of the background to OAF illustrates how politicians and the military bring their intellectual baggage, in the form of preconceptions, to a campaign. Following its perceived successes during the Gulf War and Operation Deliberate Force, air power appeared to offer the promise of decisive engagement without substantial commitment. This was reinforced in October 1998 when, faced with the threat of NATO air strikes, Milosevic backed down and agreed to allow in the UN-mandated Kosovo Verification Mission.[46] The evidence suggests that in 1999 western political leaders expected Milosevic to cave in rapidly in the face of another determined NATO coercive strategy based on limited air strikes backed by a united diplomatic front. President Clinton stated: 'I thought that there

was maybe a 50% chance it would be over in a week'.[47] SACEUR exemplified this somewhat limited strategic vision when he declared: 'This really wasn't a war. It was diplomacy backed by force'.[48]

However, Milosevic failed to capitulate as expected and NATO had to rethink its strategy. Critics maintain that NATO allowed the war to drift until events such as the refugee crisis dictated the emerging parallel strategies of targeting Serbian infrastructures and the fielded forces in Kosovo. Even before the air strikes started there was disagreement between the NATO allies over the use of ground troops and the air campaign. Wrangling over the air campaign concerned the choice of either an all-out initial assault or a phased gradualist campaign. USAF Chief of Staff, General Ryan said 'the campaign did not begin the way that America normally would apply air power – massively, striking at strategic centres of gravity' because her NATO allies insisted on a more gradual approach.[49]

The gradualist approach was based on three factors: firstly, that it would give Milosevic the opportunity to concede before substantial damage was wrought; secondly, a major assault was unfeasible for certain NATO nations given overriding national legal and political factors, and thirdly, that the operation was designed in phases and targets were attacked in significant numbers from the outset.[50] The issue of the ground invasion is murkier still. However, it would appear that whilst some nations were more hawkish than others, an opposed assault on Kosovo was unacceptable for most, given the size of the force required – estimated at 200,000 troops – and the high numbers of possible allied casualties.

Given the humanitarian nature of the intervention, there was no NATO consensus for a Gulf War-style massive air assault followed by an opposed ground offensive. NATO's leaders were aware that Milosevic would target NATO's centre of gravity – its cohesion – and so maintaining that cohesion became an overarching strategic objective.[51] Therefore, NATO's strategy was dictated, not by military best practice, but by the necessity to avoid undue political risk. Accordingly, NATO fought with a lowest common denominator strategy based on enemy attrition through sustained air attack. NATO's strategy was escalatory rather than decisive; deliberately designed to be transparent to the enemy; it was communicated to Milosevic when President Clinton stated 'I do not intend to put our troops in Kosovo to fight a war', and was avowedly risk-averse for both allied forces and Serbian civilians alike. As such, it was far from a manoeuvrist approach.

Campaign planning

Planning for air operations commenced 10 months prior to the air strikes and evolved through a series of iterations.[52] Primarily US led, though under the auspices of NATO, the initial plans for large-scale strategic air attacks were eventually shelved as being politically unacceptable. SACEUR ultimately approved a two-day stand-alone Limited Air Response Plan which could, if unsuccessful, be incorporated into a multi-phased operation. No clear political end-state was established but considerable constraints were imposed in incorporating force protection, casualty intolerance and collateral damage. Counting on a short sharp shock to coerce Milosevic back to the Rambouillet Accords, much of the targeting analysis for the later 'tightening of the screw' was glossed over.

The enemy's centre of gravity was assessed as Milosevic's political powerbase in Serbia but attacks aimed at this critical vulnerability were disallowed. NATO's military objectives were therefore unsurprisingly vague; on 25 March, General Guthrie stated that the aim of the strikes was to 'avert an impending humanitarian catastrophe by disrupting the violent attacks against the Kosovar Albanians and to limit such repression in the future'. Lt Gen Short, the Air Component Commander (ACC), was more bluntly critical when he stated that 'we began bombing on the first night with our objective being to demonstrate NATO resolve. We need to know what our military objectives are, and we need to understand what we are trying to accomplish'.

The planning, though conceivably combined, was inherently un-joint, with minimal attention paid to co-ordinating the air aspects with the, albeit limited, naval forces. Although the ground option had already been ruled out, it was recognised that the ground force that would eventually be required as a stabilizing force in Kosovo, could also serve as a lever against Milosevic by representing a potential invasion force.[53] The military's belief that a ground war should be planned for, even if not executed, was disregarded until well into the war when, with Milosevic still defiant, veiled hints were dropped at the NATO Summit in Washington that all options were still on the table.[54] Even then, the land planning was undertaken out of kilter with the air campaign; as a result, the barracks identified by KFOR for its own use were destroyed during the bombing campaign. Moreover, little attention was paid to Information Operations against Serbia, although there is scant evidence to suggest that NATO possessed either the will or the means to undertake them at the time.

For cogent political reasons, the military plan was therefore fragmented and, initially at least, less robust than required. It was overly predictable and fundamentally incoherent in its lack of co-ordination between land, sea and air. The plan had an in-built lack of tempo, surprise and simultaneity. As the compromise solution by a coalition of the unwilling, the plan was not imbued with, nor perceived by its opponent to contain, a ruthless determination to succeed. The underlying theme was more concerned with encouraging the allies to continue to fight, rather than destroying Milosevic's will. As such, the war was eventually won, *despite* the campaign planning, rather than *because* of it.[55] Overall, OAF was not a triumph of pre-planning, but a huge achievement in improvisation.[56]

The military's belief that a ground war should be planned for, even if not executed, was disregarded until well into the war…

Execution

The campaign was executed in an *ad-hoc* fashion, largely ignoring standardized NATO procedures. With no Joint Force Commander nominated, SACEUR undertook this role by default, leaving Gen Short as the ACC (without any strategic planning cell) to produce the Air Tasking Order (ATO) and service the target list provided by SHAPE. This arrangement effectively merged strategic and operational C2 within the NATO forces. As they provided the bulk of the assets, the C2 structure was predominantly US and highly centralized, leaving some of the allies with the impression that the coalition was merely bolted on to an extant US operation; many felt that they were 'informed rather than consulted' about the campaign's execution.[57] Where issues of releasability impinged on coalition interoperability, the solution was inevitably for the US to go it alone, as evidenced by the dual-track ATO system, which allowed the US to keep its stealth operations secret.

Extensive video teleconferencing was employed, ostensibly to reduce the friction of war and apply precise centralized control. As an unintended consequence, it encouraged political and military 'long screw-drivering' which tended to degrade mission command at the operational level and below. The target approval process through the NATO Military Committee and national governments, all with national vetoes, was cumbersome and time-consuming. Unlike the authority delegated to Gen Horner as the Gulf War air campaign commander, during the Kosovo campaign, SACEUR, the highest military authority, personally approved every target.[58] At the tactical level, pilots engaging the Serbian fielded forces in Kosovo required permission from the Combined Air Operations Centre in Italy before proceeding with their attacks.

The weather played a major part in disrupting the tempo of operations; during the 78 days of attacks, cloud cover was assessed at greater than 50% for over 70% of the time and unimpeded air strikes only occurred on 24 days. Such lulls and an element of luck, allied to the campaign's slow start, enabled Milosevic to dissipate NATO's efforts and wrest back some of the initiative. Although cruise missiles and B2 bombers were able to operate independently of the weather, they could only be employed against static targets and were of little use against fielded forces. With bottlenecks in the politically-charged target selection process working against military calls to intensify the attritional campaign, there were frequent tensions and often more aircraft available than targets approved. Moreover, NATO's aircraft became increasingly constrained in their ability to manoeuvre and achieve surprise given the constricted airspace and fulsome requirements for self-protection.

Although cruise missiles and B2 bombers were able to operate independently of the weather, they could only be employed against static targets and were of little use against fielded forces

A B-2 Stealth Bomber in search of targets

Throughout the campaign, NATO spokesmen reiterated the quintessentially attritional nature of the operation. On 12 May, Admiral Moore, ACDS (Ops), stated that 'the air campaign is an incremental one with the gradual attrition of Milosevic's assets on the ground'. Similarly on 24 May, Gen Guthrie declared: 'the maximum attrition of Yugoslav forces by NATO will be the number one priority…and that it must be very demoralizing for the Yugoslav forces to see their military capability being whittled away'.

By shying away from all-out warfare in order to preserve its own cohesion, NATO encouraged Milosevic to wait and see if he could

outlast the Alliance, in the knowledge that he could always broker a deal if necessary. It did not produce unacceptable pressure where and when he least expected it. The military always adjusts to the political parameters of the day; escalation and gradualism were the two political directives for OAF. As ever, the paradox lies in the fact that the politician's requirement for room to manoeuvre (especially when 'feeling their way' without defined end-states) militates against the military's freedom to be manoeuvrist.

Constrained by political guidance, NATO sought to coerce Milosevic by destroying his matériel and not his will. NATO could not directly target Milosevic's strategic weaknesses, was prevented from undertaking a bold decisive campaign, and relied on strength and technology rather than cunning to win the day. OAF was successful in that it achieved its objectives within the constraints dictated. With its emphasis on gradual degradation of the Serbian forces, there can be little doubt that OAF was an attritional, rather than a manoeuvrist operation. Perhaps the last word should go to SACEUR:

> *'What did the trick was the accuracy of the precision weapons, the avoidance of losses, and the increasing destruction of the Serb forces'.*

SECTION FIVE

> *"There is only one thing more difficult than getting a new idea into the military mind…and that is getting the old one out"*
> (Churchill quoting Liddell Hart)

In theory, governments should ascertain the viability of coalition operations via a military informed cost-benefit analysis. In practice, the question is often stillborn as the decision is invariably pre-determined by political expediency. Despite the fact that coalitions rarely exhibit overall military synergy (the norm is for problems of integration to reduce the whole to less than the sum of its constituent parts), they do have an impressive track record. However, some recent successes mask internal flaws and some of the contests were a lot closer than is generally recognised. In the foreseeable future (discounting purely national interventions such as Sierra Leone), the requirement to fight as a coalition is likely to remain paramount, *ceteris paribus*, until such time as a coalition either wins too costly a victory, loses against an asymmetric opponent or simply becomes 'unglued' and falls apart in the process.

Are there dangers in being so coalition-centric? A coalition's mere existence does not guarantee success and their recent success has been attributed to the overwhelming military might of the USA. There are pitfalls: size can be counter-productive and capability without commitment delivers an empty message. Victory can breed complacency with winners seduced by the apparent inevitability of their continued success. Paradoxically, the vanquished often emerge with the more profound insights. Early German successes during WWII and the American-led victory in the Gulf after the debacle of Vietnam reveal how fertile a breeding area for groundbreaking doctrine a previous defeat can be.

The Lockheed F-117 Nighthawk

The danger for the western coalitions lies in the fact that they have probably never been so safe and must appear predictable, stale, incapable of objectively assessing their true weaknesses and, over-confident in their technical superiority, lacking in originality

The danger for the western coalitions lies in the fact that they have probably never been so safe and must appear predictable, stale, incapable of objectively assessing their true weaknesses and, over-confident in their technical superiority, lacking in originality. It is questionable whether the guarantee of security through coalition membership induces an innovative military mindset. Valid critiques of coalitions emphasize their tendency to subjugate 'operational art' to the skills required in chairing committees. Possibly only defeat will force nations to question their default setting to coalition warfare and all that it entails in terms of the way they train and fight.

Nevertheless, lacking threats to her national survival, the UK remains avowedly coalition-centric, but also espouses manoeuvrism. Coalitions normally tend to a constrained, attritional, and more recently, gradualist, approach, in order to guarantee consensus and reduce the risk for its participants. History teaches us that the manoeuvrist approach thrives during limited national operations, especially when the military situation justifies the acceptance of increased risk in favour of rapid success. It is hard to imagine another Gulf War scenario in which coalition forces would again be given a political free rein to employ a manoeuvrist approach in an area purpose built for manoeuvre warfare, against an enemy who made little attempt to disrupt its lengthy preparations.

However, calls for the demise of the Powell Doctrine (the use of overwhelming military force to decisively achieve clearly defined political objectives) are probably premature.[59] In choosing limited means to achieve its ends during OAF, NATO did not reject manoeuvrism outright and it would be dangerous to draw too many conclusions from this air-orientated war. In future wars with ground troops deployed, a more manoeuvrist approach may be more acceptable to force a decisive result. But if the Gulf War represents the exception rather than the rule and OAF the more likely template, what is the future for manoeuvrism? Does the approach still retain any intrinsic value, or has it been relegated to the status of a worthy ideal, one to aspire to, but in practice, never be able to emulate? Has manoeuvrism become the latest victim to the curse of doctrinal dogma?

Some contend that coalitions sound the death-knell for a manoeuvrist approach and that manoeuvrism should be either rejected or sublimated into the use of ever more technological marvels to wow the crowds in the media amphitheatre. Confident of their

technological superiority, coalitions can now ignore manoeuvrism's basic tenets and, being risk-averse and consensual, rely on 'winning together from a distance'. The lure is victory at minimal cost, and the danger of losing the psychological advantage to a potential enemy can be marginalised with military might and political unanimity. The anti-manoeuvrist heretics argue that, contrary to recent developments in the art of war, national doctrine remains overly manoeuvrist and should be re-written to reflect the changed coalition realities. Moreover, the continued emphasis on manoeuvrist doctrine is at best irrelevant, and at worst imparts a misleading paradigm to future coalition warriors; such an error only thickens, rather than disperses, the fog of war.

Others point to the manoeuvrist approach's continued relevance. In a purely national operation, without the additional resources afforded by coalition membership, the UK would have to preserve its limited assets by fighting smartly. Moreover, coalitions should not automatically reject a manoeuvrist approach. CDS's remit is to present politicians with options based on informed military advice, irrespective of how politically unpalatable they might appear. Manoeuvrism represents a national doctrinal success story that could be read across to coalition operations. Accordingly, the UK should engage its coalition partners in the manoeuvrist approach through the development of combined doctrine. Care should be taken to ensure that, when standardizing doctrine, the manoeuvrist element is not 'nibbled to death by ducks'. Ultimately, should Europe's ambitions for an independent military capability come to fruition, its forces could lack the technological superiority currently afforded to NATO by the USA, and Europe would have to rely on a manoeuvrist approach to compensate for its capability gaps.

The answer lies somewhere between the 2 extremes. The manoeuvrist approach will remain paramount in national operations because a return to a more attritional style of warfare is both inconceivable and impossible given our current force structures. Moreover, it remains our best weapon against an asymmetric opponent. However, current national doctrine overplays the manoeuvrist line and underplays the different approaches required during coalition operations.

Manoeuvrism represents a national doctrinal success story that could be read across to coalition operations

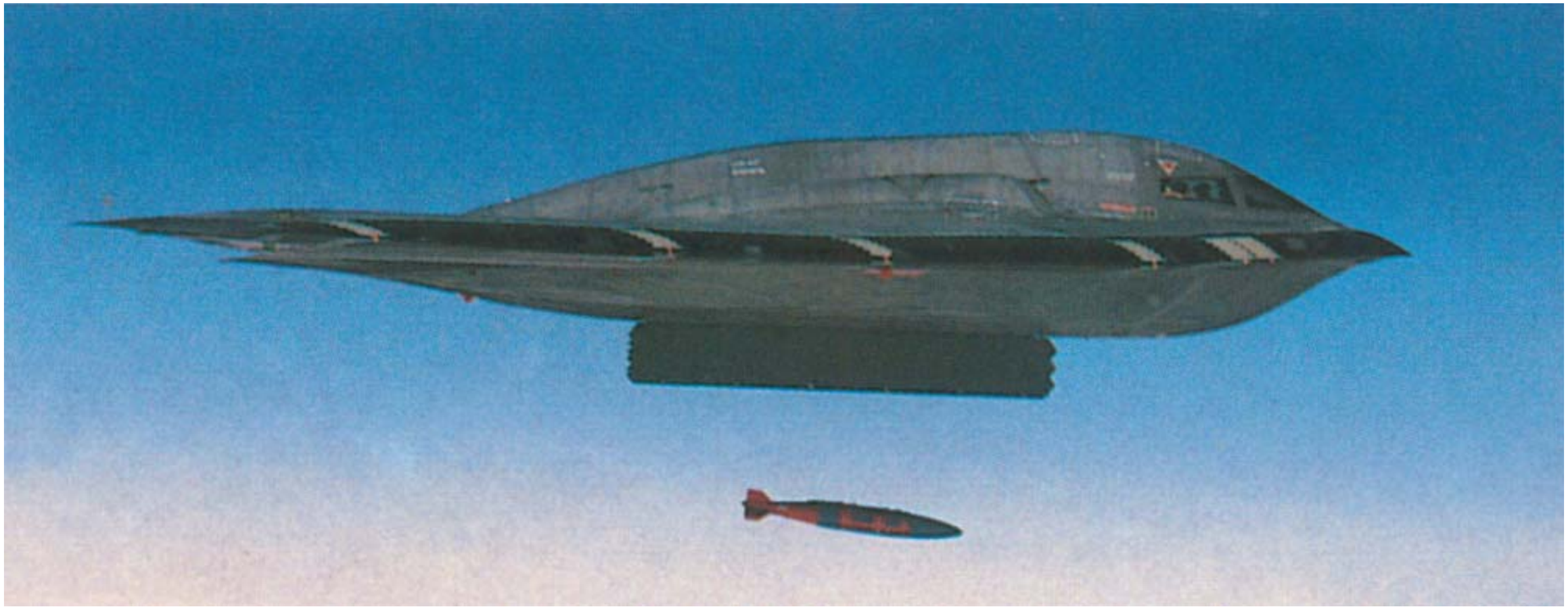
Significantly, future changes to coalitions and manoeuvrist operations could facilitate symbiosis of the two approaches. Realpolitik requires the military to live with the politics of the moment, so harmony of political objective and the military method could be better achieved by careful coalition selection. 21st century coalitions could be more situation specific, with objectives tailored to conflicts rather than broad global norms; regionally based, with those close-by having the greatest stake; or ad-hoc, and separate from existing frameworks such as NATO.[60]

Security in the 21st century may be characterised by a complex array of institutional and international links that engage different coalition partners for different levels and types of missions.[61] Therefore, future coalitions could be better placed, or forced, to employ a manoeuvrist approach, especially in more equal fights against worthy opponents. Ad-hoc coalitions of like-minded nations will need to be small enough to allow manoeuvrist action but large enough to confer legitimacy. Similarly, larger

coalitions could develop manoeuvrist approaches through burden-sharing, allowing the willing and capable to do the manoeuvrist war-fighting whilst the rest perform the follow-on missions.

Hybrids resulting from the merger of the two approaches could herald a ‘third way’ between the two extremes. During OAF, the attritional legacy was evident in the gradualist use of incremental force to coerce an enemy by destroying his critical assets, but

If a single B-2 armed with Joint Direct Attack Munitions can deliver massed precision with impunity, then what more of a manoeuvrist weapon could one wish for? The corollary of this argument is of course that the West, with all its technological sophistication, gains a new Achilles heel



The B-2 Stealth Bomber shows off one of its 340 kg (750lb) M117 bombs

with limits placed on the acceptable damage wrought. Likewise, the manoeuvrist approach has changed, metamorphosing from the realm of the psychological to the technical. The medium for this new manoeuvrism could be, amongst others, air power (stealth delivering mass precision) or through Information Operations (cyber warfare).

This new 'ersatz manoeuvrism,' predicated on the benefits of technological advance and the Revolution in Military Affairs, maintains the unexpected element, but has changed its dimension. If a single B-2 armed with Joint Direct Attack Munitions can deliver massed precision with impunity, then what more of a manoeuvrist weapon could one wish for? The corollary of this argument is of course that the West, with all its technological sophistication, gains a new Achilles heel. Current concerns about asymmetric threats to coalition operations highlight how the manoeuvrist approach can be used to target Western weaknesses such as alliance cohesion and sensitivity to casualties.

The principles of risk-aversion and manoeuvrism are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Developing manoeuvrist techniques such as Information Operations could involve pre-emptive cyber attacks to influence the enemy before he is set on his intended scheme of manoeuvre. If these tactics are to be employed, the politicians' natural reluctance for early action will only be overcome with convincing arguments about their ability to reduce overall costs and casualties in the long run and thereby support the notion of conflict prevention.

Manoeuvrism remains enshrined in the UK's Joint Vision draft paper out to 2015.[62] The balance between the two approaches is still not yet right, but any anti-manoeuvrist backlash will be counter-productive. The manoeuvrist baby must not be thrown out with the doctrinal bathwater, but allowed to grow. Manoeuvrism is not dead but it must evolve to meet the new challenges. Nations need to be doctrinally multi-capable; what will be required will be a 'golf-bag' approach, allowing for the selection of a contextually suitable methodology, be it coalition or manoeuvrist, or some novel combination of the two.

CONCLUSION

'The only thing worse than fighting with allies is fighting without them.' (Churchill)

The reality of conflict is that warfare is subjective and offers few absolutes. This essay has sought to avoid advancing prescriptive doctrinal recommendations; instead, it has shed some light on the approaches that shape current military thinking. Ideally it has also highlighted some inconsistencies and identified avenues of thought worthy of further consideration. The military has a tendency, when caught analyzing its navel, to sometimes search a little too hard for hidden axioms and answers, and runs the risk of missing the wood for the trees.

When balancing on the fine fulcrum between becoming hidebound and succumbing to spin, the military must understand how its approaches fit into the wider framework. Moreover, it must remember that its personnel are part of the society it protects, and therefore mirror its preconceptions, prejudices and principles. A wise strategist knows himself as well as he knows the enemy and should be prepared to follow Captain Blackadder's dictum and, when appropriate, not be afraid to ask himself some pretty searching questions![63]

Both manoeuvrism and coalition warfare possess validity but require a caveat and can be shaped to suit the occasion.

The manoeuvrist approach is not a panacea to be advanced on every occasion, nor should it be rejected as outmoded or irrelevant

The manoeuvrist approach is not a panacea to be advanced on every occasion, nor should it be rejected as outmoded or irrelevant. Doctrine will never be perfect but it should at least aim to reflect the realities of conflict and represent best military practice. By emphasizing the ideal manoeuvrist approach at the expense of the pragmatic coalition approach, UK national doctrine has yet to get the balance right. Enhancing the coalition aspects of our national doctrine and developing the manoeuvrist perspective in combined doctrine will nurture a virtuous circle of improved military capability and intellectual debate. Above all, we should search for means of combining the best elements of both approaches and foster a spirit of innovation. A manoeuvrist coalition is not an oxymoron but it will demand much attention in its development.

Doctrine has always represented differing national strategies, force structures, equipment capabilities, and the demands of varied theatres of operations. Despite the disparate backgrounds of the two approaches, doctrine should continue to evolve by expanding upon the realities of coalition warfare without neglecting the advantages of manoeuvre warfare. It took the hard-won lessons of WWI and the attritional wars of the 20th century to convince the UK of the efficacy of the manoeuvrist approach, and it would be a backwards step if it were allowed to wither on a coalition vine. The manoeuvrist approach, if not always directly applicable due to the nature of the operations we may find ourselves engaged in, will always be useful and we reject it at our peril. It should remind us of the attritional alternative, offer a different perspective to coalition operations, provide a fertile breeding ground for new doctrine and methods, and reveal clues as to how coalitions might be targeted in the future.

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