IFOR supplies arriving at Tuzla air base.

DOD (Jeffrey Allen)

Ad Hoc Logistics in Bosnia

By WILLIAM N. FARMEN

Operations conceived and planned with little attention to functional logistics place extraordinary demands on the ad hoc headquarters created for that purpose. Such was the challenge to the commander for support (C–SPT) of a small organization established to design, plan, and implement NATO logistics for Operation Joint Endeavor. An examination of NATO multifunctional operational logistic planning serves as a timely reminder of the inherent weaknesses of ad hoc organizations. Drawing on the C–SPT experience, this article documents a process that relied on spur of the moment planning as the primary way of providing initial multinational logistic support. The continued reliance on this practice is a formula for failure.

C–SPT wrestled with many complex issues as a logistics headquarters quickly took shape. A NATO ad hoc logistics organization must be skilled in both coordination and consensus building across the spectrum of theater logistics. It must accelerate its expansion when NATO deploys, as it did in Bosnia-Herzegovina to execute the Dayton peace agreement. This was a challenge given the lack of Alliance doctrine, policies, regulations, laws, or precedents for such an operation.

Major General William N. Farmen, USA (Ret.), is a senior fellow at the Logistics Management Institute; he served as NATO logistics commander in Bosnia during the events described in this article.

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Who's in Charge?

In Joint Endeavor it was critical that the ad hoc headquarters responsible for NATO theater logistics be responsible solely to the theater commander in chief. Theater logistic responsibilities, without full authority in theater, results in decision layering, dysfunctional prioritization, untimely deconfliction of logistic mission issues, and obfuscation of logistic responsibilities.

As headquarters leader responsible for executing the NATO theater logistic mission, C–SPT enjoyed the same access to the regional CINC as the other component and combatant commanders. This is significant because an ad hoc organization has no history, prestige, portfolio, track record, or customer credibility. It must, however, have real-time status among its customers. And in this case that status was embedded in the command structure.

the lack of up-front NATO common funding constrained support of the troop contributing nations

Another formidable task was establishing and manning an ad hoc headquarters. The order to execute OPLAN 4105 in December 1995 led C–SPT to expand the planning staff from 40 to a fully operational headquarters of 400 in under 90 days. Requirements for people, equipment, funding, and facilities materialized seemingly from nowhere. The operation began from a standing start and with a clean sheet.

Personnel with the appropriate skills had to be found to bring order to chaos. Because each participating national military did things differently, it was crucial to account for and control all resources. Success depended on knowing what one had, what one needed, where it would come from, who should get it, and who would finance it.

Pay-As-You-Go

One early consideration was creating a budget and an office to administer it. The sudden creation of a logistics organization, limited funding, and justifying and accounting for spending on unclear requirements impacted budget development. The ability to demonstrate prudent practices in money management early in the operation was essential to obtaining additional resources.

From the outset an operating budget office was needed to provide fiscal and funding advice for the headquarters and meet logistic operating costs. To gain fiscal credibility it was necessary to support transparent budget development with full disclosure and fiscal accountability for common funding allocations and prudent spending.

A particular concern was the lack of up-front NATO common funding, which constrained the ability to establish common user contracts in support of the troop contributing nations. NATO common funding was extraordinarily restrictive, providing minimum support for the deployment of the NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) headquarters and C–SPT.

More immediately the paucity of up-front funds undermined NATO capabilities. It created financial inflexibility and prevented the development of commercial contractual arrangements for port operations, handling equipment, food supplies, and fuel distribution—even snow removal to assist deploying forces. It also hindered saving on the cost of lodging and messing. Common funding would have facilitated contracting for these services as a headquarters common expense, rather than each nation paying per diem to their personnel assigned to C–SPT. Instead of one all-encompassing contract, 400 personnel essentially contracted individually for simple services such as messing, billeting, and laundry.

A competent budget office, fully staffed and functioning early, could have provided more prudent money management. The office could then have coordinated the commitment of common funds with higher headquarters, facilitating financial transactions throughout the theater.

Staff Organization

The staff of C–SPT headquarters was organized around six traditional functions: personnel, intelligence, plans and operations, logistics, civil affairs, and communications. Unfortunately, not all of these staff elements were established during the predeployment phase of the operation.

Personnel. National policies for personnel rotation and rest and recreation as well as a need for qualified people were constant considerations. Other issues included hiring practices for local civilian personnel, identity cards, and performance evaluations. To energize this process personnel database needs were constructed from scratch. Requirements were captured in a NATO manning document entitled "Crisis Establishment" that listed needs by position, rank, and job description. Unfortunately, developing a manning document does not guarantee qualified people in the proper numbers. That will depend on individual nations and allocations made by Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE).

Given these dynamics, the personnel directorate (C–1) was not initially staffed to deal with the magnitude of management issues. The staff was itself being organized while it simultaneously attempted to both develop a manning document and unit manning charts, and in-process augmentees. This is a generic problem for ad hoc

Vehicles in Croatia awaiting shipment.

Atlantic Fleet Imaging Unit 193 (Mike Powell)

55th Signal Company (Brian Gavin)

British equipment being unloaded from Russian transport.

organizations, most pronounced in the personnel management area.

Early formation of a personnel directorate facilitates the entire personnel process. Among its first tasks should be the production and distribution of a manual to standardize augmentee procedures for participating nations before personnel are assigned. Standard procedures, known in advance, would reduce deployment costs, loss of individual time, personal inconvenience, and national disruptions. Addressing personnel matters during planning will increase the productivity and efficiency of the deployment and sustainment process.

Intelligence. Little attention was paid to an intelligence directorate (C–2) in the initial days of organization. The only intelligence planning support came from a single officer on loan from Allied Forces Central Europe who soon was withdrawn for another mission. The lack of concern for intelligence was a mistake and haunted the mission later on.

Upon deployment to Zagreb the mission quickly expanded to include command intelligence responsibilities for NATO operations in Croatia. Neither the people nor a game plan were available for intelligence responsibilities in the theater rear area. There was an urgent need to design and develop manning levels and to acquire the resources for an intelligence directorate. Finding conduits for intelligence with higher, lower, and adjacent headquarters was a priority. The intricacies of this task were immense and stressed the importance of prompt attention to the intelligence function in such operations.

55th Signal Company (Tracey L. Hall-Leahy)

Task Force Pershin at Slavonski Brod.

Playing catch-up was a concern after deployment. The intelligence directorate was quickly upgraded from inactive to proactive—but only because participating nations provided C–SPT with their best and brightest personnel to correct the situation. As the mission matured and it came time to fine-tune the sustainment phase and address redeployment, C–SPT found that the understanding of counterespionage and counterintelligence operations was poor. These issues took on enormous importance in a theater context. Like so many aspects of developing an ad hoc headquarters in real time, dynamic conditions and attention to fundamental staff requirements should not be overlooked in favor of purely theater logistic concerns. Intelligence and logistics strengthen one another and thereby the total theater logistics plan.

Plans and Operations. Established initially as a planning cell comprised of six people under a French officer, the plans and operations directorate (C–3) originated all internal and subordinate taskings. It published both fragmentary and operations orders, monitored tactical and logistic operations, and maintained situation reports for the theater. Perhaps its most difficult task was coordinating theater rear area security. The directorate was organized into three sections: current operations (a three-shift, 24-hour, 7-day activity); future operations (to control battle staffs and conduct planning with other headquarters); and operations to administer task surveillance files and records and prepare command briefings. Although they are routine, these responsibilities were complicated by the multinational, multilingual, multifunctional, joint, combined, and ad hoc nature of Alliance business. The action officers and NCOs assigned were junior in rank and had little NATO experience.

Members of the C–3 staff initially used the procedures of their respective national militaries. That along with language barriers meant that a disproportionate time was spent learning NATO procedures. It forced the directorate to adopt the Alliance way of doing things in real-time while satisfying operational requirements, an accomplishment that was a credit to the individuals that NATO assigned to C–SPT. However, there is no guarantee that similar qualified people will be available in the future given personnel cutbacks and increased operational tempos.

Logistics. A major shortfall during the early stages of organizing C–SPT headquarters was the failure to establish a logistics directorate (C–4). C–SPT was accountable for all NATO-funded material purchased for the theater. Personnel and equipment expanded rapidly during deployment. A preoccupation with IFOR logistic accountability nearly resulted in failure to manage and control organic equipment.

There was an immediate need for NATO funds to support the headquarters, from paper and pencils to automation, fleets of vehicles, and accommodations. Thus equipment purchases began with no established program to ensure accountability. Recognizing this shortfall, a directorate was quickly set up to collect data on all NATO-funded material acquired from the start of the operation. This meant initiating inventory control, customer account, and property book management, all hampered by the lack of approved procedures. Accordingly, permission was sought to utilize Allied Command Europe Directive 60–80, "Property Accounting and Control," for this purpose. However SHAPE only approved the request some two months after deployment. It was thanks to efforts by the original five members of the logistics directorate that C–SPT headquarters was able to overcome a slow start and gain full property accountability, something that should have been addressed much earlier. Future logistics directorates should be operational with sufficient time, personnel, and procedures to deploy with the advance party. Only then will they be able to facilitate theater supply for all NATO-funded organizations and ensure equipment accountability.

Civil Affairs. Establishment of a civil affairs directorate (C–5) was also overlooked during predeployment planning. While this directorate was initially envisioned as a small staff intended primarily to conduct liaison between the theater civil military command and C–SPT headquarters, this mission too soon expanded.

55th Signal Company (Brian Gavin)

NATO convoy embarking for home, Joint Endeavor.

As a deployment expedient, NATO designated C–SPT as commander of forces in Croatia. Thus the headquarters served as the single point of contact between the Alliance and the Croatian government, the NATO negotiator for a status of forces agreement (SOFA), and the focal point for relations with the populace to promote civil cooperation and military aspects of the peace accords.

Civil-military operations would have been simplified if the C–5 staff had been expanded earlier and manned by generalists with geopolitical expertise on the former Yugoslavia. It could thus have developed a database prior to deployment containing information on local government structure and functions and biographical details on senior civilian and military leaders.

the ability to execute civil affairs responsibilities is a force multiplier for multinational headquarters

Given the complexities of negotiations on deployment requirements, SOFA arrangements, and command responsibilities, earlier attention in these critical areas would have been most useful. The ability to execute civil affairs responsibilities is a true force multiplier for multinational, ad hoc logistics headquarters.

Communications. Initial plans identified the need for a communications directorate (C–6), but SHAPE did not resource this staff element until just prior to deployment. Instead Headquarters, Allied Forces Central Command, provided its own organic communications assets, a costly contribution. Nevertheless, major shortcomings arose in communications planning because of a lack of qualified command information systems personnel. Nor was there the right balance of more senior officers experienced in NATO systems and junior personnel whose strong suit was familiarity with newly developed technology.

The communications directorate was structured according to estimates of functional needs. This initially put too much emphasis on administrative requirements such as drivers and clerks and not enough on communications generalists and automation specialists. As the planning evolved, it was determined that administrative requirements could be accomplished as added duties.

A major concern for planners was the lack of Internet connectivity. In its absence, NATO planned to extend a secret communications network into theater for electronic transfer. This was not useful because it could not be connected to the Internet for security reasons. The question of communications security was never fully resolved. Action officers were a diverse group from several nations, not all NATO members. Not everyone possessed the same security clearances. Nevertheless, real-time operational decisions demanded real-time actions by available functional experts, and a command decision was made to accept the security risk.

There was also inadequate headquarters automation, exacerbated by delays in acquiring and distributing additional computer systems. For planning purposes one computer for every two staff officers is reasonable in an ad hoc logistics headquarters. Staff members found work-arounds like satellite telephone communications or laptop computers, but they were frequently expensive.

Communications directorates should initially be composed of 60 percent generalists and 40 percent automation experts. That ratio could be reversed as the communications system matures. Returning to a 60/40 staff mix may be appropriate as NATO considers endstate redeployment.

Legal Dimension

SHAPE did not provide for a legal affairs office until five days before C–SPT deployed. It was comprised of a single British officer, but it paid tremendous dividends almost immediately. This lawyer faced two challenges: the numerous logistics contract negotiations to support NATO forces throughout the theater and the technical agreement negotiations to implement the status of forces agreement between NATO and the Croatian government. This staff officer was augmented after deployment by an American legal officer and an administrative assistant.

The implementation phase of Joint Endeavor rested heavily on the legal interpretation of the Dayton accords, which were written generically. Every nuance of the implementation process was subject to scrutiny. All factions of the Federation—as well as the countries that splintered off from the original Yugoslavia—had their own interpretations.

Atlantic Fleet Imaging Unit 193 (Mike Powell)

Vehicles awaiting transport by rail to Bosnia.

C–SPT headquarters negotiated logistical contracts and technical agreements for NATO and most other nations that comprised IFOR. Its legal officer made every effort to render opinions on behalf of the Alliance, sometimes risking national rebuke. Any lawyer assigned to a multinational, ad hoc theater logistics headquarters should be free of national baggage and have an understanding of contract and international law.

A complex range of legal issues arose immediately upon deployment. It is imperative for commanders to have dependable nonpartisan advice. Moreover, legal counsel with administrative support must be resident in any headquarters during logistic planning. Sound legal expertise was tragically underestimated in planning and drastically oversubscribed during deployment and early sustainment. C–SPT navigated the Joint Endeavor legal waters thanks to competent legal counsel.

The Rest of the Team

Three other elements of the staff require special note: public information, provost marshal, and headquarters commandant. Each was overlooked during initial planning.

The international media displayed a keen interest in C–SPT headquarters from the moment it arrived in Zagreb. Press conferences and interviews were a way of life. A new headquarters must maintain the appearance of organizational control under constant media scrutiny. Failure results in too much time fielding inquiries and too little satisfying customers. The public information office diligently presented C–SPT in the best light. The importance of information support should not be overstated in future ad hoc organizations. A good program, designed and manned early on, saves time and facilitates mission accomplishment.

Another problem was gaining high-level command support for a provost marshal office. Two reasons prevailed: the shortage of military police assets and justifying them for an ad hoc, rear area, nonhostile environment.

C–SPT had valid security needs. The headquarters personnel blended cultures, nationalities, and military traditions, and used mass transit, drove in local traffic, lived on the economy, and mixed with the population. Order and discipline were essential. Early C–SPT objectives included competent law enforcement and interaction with the local police. Provost marshal personnel must also maintain records and analyze law enforcement matters. While these goals were accomplished, their cost came out of hide by diverting assets from other headquarters elements.

Military police support requires early recognition and commitment from higher commands. The most important aspect of provost marshal support is direct interaction with host nation police forces and law enforcement authorities to ensure fair treatment of NATO forces. Leaving an ad hoc headquarters solely to the jurisdiction of local law enforcement does not work.

Finally, an ad hoc headquarters commandant is a critical position that must be filled before deployment. The responsibilities are immense. Billeting assignments, driver licenses, motor pool operations, mail room procedures, morale and welfare, and arms room control and access all affect morale. These areas require time in order to develop teamwork.

Issues regularly addressed by the commandant and senior noncommissioned officer—the dynamics of amalgamating so many cultural and national concerns—are enormously complex. The heart and soul of an organization, which is the harmonious cooperation of all its members, can be undermined without a competent headquarters. The first impression new assignees gain

of an organization is their treatment by headquarters personnel.

Some Reflections

Lessons are bountiful from the first NATO out-of-sector experience. The magnitude of the challenge—from organizing a headquarters vision, to designing a theater deployment, sustainment, and initial redeployment package, to the execution of the plan—is mind boggling. NATO was hard at work on the situation in the former Yugoslavia starting in 1993, but there were many diversions before final implementation in 1995 to support the Dayton accords.

During rapid expansion and deployment, with real-time responsibilities and missions, there was no relief for C–SPT. Although the odds against successful orchestration were great, C–SPT enjoyed advantages. No doctrine or procedure existed. No one could predetermine right or wrong. There were no similar NATO operations for comparison. C–SPT had to learn through trial and error, but being able to address mistakes without outside interference was a rare opportunity.

the lines of communication from across Europe made it easy to logistically adjust operations in progress

The lines of communication from across Europe were short and robust. That made it easy to logistically adjust operations in progress. The theater was largely benign despite early concerns. Infrastructure and transportation were adequate, providing wiggle room, less congestion, and more options. One should not expect future theaters to be as forgiving.

C–SPT was initially successful primarily because of good men and women who had spent the better part of a year together coming to grips with multinational logistics. NATO would not go out-of-sector for the first time and fail on their watch; teamwork and personal pride were ingrained. Although these are valuable ingredients, future operations may not allow a year to work out details and develop cohesion. Experience is priceless but perishable.

Failure was not part of either our ethic or vocabulary. In the future, the been-there, done-that attitude might set in, reducing the sense of urgency. In addition, many of the participants will have been promoted, transferred, or retired from active duty. The reality is that NATO may relearn this process indefinitely without ever establishing a permanent logistic capability and may face the possibility that it will always rely on ad hoc arrangements.

Multinational logistics, NATO, and C–SPT dodged the proverbial bullet in Joint Endeavor. Few understood the C–SPT role or how to measure its performance. The only line between success and failure early on was the thin facade of the unknown, behind which we labored diligently to solve issues never before confronted by NATO. Inside this corridor of opportunity, multinational logistics gained structure and status. It nurtured itself while executing the mission—not a formula on which to hang multinational logistics. A concern for future NATO operations is that success breeds higher expectations for next time. Unfortunately, without a standing logistics headquarters, a benign theater, and a dedication to institutionalizing the logistic lessons learned from Joint Endeavor, replicating C–SPT's success is questionable.

Logistics is a national responsibility. Nevertheless, national logistics have shortcomings in joint, combined, multinational, and alliance environments, especially when service and commodity contracts, ports, and facilities are managed and controlled by a theater logistics command. Theater logistic synergies appear to be optimized by centralized instead of national control of certain funds, services, contracts, and assets. In a multinational logistic operation, such a command can return huge dividends—to the advantage of all participants.

Much remains to be accomplished in the diverse and misunderstood world of multinational logistics. Any military scenario that is not dedicated to optimization and mutual synergy—that is, derived from proven or potential multinational logistic practices such as collective bargaining for outsourcing and contracting, common funding, centralized support services, and reduced manpower requirements—squanders precious resources.

A NATO commitment to move away from ad hoc planning and operations would be a major step toward optimizing logistic support. Depending on piecemeal logistics is like relying on a bank account with no balance. No commitment can be made from the account without first making a deposit.

Someone once said that good logistics alone cannot win a war but that bad logistics can lose one. U.S. and NATO policies suggest a heavy future reliance on multinational logistics. A concerted effort must be made now to get it right. **JFQ**