



*A Bradley fighting vehicle commander from the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, radios his crossing time to his headquarters during Operation Joint Endeavor. (Photos courtesy of the Joint Combat Camera Center)*

## Getting There Was the Battle: Part I

This article, the first in a two-part series, looks back at the impact of insufficient logistics force structure during the planning phase of Operation Joint Endeavor, the deployment of peacekeeping forces to Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995.

■ By Dr. James P. Herson Jr.

Operation Joint Endeavor, NATO's first major post-Cold War peacemaking mission to the former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) is widely portrayed as a great success. Less publicized, however, is the difficulty U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) faced in simply getting its forces deployed to the FRY and how close it came to failure.

Department of the Army and USAREUR senior leaders' post-Cold War downsizing decisions significantly affected the composition of logistics and enabling forces.

The initial deployment of Europe-based U.S. Army forces into the FRY illustrates the operational impact that reductions in the Army's logistics force structure have on its

force projection capabilities.

As in prior downsizings, senior Army leaders opted to cut logistics forces more than combat arms organizations, choosing tooth over tail. This decision almost resulted in USAREUR's failure to meet the Dayton Accords' boots-on-the-ground timeline.

A lesson from a painfully "right-

sized” USAREUR in the mid-1990s may prove useful to today’s Army force structure planners who are reshaping an increasingly smaller force following its lengthy and costly fight in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere without a “peace dividend” in sight.

### Post-Cold War Downsizing

The post-Cold War downsizing of U.S. forces in Europe was significant. From 1990 to 1995, USAREUR went from 213,000 military personnel and 62,000 civilian employees to 65,000 military personnel and 19,000 civilian employees. Overall, the Department of the Army lost close to 40 percent of its force structure in an era where deployments had risen 300 percent.

Of the two Cold War-era Army corps in Germany (the V and VII Corps, which were each composed of three divisions, a corps support command [COSCOM], and other enablers), only V Corps remained.

V Corps in the 1990s was smaller and had less combat power than it had during the previous decade, despite enjoying some minor equipment modernizations. Also, its remaining two divisions, the 3rd Infantry Division and the 1st Armored Division, had each lost a ground maneuver brigade, leaving only two.

Not only were the combat arms units that provided the punch reduced in number and scope, but the combat support and combat service support (CSS) branches that provided vital signal, intelligence, and logistics support to U.S. forces in Europe were also dramatically pared.

Without the Soviet threat, what was the purpose of maintaining a still sizable, albeit smaller, U.S. forward presence in Europe? Commenting on this conundrum, the V Corps historian at the time mused, “An Army needs an enemy the way an evangelist needs sin. Without a credible and virulent foe, the service has always

had difficulty justifying itself.”

In this case however, instead of the Army’s presence in Europe being viewed as an unneeded and expensive Cold War holdover, the retention of U.S. troops in Europe became a vital part of NATO’s efforts to stop violence and genocide in the Balkans.

Having been prepared for decades to counter a high-intensity Warsaw Pact invasion, conducting a peace-making operation with just one of its shrunken divisions should have been simple for USAREUR. However, planning for and then dispatching USAREUR forces to the FRY became one of the most cumbersome and difficult deployments experienced by U.S. troops since World War II.

Even before the Berlin Wall rose in a divided Germany during President John F. Kennedy’s tenure, senior commanders in USAREUR recognized that they lacked sufficient transportation units and logistics capabilities



*Task Force Eagle engineers drop a bridge float section from a hastily constructed riverine drop point from their recently flooded basecamp.*

to transition and sustain combat operations against the massive mechanized Warsaw Pact formations they faced. In 1958, the NATO supreme allied commander Europe “doubted that the Seventh Army had the logistics means to conduct sustained combat operations.”

Although defense leaders noted USAREUR’s shortage, sourcing the force for Vietnam became the Army’s main effort from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s; thus, little emphasis was placed on solving USAREUR’s Cold War logistics shortfalls. Instead the Pentagon focused on sourcing the more immediate threat in South-east Asia.

The drop in the active Army’s troop strength following the Vietnam War, the accompanying severe budget cuts, and the adoption of a tiered readiness construct in the 1970s made the Army a hollow, ill-trained and unready force. The unpopularity of the Vietnam War and widespread societal disapproval of most things military caused the U.S. Army to be isolated from the very public it was sworn to protect.

### Post-Vietnam Transformation

Gen. Creighton W. Abrams Jr., chief of staff of the Army in the immediate post-Vietnam period, was determined that the Army would never go to war again without the benefit of a national discussion. He reasoned that senior civilian decision-makers could not escape a public debate if he restructured the Army to rely on its mainly civilian Reserve component troops in order to transition to war.

Correspondingly, Abrams took many active duty logistics units and commands out of the regular Army and either deactivated them or moved them into the Reserve component. Along with this strategy, Abrams increased the number of combat divisions in the active Army to 16 using the newly vacated spaces to help man the new divisions.

He accomplished this through a combination of aggressive recruiting

and restructuring and without raising the overall Army end strength. This dramatic change in force composition was authorized in a gentlemen’s agreement known as the “golden handshake” that Abrams brokered with Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger.

Even before the 1990s drawdown, several Army leaders recognized the danger that the lack of sufficient U.S. European theater CSS units and capabilities had on their organizations. Just a decade before Operation Joint Endeavor, the NATO supreme allied commander Europe, Gen. Bernard W. Rogers, testified before Congress that the Army did not “have sufficient combat service support forces to support our forward deployed forces in Europe.” A year later in 1986, the USAREUR commander, Gen. Glenn K. Otis, testified to Congress that “history warns that there is peril in basing combat operations on inadequate CSS.”

Despite the considered opinions of senior leaders on the need for more logistics units and what history had to say about their importance, the choice to save tanks and artillery rather than the means to move and fuel them indirectly sacrificed the very operational mobility that senior Army leaders had likely hoped to maintain.

By the late 1980s, the Germany-based Seventh U.S. Army—although it was the most powerful and robust field army the nation had ever fielded in peacetime—still lacked sufficient logistics capabilities to sustain its forces. USAREUR thus began the post-Cold War drawdown already gravely short of logistics wherewithal.

When the Army further shed nearly 40 percent of its force structure by 1995 as part of the post-Cold War rightsizing, the trend of cutting logistics in favor of combat arms accelerated, creating an even greater imbalance in the capability of its remaining forces.

The tooth-to-tail ratio became grossly skewed, and the likelihood that USAREUR could conduct op-

erations without being constrained by its own poor logistics stance was close to impossible.

### Getting Past Inadequate Logistics

The rightsizing of USAREUR logistics units was a substantial contributor to the slow and unwieldy deployment of the U.S. Implementation Force (IFOR) into the FRY. For instance, in the area of tactical transportation, V Corps’ sole remaining truck battalion (the 181st Transportation Battalion) was downsized from five line truck companies re-sourced at authorized level of organization (ALO) 1 in 1990 to only three line truck companies by 1995. Of these three companies, one was ALO 2, another was ALO 3, and the third was capped at ALO 4.

The ALO refers to the unit’s authorized level of manning and equipment. An ALO of 1 roughly translates into the unit having 100 percent of personnel authorizations and required equipment on hand. A higher ALO number means that the unit is authorized fewer personnel and less equipment to accomplish the same mission.

The higher headquarters of the 181st Transportation Battalion was the 3rd COSCOM, which also took significant personnel cuts. The 181st Transportation Battalion had a composite ALO of 3, but the 3rd COSCOM headquarters had an ALO of 5. Unfortunately the shortages in the theater’s transportation movement control community were even more acute.

At the theater level, the 1st Theater Movement Control Agency (TMCA), a subordinate command of the also majorly downsized 21st Theater Army Area Command, was responsible for coordinating common-user land transportation assets, conducting container management and transportation contracting for USAREUR customers, and other associated support tasks.

For a deployment outside of Western Europe, the 1st TMCA would have to play a central role in planning and execution. The TMCA needed to



*Deploying Task Force Eagle vehicles and cargo at a staging area at Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, await airlift to Tuzla Air Base in Bosnia.*

be capable of orchestrating multiple transportation modes from many nodes, synchronizing transit coordination and movements, and supervising and modifying transit timelines and agreements with private and public transportation agencies among both NATO partners and nonaligned nations.

Like the 3rd COSCOM and its own headquarters, the 1st TMCA was not adequately manned. Its personnel authorizations were at ALO 8, equating to a fill of just 35 percent. Its subordinate units were also significantly under-resourced. In many cases, the staff of the TMCA was just one person, making sustained and split-based operations impossible.

In theater transportation operations, the 37th Transportation Command of the 21st Theater Army Area Command had only one remaining truck battalion on its roles. Although

better resourced than V Corps transportation units, it too had more missions than means or manpower.

To calculate “faces and spaces” in the post-Cold War rightsizing era, USAREUR and Department of the Army senior leaders opted to harvest much of the theater’s transportation force structure to save billets for its combat arms organizations.

This decision caused much of USAREUR’s difficulty in efficiently moving one of its smaller divisions to the Balkans—never mind how it might attempt to move the entire V Corps to an area of conflict while concurrently providing its sustainment.

### **Deployment Planning**

Throughout the early 1990s, NATO’s thoughts were constantly shifting about what to do about the increasingly ineffective United Nations (U.N.) Protection Force and the

noncombatants who were suffering in the FRY.

Until the Dayton Accords were signed, the continuing deterioration seen in Bosnia—televised atrocities, rape camps, the U.N. Protection Force hostage crisis, the overrunning of U.N. “safe areas,” and predictable follow-on massacres by Serbian troops and paramilitary elements—prompted western public opinion to demand a feasible solution.

Consequently, U.S. European Command and USAREUR planners approached the problem in two ways. One option was to deploy a sizable NATO force to enter the FRY and extract the U.N. Protection Force either peacefully or forcibly.

The other plan called for using a substantial NATO force to extract the U.N. Protection Force and then assume its peacekeeping mission using more robust rules of engagement

to establish effective security.

These two approaches required many of USAREUR's subordinate headquarters to conduct contingency planning for both with little coordinating guidance. The main question that stymied USAREUR's logisticians was how would they support either option, given the theater's now even more modest logistics force structure and the frustrating lack of detail on the intended end state, rules of engagement, and timelines. In essence, too many assumptions and too few facts plagued both military leaders and their exhausted planners.

Prior to the signing of the Dayton Accords on Dec. 14, 1995, NATO and some of its subordinate commands had already conducted planning for a possible U.N. Protection Force extraction mission. In early 1993, the NATO supreme allied commander Europe designated Allied Forces South as the lead in developing an implementation plan for securing peace in Bosnia.

Consequently, Allied Forces South developed and internally staffed Operation Plan 40103 (Operation Disciplined Guard) in November 1993. Although the plan was not executed, many of its concepts were reflected in follow-on planning products.

After the plan's limited release, refinement continued within Allied Forces South and the plan was substantively revised, renumbered, and renamed Operation Plan 40104 (Operation Determined Effort) in 1994.

Recognizing the increasing vulnerability of the U.N. Protection Force caused by increased Serb aggression and ineffectual rules of engagement, Operation Plan 40104 focused on an "in extremis" extraction of the U.N. Protection Force and its replacement with a credible NATO force using NATO's Allied Rapid Reaction Corps as the command element.

Operation Plan 40104 tasked USAREUR (as a force provider) to be prepared to further task organize a heavy brigade (+) from the 1st Armored Division and a logistics sup-

port element from V Corp's 3rd CO-SCOM and select theater enablers for a possible deployment to the FRY.

Because of the increasing danger to the U.N. Protection Force and FRY noncombatants caused by heightened Serb aggression, the U.S. European Command and USAREUR began developing a more rapid extraction concept using the U.S. Southern European Task Force (Airborne) (SETAF) as the primary extraction force. This planning initiative became known as the quick reaction option.

### Final Planning

Up until November 1995, both plans—the lighter SETAF-centric extraction plan and the heavy 1st Armored Division option—remained viable. Either could be selected based on ground conditions, international political developments, or internal NATO machinations. What connected both options was a reliance on the same austere theater logistics base.

Ultimately, the heavy IFOR peace-making force concept prevailed. As part of the operational design, the United Kingdom and France would control two division sectors in Bosnia while the U.S. IFOR would control the remaining sector, Multi-National Division North. The U.S. IFOR would be formed from the 1st Armored Division and select V Corps units. Along with these heavy forces came the need for heavy logistics, especially transportation.

The occupation of the U.S. sector in Bosnia proved to be more challenging than the occupation of the French and British divisions. British and French IFOR elements were essentially already deployed; they had been part of the rapid reaction force that deployed in 1995 to buttress the failing U.N. Protection Force after the Srebrenica massacre. Once the Dayton Accords were signed, they were simply reflagged from the U.N. and put under the command of NATO's Allied Rapid Reaction Corps.

The Dayton Accords required that

some 60,000 IFOR troops (20,000 of which were U.S.) arrive almost immediately in the contested areas of the FRY to supervise the agreed-upon ceasefire, patrol the zones of separation, ensure the separation of belligerents, conduct major weapons cantonment, and fulfill other military provisions.

The short window to meet this force arrival goal presented a dramatic challenge for USAREUR's logisticians, especially for transportation units that would have to execute a large surface deployment within a short time frame.

As part of the Dayton Accords working group, Gen. Wesley K. Clark promised Serb President Slobodan Milosevic that U.S. forces could arrive almost immediately after the Dayton Accords were signed and, in doing so, inadvertently compressed an already difficult force projection timeline.

Not privy to agreed dates of arrival because of White House imposed compartmentalization, Joint Chiefs of Staff caveats, and other factors, USAREUR units lost almost 10 days of preparation time, adding more stress on an already unrealistically ambitious deployment timeline.

This historical assessment of the U.S. deployment in Operation Joint Endeavor will continue in the March–April 2014 issue of *Army Sustainment*. Part II will focus on the actual IFOR deployment and the impact of the logistics forces downsizing on the operation.

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