

FEATURES

When developing a multinational logistics common operational picture in a decisive action training environment, logisticians must consider four essential elements.

In the foreword of Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-3-1, The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World, Gen. Raymond T. Odierno wrote, “The Army Operating Concept (AOC) describes how future Army forces will prevent conflict, shape security environments, and win wars while operating as part of our Joint Force and working with multiple partners.”

Today more than ever, as the Army transitions from forward operating base-centric logistics to Force 2025 and beyond, we must ensure that we continue to improve relationships and strive to become more interoperable with our multinational partners.

When determining the key considerations in developing a multinational logistics common operational picture (LCOP), senior logisticians must first understand the common operational picture across the area of operations and effectively synchronize logistics support. This article discusses the four essential elements that should be considered when developing a multinational LCOP:

- ❑ Enhancing interoperability among multinational forces.
- ❑ Understanding national caveats and doctrine of individual multinational partners.
- ❑ Analyzing task organizations.
- ❑ Standardizing reporting.

Interoperability

At the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) in Hohenfels, Germany, observer-coach/trainers (OC/Ts) often hear and preach the word “interoperability.” Joint Publication 6-0, Joint Communications System, defines interoperability as “the condition achieved among communications-electronics systems or items of communications-electronics equipment when information or services can be exchanged directly and satisfactorily between them and/or their users.”

The NATO definition of interoperability dives much deeper than just having interoperable communications

Capt. Stephen Schaefer discusses operations by phone during a training rotation at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, on June 24, 2015. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Craig Norton)

Developing a Multinational Logistics Common Operational Picture

■ By Capt. Joseph T. Boos

ICOP

platforms among multinational partners. Allied Administrative Publication-6, NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions, defines interoperability as “the ability of Alliance forces and, when appropriate, forces of Partner and other nations to train, exercise and operate effectively together in the execution of assigned missions and tasks.”

Leaders who prepare for a combined multinational rotation at JMRC tend to focus on the Joint Publication 6-0 definition of interoperability. This leads to many challenges, especially when it comes to incorporating multinational partners into the logistics support plan. NATO’s definition clearly involves more than communications. It reduces duplication in an alliance of 28 members, allows pooling of resources, and even produces synergy among the members.

As the Army transitions to Force

2025 and beyond, OC/Ts must continue to preach the word “interoperability” and logisticians must embrace NATO’s definition of the term. This will benefit the logistics community in the development of procedures and systems for U.S. forces and their multinational partners.

Developing systems and procedures that are interoperable among multinational partners will allow logisticians to plan for and have the required capabilities to provide the logistics support needed to sustain multinational task forces across the battlefield.

National Caveats and Doctrine

While participating in a rotation at JMRC, each multinational partner has restrictions called “national caveats.” These caveats specify what each of the participating multinational partner’s Soldiers can or cannot do and what ca-

capacity of support they can provide or receive during a rotation.

Figure 1 is an example of how complex national caveats and support agreements can be during a rotation at JMRC. Logisticians must truly understand multinational caveats and think through what resources each multinational partner requires or brings to a rotation to sustain the fight.

At the tactical level, there is little approved NATO doctrine on how multinational operations should be conducted. Each multinational partner that participates in a rotation operates under its own military doctrine.

It is imperative that logisticians identify doctrinal differences up front and bridge gaps when developing the logistics support plan, even prior to conducting the military decision-making process. Classes of supply best exemplify doctrinal differences com-

| Multinational Caveats and Support Agreements | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----|----------|-----------|----------|---------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Unit | Task Organization | PAX | Class I | Class III | Class IV | Class V | Class VII | Class IX | Recovery |
| U.S. Platoon | 1st Squadron | 36 | Contract | JP8 | Self | Self | MRX | MRX | MRX |
| Belgian Company | 4th Squadron | 91 | Contract | DF2 | Self | Self | Self | Self | Self |
| Bosnian Platoon | 1st Squadron | 35 | Contract | JP8 | Self | Self | MRX | MRX | MRX |
| Bulgarian MPs & Engineers | Engineer Squadron | 42 | Contract | JP8 | Self | Self | MRX | MRX | MRX |
| Hungarian Platoon | 1st Squadron | 131 | Contract | DF2 | Self | Self | Self | Self | Self |
| Latvian Platoon | 4th Squadron | 45 | Contract | DF2 | Self | Self | Self | Self | Self |
| Luxembourgish Platoon | 4th Squadron | 30 | Contract | DF2 | Self | Self | Self | Self | Belgium |
| Macedonian Platoon | 1st Squadron | 30 | Contract | JP8 | Self | Self | MRX | MRX | MRX |
| Moldovan Platoon | 1st Squadron | 10 | Contract | JP8 | Self | Self | MRX | MRX | MRX |

Legend

Class I = Subsistence

Class III = Petroleum, oils, and lubricants

Class IV = Construction and barrier materials

Class V = Ammunition

Class VII = Major end items

Class IX = Repair parts

DF2 = Diesel fuel 2

JP8 = Jet propellant 8

MPs = Military police

MRX = Mission rehearsal exercise

PAX = Personnel

Figure 1. This chart provides an example of how forces may be sustained during a multinational training rotation. For example, the Hungarian platoon will provide its own class VII, but the Bosnian platoon will draw its class VII from the MRX yard.

monly seen at JMRC.

Once the senior sustainers understand the capabilities and limitations presented by national caveats and doctrine, they can shift their focus to task organization and determine where sustainment shortfalls may occur.

Task Organization

During a rotation at JMRC, task organization can be very complex and can include more than 20 different NATO and Partners for Peace countries working together under a single task organization. Sixteen of the 19 different NATO and Partners for Peace countries participating during the rotation are task-organized under a single higher command.

When it comes to developing an LCOP at JMRC, the most crucial piece of the logistics puzzle is analyzing the complexity of the task organization. The task organization sets conditions and is the starting block for logisticians. Once logisticians understand the supported multinational task force caveats, requirements, capabilities, and operational missions by phase of each operation, they can start to project requirements for future operations and continue to develop the concepts of support for specific task forces.

After establishing the capabilities and requirements needed to sustain each task force under the task organization, logisticians can begin to transition into developing the reports needed to capture the information required on a daily basis.

Standardized Reporting

One of the biggest challenges that logisticians face at JMRC is capturing the pertinent data points for the logistics status reports (LOGSTATs), especially for multinational data. Several areas contribute to the difficulty of trying to capture this data.

Emphasis should be placed on getting to know the different types of requirements for the multinational partners' equipment. For example, most logisticians know the fuel requirements needed for U.S. equipment. The three basic fuel types commonly used in-

clude JP8, motor gasoline, and aviation gasoline.

Fuel requirements are very different when dealing with multinational partners, especially during a large exercise like Saber Junction or Combined Resolve. Several types of multinational partner equipment require either diesel fuel 2 or diesel fuel 54. These are not commonly used for U.S. equipment and are not typically captured on LOGSTATs. When developing daily LOGSTATs, logisticians must learn and incorporate the requirements for all classes of supply for multinational partners.

Another issue that arises during the reporting process has to do with the information from the combat power slants, which are reports on which key combat enablers are fully mission capable and which are not mission capable by task force.

When incorporating data from the combat power slants into the LCOP, logisticians need to determine U.S. equivalents of multinational equipment so that they can prioritize the information that is reported. This equivalency assessment helps portray a picture of effectiveness for combat enablers and helps the brigade commander make maneuver and fire support decisions across the battlefield.

The final issue with the reporting process concerns how the reports are going to be sent to and received by higher headquarters. Multinational task forces experience many challenges with the interoperability of communications platforms. These problems are made more complex through language differences and communication protocols.

Logisticians must recognize such communication gaps early on to better determine how to collect LOGSTATs and conduct logistics synchronization meetings during a training rotation. An effective technique used at JMRC to overcome these challenges is assigning liaison officers with clearly defined sets of tasks, purposes, and authorities throughout the supported and supporting units.

During Combined Resolve III, the sustainment OC/T team took into

account these four essential elements and created an LCOP in order to track the "ground truth" (the veracity) of the rotational training units' (RTUs') LOGSTATs. The primary intent was to track maintenance supplies, class I (subsistence), and class IIIb (bulk petroleum, oils, and lubricants).

Logistics OC/Ts assigned to each task force reported LOGSTAT numbers daily to compare ground truth data with the RTUs' reported data. This enabled the OC/Ts to identify shortfalls in the RTUs' support plans and their ability to paint accurate pictures for the brigade commander. Simultaneously, the OC/Ts coached their counterparts to develop more accurate and efficient LCOPs.

It is critical for logisticians to identify and plan for the interoperability gaps in multinational task forces. By doing so early in the planning process, task forces are better able to exercise established plans and allow for changes if needed. The plans help create accurate LCOPs and become the driving forces behind successful concepts of support.

Developing accurate and reliable LCOPs is only possible when these four essential elements are understood, are planned for, and incorporate interoperable systems developed to capture the information required to sustain multinational task forces.

It is apparent that the transition to Force 2025 and beyond will include our multinational partners. That is why it is critical to continue increasing interoperability among multinational forces, understanding each partner's national caveats and doctrine, understanding multinational task force capabilities and requirements, and refining the reporting processes through training.

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