



[ANNEX 3-04 COUNTERSEA OPERATIONS](#)

MULTINATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION

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Coalition Command Structures

[Multinational](#) command structures within an alliance are usually regulated by agreements, while the command structures created by a [coalition](#) tend to be more ‘ad hoc’. Factors that may influence the coalition command structure may include national caveats (tasks or missions that nations cannot perform), the seniority of the deployed national commanders and the associated capabilities of their platforms, the level of command authority granted over maritime forces and national [rules of engagement](#). Additionally, maritime forces tend to be contributed as complete entities which serve to preserve national integrity.

There are three basic coalition command structures—parallel, lead nation, or integrated.

- ✦ Within a parallel command, each nation retains control of its forces. Though Air Force forces will be operating under standardized joint guidance, they will probably be participating in maritime operations with other nations using different operating procedures. Careful coordination of multinational maritime operations is necessary to preclude conflicting operations.
- ✦ Under a lead nation command structure, the nation that supplies the preponderance of forces generally provides the overall commander of forces.
- ✦ Typically, in an integrated command structure, a single commander is designated from an alliance or coalition member nation. Additionally, the command staff, subordinate commanders and their staffs are all composed of representatives from each member nation.

Regardless of the structure, it is imperative that US personnel understand the procedures of other nations conducting operations in the maritime domain. For additional information on multinational operations, see JP 3-16, [Multinational Operations](#).
