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THEATER LOGISTICS: SHOULD THERE BE A JOINT SUPPORT COMMAND?

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirement of the Joint Military Operations Department.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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This paper discusses the problems encountered in forming ad hoc JTFSC headquarters; analyzes three concepts for establishing an improved JTFSC; and concludes by recommending the establishment of a standing JTFSC headquarters to support the combatant commander.

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THEATER LOGISTICS: SHOULD THERE BE A JOINT SUPPORT COMMAND?

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Armed Forces have undergone a remarkable metamorphosis as a result of the change in our country's National Military Strategy. The combat forces are not only smaller, but more mobile and high-technology equipped. The challenge for the combat service support (CSS) community in each of the Services is to improve the logistics performance to support these restructured forces and to reduce the infrastructure.

Fundamental changes have taken place in the last two years to improve sustained logistics support to the warfighting unified combatant commanders (CINCs). In 1994, the Under Secretary for the Department of Defense (Logistics) directed the Military Departments, Joint Staff, and Defense Agencies to develop strategies to enhance the performance of the Department of Defense's (DoD) logistics systems.[1] As a result, numerous concept plans were fielded to provide improved support to the CINCs. For example, the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) developed a concept to improve the intransit visibility of DoD supplies and cargo.[2] The U.S. Army Combined Arms Support Command (USCASCOM) developed a concept to improve theater distribution of supplies to

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[1] U.S. Dept. of Defense, Department of Defense Logistics Strategic Plan Edition 1994, (Washington: 1994), 1-21.
[2] U.S. Dept. of Defense, Defense Intransit Visibility (Washington: 1995), 1-1 -- 4-13.

Army and other Service forces located throughout the theater of operations.[3] The USTRANSCOM's Joint Transportation Corporate Information Management Center is developing a concept plan that integrates the Services' transportation movement requirements in order to improve the deployment process. Other initiatives such as the Defense Total Asset Visibility and Velocity Management are being developed by DoD agencies and the Services to improve logistics support to the combatant commands.

Although theater logistic processes have improved, much work is needed to determine the best command and control element to manage these logistics systems in a theater of operations. Service and Joint doctrine delineate procedures and responsibilities in this regard. The logistics doctrine emphasizes "flexibility" and the need to tailor forces to meet the various support requirements in a theater of operations.[4] Unfortunately, when the logistics command and control element has been tailored to support a joint task force (JTF) operation, problems have arisen in integrating the Service component commands' logistics requirements. For example, during the last three major JTF operations, commanders of JTFs (CJTFs) experimented with different ad hoc command and control joint support headquarters to meet the unique support requirements in their specific theater. Although each of the joint support headquarters worked well, there were problems regarding planning, managing, and executing theater support.

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[3] U.S. Army Combined Arms Support Command, Military Operations: Battlefield Distribution (Fort Lee, VA: 1996), 1-33.
[4] U.S. Dept. of the Army, Decisive Force: The Army in Theater Operations Field Manual 100-7 (Washington: 1995), 5-20.

It appears that more and more CJTFs want to exercise their directive authority in designating a single command to be responsible for theater common-item support. Since this is becoming the standard, it may be time to reflect this idea in Service and Joint theater support doctrine as well as develop joint tactics, techniques, and procedures. Therefore, in determining the best approach for this support, I will discuss the Service and Joint logistics doctrine that specifies the responsibilities for providing theater support. Additionally, I will review the problems encountered where an ad hoc JTFSC was established in three recent JTF operations; evaluate three possible concepts to support the CINCs; and recommend the best approach to support JTF operations.

LOGISTICS DOCTRINE

Before reviewing the problems associated with an ad hoc JTFSC; it might be useful to first examine the doctrinal background laying out responsibilities for theater support. Logistic support to a theater encompasses the total scope of activity needed to activate, equip, train, sustain, move, employ, disengage, and inactivate military forces. Title 10, United States Code, clearly designates the Services as having this responsibility.[5] In theater operations, although the Services are normally responsible for their logistics, the CINC is responsible for coordinating logistics through the commanders of the Service component forces.[6] The CINC recommends joint efforts to improve economy consistent with military

[5] U.S. Laws, Statutes, etc., "Military Departments," Title 10, United States Code--Armed Forces 1993 ed. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993), Sections 3013, 5013, & 8013.
[6] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Logistics Support of Joint Operations Joint Pub 4-0 (Washington: 1995), I-4.

efficiency, reviews requirements, and recommends priorities and programs.[7] He has authority to coordinate the support of the Service components and to control distribution of support when shortages occur.

Recently, CJTFs have designated the dominant user Service component command to provide common-item supply and service support to the other Service components. Normally, common-item supplies are items of Classes I, III, V, and VIII used by two or more components within the theater of operations.[8] Therefore, common-items include subsistence, petroleum, oil, and lubricants, munitions, and medical supplies. Common services normally encompass common-user operation of ocean terminals, intra-theater transportation, inland distribution of bulk fuel, mortuary affairs, and postal operations. Inter-Service Support Agreements, Memorandum of Agreement, or Memorandum of Understanding are pre-requisites for using common support. Common support assignments do not relieve the Services of the responsibility for providing and arranging all supplies needed by their forces.[9]

Although the Services are responsible for the spectrum of logistics at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, the CINCs are responsible for logistics within the theater of operations.

> For a given area and for a given mission, a single command authority should be responsible for logistics. Combatant commanders exercise combatant command (command authority) (COCOM) over assigned forces. COCOM includes directive authority for logistics.[10]

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[7] Ibid., vi
[8] U.S. Dept. of Army, Army Operational Support Field Manual 100-16, (Washington: 1995) 3-10.
[9] Joint Pub 4-0, I-7.
[10] Ibid., I-4.

The problem this presents to the CINCs is that there is no small fully capable logistics command that can efficiently perform theater support. Consequently, ad hoc organizations have been created by CJTFs in recent operations to coordinate support for joint and multinational operations. These ad hoc organizations were augmented by personnel from Service component commands. In most cases the augmentees were untrained and had never worked at the joint level. Therefore, the theater attained minimal unity of effort under a single logistics command authority.

LOGISTICS SUPPORT TO JOINT OPERATIONS

Common problems were encountered in using an ad hoc command and control headquarters during three recent JTF operations. In theory, the CJTFs designated a Service component command to establish an ad hoc command to integrate the Services' requirements, establish theater priorities, and achieve unity of effort. In each case, the decision to form an ad hoc organization was based on the lack of a small modular theater logistics support command in the active force. Economy of force and unity of effort was only partially achieved in the operations.

Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The Commander in Chief of the U.S. Central Command (CINCUSCENTCOM) tasked the Army service component command (ASCC) to establish a provisional support command to coordinate logistic support in the theater. The 22d Support Command (SUPCOM)(Provisional) was established on 16 August 1990, to support Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Although the command was

responsible for coordinating and arranging for joint support, the command never became a jointly staffed headquarters. Augmentees from various in-theater active duty Army CSS units were initially assigned to fill staff positions in the SUPCOM. Once the President authorized the call-up of the reserves, the staff was augmented by Army reservists from the continental United States (CONUS) CSS units.

The Army made a conscious decision not to deploy a reserve theater army area support command (TAACOM).[11] The rationale given, was that the CONUS TAACOM would take too long to be established. Better support could be provided by the newly formed SUPCOM since they had already coordinated the host nation support agreements and were familiar with all the operating forces in the theater.

The 22d SUPCOM staff had to requisition computers and other ancillary equipment to run the theater's logistics systems as well as learn how to operate them. Many of the staff augmentees were untrained in joint operations. Service logistics plans were not integrated resulting in duplication of supplies. The SUPCOM had minimal visibility of supplies being shipped to the theater. DoD logistics agencies such as the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) were overwhelmed by high priority requisitions that should have been sorted out by the theater materiel management center.[12] Each Service component command requisitioned common support items for their commands. As a result, mountains

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[11] F. Marion Cain III, "Force Projection: Building Desert Storm Force Structure," Military Review, July 1993, 23.
[12] U.S. General Accounting Office, Desert Shield/Storm Logistics: Observations by U.S. Military Personnel (Washington: 13 Nov 91), GAO/NSIAD-92-26, 32.

of containers arrived in theater containing parts and supplies that were double requisitioned.

The headquarters was eventually organized around the Army's TAACOM structure. The SUPCOM eventually provided common-item supply and service support for subsistence, bulk petroleum, inland distribution, mortuary affairs, and medical support. The Army could have avoided many of these difficulties if it had deployed a CONUS TAACOM headquarters element and then jointly staffed it with augmentees from the other Services.

Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm after action reports contain many logistics lessons learned. There are numerous comments regarding the difficulties associated in identifying the contents in the over 40,000 containers and 250,000 463L airlift pallets shipped to the theater between August 1990 and March 1991.[13] There is mention of problems encountered in receiving, staging, and onward movement of personnel and equipment that arrived at the airfields and seaports. The Army's reports refer to the lack of a command and control logistics headquarters in the initial phase of the operation to manage and integrate the theater's logistics systems.[14] The GAO report states that ad hoc measures had to be taken to provide support capability to the theater in the initial build up phase.[15] The justification for creating ad hoc logistics organizations was the result of the unavailability of reserve CSS units since the President had not

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[13] U.S. Dept. of Army, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm Sustainment (Washington: u.d.), 59.
[14] Ibid., 6.
[15] U.S. General Accounting Office, Operation Desert Storm: Full Army Medical Capability Not Achieved (Washington: 18 Aug 92), GAO/NSIAD-92-175, 43.

yet authorized their call-up.[16] Unfortunately, this lesson was not learned and was repeated in Somalia.

Operation Restore Hope. The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) was the standing headquarters for establishing Joint Task Force Somalia. The CJTF made a decision to establish a JTFSC and tasked the ASCC to form the headquarters. He decided to form a JTFSC as a result of the perceived successes of the 22d SUPCOM concept employed during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Unfortunately, the Army had already begun deploying a CSS force to support only the Army force (ARFOR).[17] As a result, no theater logistics command and control headquarters was activated for deployment to Somalia.

The ASCC designated the 13th Corps Support Command (COSCOM) to become the JTFSC. The JTFSC was a separate component with equal status of the other Service components. The I MEF Force Service Support Group (FSSG) provided theater logistics support while the JTFSC was formed.

From the beginning the JTFSC had difficulty establishing their organization.[18] Augmentees were needed to fill staff billets in the headquarters. Although the command was designated "Joint," the headquarters was staffed with in-theater Army personnel. Soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division were tasked to fill staff positions in the JTFSC. These personnel along with 13th COSCOM

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[16] Ibid., 43.
[17] Center For Army Lessons Learned, Operation Restore Hope: Lessons Learned Report (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 1993), IV-12.
[18] Ibid., 12.

soldiers were not trained in joint and multinational operations and procedures.[19] As a result, the command had difficulty coordinating joint and coalition support. The staff was not familiar with support agreements and lacked procedures on how to account for support provided to the other Services and coalition forces.

One of the principal missions of the JTFSC was to provide common support to the joint force. Once it got the organizational problem resolved, logistics support was labeled a success. The JTFSC arranged subsistence, water, bulk petroleum, transportation and medical support to the JTF.

When the operation transferred to the United Nations Operations Somalia II, on 4 May 1993, the JTFSC was redesignated the United Nations Logistics Support Command (UNLSC). Like the JTFSC, the UNLSC provided similar common support to all forces involved in the operation.

Operation Uphold Democracy. The JTFSC concept was also employed to support the JTF in Haiti. Initially, the 1st COSCOM was tasked to establish a joint logistics support command (JLSC).[20] Lessons learned from Somalia were applied and fewer problems were present as a result. However, the headquarters staff still did not have the requisite training in joint and multinational operations. Soldiers from the COSCOM were unfamiliar with most joint procedures and had to rely on DoD personnel from DLA for assistance. Fortunately, unlike the JTFSC operation in Somalia, the Haiti JLSC was jointly staffed. Members from DLA were

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[19] Anthony M. Jareb, Logistics in Operation Restore Hope Alexandria, VA: 1994, 44.
[20] Center For Army Lessons Learned, Initial Impression: Volume III, Haiti (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 1995) 174.

assigned to the headquarters. Eventually the JLSC transferred operations from the 1st COSCOM to the U.S. Army Materiel Command.

Since it has become standard practice for CJTFs to establish a JTFSC, it is time that doctrine recognizes this concept and provides guidance on joint tactics, techniques and procedures. The following section will discuss possible concepts for use in establishing a JTFSC.

JOINT SUPPORT COMMAND CONCEPT ANALYSIS

Resolution of the ad hoc concept to staff a JTFSC was highlighted in both Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and Restore Hope lessons learned. The idea of employing a JTFSC has merit and three possible concepts for establishing a JTFSC headquarters are discussed below.

CINC J-4 Staff Concept. One possible solution is to use the CINC's J-4 staff with personnel augmentation from the Service component commands to establish a JTFSC.[21] Under this concept, selected personnel from the J-4 staff would form an early entry module that would deploy to the theater to coordinate support arrangements with the host nation. The advantages of being readily available to coordinate the necessary contracts and arrange services to receive early deploying forces has merit. Another advantage of this concept is a well versed staff in joint and multinational plans and operations.

The disadvantage is removal of key J-4 personnel from the CINC's staff. They may be needed to concentrate on other contingencies that are developing in a different region of the CINC's area of responsibility (AOR). Another significant

[21] Douglas C. Redlick, "The Joint Logistics Operational Level of War and the Unified Command J4," Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 1992, 12.

disadvantage is the idea of liaison personnel from the Service component commands forming the nucleus of the JTFSC staff. It is doubtful that augmentees would be available in the early stages of the planning to represent their respective Service requirements. The administrative demands of the personnel to support two activities are perceived as being a disadvantage. Additionally, the liaison personnel would be untrained in joint and multinational operations. Consequently, this concept would be difficult to adopt.

Theater Support Command Concept. The U.S. Army Combined Arms Support Command (USACASCOM) is developing a concept that restructures the Army's TAACOM.[22] Renamed the Theater Support Command (TSC), this organization will be capable of converting into a jointly staffed headquarters when the CINC designates the ASCC to provide common logistics support to the theater. It is envisioned that other Service staffing will be accomplished by battle rostered liaison personnel provided by the Service component commands receiving support. The TSC will be an Army organization assigned to the ASCC.

The TSC will be a modular headquarters. An early entry headquarters module is being developed that is capable of directing the initial theater logistics requirements. This module consists of 93 personnel and is capable of deploying in 24 hours to support the ASCC or CINC.[23] While small in number, it contains the full range of capabilities from the TSC, with robust capability in contracting,

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[22] U.S. Army Combined Arms Command, "Draft Concept for Support Command at Echelons Above Corps," Fort Lee, VA: 1996, 2-18.
[23] Ibid., 3.

host nation support, reception, staging, onward movement, and integration management.

The advantage of this concept is it offers the CINC a flexible and adaptable command structure for providing common logistics support to the theater. Although that has merit, the reliance on battle rostered augmentees from the other Services is a disadvantage. As mentioned above, it is unlikely that these augmentees will be available during the initial planning phase as parent component command duties will require extensive competition for their time. The demands of being dual hatted will lead the augmentees to support parent component command duties first before those of the TSC.

Standing Joint Support Command Concept. An alternative idea to the Army's TSC concept is to modify the 93 staffed early entry module concept and use it to form the core of a jointly staffed standing JTFSC headquarters. This JTFSC headquarters would be assigned to U.S. Atlantic Command (USACOM). As a supporting CINC, USACOM would deploy the JTFSC headquarters to support the designated supported CINC for a particular JTF operation. The JTFSC would be a subordinate command assigned to the CINC or CJTF and capable of deploying in 24 hours.

The JTFSC would have a robust staff that would coordinate common support to the Service component commands and provide the supported CINC expertise in logistics contracting, personnel and finance management, engineering, port operations, materiel distribution management, and medical

service management. Additionally, the staff would integrate the CINC's priorities in the overall theater logistics plan.

Exact number of joint billets and total personnel required to form the core JTFSC headquarters would be determined by USACOM. All personnel would be trained in joint and multinational logistics operations and procedures. Since the JTFSC headquarters would be a standing organization, personnel will not have dual administrative responsibilities. When additional staffing is required, the JTFSC headquarters would be augmented by trained personnel from the Army's TSC headquarters.

When there are no JTF operations requiring the support of a JTFSC, the staff would validate the logistics requirements identified in the warfighting CINCs operational plans concept of support with the Services' strategic logistics activities and DoD logistics agencies. The staff would work with the unified command J-4s in identifying potential CSS force structure to support the myriad of contingency plans. Additionally, the staff would prepare the JTFSC support plan for the numerous JTF exercises conducted annually by the CINCs.

The key advantage to this concept is the principal staff will have worked together on a daily basis and be trained in joint and multinational logistics operations. They will have the advantage of knowing the operating environment and will be familiar with contingency plans and procedures since they will have worked with the unified command J-4s on a daily basis. This synergism will enable the theater logisticians to more effectively and efficiently integrate the theater's logistics requirements. Therefore, the CINC will achieve economy of

force and unity of effort in theater logistics. Additionally, the permanent JTFSC staff will be able to quickly train TSC augmentees. The standing JTFSC avoids the dependency on untrained battle rostered augmentation from the Service component commands.

Conversely, the Services will argue vehemently against this concept. A standing JTFSC has not been formed due to Service parochialism. Title 10 obligations where Services are responsible for "supplying" their forces is the basis of their argument. The Services will want to retain responsibility for supplying their component forces in a theater of operations. The counter argument to this is that it does not convert any of the operational support structure into a joint organization. The Services would retain their transportation, ordnance, medical, finance, and quartermaster units. This concept provides a joint staff to manage the common operational logistics systems and interface with the strategic and tactical systems.

Services will be reluctant to give up personnel authorizations to create another joint organization. This argument can be countered by the economies each Service would receive in not having to provide duplicate services and force structure in a theater of operations.

Lastly, it will be hard to replicate another JTFSC should there be two requirements in the same AOR. A possible solution would be to convert one Army reserve TSC into a jointly staffed headquarters. When activated, the reserve TSC would deploy with a staff trained in joint and multinational operations.

Even though there will be arguments against establishing a standing JTFSC, it offers the CINC and CJTF the best command and control organization to support joint operations. The JTFSC will prevent unnecessary duplication of effort. It will enable the CINC to fulfill his responsibility to efficiently integrate the Services' logistics requirements. Finally, it will provide a more effective theater support organization through a jointly trained core staff.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The concept of establishing a JTFSC is necessary to establish theater priorities, integrate the Services' requirements, and ensure unity of effort in the theater of operations. In each of the last three major JTF operations, the CJTF directed the formation of an ad hoc logistics command and control organization. This was done to manage the joint logistics requirements and provide common service to the joint and multinational forces. In all three cases, the ad hoc JTFSCs had difficulty in becoming organized to provide efficient support to the theater forces. A standing JTFSC headquarters will provide the CINC a single command authority that is fully capable of integrating and managing both the operational and logistics support systems.

The Joint Staff should take the necessary steps to form a permanent JTFSC using a modified version of the USCASCOM TSC concept. A standing JTFSC would provide a core headquarters trained to coordinate and execute contingency requirements with the host nation, joint, and multinational forces. This concept offers the best course of action to support the CINC's theater logistics responsibilities.

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