

A photograph of a soldier in a camouflage uniform and cap, looking down at a rifle. The soldier is wearing a green and brown camouflage uniform with a patch on the shoulder. The background shows a wooden structure, possibly a building or a container. The text is overlaid on the image.

*A 71st Iraqi Army Brigade soldier writes down the serial number of a newly issued M16 rifle during an equipment issue at Camp Taji, Iraq, on Oct. 26, 2015. (Photo by Sgt. Charles M. Bailey)*

# Considerations for Supporting a Train, Advise, and Assist Environment in Iraq

■ By Maj. Gen. Paul C. Hurley Jr., Brig. Gen. Susan E. Henderson, and Col. Sean J. Cannon





**W**aging a war against the Islamic State group, also known as Daesh, with a limited U.S. military presence requires non-doctrinal logistics solutions to support coalition, U.S., and host-nation forces. This is particularly true in the manning-restricted, contract-enabled, coalition-force operational environment in which the fight against Daesh is happening. This new and unfamiliar environment is having a profound effect on tactical sustainment estimates, the U.S. procurement system, and sustainment force structure in theater.

Train, advise, and assist (TAA) brigades that are scheduled to activate in fiscal years 2018 and 2019 are the Army's solution to this new environment. Although the Army has invested much time developing force structure for TAA brigades, the sustainment community has not kept pace in assessing their unavoidable impact on logistics.

The proving ground for the TAA concept has been in Iraq, where Combined Joint Task Force–Operation Inherent Resolve facilitates the fight

against Daesh. Over the past year, the 1st Theater Sustainment Command (1st TSC) made several important sustainment observations that the Army must consider as it refines how it will fight using this concept:

- U.S. logistics underpins coalition success against Daesh.
- Emerging coalition materiel requirements in theater have outstripped organic industrial base (OIB) production rates and forced the Army to leverage existing U.S. war stocks.
- Procurement-based foreign policy in countries throughout the region undermines combat readiness.
- TAA efforts must work within partner force cultural norms, military processes, and budgetary restrictions to develop sustainment estimates that ensure the development of true operational capability and combat readiness.

### **Logistics and Coalition Success**

Despite heavily resourced TAA efforts that produce competent and combat-ready Iraqi brigades, it is

## FEATURES

The 1st Theater Sustainment Command provides insights into the support Iraqi forces now need and the impact these needs are having on U.S. Army sustainment.

U.S. logistics that underpins the coalition's operational success against Daesh. However, coalition partners in the region rely too heavily on U.S. logistics expertise and equipment to achieve operational capability.

Iraq is a case in point. Michael Knights, a military analyst with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, stated in a 2016 interview with the Associated Press that the Iraqi army (IA) once possessed very skilled logisticians, but this talent decreased after the U.S.-led invasion and subsequent dissolution of the country's military.

Unfortunately, this logistics brain drain has limited the country from harnessing the full benefit of its investment in military technology. Additionally, the lack of a functional supply system contributes to chronic shortages in vehicles, weapons, and weapons systems.

Even though the costs for equipping and training forces are projected to decline, the logistics requirements for resupplying forces and repairing and replacing combat losses to sustain ongoing operations are expected to increase markedly. The lack of organic Iraqi capacity to maintain equipment is a critical weakness in the fight to defeat Daesh.

Without the authorities, access, and logistics structures of the past, the 1st TSC's challenge is twofold: providing operational and tactical logistics to U.S. forces while simultaneously providing materiel and supply support to the Iraqi forces.

To build and maintain momentum against Daesh in Iraq, the U.S. has agreed to supply, transport, and issue the equipment, uniforms, weapons, ammunition, and gear required to generate the Iraqi fighting force. This force includes the IA, Iraqi federal and local police, the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service, border forces, tribes, and Peshmerga brigades (Kurdish forces of the autonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan).

U.S. logisticians are meeting this non-doctrinal workload using a manning-restricted sustainment

footprint that is arguably inadequate for the task. Regardless of manning, the mission of building and sustaining the IA is a critical component in the campaign against Daesh. The IA's success has not only tactical implications but also strategic ones.

### Stripped OIB and War Stocks

Building and supporting a partner force in the fight against Daesh has required the U.S. OIB to respond at an unprecedented speed to the increasing demands in Iraq and Syria. Historically, the OIB responded to predictable demands created using well-documented forecasts and well-established budget cycles. A fairly predictable equation for equipment regeneration and ammunition expenditure was the norm, and the OIB established production cycles to meet that demand.

Because of the new operational environment, the OIB is now being asked to meet the unique, anomalous materiel needs of the IA and coalition armies at unprecedented production rates. Consequently, when the OIB cannot meet emerging requirements, the U.S. forces are forced to reach into theater war stocks to sustain the fight against Daesh.

Although war stocks fulfill the current materiel demand, we must assess how using these limited resources affects our ability to execute regional contingency plans. The 1st TSC and U.S. Army Central are working closely with the Department of the Army, the Army Materiel Command, and the U.S. Central Command to assess the composition, fill rates, and operational readiness of Army pre-positioned stocks in theater.

### Procurement-Based Policies

Countries in the Central Command region have historically relied on a procurement-based foreign policy. This approach results in countries buying equipment from multiple sources in order to maintain international relations, rather



than using coherent buying strategies to build combat power.

Procurement-based foreign policy focuses on the end item without considering the downstream logistics requirements. It undermines combat readiness by creating multiple international supply chains that result in inadequate resourcing for life-cycle maintenance of combat systems.

Managing the operational readiness of existing equipment is clearly within the 1st TSC's comfort zone. However, helping coalition partners procure materiel to build and maintain combat power, using cumbersome processes like Foreign Military Sales and similar programs, is complicated.

It requires the ability to assess readiness, forecast operating tempo, and anticipate materiel requirements. It also requires an understanding of nonstandard automation systems and Office of Security Cooperation processes so that the correct parts are ordered early enough to build and sustain combat power.

### **Working in a TAA Environment**

Resourcing the IA from a materiel perspective is only part of the U.S. effort to build Iraqi partner capacity. The 1st TSC has learned that it must partner with Iraq to go beyond replacement-based force generation in order to create a maintenance culture and help the Iraqis improve processes to maintain combat power.

We cannot use the same approach that we did in 2010 and 2011, when the U.S. Army tried to create an IA in its image. During that time, we found that cultural differences prevented our partners from implementing the automated processes and managerial techniques necessary to achieve operational readiness. This time, we must build and sustain combat power within our partner's cultural norms, military processes, and automation proficiency.

Coalition forces must see themselves accurately and then must have the desire to address readiness short-

falls. Through TAA efforts, the 1st TSC facilitates introspection and teaches Iraqi forces how to accurately assess their operational readiness. Using this information, Iraqi forces can develop accurate sustainment estimates that outline the supply and service support required to maintain operational readiness now and to build combat power for future operations.

To grow this effort, the 1st TSC has established a logistics operations center in Iraq, jointly manned with U.S. and Iraqi logisticians. There, U.S. Soldiers leverage TAA teams, co-located with IA units, to collect readiness data. This data is aggregated to provide Iraqi leaders with a readiness report similar to an O26 (deadlined equipment) report. The report allows the IA to see its readiness and to identify necessary class VII (major end items) and class IX (repair parts) required to maintain combat effectiveness.

Once this materiel is identified, the U.S. experts at the logistics operations center help the IA order the needed materiel through the Security Cooperation Information Portal so that the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq can coordinate for the appropriate funding stream and the Army Materiel Command can forecast requirements to the national OIB.

Through the logistics operations center, U.S. commanders have partnered with the IA to assess existing combat power, forecast requirements for class IX, and develop a coherent procurement process for combat systems. The resulting plans are presented to the Department of the Army and Army Materiel Command so that they can manage associated U.S. military OIB production rates.

Sustainment requirements have changed in nature, grown in volume, and increased in velocity over the past two years as the Army attempts to sustain its forces working to train, advise, and assist units in Iraq. The entire Iraqi force structure has also changed as it fights Daesh.

The Army's combat power is not what is needed this time. What Iraq needs is help in the form of TAA assets and, more importantly, logistics and sustainment, without which the Iraqi forces would certainly fail.

Logisticians are essential to any war effort, but right now, they are the Iraqis' kingpin. Only by leveraging effective, timely sustainment resources will the Army be able to address the complex challenges of this environment and help the IA succeed.

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Maj. Gen. Paul C. Hurley Jr. is the commanding general of the 1st Theater Sustainment Command (1st TSC). He holds a bachelor's degree in engineering technology from Texas A&M, a master's degree in industrial engineering from the University of Tennessee, and a master's degree in strategic studies from the Air University. He is a graduate of the Transportation Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the Army Command and General Staff College, and the Air Force War College.

Brig. Gen. Susan E. Henderson is the deputy commander of the 1st TSC's operational command post at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Tampa and a master's degree in counseling from the University of Massachusetts. She is a graduate of the Transportation Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the Combined Arms and Services Staff School, the Command and General Staff Officers' Course, Advanced Joint Professional Military Education, the Reserve Component National Security Course, and the Army War College.

Col. Sean J. Cannon is the support operations officer at the 1st TSC's operational command post. He holds a bachelor's degree in geography from Brigham Young University, a master's degree in geography from the University of Utah, and a master's degree in strategic studies from the Army War College. He is a graduate of the Transportation Officer Basic and Advanced Courses and the Command and General Staff College.