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**RECONFIGURING LOGISTICS COMMAND AND CONTROL FOR  
THE 21ST CENTURY**

**By**

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

**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.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**17 May, 2005**

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## CONTENTS

Abbreviations.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Introduction: The nature of the problem.....	1
Analyzing challenges within the existing logistics structure.....	3
Solutions	
Technology.....	9
Formation of a joint logistics command.....	11
Joint control and use of prepositioned assets.....	13
Counter arguments.....	15
Conclusion.....	16
Endnotes.....	18
Bibliography.....	20

## ABBREVIATIONS

AOR	Area of Responsibility
ASB	Army Science Board
C2	Command and Control
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
COCOM	Combatant Command
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
CONUS	Continental United States
COP	Common Operating Picture
DISA	Defense Information Systems Agency
DoD	Department of Defense
EUCOM	European Command
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FoS	Family of Systems
GCSS	Global Combat Support Systems
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
IT	Information Technology
ISB	Intermediate Support Base
J-4	Joint Forces Logistics Officer
JOpsC	Joint Operations Concept
JTF	Joint Task Force
JxDS	Joint Experimental Deployment and Support
LRMC	Landstuhl Regional Medical Center
MASH	Mobile Army Surgical Hospital
MEU	Marine Expeditionary Unit
ODS	Operation Desert Storm
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OPCON	Operational Control
SOC	Special Operations Capable
TACON	Tactical Control
TF-58	Task Force 58
USMC	United States Marine Corps

## **ABSTRACT**

The joint nature of 21st Century warfighting mandates changes in the command and control structure overseeing logistics functions. While there is no debate as to the importance of logistics, there is considerable discussion and disagreement as to command and control issues. Without a truly joint logistic C2 structure, services will continue to rely on existing stove piped capabilities that too often result in ineffective workarounds and disjointed logistics efforts. One approach to resolving this problem is the establishment of a subunified logistics command that would ride the backbone of emerging technology in closing gaps that exist between inter-service logistics capabilities, including control of and use of prepositioned assets. This logical “next step” in logistics command and control is essential in order to exploit past hard lessons learned and to improve the effectiveness of operational logistics.

## INTRODUCTION: THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

The joint nature of 21st Century warfighting mandates changes in the command and control (C2) structure overseeing logistics functions. This paper will explore whether the establishment of a joint logistics command can leverage certain principles of war to consolidate efforts, reduce redundancies, gain efficiencies, and improve effectiveness for the Combatant Commander.

Henry E. Eccles defined logistics as “. . . the provision of the physical means by which power is exercised by organized force. In military terms, it is the creation and sustained support of combat forces and weapons. Its objective is maximum sustained combat effectiveness.”<sup>1</sup> In his book *Pure Logistics*, George C. Thorpe captured the critical, but often overlooked, role of logistics when he wrote,

Strategy is to war what the plot is to the play; Tactics is represented by the role of the players; Logistics furnishes the stage management, accessories, and maintenance. The audience, thrilled by the action of the play and the art of the performers, overlooks all of the cleverly hidden details of stage management.<sup>2</sup>

History is replete with examples of battles, campaigns and wars that were won or lost on the ability of commanders to understand, manage, and employ logistics forces. It was said of Napoleon’s campaigns in Spain and Russia that “. . . the Emperor’s map strategy was perfect, but his *logistics* [italics added] lacked the winning quality.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed his “. . . great deficiency lay in the fact that logistics was not organized under one head as a branch of warfare for analysis of the requirements of the campaign and a cooperating response to such determined requirements.”<sup>4</sup> It is imperative that today’s combatant commander better understand the role of logistics in warfare and, as such, implement effective command and control of logistics capabilities.

While there is no debate as to the importance of logistics, there is considerable discussion and disagreement as to command and control issues. Logistics has traditionally been, and is

doctrinally, an individual service responsibility. Consequently, each military Service developed stove-piped logistics capabilities aligned with their respective tactics, techniques, and procedures in support of their own operational forces, concepts, and plans. Additionally, the independent system tools and supporting information technology developed by each service to manage their logistics functions virtually guarantee autonomous logistics operations.

Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff were organized in 1942 and further defined by the Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, the tenor of 21st century joint operations can be traced to the passage of the Goldwater – Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. With that legislation, Service chiefs were directed to develop joint doctrine aimed at better integrating capabilities during inter-Service operations.

The importance of joint logistics efforts was addressed in April 2000 by General Shelton, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In his introductory comments in the revised edition of Joint Publication 4-0, *Doctrine for Logistic Support of Joint Operations*, he stated;

As long as our Armed Forces continue to be committed around the globe, our ability to deploy and sustain them will remain a top priority. We must continue to integrate the *unique logistic capabilities* [italics added] of all our Services in the most efficient manner possible. . . .it is vitally important that we capitalize on new and developing technologies to enhance responsiveness, visibility, and access to logistic resources.<sup>5</sup>

As General Shelton pointed out, new technology would simplify the logistics challenges of the commander. That technology is currently being developed and tested and will be a major component of the logical ‘next step’ in closing the gaps that exist between inter-Service logistics capabilities. Closing the command and control gap is made even more critical by the potential for multiple conflicts to develop concurrently within a Combatant Commander’s Area of Responsibility (AOR). Creation of a joint logistics command would further serve to close that

gap, affording greater flexibility and mobility for the Combatant Commander while enhancing support and sustainment for the warfighters in the AOR.

## **ANALYZING CHALLENGES WITHIN THE EXISTING LOGISTICS STRUCTURE**

A comprehensive analysis of command and control challenges of all logistics functions (engineering, supply, health services, transportation, maintenance, and other services) is beyond the scope of this study. This study is a starting point and will concentrate on overall operational supply, sustainment and distribution issues. It will argue that redundancies, gaps, limitations and vulnerabilities created by current individual service logistics capabilities can be reduced by implementation of a more robust joint operations logistics structure.

The FY 2004 Army Science Board (ASB) Task Force on Intra-Theater Logistics Distribution, in the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) AOR during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), reviewed 21 joint logistics publications and found no distinction between Joint and Service functions, stating, “Joint Doctrine . . . does not clearly distinguish the theater opening/theater sustaining functions/tasks required at the Joint Force Commander level.”<sup>6</sup> This lack of a single focal point, i.e. a joint logistics commander, leads to ad hoc work-arounds by service components to effect joint logistics.

Successful logistics support is defined by two terms- efficiency and effectiveness. The draft Joint Experimental Deployment and Support Organization Concept of Operations, (JxDS CONOPS) defines *efficiency* as a smaller footprint (the amount of personnel, spares, resources, and capabilities physically present and occupying space at a deployed location<sup>7</sup>), with more *reachback*, (the process of obtaining products, services, and applications, or forces, or equipment, or material from organizations that are not forward deployed<sup>8</sup>), and less *redundancy*, (the part of support that can be eliminated without loss of essential support<sup>9</sup>). *Effectiveness* is

defined as the “. . . ability to provide . . . the force . . . the right personnel, equipment, supplies, and support in the right place or on-the-move, at the right time, and in the right quantities, across the full range of military operations.”<sup>10</sup> Through an effective command and control structure, logistics efficiencies and effectiveness can be gained for the combatant commander.

Joint Publication 1-02 defines command and control as;

The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities, and procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling forces and operations in the accomplishment of the mission.<sup>11</sup>

Command is a function of authority, responsibility and accountability over the control of the process and systems used by the commander when analyzing what must be done.<sup>12</sup> Joint doctrine attempts to empower the combatant commander with the authority to effectively and efficiently command and control logistics processes by granting directive authority for logistics. U.S. Code, Title 10, however, extends directive authority only to assigned and allocated forces and does not include forces transferred under operational or tactical control (OPCON/TACON). In peace time operations, geographical combatant commanders have limited assigned forces under their Combatant Command (COCOM). This misalignment of authority over forces can lead to confusion and lack of unity over joint force logistics. The Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) presents a context for analyzing joint logistics command and control and its impact on supply, sustainment, and distribution efforts within a Combatant Commander's AOR.

After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the forward deployed Marines and Sailors of the 15th and 26th Marine Expeditionary Units, Special Operations Capable (MEU(SOC)) joined forces within the CENTCOM AOR to form Task Force 58 (TF-58), commanded by then Brigadier General Mattis. With the combined staffs and assets of two

MEUs, BGen Mattis successfully maneuvered from the ships of the Peleliu and Bataan Amphibious Ready Groups to a forward operating base (FOB) located over 400 miles inland into landlocked Afghanistan from which operations against the terrorist organization, Al- Qaeda, were carried out.

The success of the mission was not without significant logistics challenges. By Marine Corps doctrine, logistics capabilities of a MEU are limited to 15 days of tactical operations sustainment after which the requirement exists to establish links to operational level logistics. This was the case for TF-58. Unfortunately, no logistics command and control structure existed for the staff logisticians of the MEUs to interface with. Ultimately, the burden of operational logistical support fell to the MEU logistics officers.

Major Mikel E. Stroud, the 15th MEU(SOC) logistics officer, responsible for *tactical* logistics, articulated the challenges of *operational* logistical planning when describing the establishment of sustainment and distribution pipelines. MEU planners quickly determined that organic helicopter and C-130 lift were insufficient to support the 1,400 Marines ashore. The planning challenge increased with the addition of Coalition and Special Forces that were co-located at the FOB. As planning progressed, Major Stroud saw requirements that exceeded the support capabilities of the MEU. He stated;

As the MEU planned the logistics for this mission, it became apparent that seabased logistics would not be sufficient to support the force closure or troop sustainment for that amount of time with only MEU assets. The MEU began to search the other services and what available capabilities they possessed ...<sup>13</sup>

Clearly the two MEUs of TF-58 would have benefited from a standing joint logistics command with which they could coordinate and receive operational level logistics support for sustainment and distribution operations. Out of necessity, Major Stroud planned for operational support by creating a hub-and-spoke type distribution system that relied on liaison officers,

armed with satellite communication systems, located at seven intermediate staging bases to reach back to the Continental U.S. (CONUS) commands to coordinate operational logistics. The efforts to pull logistical sustainment were ineffective as it took on average 33 days from the time of requirement generation to receipt of equipment by the requesting unit.<sup>14</sup>

From the foregoing example, it is readily apparent that the sustainment system and distribution procedures for supporting TF-58, an operational level command, were vulnerable to communication and transportation problems and lacked an overall command and control structure to unify efforts. A problem with even broader implications was the fact that *tactical* units were being forced to fend for themselves in providing *operational* level logistics sustainment when their focus should have been on direct support to the warfighter. In Major Stroud's words;

The theater logistics system was not established thus leaving the service components to support themselves to the best of their abilities. This led to a lack of quality support getting to the forces with the greatest need. The [15th] MEU [SOC] took the lead by trying to establish a joint logistics system through their use of liaison officers at various ISB's [Intermediate Support Bases].<sup>15</sup>

He further observed that,

. . . there needs to be an operations area logistics plan in place as soon as the theater is opened up... the JTF[Joint Task Force] commander and his staff must provide guidance and influence the theater logistically as soon as possible. If this is not accomplished, the services will have no choice but to do it themselves and this will not lead to the most desirable or most efficient use of logistics.<sup>16</sup>

The deficiencies in logistics command and control did not improve during OIF. In an article, Analyzing the Lessons of OIF Distribution, Suzi Thurmond gives credit to the performance of the Army's combat service support units but is critical of the Army's logistics leadership for not applying lessons learned 12 years earlier during Operation Desert Storm (ODS). She states, "... some of the lessons learned . . . were merely lessons experienced."<sup>17</sup>

The FY 2004 ASB Task Force, in analyzing the designation of the Combined Forces Land Component Commander as the “. . . one belly button responsible for sustainment and distribution . . .,” referred to the designation as an “*after the fact*” [italics added] decision.”<sup>18</sup>

Restricted by doctrine, the CENTCOM Combatant Commander was unable to establish effective/efficient command and control over logistic operations. In December 2003 the General Accounting Office reported that substantial logistics support problems existed in OIF, to include;

- a backlog of hundreds of pallets and containers of materiel at various distribution points due to transportation constraints and inadequate asset visibility;
- a discrepancy of \$1.2 billion between the amount of materiel shipped to Army activities in the theater of operations and the amount of materiel that those activities acknowledged they received;
- a potential cost to DoD of millions of dollars for late fees on leased containers or replacement of DoD-owned containers due to distribution backlogs or losses;
- the cannibalization of vehicles and potential reduction of equipment readiness due to the unavailability of parts that either were not in DOD’s inventory or could not be located because of inadequate asset visibility;
- the duplication of many requisitions and circumvention of the supply system as a result of inadequate asset visibility; and
- the accumulation at the theater distribution center in Kuwait of hundreds of pallets, containers, and boxes of excess supplies and equipment that were shipped from units redeploying from Iraq without required content descriptions and shipping documentation.<sup>19</sup>

One other vital logistics challenge bears mentioning. Medical services are a primary responsibility of the logistician. A gap in logistics planning can be seen when analyzing capabilities at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (LRMC), the largest U.S. military medical facility outside the United States and a critical resource for treatment and evacuation of wounded U.S. military personnel during OEF/OIF. Key command and staff positions at LRMC are held by personnel from both the Air Force’s 86th Medical Squadron and the 212th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH).

Between October 2001 and October 2002, over 1,000 casualties from OEF were treated at LRMC<sup>20</sup>. It quickly became apparent that the facility needed double the amount of existing

bed space. A major gap became apparent when medical personnel began receiving large numbers of injured reservists whose fitness level differed greatly from that of active-duty personnel, requiring unforeseen expenses such as additional cardiology equipment. Outpatient resources became stressed since “clinics were not staffed or prepared to accept a huge workload increase.”<sup>21</sup> Expanded infrastructure requirements resulted in unforeseen expenses and compressed time frames for logistics support. Medical material purchases became a challenge when contracted agencies could not keep up with demand.

Personnel became a critical issue with the deployment of the 212th MASH, several surgical teams, and other essential personnel, creating a gap to be backfilled by Air Force personnel. In spite of the backfill, massive overtime requirements resulted. LRMC has a Logistics Division to develop and coordinate logistics contingency requirements, “. . . in conjunction with the OIF military decision making process.”<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, logistics requirements were identified based on a “. . . limited budget and a low casualty figure,”<sup>23</sup> and, no additional staff were assigned during the planning process.<sup>24</sup>

At LRMC, the unique logistics structure of each service could be shown in one example, the Patient Movement Item (PMI) system, which was “. . . well-prepared and works well during *peacetime* [italics added] operations.”<sup>25</sup> With OIF, the PMI system became stressed as patients were loaded into and unloaded from aircraft and vehicles, resulting in identification mix-ups and confusion between Army and Air Force PMIs due to differences in tracking systems.<sup>26</sup> Although PMI tracking involved medical equipment, the stove piped nature of service logistics is applicable across the spectrum of logistics support.

Logistics challenges at LRMC were compounded by the unique requirements of many different commands, including the Army Medical Command, the U.S. European Command, and

CENTCOM. Establishment of a subunified logistic command within each geographical Combatant Commander's AOR would unify the logistics capabilities of all forces. Coordination of logistics requirements that cross boundaries between Combatant Commands would serve to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of overall logistics operations.

Joint logistics challenges must be addressed to avoid failure in the ongoing GWOT as well as other future conflicts. Contemporary fiscal realities, and today's asymmetric warfare, mandate that logistic commanders be given the authority to influence logistics operations. A commander responsible for joint theater logistics must be an active participant in all stages of planning.

## **SOLUTIONS**

### **Technology**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, technology will make it possible to find, fix, or track and target anything that moves on the surface of the Earth.<sup>27</sup>

General Ronald R. Fogleman, USAF

The ability to 'see' the broad logistics picture is critical to the Combatant Commander's ability to access and utilize all available assets. Coordination of those broader abilities can be gained through the right command and control architecture, specifically through the organization of a joint logistics command, and by utilizing the latest information technology (IT).

Solutions to the joint logistics challenges of supply, sustainment, and distribution will begin with fielding technological tools currently under development. As previously mentioned, current logistic management systems employed by the individual Services were developed to support Service unique requirements. The stove-pipe nature of existing tools restricts interoperability between Services and prevents data integration into a Common Logistics Operating Picture.

In addressing interoperability challenges, the Joint Staff articulated an operational concept of Focused Logistics in their Joint Vision 2010, stating:

Focused logistics will be the fusion of information, logistics, and transportation technologies to provide rapid crisis response, to track and shift assets even while enroute, and to deliver tailored logistics packages and sustainment directly at the strategic, operational, and tactical level of operations. . .<sup>28</sup>

Responding to the Joint Staff's direction, in 1996 the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) began developing the Global Combat Support System (GCSS), consisting of:

. . . a family-of-systems (FoS) approach that establishes data interoperability across combat support information systems and between combat support and command and control functions. It fuses information from disparate sources into a cohesive COP [Common Operating Picture].<sup>29</sup>

The operational concept for GCSS was completed in 1997. The GCSS FoS aims to unify the logistics command and control architectures of individual services by linking new technology with existing legacy systems in providing accurate and real-time asset visibility to the warfighter, available from "any box, any user, one net and/or [sic] one picture."<sup>30</sup> GCSS ". . . will provide a highly effective, web-based/enabled, collaborative logistics system applicable from the *tactical to strategic levels*, which will bring the currently stove-piped functions of inventory management, maintenance, transportation, and logistics C2 into *one common operational picture* [italics added]."<sup>31</sup>

As envisioned, GCSS would provide the operational commander with total asset visibility, the first step in unifying the logistics process. Projections are that the majority of program criteria can be met by 2006.<sup>32</sup> Currently, DISA has fielded GCSS models in-theater to each geographic combatant commander as the individual Services move toward compliance with the Joint Staff's directive. As DoD completes its transfer to the GCSS FoS, a Common Logistics Operating Picture will be achieved, thereby improving support to the warfighter.

## **Formation of a Joint Logistics Command**

In November 2003, the Joint Chief of Staff published the *Joint Operations Concept* (JOpsC) document as,

An overarching description of how the future Joint Force will operate across the entire range of military operations. It is the unifying framework for developing *subordinate joint operating concepts* [italics added], joint functional concepts, enabling concepts, and integrated capabilities. It assists in structuring joint experimentation and assessment activities to validate subordinate concepts and capabilities-based requirements.<sup>33</sup>

The JOpsC is future focused and can be said to make a strong argument for the establishment of a joint logistics command in that it states:

Additional organizational changes will take place at the *operational level* [italics added]. The Joint Force must be organized into tailorable capabilities-based force packages for employment designed to produce a set of synergistic joint capabilities not currently available to the JFC. *These force packages will not necessarily be based on previous unit configurations* [italics added]. They must be capable of “plugging” into an adaptable standing joint C2 structure for immediate employment by the JFC.<sup>34</sup>

These changes apply to both operating units and their higher command and control structures.

The FY 2004 ASB Task Force stated, “While the Joint Force Commander is responsible for theater-level logistics, no subordinate commander is charged with executing that mission.”<sup>35</sup>

The report further stated, “The Service organizations needed to perform theater-level logistics operations have not been designated and assigned to joint commands and resulted in too many workarounds and impeded effective theater-level logistics support and C2.”<sup>36</sup> Unity of command must be established over multiple logistics organizations within an AOR by restructuring logistics forces into a single command, focused on providing logistical support to all units operating within the Combatant Commanders AOR. Granting the Combatant Commander the authority to command all logistics and support functions necessary to accomplish assigned tasks would result in more effective and efficient operations.

A joint logistics command can be established as either a JTF or as a subordinate unified command. “A joint task force may be established on a geographical area or functional basis when the mission has a specific limited objective . . .”<sup>37</sup> Whereas a subordinate unified command, or subunified command, is established, “. . . to conduct operations on a continuing basis . . .”<sup>38</sup>

In past operations, logistics organization, structures and responsibilities were assigned at the start of a conflict. Responding to the challenges of the GWOT, however, places new demands on limited resources. The operational tempo is such that logistics organizations are transferred from one conflict to another with little to no time between missions. In many instances, support requirements overlap and demand for resources exceeds availability. Often they must be reallocated from one operation to another to meet the most urgent demand within an AOR. Managing limited resources across the spectrum of competing missions requires that command and control tasks be assigned to permanent organizational units focused on resource monitoring, prioritization, and reconfiguration.

As defined in the draft JxDS, the commander of a logistics subunified command must have the following authority and responsibilities:

#### Authority

- Cross level logistics resources
- Establish priorities for logistics and other support activities
- Coordinate logistics functions and support activities
- Establish a collaborative network
- Course of action planning
- Transfer executive responsibility for logistics and support functions

#### Responsibilities

- Coordinate and monitor current and evolving theater logistic requirements
- Coordinate logistic support for current and future operations
- Advise the Commander on the supportability of proposed courses of action
- Serve as required as the joint force commander’s agent and advocate to non-theater logistic organizations
- Establish boards, centers, and cells for logistics and support activities

- Coordinate and execute Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration (RSOI)
- Coordinate inter and intra theater deployment
- Establish logistics and support lines of communication
- Conduct contracting and procurement in support of operations
- Coordinate the apportionment or redistribution of critical resources
- Coordinate Host Nation Support (HNS)
- Coordinate interagency support for logistics
- Theater Opening
- Phase IV operations
- Level III medical support
- Real estate management
- Acquisition process input
- Military Construction within assigned AOR
- Title X responsibility oversight
- Coordinate coalition logistics support
- Plan for future operations and force rotations
- Coordinate Enemy Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons management
- Coordinate mortuary affairs
- Establish material priorities<sup>39</sup>

The ASB Task Force proposed a Theater Sustainment Command to accomplish Joint Theater-level missions. As proposed, a subunified Joint Logistics Command would have authority and responsibility over the Deployment Distribution Operation Center as well as theater sustainment, air, land, & sea mobility, and theater distribution centers. The task force effectively utilized basic Principles of War, e.g., unity of command, simplicity, and economy of force, in making their proposal. A subunified logistics command within the CENTCOM AOR would reduce such challenges as experienced by the 15th MEU(SOC). Accessing a robust subunified command and control structure would allow the tactical logistician to continue to focus attention at the tactical level.

### **Joint Control and Use of Prepositioned Assets**

Prepositioned assets offer another example where economies and efficiencies may be gained by the establishment of a logistics command. In his 1980 State of the Union Address,

President Jimmy Carter announced a new American policy that came to be called the Carter Doctrine. Referring to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Carter warned that:

An attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interest of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.<sup>40</sup>

Service Chiefs recognized that speed of deployment was essential to enforcing the Carter Doctrine. At the time, airlift was the most responsive means to responding to a distant crisis. It was quickly realized that insufficient airlift assets existed to move the necessary forces into theater and building a new fleet was cost prohibitive. Sea lift was also rejected due to the time necessary to transit from CONUS to the CENTCOM AOR. Forward basing presented a solution that proved successful in the European AOR but political realities and the lack of US facilities within the CENTCOM AOR eliminated that as an option. The most feasible solution to rapid deployment was a combination of airlift and afloat prepositioned assets.

Today, through 26 sites world-wide, each Service branch and the Defense Logistic Agency operate some form of prepositioning program.<sup>41</sup> The Military Sealift Command operates some 36 ships supporting the program.<sup>42</sup> Equipment, ammunition, and fuel for the Army and the Marine Corps form the bulk of the material. Currently, however, those prepositioned assets are not shared between Services even though many items of equipment are standardized or can be easily reconfigured to meet the requirements of more than one service.

Supply and sustainment challenges can be mitigated by allowing inter-service use of prepositioned assets through the combined logistics efforts of a subunified logistics command which could deal with distribution and accountability issues. For example, the Abrams tank and the HMMWV are used by both the Marine Corps and the Army. Commanders are not necessarily concerned with who owns the tanks, just that they have them when they are needed.

Discussion of cultural changes necessary to gain additional efficiencies through joint use of prepositioned assets are beyond the scope of this study. Suffice to say that the creation of a subunified logistics command would provide the C2 structure necessary to give all services access to equipment and spare parts, thus enhancing the ability of a Combatant Commander to call up additional resources vital to the speed and sustainment of operations. The alignment would result in increased options for the commander in addressing challenges within the current and future security environments.

## **COUNTER ARGUMENTS**

Component commanders will be reluctant to assign logistics forces to the subunified command, fearing loss of logistics control as well as personnel reductions. Some will argue the current process is effective and only in need of new IT tools. However, current logistics doctrine was written for traditional warfare as it existed up to and including the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Asymmetrical warfare, particularly the GWOT, requires doctrine to make the same radical changes as the nature of war itself. As the threat evolves, so too must the response.

One need only review after action reports from Desert Storm/Desert Shield and OEF/OIF to conclude that the current system does not efficiently or effectively address the logistics challenges of today's security environment. Promoting the use of interoperable IT tools will serve to leverage the capabilities of all the services. Absent new C2 relationships, however, logistics challenges may be compounded. New technology may again be tailored to become service specific instead of capitalizing on its ability to expand joint capabilities.

Others may argue that command and control of joint logistics is a J-4 responsibility and that it is unnecessary to create additional joint commands. The joint force commander's J-4 is responsible for planning immediate and long- range operational logistic requirements. Due to

increased operational tempo and technological advancements, the time available for commanders to gather information and make decisions has been compressed. Orientation and decision making are no longer sequential actions but must be simultaneous and continuous. As a result, the J-4 becomes consumed with the details of managing, coordinating, and collaborating logistics functions with other supporting agencies to the decrement of future operations.<sup>43</sup>

No counter argument based on the status quo will survive the next combat operation. Change, particularly to long held doctrine, is difficult and will require overcoming ongoing protection of ‘turf’ by individual services and by a commitment of all concerned. General Zinni, (USMC Ret.), CENTCOM Commander in 1997, recognized early on the problems inherent with a disjointed logistics process. After his retirement, he recounted the warfighting issues that he had dealt with, stating;

My third objective – never fully accomplished during my tenure – was to create one logistics command for the theater, to control and coordinate the massive logistics effort we would have to undertake in a major crisis. The system of separate and competing service and coalition systems, all putting stress on the limited lines of communications and infrastructure in the region, would really cause us problems if we didn’t have one umbrella organization to pull all the support needs together . . .<sup>44</sup>

General Zinni stated that his proposals, “. . . drew criticism and resistance again from doctrinal traditionalists, who didn’t understand the realities of the battlefield.”<sup>45</sup> Now, almost a decade later, the GWOT demands that we revisit the issue, challenge traditional thinking, and take necessary steps to make the logistics command a reality.

## **CONCLUSION**

In January 2003, the Joint Forces Command, in concert with the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, was assigned the mission of developing joint doctrine, concepts, requirements, and integrated architecture for logistics. A major component of that ongoing mission should be

embracing the joint logistics command concept. Logistics IT capabilities cannot stop at intra-service capabilities or merely be a tool for inter-service communication. Joint operations demand that logistics, within an AOR, become truly joint through the formation of a subunified logistics command that exploits the capabilities of emerging technology, specifically the GSCC FoS, to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of logistics support to the warfighters.

The face of war in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has changed as has the way that military services operate, particularly in a joint environment. Military logistics must be addressed as a vital part of joint operations with emphasis on utilizing inter-service logistics capabilities. Creation of a subunified command for logistics will allow the enhanced flexibility and sustainment necessary to conduct operations on multiple fronts. Timing is vital since IT that can support joint logistics efforts is currently being field tested. It is recommended that Combatant Commanders build the joint logistics structure now in order to fully exploit the opportunities that the new IT can afford.

The timing could not be more critical. Future planning specifically stresses joint doctrine and capabilities. We must not repeat our past actions and fail to apply hard fought lessons learned to tomorrow's conflicts. The ASB task force recommendations should be given serious consideration as a model for development of a joint logistics command. The subunified logistics command would provide the C2 relationships necessary to exploit emerging technology and thus enhance the overall effectiveness and efficiency of tomorrow's logistics operations.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>13</sup> Major Mikel E. Stroud, USMC, “Joint Logistics in Afghanistan: Seabased, Focused, or Miracle?” (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI:2003), 8.
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