

Napoleon's maxim was, "if you must fight, fight coalitions." History showed coalitions as weak structures fractured by national interests, incompatible forces, and divided command. What Eisenhower and the political leaders of the western alliance discovered was a winning pattern of behaviour built on a regime of agreed principles, norms, rules, and procedures around which leaders' expectations converged. Eisenhower, Lord Ismay (the first secretary general of NATO) and others who devised the wartime practices for cooperation within the great coalition carried the pattern into the North Atlantic Alliance. Although circumstances today are much different from those in 1950, the "enduring lesson" from that period may provide helpful signs for present policymakers. If Canada were to develop for itself a regime for coalition-building and for coalition mechanisms to use as a guide in policymaking at home and as a basis for negotiation abroad, then what principles, norms, rules, and procedures would be included?

There are only a few principles, norms, rules, and procedures, many of which are already established in NATO and to some degree in the United Nations. Any Canadian policy dealing with coalitions ought to include the following minimal regime.

National Sovereignty The *sine qua non* of multinational alliances is the unconditional sovereignty of member states. Notwithstanding the fact that coalition arrangements invariably require the sharing of responsibilities and capabilities, each state voluntarily makes its own decision to join and on its level of participation. Furthermore, it is then free to reconsider these decisions at any time. The independence of member states negates voting or any type of institutional leadership that might be construed as compelling nations to act outside their appreciation of their national interests. Decisions in coalitions, therefore, are taken only by consensus. This principle, however, does not necessarily confer on any state a right to veto the decisions of others, or the right of any state to abstain or withdraw from any decision taken by the coalition.

Equality of Rights and Access Sovereign nations in coalitions by definition are equal in all respects. The presumption of equality has important consequences for coalition procedures and operations requiring, for instance, unhindered access for each member to all committees, organizations, plans, and information of the coalition. Although the duties within an alliance may be distributed according to agreements, the benefits of belonging to the coalition accrue to each state equally. In NATO, for example, Iceland, which has no armed forces, enjoys the same rights and protection under the North Atlantic Treaty as any of the major alliance powers. Coalitions, therefore, must establish a well-understood system of rules and procedures to ensure appropriate national representation within the coalition in accordance with an agreed formula based on levels of commitment, capabilities, national sensitivities, and tradition.

Supremacy of National Political Authorities Civilians elected to parliaments are the unconditional leaders of states and, therefore, they constitute the civil authority in any coalition states may form. This principle reinforces national sovereignty and establishes the norm for the construction of coalition structures and relations between political leaders, national delegations to coalitions, and officials and military officers temporarily assigned to coalition headquarters or units for any purpose. Practically, this principle necessitates that the central mechanism of coalitions be built on a council or committee structure headed by prime ministers or heads of state supported by subordinate multinational committees of officials and military officers depending on the nature of