

Comments on Logistics

by Gen A.M. Gray

On 1 September Gen A.M. Gray addressed a conference attended by some 70 senior logistics officers from commands throughout the Corps. The following points, which identify some of the logistics challenges facing Marines in the years ahead, were highlighted in his remarks.



• Readiness

Over the next two fiscal years, FY90 and FY91, the Marine Corps' Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Budget will be nearly 10 percent below the FY89 level. As a short-term response, we will curtail some training and exercises to avoid hurting readiness. When the maintenance backlog grows, as a further step in maintaining readiness, we will draw down on war reserve stocks. Over the longer term, however, unless there are budget increases above the FY90-91 levels, we can anticipate early deterioration of the equipment and facilities acquired in the mid-1980s.

• Materiel Policy

We need to try to reduce the amount of equipment in the hands of the forces. We must, therefore, move ahead with a Table of Equipment review. We have been carrying out the warfighting enhancement initiatives for about one year and will continue to do so for several more years. As we do, the initiatives' effects on sustainment and readiness need to be evaluated. Good effects can then be amplified; bad effects, attenuated.

The program to provide Marine expeditionary units with a special operations capability, the MEU(SOC) program, is now institutionalized. We started it quickly with lots of special equipment not in the system. It's time now to establish those SOC items as system items so we can provide for their long-range supportability. At the same time, we must continue to accelerate the acquisition process so we can adjust quickly to future operational needs as they arise.

• Improving MAGTF Closure

Improving closure times is one of six key issues coming out of the recent Fleet Marine Force (FMF) Roundtable Conference. We must provide the

Commanders in Chief of unified commands (CinCs) with flexible and attractive force options for use in crises and execution of their operations plans. Marine air-ground task forces (MAGTFs) are especially well suited to meet the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) requirement for CinCs to develop deterrent force modules (DFMs) for early deployment.

Logistics plays a dominant role in making DFMs and crisis action modules (CAMs) a reality rather than mere rhetoric. We must know what materiel and supplies are available, where they are, and how to get them to ports of embarkation (POEs) and embark them quickly. The commanding generals of FMFs are developing DFMs and CAMs now, but all senior Marines are responsible for informing the joint community of our capabilities.

• MPF Expanded Employment Capabilities

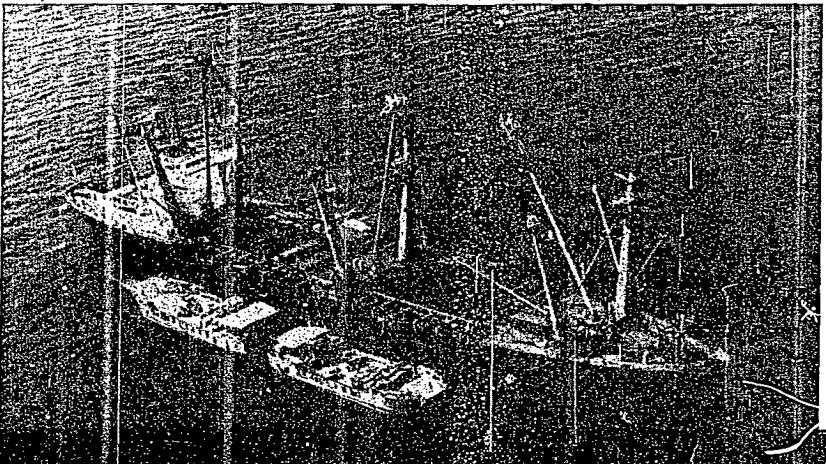
The *MAGTF Master Plan* calls for improving the "capability to conduct a range of MPF [maritime prepositioning force] operations including pre-hostility deterrence, reinforcing a forward afloat MAGTF, providing selected capabilities, and supporting amphibious assaults." MPF has been a singular operational and logistics success; but we now need to build on that

success by making it more flexible, more responsive in a broader range of contingencies.

We must, however, take care not to damage what we've worked so hard to attain. Several options have been discussed and debated recently; I understand the topic has come up at this conference; I'm confident the final outcome will be yet one more enhancement of the Marine Corps' contribution to the Nation's security.

• A Time for New Thinking

Sustainability is the Corps' unique strength; no other Service has it in its active structure. Our doctrine of 60 days accompanying supplies has served us well, and we must continue to plan and fund for it. But that does not mean our logistics plans are set in concrete. Our operational focus has shifted toward low- and mid-intensity conflict, and our stated doctrine is now maneuver warfare. It is time to reevaluate our sustaining materiel and supply requirements in this new context. Perhaps a menu of several sustainability packages could be developed that would allow us to pick the one that best matches the needs of a specific contingency. If these were sourced, just as accompanying and nonunit supplies are sourced in deliberate planning, response times could be reduced.





• **Comments on FMFM-1**

You've read *FMFM-1*. You know that Marine Corps doctrine today is based on warfare by maneuver. Much has been written about the operations component of maneuver warfare. But maneuver warfare operations, like all modern types of warfare, will succeed or fail depending on the adequacy of logistics support. Little has been written, however, on logistics in maneuver warfare. The task is obvious—develop new, or modify existing, combat service support doctrine and techniques to support maneuver warfare.

The essence of maneuver warfare is to do more with less. The challenge for logistics is to get the less to the proper place at the proper time. Logistics officers must know our operational doctrine, for it provides the basis for harmonious actions and mutual understanding. They must know how the operations folks are thinking—or how they should be thinking. They must understand maneuver warfare so they can support it and so they can let operational commanders know the limits of logistics support and the risks attached to various courses of action.

Marine Corps philosophy of command requires familiarity among com-

rades and confidence among seniors and subordinates. MAGTF organization encourages this result across its four elements. The partnership of command, ground, air, and combat service support deserves constant nurturing. Leadership within all the MAGTF elements must have this result—this teamwork—as a major goal.

Mission orders and commander's instructions are applicable to logistics. A commander's ability to exploit fleeting opportunity will depend on the logistics officer's skill in anticipating various situations he may be called upon to support.

• **Some Key Challenges**

— Logistics is a joint business. Marine logistics officers must understand the broader Department of Defense logistics systems to include those of the other Services. Strategic mobility is the key to the aggregate usefulness of the Marine Corps. We need to be the premier Service in knowing how to use airlift and sealift. This means education about Military Airlift Command, Military Sealift Command, and Military Traffic Management Command assets and functioning as well as our traditional association with amphibious ships.

— We've begun campaign planning in the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps has a campaign plan; each Fleet Marine Force has one; each Marine expeditionary force has one. Campaign planning must become second nature to us—a tool to force us to look at the operational level of war. Campaign plans are, to a large extent, logistics plans; Adm Chester W. Nimitz' famous GRANITE I and GRANITE II campaign plans for the Central Pacific had major logistics components. Logistics officers have a key seat at the table when it comes to campaign planning; you should seek to become experts at it.

— Expeditionary means logically prepared. Logistics preparedness requires good planning factors, accurate data, and detailed hard work; RAdm Henry F. Eccles in his book, *Logistics in the National Defense*, makes the point again and again that sloppy planning will come back to haunt you. The deliberate planning process has uncovered many deficiencies in logistics planning for all Services. As a result, we're getting better at it; we must continue the trend.

— A logistics officer's job is to extend Clausewitz' culminating point as far forward as possible. The offense cannot sustain itself indefinitely. It grows weaker as it advances. The mission of logistics is to find ways to minimize this unavoidable effect.

• **Logistics' Key Role**

Logisticians and combat arms Marines differ only in the tools of their trade. Both must be aggressive; both must be risktakers; both must do with less in the years ahead; both must turn on the brain power. The books on our professional military reading list reveal again and again that it has been the logistics foundation that has sustained victorious armies. Paul Kennedy's book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, summarizes warfare results in the 19th century this way:

The powers which were defeated were those that had failed to adopt to the *military revolution* of the mid-19th century, the acquisition of new weapons, the mobilizing and equipping of large armies, the use of improved communications offered by the railway, the steamship and the telegraph, and a productive industrial base to sustain the armed forces.

The decisive role of logistics continues today. There can be no doubt that we must give it our full attention as we move toward the 21st century.