

RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING THE COMMAND STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL CO-OPERATION FOR JOINT COMBATING OPERATIONS

2.1 The Contracting Parties

RECALLING the provision of Article 7 of the Agreement for Co-operation in Dealing with Pollution of the North Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances, 1983 (Bonn Agreement) concerning assistance to a Contracting Party by other Contracting Parties called upon,

TAKING into consideration that assistance could be rendered in the form of strike teams consisting of personnel, ships, reconnaissance aircraft, equipment for confinement, recovery and on-scene storage of Harmful Substances under national command,

BEING AWARE of the difficult practical and organisational problems that arise from joint combating operations involving strike teams from several countries,

NOTING that joint operations necessitate a clear and simplified command structure agreed upon beforehand,
RECOMMEND that:

- a. The organisational structure in joint operations should contain two main co-ordination and command levels, namely Operational Control ashore and Tactical Command on the scene of operations.
- b. The Operational control should be exercised by the country that has asked for assistance (lead country) which normally is the country within whose zone the operation takes place. Each country exercises control in its territory or territorial sea.
- c. Change of Operational Control and tactical Command might, when practical and agreed between the parties concerned, take place when the main body of a combating operation moves from one zone to another.
- d. Liaison officers from participating countries should be integrated in the staff of the Operational Control to secure the necessary knowledge of rendered national resources.
- e. The overall Tactical Command is laid upon a designated Supreme On-Scene Commander/Co-ordinator (SOSC) from the lead country.
- f. Strike teams provided by assisting countries should normally operate under the command of a National On-Scene Commander/Co-ordinator (NOSC).
- g. The NOSC operates under the command/co-ordination of the SOSC.
- h. For practical and organisational reasons, not more than three countries should be engaged in one and the same limited area within a combating operation, except in exceptional cases.

2.2 Supplementary Operational Guidelines

With the aim of further facilitating the operational co-operation in joint combating operations, the following guidelines have been agreed upon:

2.3 General Principles

The general principles for the command structure for combating operations are given in the annexed diagram, figure 1.

2.4 Lead Country

2.4.1 The Contracting Party who has asked for assistance should, unless otherwise agreed, be in charge of the joint operations (lead country).

To that effect the lead country should *inter alia*:

- give administrative, operational and logistic support to assisting foreign units
- give clearly defined tasks to all units
- organise the practical co-operation between units from different countries
- keep all units well-informed of the overall situation, and
- keep a firm contact with the command organisations of the assisting countries in order to ensure that assisting foreign units can be transferred to national command if so necessitated.

2.4.2 Operationally self-contained foreign units should, to the largest extent, be given separate tasks within defined geographical areas. The execution of the task will normally be carried out under the command of the appropriate NOSC who will be in close radio contact with the SOSC from the lead country.

2.4.3 If the assistance is rendered in the form of equipment or units not operationally self-contained, it is the responsibility of the lead country's operational control or tactical command to integrate the equipment or units in the combating operation.

2.5 Transfer of Operational Control and Tactical Command

2.5.1 If the main body of the pollution in question passes the borderline of a neighbouring country's zone the operational control and tactical command (lead country) will normally be transferred to the country whose zone is affected by the main body of the pollution.

2.5.2 The timing of the shift of operational control and tactical command should be negotiated between the two countries in question, giving due regard to the overall picture and any possible trends in its development.

2.5.3 The countries in question will further have to settle the number of units and the amount of equipment that could be placed at the disposal of the new lead country and how the combating operation should be continued.

2.6 Liaison Officers

2.6.1 In combating situations where two or more Contracting Parties are, or could be, involved, the Contracting Parties in question should be entitled to send two liaison officers as a maximum to the respective national centres responsible for combating operations.

2.6.2 The exchange of the liaison officers is independent of whether the combating operation is carried out on a purely national basis, by means of rendered equipment or by strike teams from other Contracting Parties.

2.6.3 The liaison officers should be given the opportunity to give advice and statements during meetings in matters concerning the actual combating and the disposal of resources, etc, when the matter in question concerns their own country's territory.

2.6.4 The liaison officers are placed under the same obligations of discretion as imposed on the centre's own national staff but are not limited as to the substance to be reported to their own national authorities.

2.6.5 The liaison officers are under no administrative obligations from the host country except those established by the host country for the functioning of the centre itself. The liaison officers will thus have to arrange for their own accommodation, meals, etc.

2.6.6 The liaison officers should be given access to all necessary communication means such as telephone, telefax, telex and email to a reasonable extent if available.

2.6.7 The functions of the liaison officers should be two-way so that their home country should be able to channel its opinions and wishes through the liaison officers. In cases involving joint operations or rendered equipment, this two-way function will be of great importance.

2.6.8 In relation to the undertaking of surveillance activities with fixed wing aircraft, helicopters and satellite surveillance, the liaison officers should co-ordinate the surveillance activities with their national authorities in order to avoid costly duplication (see Chapter 4).

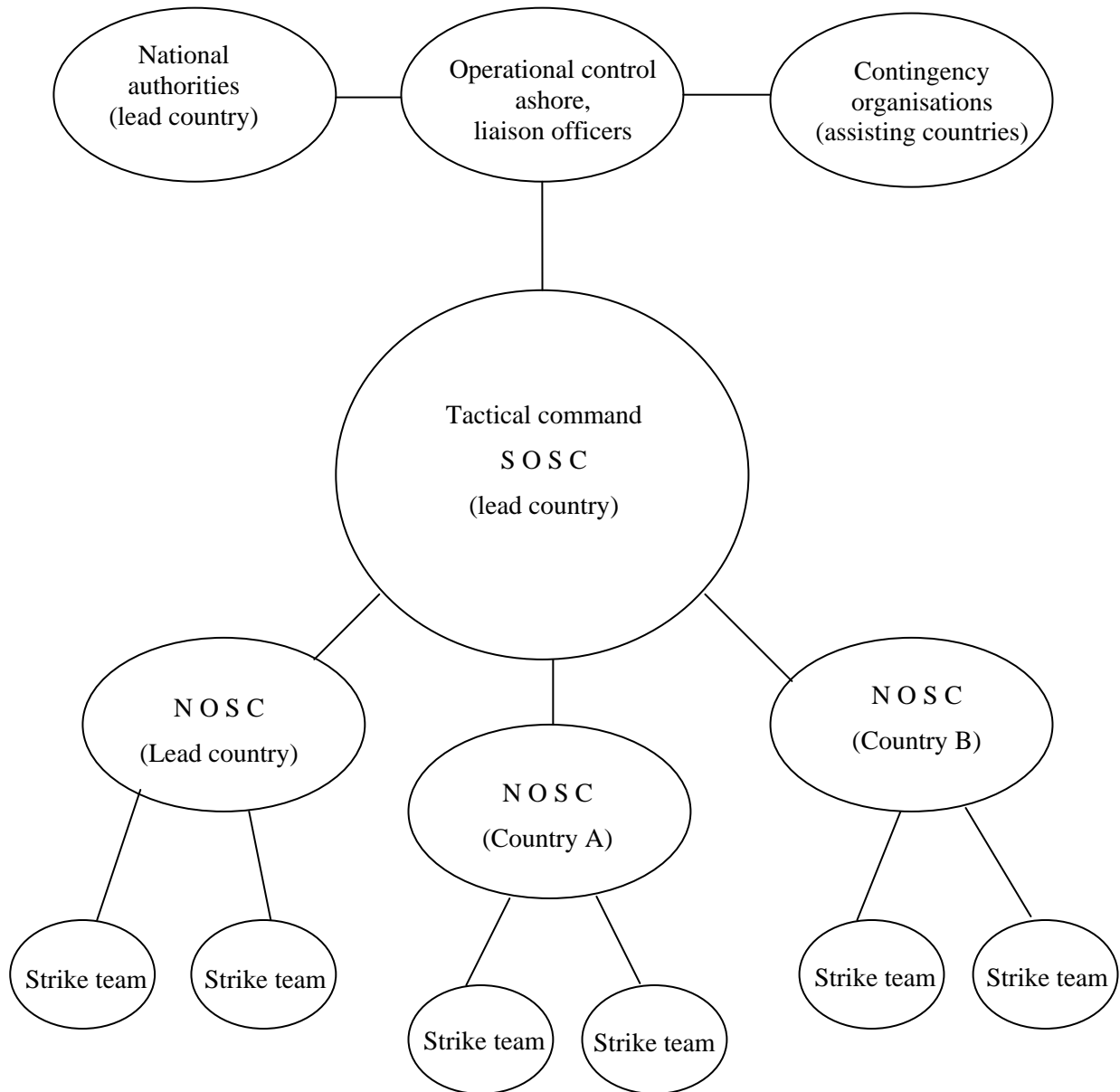
2.6.9 If two countries affected by the same pollution choose not to exchange liaison officers, they should as a rule exchange daily situation reports.

2.6.10 If more than one Contracting Party is involved in a response operation assisting an affected Contracting Party, those Contracting Parties could decide to coordinate the liaison function. One liaison officer could then act on behalf of more than one Contracting Party.

2.7 Command of Different Strike Teams

When needed, units from different strike teams can temporarily be put at the disposal and command of another NOSC.

Figure 1: Command structure for combating operations



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