

Coalition Logistics in Somalia

by LtCol David M. Jespersen, USMCR

Coordination of all the military forces, transnational organizations, and diplomats that descend upon a peacekeeping operation is no easy task. Providing logistics support is even tougher.

Logistical support of military operations has traditionally been a low interest topic relative to strategy and tactics. However, logistical support arrangements in combined operations involving a significant number of coalition forces has provided a new and more interesting aspect to the subject of logistics. If peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance operations become the more common form of military operations, then U.S. forces and coalition partners will be projected to any number of regions in the world. In almost every case it is safe to assume that U.S. support to coalition partners will be essential for mission accomplishment. Most recently, Operation RESTORE HOPE demonstrated this new reality and required U.S. logistics staffs to implement international arrangements and procedures for logistical support.

The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) went ashore in Somalia on 9 December 1992. Within 3 weeks, U.S. forces and its coalition partners established a presence in eight humanitarian relief sectors (HRSs) in southern Somalia. By the end of January 1993, contingency forces from 24 countries had arrived in Somalia to contribute to the security effort. During that December through January time period, these 24 foreign military contingents, U.N. civilian and military commands, and several humanitarian assistance/relief organizations—or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in U. S. military parlance—received supplies and services from Marine Forces Somalia (MarForSom). Supply Classes I (water and food), II (individual equipment, tentage, etc.), III (fuel), IV (construction and barrier material), VIII (medical supplies), and IX (spare parts) were provided, along with transportation, engineering, and medical services. All this

was provided between D-day and D+50 (9 December–8 January); after which, the U.S. Army Logistics Support Command continued this support until 4 May when the United Nations Operations Somalia II (UNOSOM II) Command assumed this responsibility.

This article describes the efforts of Joint Task Force (JTF), and later Unified Task Force (UNITAF), logistics personnel in providing this support during the first 60 days of Operation RESTORE

duration of support from the United States varied greatly among the coalition partners. Some required strategic lift, ground transportation, and asked for support in every class of supply, plus additional services. A number of countries would not have joined Operation RESTORE HOPE without the assurance of U.S. logistical support. Others intended to become self-sufficient with their own resupply capability as quickly as possible.

CentCom logistics staff prepared an initial record of each coalition force's logistical requirements and capabilities, along with other information about the force and its deployment plans. This was faxed to the JTF Headquarters in Mogadishu. Most countries sent liaison officers who arrived in Somalia prior to their full contingent. These liaison officers met first with the J-3 Future Operations staff for a discussion of missions and initial locations. Then they went to the J-4 to discuss logistics.

As I MEF's host nation support officer assigned to the J-4, I did not know what kind of role I would play in a country without an existing government. Although coordinating logistical support needed by coalition partners and developing the necessary policies and procedures to account for this support were not functions I expected to perform, I welcomed the opportunity to work with the liaison officers.

HOPE.

Prior to their deployments, coalition attaches and liaison officers arrived at U.S. Central Command (CentCom) Headquarters in the United States. Although the CentCom briefing stressed the importance of each country providing their own logistical support to the maximum extent possible, the United States was willing and able to meet their requirements. The Marine Corps maritime prepositioning force (MPF) and the sustainment planning conducted at I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) provided MarFor with the capability to provide the necessary support. With a peak U.S. force of 21,000 ashore by mid-January 1993, there was enough fuel and water production capability to provide for the 12,000 personnel among coalition partners at that time. The amount, type, and

I arrived in Mogadishu with the main body of J-4 logistics personnel on 19 December 1993. The Jordanian liaison officers had already arrived, and I met with them almost immediately. Their request for logistical support was in my opinion rather extensive, and I was not prepared to tell them what we could or could not



USS Tripoli (LPH 10) and USS Rushmore (LSD 47) can be seen in the background of a Marine tent city at Mogadishu airport in December 1992.

provide. We agreed to meet the next day, and there were several subsequent meetings to answer questions from both sides. A memo of each meeting was made, and a final memorandum for the record was written and provided to the Jordanians just to show our understanding of what they requested. We also encouraged them to provide as much of their own logistical support as possible. We could not sign any document promising support, since legal authority and funding authorization issues still had to be worked out between the United States, the United Nations and the other participating countries.

Soon, contact between coalition liaison officers

was occurring on a regular basis. Some took considerable time to develop, others occurred practically overnight. In most cases, however, there was a great deal of appreciation for our support. This was especially true of the Swedish liaison officers who needed to find a suitable site for their field hospital. Together, we surveyed several areas in Mogadishu, and eventually a site near the university was agreed upon. Indeed, all coalition countries expressed appreciation of our efforts. This applied even to the Pakistani liaison team, whom the United States is prohibited from supporting in military operations (the Pressler Amendment) and to whom we could give only limited assistance. Every one of the 24 liaison teams was totally professional and cooperative.

Practically all 24 coalition partners, plus the U.N. command and U.N. civilian agencies, were dependent on the United States for the fuel each car, truck, armored personnel carrier, and aircraft used. Early in the operation, most of these were also receiving U.S.-generated potable water. Over one-third of the countries received meals, ready-to-eat, or MREs, from U.S. forces.

JTF logistics forces were directed to

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provide supplies and services within their capability, provided it was not to the detriment of U.S. forces in the region. However, legal authorization and the basis for being able to seek reimbursement for what was provided were issues that CentCom, DoD, and State Department personnel were resolving as logistical support was being provided. Various forms of authorization were eventually arranged. Two forms of agreements covered most of the coalition partners. North Atlantic Treaty Organization mutual support agreements (NMSAs), otherwise known as cross-servicing agreements, were the basic for logistical support to five NATO countries—Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, and the United Kingdom. However, these agreements are geographically restricted

and applied only to the European Command's area of responsibility. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had to delegate executing authority to CentCom to provide aid to these NMSA countries in Somalia. An 11 January 1993 message provided this authority for those five countries. Later, authorization to provide support to Norway was also based on a cross-servicing agreement with them.

Ten countries were covered by a direct agreement between the United States and the United Nations. On 29 January, the day after MarForSom had completed transfer of U.S. stocks to the U.S. Logistics Support Command, the United States and the United Nations signed an agreement by which the United States would be reimbursed from a U.N. trust fund for Somalia for costs incurred in support of eligible countries participating in Operation RESTORE HOPE. Japan was the largest contributor to the fund. The 10 countries that qualified to have the costs of their logistical support reimbursed from this fund were Botswana, Egypt, Morocco, Turkey, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Tunisia, Jordan, India, and Pakistan. For the remaining countries, foreign military sales and other agreements were the legal bases for logistical support.

All these authorizations were in the process of being determined during the period in which MarForSom provided support, but this did not affect the responsibility of the JTF to provide support to any country. On the ground the main questions involved what we could provide. We were working out the arrangements with the coalition liaison officers at the same time we were developing the policy and procedures. Providing water and MREs (Class I) was not difficult because water producing capability was sufficient, and not everyone needed MREs. There was an initial hesitancy on the part of MarForSom in providing Class II items, because of the number of requests for small quantities of consumables, individual equipment, etc. and the fact that it was a time-consuming effort. Providing fuel (Class III) was not difficult, as it was plentiful. Requests for construction and barrier material (Class IV) could not be met most of the time because of the shortage and high demand for these items. Countries asked for ammunition



A Marine refueling operation underway in Somalia.

(Class V), but approval from CentCom for specific requests was required, except in an emergency. Transferring ownership of major end items (Class VII) was prohibited. Spare parts (Class IX) could be provided, but these were not plentiful in-country and were often not compatible with foreign equipment. Developing policy regarding what could be issued (within the general policy that we would provide what was available and not to our detriment) was not as difficult as developing and implementing the procedures to account for the issues.

The JTF was tasked with accounting for all supplies and services provided to coalition forces to ensure that costs could be fully recovered. Although procedures and reporting requirements were still being developed by CentCom, it was known that a signed receipt would be required to seek reimbursement. Getting receipts signed at issue points was initially the preferred method, but it soon became apparent that this was too burdensome, except with MRE issues, which are normally documented with a DoD Form 1348. The normal procedure of recording issues in logbooks for bulk fuel and bulk water became the documentation that was the most reliable record of who received it and in what quantities. Although a considerable effort was required to collect and go through logbooks to find every issue to 24 countries and several U.N. organizations, the types and quantities of supplies issued were eventually determined. These figures were recorded on the receipt forms that were signed by representatives of the receiving organizations.

Spreadsheets were developed by the J-4 coalition forces support staff to record the support to coalition partners and to report the estimated costs to CentCom. Unit costs were determined and checked for compliance with agreement wording. For example, most of the cross-servicing agreements called for prices that the providing party would normally charge its own forces.

The requirements and capabilities data received from the coalition liaison officers in Somalia were recorded on matrices, similar to those developed at CentCom Headquarters. Equipment density lists were also obtained from each contingent. The requirements data provided J-4 commodity areas with planning estimates and provided MarForSom with J-4 approved orders to fill. The matrix showing logistical capabilities of each coalition force included information on their basic supply load, as well as transportation, maintenance, engineering, medical, and resupply capabilities. We also asked coalition logistics staff to code all of their logistical capability data to indicate what support they could provide to others. J-4 engineers became the most interested in this information as the operation matured and more effort was directed toward infrastructure needs.

The most interesting and rewarding aspect of arranging logistical support for coalition forces was simply the day-to-day contact with their personnel. The mutual interest, respect, and cooperation shown among people from the number of different countries involved in a common effort to assist a devastated people was a very positive experience in inter-

national relations. We were working with a unified task force, and the elements of combined logistics planning and operations were there. Although the operation and size of forces was small in this overall logistics operation, it provided an experience that may be a common characteristic of U.S. and coalition force military operations in the near future.

The U.N. Secretary-General's proposal for a standing U.N. force reflects the need for increased preparation and planning for security and humanitarian relief missions. Whether U.S. forces deploy as part of such a force or as the force that leads the way in a multinational effort, the United States will be asked to provide logistical support to coalition partners. The combined planning for these operations needs to emphasize specifically that the force structure of all participants must be based on mission requirements and on what contributions a particular force can make to accomplishing the mission. Forces deploying with severe political constraints on their employment and with capabilities ill-suited to the situation are simply an added logistical burden. There is also a need for advanced agreements and funding arrangements so that all who participate know that their mission is supportable and know how the cost of this support will be paid.

The United Nations for the first time has attempted to rebuild a nation, and the U.S.-led coalition set the effort in motion. All logistics support was projected into Somalia, other than rudimentary sea and airport facilities, and distributed as needed to the coalition by U.S. forces. This made RESTORE HOPE not only a successful security and humanitarian relief operation but also a demonstration of how logistical support can be successfully arranged for a large number of coalition partners. Logistical support efforts, such as this, will be essential for combined operations in the future.

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