

LOGISTIC SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS IN MULTINATIONAL OPERATIONS

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The requirements for the logistic support in multinational operations are not totally different than those for classic operations, as we know them at the present moment. But what differentiates them for sure, is the multinational framework that incorporates the military actions, the multiculturalism of tactics, techniques and procedures by which NATO and non-NATO member states, that participate in the multinational operation, understand to provide the logistic support to their own troops, as well as the different roles accepted to be fulfilled by one country or another (Lead Nation for Logistics, Specialized Role Nation, Host Nation Support, etc).

Key words: *logistic support, requirements coordination, supply.*

The requirements for logistic support in multinational operations bring forward the managerial facet (organization and planning) of activities conducted by the planning and leadership bodies, in order to generate and equip the forces, as well as to provide for them a level of logistic support that allows them to sustain themselves in the theater of operations, for a specified period of time; subsequently, after the support system (support lines) has been realized, the forces will have their material and services needs filled, in accordance with the consumption rate and the individuals' needs.

From this point of view we want to underline that the requirements for logistic support highlight the capacity of logistic support bodies, to combine the capabilities of their own organization with those belonging to other member states and to the Host Nation Support, as well as to international non-governmental organizations and to local and international economic actors.

The requirements for logistic support in multinational operations take into account: the timely and

efficient use of economic actors; the detailed planning of logistic support; the continuity of logistic support; the coordination of logistic support planning with operational planning; the supply towards the front; the balance between combat forces and logistic forces; the distribution and allocation; the effective use of resources at hand; movement coordination and control; the provision of logistic reserves; the modular structure of the logistic support forces.

The timely and efficient use of economic actors represents one of the main requirements of logistic support in this type of operations, taking into account that these military actions are conducted faraway, and the troop contributing nations make big efforts to move not only their personnel and vehicles, but also the equipment and material stocks which are necessary to sustain the forces for a given period of time. From this point of view we consider that the terrain footprint of the specialized structures belonging to each national contingent (to multinational logistic structures, respectively), decreases or increases, depending on the identification of

international or local economic actors, which can take responsibility over some logistic demands and provide support for the whole range of operations.

Unlike the operations conducted on national territory, where suppliers have the necessary time to take note of the requirements forwarded by the troops (in order to reinitiate the processes and technologies for production, to establish the demands for raw materials, materials, production technologies and labor force), in multinational operations the international economic actors have to be informed well in advance (at the initial stages of force generation and logistic planning process), about the demands forwarded by the troops, the locations where these supply should be sent, the foresighted consumption rates, for the purpose of establishing the re-supply rates, etc.

Within this planning process, the Host Nation is involved, in order to present their support capabilities, especially in the field services domain, to allow the creation of a general picture about the multinational force's support capabilities.

The detailed planning of logistic support represents another defining requirement related to the way multinational forces are being sustained along the operations. It highlights the capacity of logistic planning and leadership bodies to create an appropriate database, to use the sources of information from the international security organizations (UN, NATO, EU), related to supply and contracting sources available in the member states, in the Host Nation, and also in the global procurement network. This way, by accessing all these sources, the management of logistic support is highlighted and the military supply-delivery chain is interconnected with the civil one. This connection will lead to reduced costs and efficiency in providing for the material and field

services demands, at the right moment, in the right place.

From this perspective, the bodies responsible with logistic planning and leadership at the level of the multinational force, have to obtain and clarify, for all functional domains of logistics, the information which is necessary to know the troop contributing nations' own capabilities, the capabilities of the organization itself, and also the capabilities which can be obtained at local level, or within the surrounding area of the theater of operations. These information which targets the supply sources, the demands for transportation assets, assembly areas for maintenance units and subunits, areas for the evacuation of damaged vehicles and equipment, places for the evacuation of wounded and sick personnel, the viability and security of communication routes, the way the strategic deployment and redeployment processes take place, and last but not least the factors that influence the operation, have to be used in an appropriate way for the decision making process to be conducted objectively.

The continuity of logistic support, viewed through the eyes of the military experts, represents a decisive element for the actions of those planning the multinational operation, including the establishment of objectives for military actions, and the end state of the operation. So, in our opinion, the logistic support of multinational operations imposes not only constraints but limitations also, some of them quite serious, depending on the nature of the operation, the environment, the concept of employment of logistic support execution structures, by both the Multinational Force Command and the tactical and operational level commanders. If at strategic level we can take into consideration some limitations of logistic support that might contribute to a limited decision of the force commander, related to the development of the strategic deployment/

redeployment process, at operational and tactical levels we take into consideration other constraints, related to the capacities of logistic structures that execute the necessary support, with impact on revision/re-dimensioning of combatant forces, on the establishment of missions, on the duration and rhythm of actions. The logistic support of operations at operational and tactical levels always influences the strategic level.

The coordination of logistic support planning with operational planning underlines once more the fact that the operations and the logistic support are being considered interdependent; they could not be analyzed separately, because the two domains have established a relation of complementarity of a high level of integration. For this reason and other more, the two domains have to be analyzed in their interdependency, along the planning process; the documents that result from the process, both the planning ones (the logistic support annex to the operations plan and those specific to some domains like maintenance, medical support, etc), and the management ones/ conduct of operation (the logistic support annex and the documents mentioned above, to the operations order) have to sustain the efforts of troops, to overlap the operations, to be integrated at the three levels of the military art.

In accordance with the aspects presented above, an important role is played by the leading structures from the multinational force HQ (Combined Joint 4/CJ4), which coordinates the logistic support at the theater of operations level, using subordinated structures like the Multinational Joint Logistic Centre/ MJLC (in case of a Combined Joint Task Force/CJTF), or the Joint Logistic Support Group/JLSG (for NATO Response Force); the latter can intervene to solve some requests that come from the troops, or to provide the transfer of the logistic support from an area of operations to another. At the same

time, entities like these, that coordinate the multinational logistic support have specific authority over other logistic support structures of a multinational character, like the Multinational Integrated Logistic Units/MILUs which are responsible for various functional domains of the logistic support (supply, transportation, engineer infrastructure for logistics, etc).

The supply towards the front comes to underline a very important principle of the approached domain, namely the common responsibility of the multinational force and troop contributing countries, for the logistic support of their own troops. In accordance with the already mentioned principle, the demand comes to bring forward the way the logistic system of a multinational force is established; it has to provide for the organization of material flows, from the higher echelon, to the lower echelon, using the "linear" variant or the "hub-spoke" variant. This way, the materials and services which are necessary for the combat troops are being provided by the known methods of pull and push from the supply bases towards the fighters. An aspect which is specific to multinational operations is the way a large part of these goods and services are being contracted locally, or within the areas surrounding the theater of operations. Another expression of the approached principle and stated demand, is given by the command and control authority over the logistic forces belonging to national contingents, which remains always, within the responsibility of national authorities. Usually, in the conduct of multinational operations, the combat structures are relieved from administrative problems, the responsibility going to the multinational force, the National Support Elements/ NSE of each national contingent and the National Command Authorities.

In our opinion, the supply towards the front has to be considered in an objective way, because it can lead to accumulation of stocks in excess, in some cases.

The balance between combat forces and logistic forces underlines another important characteristic of multinational operations, namely the necessity that each national force provides the logistic support structures in accordance with the size of the combat forces. This balance has to be noted and to result from the initial stages of the planning process, taking into account that each multinational operation has to be analyzed individually. In other words, there is no template in sizing logistic support, because each action of this type is singular and has to be approached in a distinct way. An aspect specific to the operations conducted lately is that the Multinational Force did not manage to deploy into the theaters of operations MJLC type structures, or MILU type structures. We add that the structures that should serve the second line of the logistic support (which is the responsibility of the multinational force) are missing, resulting in a more substantial effort to be undertaken by the NSEs. In all cases without exceptions, the logistic support concept has to be harmonized with the concept of operations, in order to avoid blockages or major disturbances in the provision of logistic support, that could not be surpassed in a rapid way.

Distribution and allocation represents one of the essential requirements of logistic support in multinational operations, being considered as closely related to the specific principles of supply/re-supply. From a different perspective, both distribution and allocation are extremely important within the resource planning process; there are many situations when due to various motives the operations result in consumption rates higher than the forecast ones, or higher than stocking capacities of logistic structures (the best suggestive example was the Iraqi war where due to the high offensive rhythm of the American forces, the logistic structures were not able to keep

the pace of advance, so the distribution and allocation did not work). For this reason, both distribution and allocation are procedures for the completion of resources (stocks) presenting a high degree of flexibility.

Talking about their significance, distribution stands for the provision of materials, based on the planning of resources which exists with the troops (taking as reference the consumption rates approved and noted in plans and operations orders – auto completion), while allocation provide the distribution of services, products and materials which are necessary to the troops, based upon their requests.

As a particular aspect of multinational operations, the above mentioned requirement highlights the concept of military operations and takes into consideration the dimension of forces that will be supported, the operational needs that should be reached, and, not in the least, the logistic support concept, overlapped with the concept of operations. Regarding our analysis, the most important elements of the logistic support concept, are those targeting the level of material stocks and the method of their re-supply, the viability of the supply-distribution flow and the considerations of a multinational nature, which targets the responsibilities of troop contributing countries (leading nation, specialized role nation, etc). We would like to highlight that sometimes the resources distributed or allocated to multinational forces are not enough, due to many reasons that go with the involvement of the troop contributing countries, and the resources of the international security organization, etc. Due to the above mentioned reasons, there might be fewer resources, so the allocations will be insufficient, in comparison with the quantities requested or forecast along the planning process.

The effective use of resources at hand demands from all planners of

a multinational operation to pay a special attention to the establishment of the level of resources needed for the logistic support, of the ways and methods for their re-supply, in order to provide the sustainment of troops in the theater of operations. For these reasons, when establishing the level of resources for logistic support, along the planning process, they have to take into consideration the costs of the operation and to determine if the proposed goals are sustainable and credible from the perspective of identified resources. At the same time, the establishment of responsibilities (leading nation, specialized role nation, etc), memoranda, technical agreements between troop contributing countries, or the accessing of logistic support from third parties, represent other ways and methods to reduce costs and place them in limits which are reasonable and accepted by all participants in the military action. Consistent with the above mentioned aspects, logistic support planners have to bear in mind as a must, that the way resources are being utilized, should be within the limits established by the commander of the multinational force, in the concept of operations.

The movement's coordination and control considers both the movement and transports which are to be executed, outside and inside the theater of operations. This requirement asks for the existence of some specialized structures, at the level of the multinational force/regional commands, which have to be able to complete these actions in accordance with the orders and dispositions of the multinational force commander. The above mentioned issues highlight the desire of multinational force level decision bodies, to avoid blockages in performing movement and transportation tasks, allowing for an efficient flow, related to the strategic deployment/redeployment process and to the rapid re-supply of material stocks

and services necessary to combat troops.

It is appreciated that by the introduction of specialized structures for the coordination of movement and transportation, like the one that exists at MJLC level (the movement and transportation coordination cell), it will be assured an appropriate level of coordination and control at the theater/area of operations level, fluidity and efficiency in the movement of combat forces, and finally a better performance of the resources supply/re-supply system.

The provision of logistic reserves brings forward the necessity of pre-positioning the quantities of materials needed by combat forces (outside the area/theater of operations, or inside them), so the inception of blockages in the supply process will be avoided. For this reason the logistic support, as well as the combat support represent some of the factors that are taken into consideration, with a strategic and operational impact over the success of the multinational operation. As we have presented above, in the case of the American offensive in Iraq, the logistic support was a quantifiable factor, in determining the impact over the rhythm of operation, in the same way the human resources strategic and operational reserves, are necessary to exploit the operational success, or to provide for the requirements which have not been forecast during the planning process.

The creation of logistic reserves before the operation is a compulsory aspect, because these reserves give the multinational force commander the possibility to intervene in support of combat forces and prevent the ignition of a phenomenon known in the logistic circle as logistic crisis.

The modular structure of the logistic support forces contributes to the assurance of freedom of movement at the level of multinational force HQ, so the decision making structure (CJ4) has the flexibility to solve various demands

from the troops, both following a chronological order of registration, and function of operational hierarchy and existing necessities in the theater of operations.

The above mentioned requirement contributes to the projection and deployment into the theater/area of operations of some logistic support structures that have a considerable capacity of deployment and action, similar to that of supported forces.

By abiding by this demand, both the logistic support planners from the international security organization/coalition of forces, and the troop contributing nations can generate an increased level of readiness for the multinational force, this way assuring the success of the mission success.

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