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## **5. OPERATIONAL CO-OPERATION**

### **5.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- In accordance with Regulation 1 of Annex VII of the Helsinki Convention, the Contracting Parties undertake to maintain ability to respond to pollution incidents threatening the marine environment of the Baltic Sea area. This ability shall include adequate equipment, ships and manpower prepared for operations in coastal waters as well as on the high sea. The Contracting Parties shall, subject to their capabilities and availability of relevant resources, co-operate in responding to pollution incidents when the severity of such incidents so justify.
- According to Regulation 4 of Annex VII of the Helsinki Convention the Contracting Parties shall as soon as possible agree bilaterally or multilaterally on those regions of the Baltic Sea Area in which they shall conduct surveillance activities and take action to respond whenever a significant pollution incident has occurred or is likely to occur.
- In accordance with Regulation 7 of Annex VII of the Helsinki Convention the Contracting Party shall, when a pollution incident occurs in its response region, make the necessary assessments of the situation and take adequate response action in order to avoid or minimize subsequent pollution effects. When such a spillage is likely to drift into a response region of another Contracting Party, that Party shall without delay be informed of the situation and the actions that have been taken.
- A Contracting Party is entitled according to Regulation 8 of Annex VII of the Helsinki Convention to call for assistance by other Contracting Parties when responding to a pollution incident at sea. Contracting Parties shall use their best endeavours to bring such assistance. They shall facilitate transport and movements of ships, aircraft, personnel, cargoes, materials and equipment, which are engaged in responding to a pollution incident, into, through and out of their territories.

### **5.2 OPERATION MANAGEMENT**

Operation management for a marine pollution emergency consists of four elements; control, command, communication and intelligence. The Contracting Party in charge of a joint operation, the Lead Country, has operational control and command of it.

Especially the Contracting Parties involved in a joint operation, shall communicate in all relevant levels of cooperation. The reporting procedures described in previous Chapter 3, the guidelines in Chapter 4 for requesting and providing assistance, and the operational communication detailed later in sub-paragraph 5.4 formulate the ways and means of such communication.

Intelligence includes reconnaissance and forecasting. The aerial surveillance, which is featured in Chapter 7 is a tool for co-operation on reconnaissance of pollution. HELCOM Recommendation 12/6 and the Guidelines on development and use of oil drifting forecasting are applicable also to operational co-operation.

### 5.3 **COMMAND STRUCTURE**

The general principles for the command structure for joint combatting operations are given in HELCOM Recommendation 2/5 and the diagram showing these principles is contained in Table 1 to this Chapter.

The Contracting Party who has a multinational combatting force operating within its response region shall, unless otherwise agreed, be in charge of the joint operation (**Lead Country**).

A **Competent Authority** of a country is the nationally responsible authority, that is empowered to request and give international assistance (cf. Chapter 1). Competent Authorities of the Assisting Countries provide agreed assistance, such as **Strike Teams** and materials, to the use of the **Operational Control** (normally ashore) of the Lead Country.

The Competent Authority of the Lead Country has the overall control of a joint operation and all pollution response measures for the same incident. Nationally it is assisted by the respective **Co-operative National Authorities**, which deliver necessary resources to the Operational Control.

The Operational Control is the control and command function that is undertaken by the appointed national authority of a Lead Country in charge of a joint combatting operation relating to the disposition and use of personnel and equipment placed at its disposal. The Operational Control plans, orders and co-ordinates all combatting measures at sea and on shore for an incident and takes care of communication, command, control, intelligence, forecasts and other joint arrangements in connection herewith.

Operational Control is an operative body having the responsibility for and supervision over the staff, facilities, communications and equipment provided in the combatting operation (Table 1).

The person in charge of the overall operational control is the **Response Commander (RC)**. He may be aided by the **liaison officers** from assisting countries and the **representatives** of co-operative national and regional authorities acting as an **advisory body** for him.

Under the Operational Control and command of RC the **Tactical Command On-Scene** (normally at sea in a joint operation) is laid upon a designated **Supreme On-Scene Commander (SOSC)** from the Lead Country. The contingents of Strike Teams of assisting countries and of the Lead Country operate under the command of a **National On-Scene**

**Commander (NOSC)** from each country. The NOSC is operating under the command of the SOSC.

Leaders of special joint functions and separate units may be directly under the RC or the SOSC. For instance flight operations for reconnaissance and/or transport can be coordinated by the operational control and there be controlled and commanded by a special **Flight Coordinator**.

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

#### Operational Guidelines

The Lead Country shall, *inter alia*:

- give administrative, operational and logistic support to assisting foreign units;
- give clearly defined tasks to all units; organize 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 organizations of the assisting countries in order to secure that assisting foreign units can be transferred to national command, if so necessitated.

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

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

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 combatting operation.

If the main body of the pollution in question passes the border line of a neighbouring country's response region, the operational control and command (Lead Country) will normally be transferred to the country whose response region is thus affected by the main body of the pollution.

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

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 combatting operation should be continued.

The contingency organizations in the Contracting Parties shall keep each others informed about the pollution incidents, extent and area together, with information on the actions taken and their efficiency.

In connection with operations in border areas, the neighbouring countries should be consulted with respect to priority and employment of resources.

As the use of chemical agents can influence the interests of neighbouring countries, the employment of such agents should be taken with a due regard to the neighbouring countries' attitude to their use. Due account should also be given to Regulation 7 of Annex VII of the Helsinki Convention stipulating that mechanical means are the preferred response measures and that chemical agents may only be used in exceptional cases, after authorization has been granted in each individual case. Furthermore, HELCOM Recommendation 22/2 concerning Restricted Use of Chemical Agents and Other Non-mechanical Means in Oil Combatting Operations in the Baltic Sea Area should be taken into account.

It is anticipated that the Lead Country will initiate surveillance of the spill within its own response region and communicate the results from this surveillance activity to other Contracting Parties bordering the Lead Country's response region. If a spill spreads into two or more response regions, the contingency organizations of the Contracting Parties, whose response regions are affected by the spillage, should agree on a co-ordinated surveillance of the spill area in order not to duplicate the surveillance efforts.

#### Guidelines for liaison

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

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

The liaison officers shall be given access to meetings and conferences relevant to the combatting operation, unless only internal national issues are considered.

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

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

The liaison officers are under no administrative obligations from the host country except those established by the host country for the functioning of the central itself. The liaison officers will thus have to arrange for their own accommodation, meals, etc. The liaison officer should be given access to telephone and telefax to a reasonable extent. The functions of the liaison officers should be two-way so that their home country should be able to canalize its opinions and wishes through the liaison officers. Especially in cases involving joint operations or rendered equipment, this two-way function will be of great importance.

In relation to execution of surveillance activities with fixed wing aircraft and helicopters, the liaison officers should co-ordinate the surveillance activities with their national authorities in order to avoid costly duplication.

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

SOSC and NOSC may exchange liaisons in accordance to needs.

## **5.4 COMMUNICATION**

### **5.4.1 General**

The reporting procedures detailed in Chapter 3 apply to normal communication between the competent national authorities responsible for receiving and dispatching pollution reports and for mutual assistance, information and cooperation in joint combatting operations. They apply also to establishing direct contacts between the relevant national combatting authorities.

The outline scheme for radio communications between operative bodies in joint combatting operations in the Baltic Sea Area is given in sub-chapter 5.4.3 and Table 3 to this Chapter. Besides that and formal reporting, a lot of communication is needed to produce information and support, which the situation management requires. In order to optimize communication, a scheme for all of it is useful, too.

It should be noted that the working language between the SOSC and NOSCs from other countries than that of the SOSC should be English, if not otherwise agreed between the on-scene commanders/coordinators. The working language for communications between NOSCs from different countries is established according to the same guidelines.

An example of a scheme for all communications for a joint combatting operation is shown in Table 2 to this Chapter. A scheme of radio communications for joint combatting operations is shown in Table 3 to this Chapter. In the following some additional information is given as to the communication between the different levels in the communication scheme.

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## 5.4.2 External (off-site) Communications

### International communication between Contracting Parties

Formal messages warning and informing on an incident, requesting and rendering assistance and acknowledging such messages shall be signed by an appointed officer on behalf of the Competent National Authority. Such POLREP messages should be done preferably by telefax and sent via the National Operational Contact Point of each Contracting Party.

The authenticity of any official message should be possible to check preliminary on the basis of the call number of a sending device printed on the report and to be found on the list of contact numbers in Chapter 1. When further checking is needed a return call to the official contact number is recommended.

Urgent official or informal contacts may be made in some other convenient way, like by telephone calls, too. Any matter of importance for joint efforts or for one=s interest like requests, decisions, plans, purposes, reasons and available resources and possibilities should be confirmed as soon as possible by formal messages as said above.

### Communication between Competent Authorities of Contracting Parties and the Operational Control

The Competent Authority of the Lead Country and the Competent Authority of a assisting country may communicate with the Operational Control by using all convenient ways of communication available for the purpose. All important matters for assistance shall be confirmed by the Competent Authorities of the respective Contracting Parties as said under the previous heading.

The assisting country=s liaison officer, if any, may take care of communication between his authority and the Operational Control. Otherwise it is the duty of the Operational Control to deliver necessary information at minimum daily.

### Communication between an Assisting Country and its Strike Teams

An Assisting Country may communicate with its NOSC and Strike Teams via its liaison and the Operational Control or directly when not out of the reach of applicable communication devices. Sea-going units may be reached by radio via MF, VHF or HF coast stations or by mobile telephone (NMT or GSM) or by satellite telephone.

Flight units and other land-based teams may be attained by telephone. A plane, when airborne, may be attained directly only within the reach of its communication devices and indirectly through the Operational Control. In case of an emergency an airborne aircraft may be attained through the **Air Traffic Service**, too.

### 5.4.3 Operative Communications (Table 3)

#### **Communication between the Operational Control, the SOSC and Flight Operations (1st Level: ashore to scene)**

The operational control is exercised normally by the country within whose response region the operation takes place (Lead Country) and its physical location will normally be ashore.

It is the responsibility of the Lead Country to establish and maintain the communication between the Operational Control, SOSC and Flight Operations.

Depending on the facilities and internal organization within the Lead Country, the communication could be established either directly from the Operational Control to the SOSC via radio telephone, radio telegraphy, mobile telephone or mobile telecopyprinter, or via a coast radio station using telefax or telephone between the Operational Control and coast radio station and maritex, radio telephone or radio telegraphy between the coast radio station and the SOSC.

The Operational Control (and maybe a special **Flight Coordinator**) communicate with airplanes and helicopters via the aviation frequencies (VHF 118-136 MHz), which the nearest **Flight Information Region** will order to be used for the purposes of the operation. Aviation frequencies may also be used in communication between aircraft and SOSC, who has to have an aviation radio for that.

Maritime patrol planes and rescue helicopters are normally equipped with maritime VHF radios for direct communication between them and vessels, which is beneficial for transport and near reconnaissance services. Remote sensing results gained by a surveillance flight may be transferred from a plane immediately to the Operational Control and to SOSC by radiotelephone or by a possible special image transfer system. Later after a flight reconnaissance, data can be sent by mobile telecopy or from computer to computer by radio or mobile telephone.

#### **Communication between the SOSC and the NOSC (2nd Level: on scene)**

The communication between SOSC and NOSC should be performed on one or if needed, more of the international maritime VHF channels. Their first radio contact should be made on VHF channel 16, unless otherwise agreed. The SOSC will inform NOSC of the communication channels for the combatting operation after check up of the possibilities in the area of operation (in consideration of Manuals, Pilots etc.).

To this end the vessel from which the SOSC operates should, as a rule, have at least two maritime VHF stations on board with a stand-by function on channel 16.

It is the responsibility of the Lead Country to obtain the permission from its national authority for combatting operations at sea, which could be given either as a general authorization to use the frequencies during combatting operations and combatting exercises or as a separate authorization for each combatting operation and combatting exercise. There are no common or special

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VHF channels established for exclusive use in combating operations. If the establishment of such a channel for single combating operation or operating exercise is not possible, the chosen VHF channel shall be not seriously hampered by other traffic not relevant to the ongoing operation.

### **Communication between NOSCs**

Under circumstances where one NOSC and his strike teams operate geographically close to another NOSC and his strike teams, a need may arise for direct communication between the two NOSCs in respect of navigation, manouvering and other operational matters.

In order to restrict the number of VHF channels in use, the communication between NOSCs should be performed on the same VHF channel as used for communication between the NOSCs and the SOSC.

If more VHF channels are used for communication between the SOSC and the NOSC, the communication plan should be established in such a way that NOSC and their strike teams operating geographically close to other NOSC and their strike teams should be allocated the same VHF channel for communication with the SOSC.

### **Communication between the NOSC and their Strike Teams (3rd Level: teams)**

The communication between a NOSC and his strike team units should be performed on special domestic (internal) frequencies.

Before deciding on the domestic frequencies a NOSC from another country than the Lead Country should check with the SOSC that the frequencies in question do not interfere with other frequencies used on the scene of action.

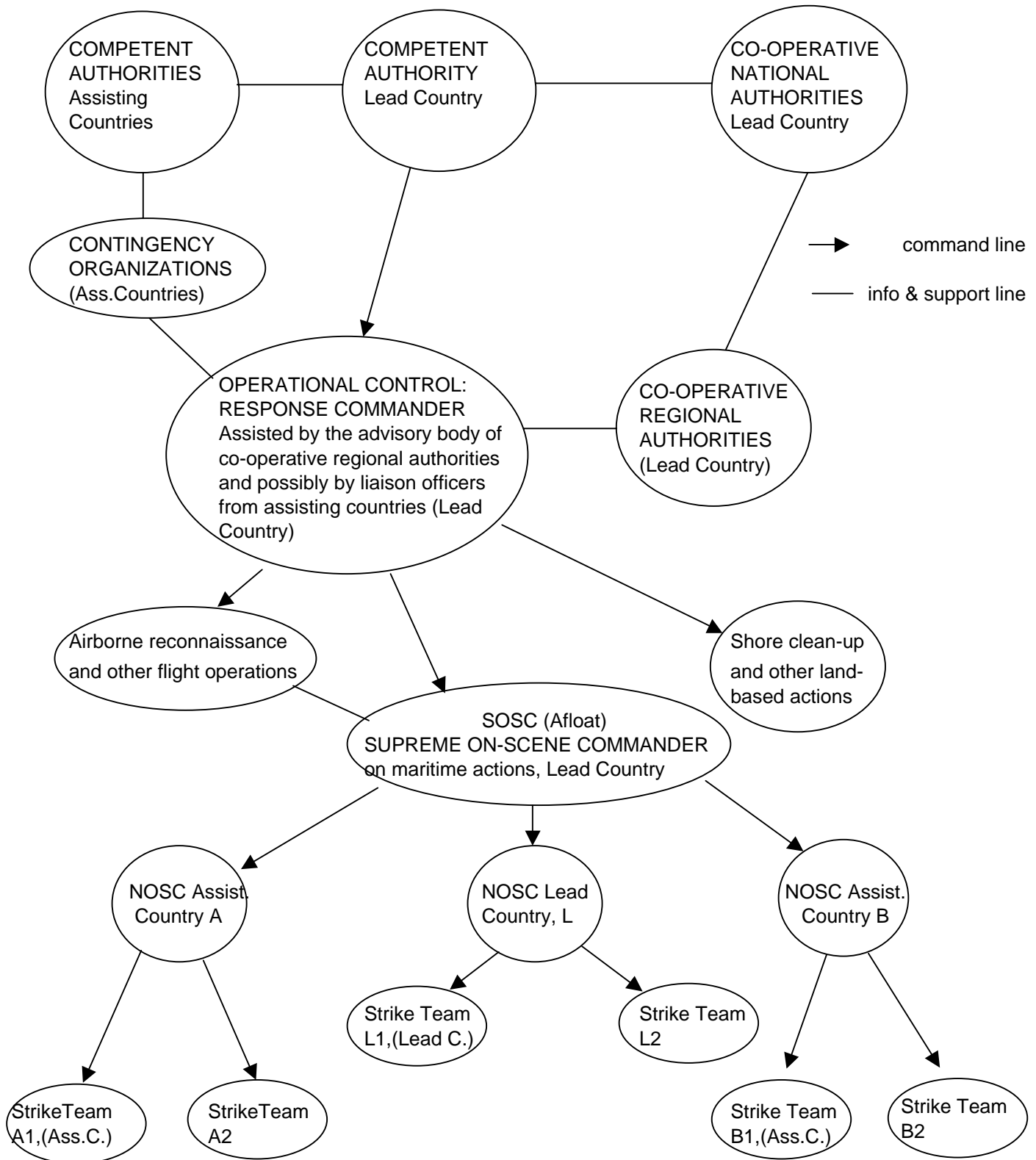
### **Communication between Strike Teams**

It is anticipated that if a need for communication between strike teams arises under the same NOSC, this communication will be carried out on the same domestic frequencies as used for communication with the NOSC or on a special domestic frequency selected for internal communication between strike teams.

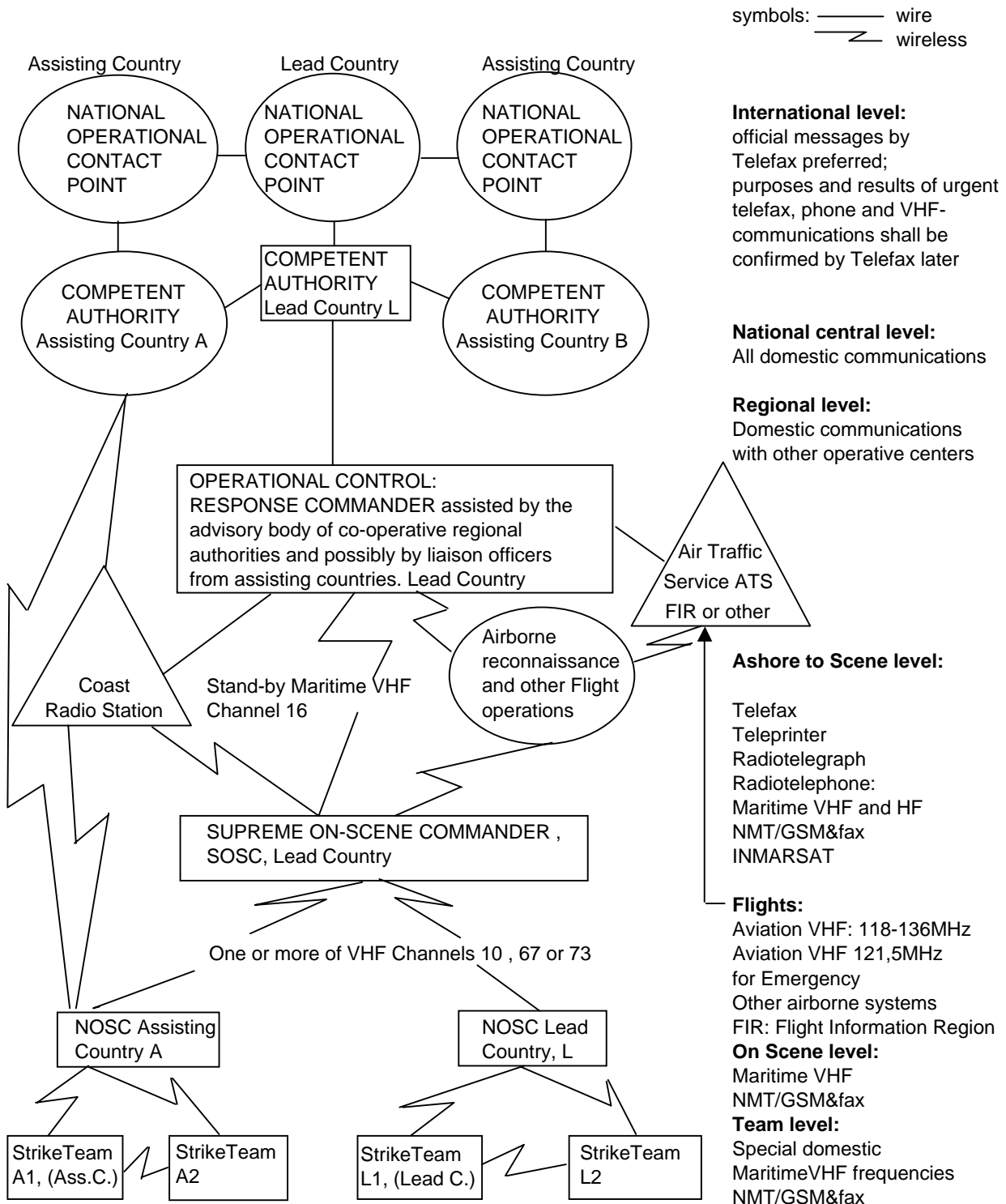
Due to the use of domestic frequencies between the NOSC and their strike teams, direct communication between strike teams from NOSC of different nationality cannot normally be expected.



**TABLE 1**  
**COMMAND STRUCTURE FOR JOINT COMBATTING OPERATIONS**



**TABLE 2  
BALTIC OVERALL COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR JOINT COMBATTING OPERATIONS**



**TABLE 3**  
**BALTIC OPERATIVE COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR JOINT COMBATTING OPERATIONS**

