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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE COMBINED - JOINT LOGISTICS

Abstract: *The logistic support realization in the multinational environment within the framework of the current missions is producing new findings in channels of distribution, standards and new access. The current NATO operation International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan has had important impact towards new ways of the logistics support understanding. It seems to be clear that ISAF lessons learned will also have impact to the combat service support and practical support realization. The aim of the NATO logistic support concept is to support the Joint Force Commander's (JFC) operations and to achieve efficiencies and economies of scale through optimum use of multinational logistic solutions².*

Key words: *military logistics, military operation ISAF, supply, movement*

INTRODUCTION

The analysis results of the logistics support realization in Afghanistan and the neighbouring countries has discovered many shortfalls, which can influence to the military ability fulfil “end state” and prepared conditions for future development. The findings showed, that all necessary sources have to be used for local inhabitants and based on Alliance principals military forces, causing in ISAF operation have got two solutions: realized logistics support via military logistics structure and used contractors services.

Afghanistan has been a country with poor infrastructure. Based on analysis of lines of communication there are limited possibilities to increase numbers of ground transport capacity. The international, governmental and non-governmental structures have helped to rebuild transport and movement capacity.

1. ORGANIZATIONAL FACTS

HQ ISAF CJ-4 is a multinational logistics organization with personnel representing 11 countries. It has three sections: logistics operations, logistics plans and joint theatre movements. The CJ-4 has personnel, who ensure that:

- class I (subsistence) and class III (petroleum, oils, and lubricants [POL]) commodities are maintained at operational levels;
- major theatre-level projects, such as the “Afghan First” and winterization programs, are planned and executed;

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² Allied Joint Logistics Doctrine AJP-4(A), December, 2003.

- the intra-theatre airlift system is efficiently moving passengers and cargo within the area of operations (AO), and the strategic air personnel are coordinating movements outside of Afghanistan³.

Noticeably missing from the CJ-4 are theatre-level logistics assets. This headquarters-level logistics office has no assigned NATO logistics support battalions, transportation battalions, multinational movement control battalions, or other logistics assets to conduct sustainment. This is a major challenge for the CJ-4.

The theatre is divided into five regions, each assigned units from a number of troop-contributing nations who are responsible for their own logistics; however, the CJ-4 does not have the ability to move high-value or sensitive equipment and supplies across regional boundaries. The CJ-4 has established the theatre movement coordination cell (TMCC) to de-conflict convoy operations along the limited main supply routes (MSRs).

HQ ISAF CJ-4 will jointly assist Afghanistan achieve economic growth, through the use of an Afghanistan First Policy. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will contribute to the development of the Afghan economy by increasing local procurement of goods and services. Presently, there are challenges associated with obtaining reliable information and access to the local marketplace in Afghanistan. Additionally, there are finite resources with which to develop and build capacity in Afghanistan⁴.

2. AFGHANISTAN – A CHALLENGE FOR LOGISTICS

NATO logistics in the Afghan War refers to the efforts of the NATO International Security Assistance Force to deliver vital fuel, food, hardware and other logistic supplies to Afghanistan in support of the War in Afghanistan. Delivery of supplies is done using a combination of air transport and a series of overland supply routes. There are two routes which pass through Pakistan, and several other routes which pass through Russia and the Central Asian states. Following the 2011 NATO attack in Pakistan⁵, the Pakistan routes were closed, but reopened after US Secretary of State apologized for the incident on July 3, 2012⁶.

The security mission in landlocked Afghanistan represents the most difficult operational challenge ever faced by NATO logisticians. The chief of CJ-4 and his multinational staff worked diligently to overcome many of these challenges. One of the main challenges that the CJ-4 faced was educating newly-arrived HQ ISAF and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan staffs on the inconsistency of logistics operational support in this theatre. Simply put, logistics support in Afghanistan cannot be compared to that in Iraq or to former NATO missions in Bosnia or Kosovo; it is completely different.

Due to hostile conditions there are increases of the direct and indirect attacks. Both types of attacks have been changed characters. The international link between terrorist groups and exchanges obtained information about direct and indirect attacks,

³ *International Security Assistance Force Logistics Operations in Afghanistan*, http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/issues/JanFeb10/secassist_logop.html (03.05.2013).

⁴ *ISAF COIN Contracting Economic Enterprise Cell*, <https://www.fbo.gov/index?s=opportunity&mode=form&tab=core&id=0742fc2f2101975f5cef0de306693488> (03.05.2013).

⁵ When a SEAL Team found and killed Osama bin Laden.

⁶ *NATO logistics in the Afghan War*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO_logistics_in_the_Afghan_War (05.05.2013).

number of victims and attack realization has resulted to the increasing number of casualties – military and non-military⁷.



Fig.1. Open-backed jingle trucks are packed as high as possible



Fig.2. The terrain in Afghanistan

Everyone who has conducted logistics operations in Afghanistan is familiar with the term “jingle truck”.(Fig.1.) Jingle trucks are the colourfully decorated trucks used throughout Afghanistan to transport fuel and other supplies within the ISAF AO. “Jingle” refers to the sound of the movement of chains, which are affixed along the bottom of the vehicles. Jingle truck drivers form part of the host nation transportation system. One contractor providing this support saw a 44% increase in insurgent attacks against its convoys in 2008. As of the end of November 2008, 202 attacks against this contractor’s convoys resulted in 100 of its personnel being killed and 230,000 liters of fuel destroyed⁸.

The CJ-4 logistics operations section monitors daily status of class III to ensure that fuel is available to meet mission requirements. Within the logistics operations section, the fuel section ensures that the fuel DOS are kept at the proper levels, especially with attacks on fuel convoys occurring regularly on Highway no. 1 between Kabul and Kandahar. To provide better visibility to all regional commands, the fuels section places timely class III data on the ISAF webpage, providing POL asset visibility. The fuels section has taken on the additional task of monitoring through put and capacity at border crossing points, especially those bordering Pakistan.

Since Afghanistan is a landlocked country, supplies must pass through other countries in order to reach it, or else be shipped by air. Since air shipping is prohibitively expensive, NATO forces tend to rely on ground routes for non-lethal equipment. This is principally accomplished either by shipping goods by sea to the Pakistani port of Karachi in the southern Sindh province, or by shipping them through Russia and the Central Asian states. Movement visibility and ground transportation challenges (Fig.2.) are not the only ones faced by the CJ-4 Branch. Because of Afghanistan’s poor infrastructure and lack of resources, logistics support within ISAF depends heavily on strategic and tactical airlift.

The intra-theatre airlift system (ITAS) is a section within the joint theatre movements staff that validates and schedules ISAF airlift in support of the COMISAF’s⁹ priorities. The ITAS staff balances efficiency and effectiveness through close coordination with troop-contributing nations and the airfield’s combined air terminal

⁷ Z. KORECKI, *Logistic support realization*, University of Defence Brno, Czech Republic.

⁸ *The Journal of the Royal Canadian Military Institute*, March-April 2010, Vol.70, No.2, page 11-12.

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operations. Every effort is made to plan and execute missions with minimal disruption by external factors and to promote higher levels of confidence in the ISAF airlift system.

With 41 troop-contributing nations - each with its own national logistics chain - spread over 5 regions and with the U.S. expansion forces arriving in theatre, the logistic challenges faced by the CJ-4 will only increase in the future. Troop-contributing nations, regional commands, and branches of HQ ISAF must understand that logistics is a collective responsibility that requires information flow, coordination, and de-confliction. Information sharing will be achieved through continuous joint operational planning groups, video teleconferences, and staff-assistance visits throughout the regions and to higher headquarters. With the support of troop-contributing nations and contractors, force-tracking systems interfacing with TMCC will provide the visibility that the COMISAF needs in order to ensure freedom of movement in Afghanistan.

3. MOVEMENT AND SUPPLY

Afghanistan has been country with poor infrastructure. Based on analysis communication lines there are limited possibilities to increase numbers of ground transport capacity. The international, governmental and non-governmental structures have helped to rebuild transport and movement capacity.

The 2,400 km Afghanistan Ring Road (Fig.3.) links the major cities of Afghanistan and extensions lead to the frontiers with Pakistan, Iran and the three Central Asian states of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The road network is in poor condition but its rehabilitation is crucial for the economic and social re-integration of the country and also for the creation of new trade links between Central Asia and the Indian Ocean ports of Pakistan and India¹⁰.

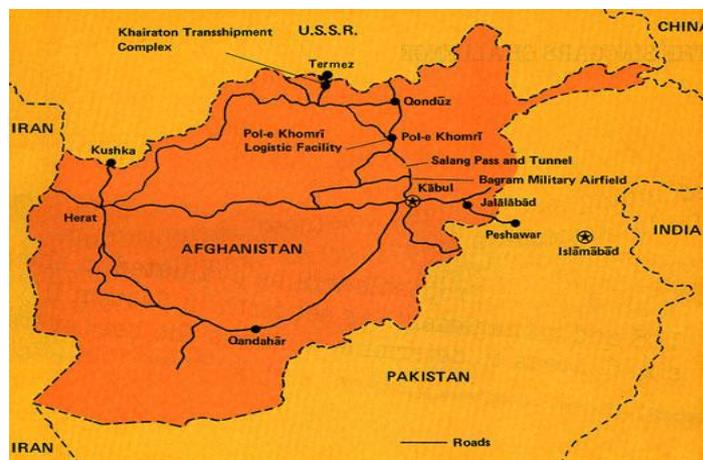


Fig.3. Main Afghanistan Roads. Source¹¹

Insurgent activity along Highway no. 1 between Kabul and Kandahar reached enormous heights: several bridges were destroyed, improvised explosive device (IED) strikes peaked, and rocket-propelled grenade and small-arms attacks on ISAF forces, civilian contractors, and humanitarian organizations threatened freedom of movement.

These threats prompted the commander of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (COMISAF) to make freedom of movement his top priority. The HQ ISAF TMCC (Theatre Movement Coordination Cell) and the regional commands' joint

¹⁰ Zbyšek KORECKI, Logistic support realization, University of Defence Brno, Czech Republic.

¹¹ <http://fmsso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/ambush-road/MAP.jpg>.

movement coordination cells (JMCC) were established to improve coordination, control, and confidence among ISAF forces, ISAF contractors, nongovernmental organizations, and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Working from the HQ ISAF Combined Joint Operation Centre, TMCC members have emphasized the need to improve movement coordination and visibility within Afghanistan.

Movement visibility is needed for the activities of troop-contributing nations, regional commands, civilian contractors, the Joint Forces Command Brunssum, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, NATO's Consultation Command and Control Agency, ANSF, and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. TMCC is working toward having full visibility of all military, contractor, and nongovernmental organization logistics ground movements. TMCC is not, however, working on this major undertaking alone.

Movement visibility is difficult to be achieved in Afghanistan. Some troop-contributing nations and contractors have tracking systems, such as Blue Force Tracker; however, their systems are not synchronized with each other. Other nations have convoys that move without tracking capability. CJ-4 approached the issue of force tracking from two fronts. First, it established a common mapping tool to provide a management overview of network visibility and incident reporting. Second, it developed Integrated Command and Control, a comprehensive tool that will monitor all major routes and any incidents that may affect them. Tracking information is presented on a map overlay, giving the regional commands or TMCC users the ability to see the route network in detail. This tool will eventually be used to de-conflict convoy movements; the goal is to have it form part of the convoy early warning and support system. Once tracking systems have been developed and implemented for all military forces in theatre, the next step will be to coordinate with civilian contractors to have their convoys tracked, with data moving easily into the TMCC system. By providing the ability to identify IED threats, troops in contact, road closures, and road damage, the TMCC tracking system will provide movement visibility for all military and civilian convoys moving along Afghanistan's roads. In cooperation with the Combined Joint Engineers Branch, CJ-4 was the lead for the Bala Morghab Bridge operation. Following the June 2008 Joint Assessment and Concept of Operations for Enhanced Security in Ghowrmach District, COMISAF approved the emplacement of a Mabey & Johnson Military Logistic Bridge, which would improve freedom of movement along Highway 1 in Regional Command West. The purpose of this strategic operation was to reconnect Highway 1 using a bridge with a maximum load capacity of at least 60 tons within Badghis Province.

To accomplish this major undertaking, ISAF had to work with tribal elders and civilian contractors. Transportation of the mission-critical equipment from Camp Invicta in Kabul to Bala Morghab, Badghis Province, was provided by Alpha Logistics, a local Afghan company. On 11 October 2008 the bridge convoy departed from Kabul. The convoy, consisting of 25 contracted drivers and private security officers, drove 811 kilometres (38 hours) from Kabul to Badghis Province. They transported 75 metric tons using 10 trucks holding 20-foot containers, 2 flatbed trucks, 1 spare truck, and 3 security vehicles. The last 80 kilometres, between Ghowrmach and Bala Morghab, proved to be the most treacherous. The contracted drivers refused to continue forward from the Ghowrmach District staging area after visiting a local bazaar and receiving death threats from insurgents. After backtracking to their previous staging area in Meymaneh, the contracted drivers had to be replaced. It took several days to hire new drivers,

transport them to the staging area, work out issues with tribal elders, and drive the remaining distance to Bala Morghab¹².

Afghanistan's tribal heartlands are administered by a traditional system where elders—respected community leaders—resolve disputes and make decisions by forming a “shura,” an Islamic community consultation meeting. Several shuras were held to facilitate the movement of this civilian-contracted convoy transporting bridge parts through areas managed by these tribal elders. During the Bala Morghab Bridge operation, CJ-4, TMCC, and the logistics operations section had to resolve many diverse challenges and provide the HQ ISAF senior leaders with situational awareness and recommended courses of action. Several lessons were learned, with the most significant being command and control: CJ-4 does not have the personnel or theatre-level assets to command such an operation and must work in cooperation with all the enablers that the HQ ISAF Combined Joint Operation Center representatives provide¹³.

CONCLUSIONS

The successful military mission of the North Atlantic Treaty under non Article 5 is based on several results which were used in ISAF mission. First of all strategic deployment, reception staging onward movement and integration and sustainability have been in the centre of the gravity.

The future development with aim to decrease national differences in standards in logistics areas including food, water and POL(Petroleum, Oils, and Lubricants) could have enormous influences to the NSEs(National Support Element) structure and in the same time also could have influence towards effectively used financial resources. Common training and later on common logistics units offered to NATO mission could also have enormous influence to national defence development.

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¹² *International Security Assistance Force Logistics...*, op. cit.

¹³ *The Journal of the Royal Canadian Military Institute*, March-April 2010, Vol.70, No.2, page 11-12.