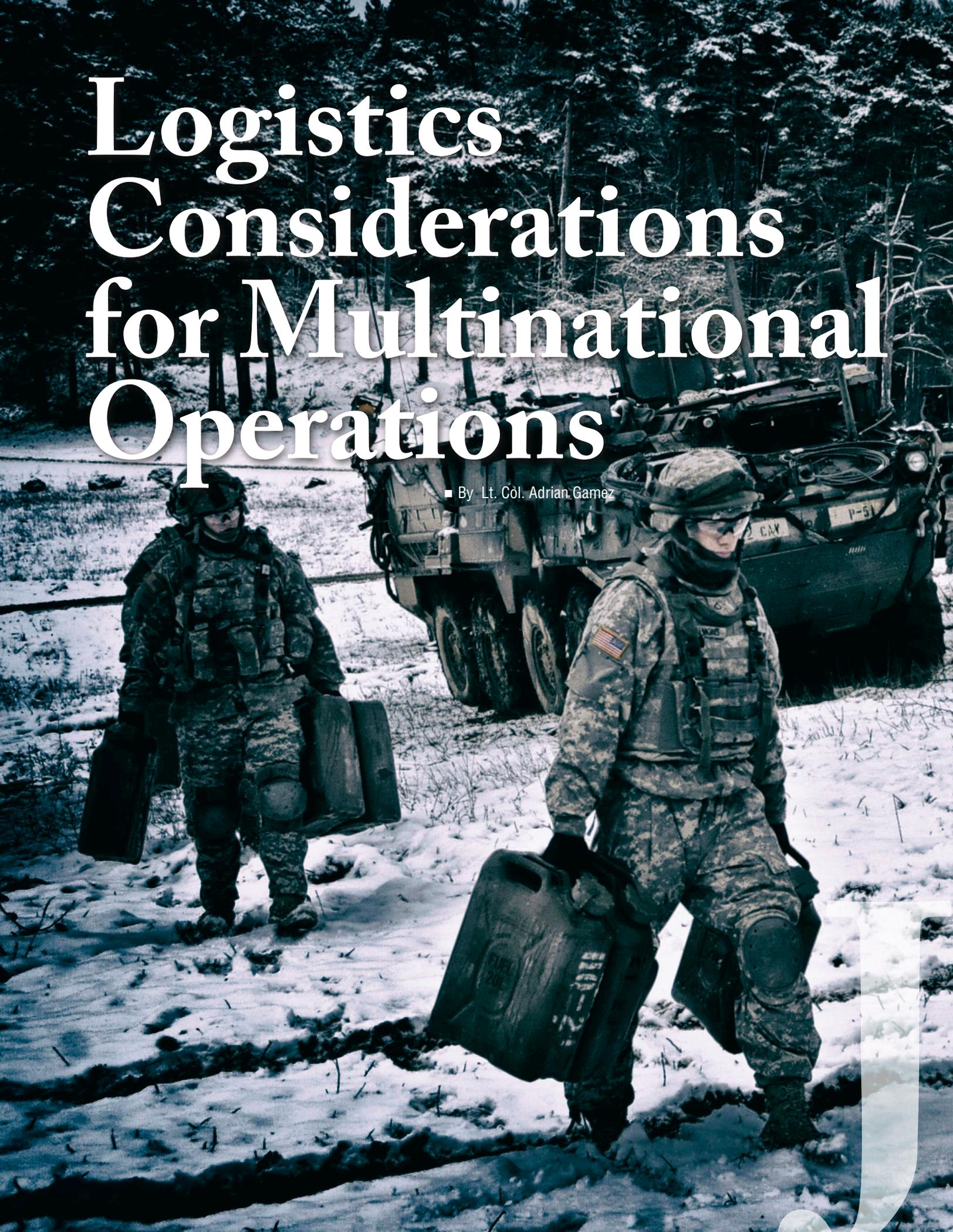


Logistics Considerations for Multinational Operations

■ By Lt. Col. Adrian Gamez





Forward support troop Soldiers from the 4th Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, deliver supplies at Hohenfels Training Area, Germany, on Jan. 27, 2015. (Photo by Sgt. William Tanner)

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Understanding six key elements will help logisticians successfully conduct multinational operations at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center.

Succeeding at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) in Hohenfels, Germany, is about having aggressively trained formations that can conduct unified land operations. The role of logisticians in these operations is twofold. Not only must logisticians sustain their brigades; they also must perform their wartime tasks, often simultaneously. Brigade and battalion commanders must understand that maneuver formations cannot function without their logistics tails.

Brigade formations do not move without fuel, equipment does not recover or repair itself, Soldiers do not heal themselves, ammunition does not distribute itself, and parts do not materialize out of thin air.

It is only through the concerted efforts of the brigade's sustainment team that it all happens. This article is about the essential, logistics considerations in a multinational environment that are often neglected during a typical JMRC training event.

Six Elements for Success

To win at JMRC when conducting multinational operations, logisticians must understand and incorporate the following:

- National caveats.
- Task organizations.
- Command and support relationships.
- Key enabling systems.
- Maneuver courses of action (COAs) and concepts of support.
- Support rehearsals.

When logisticians understand these six elements, they are better equipped to plan for and execute sustainment for their brigade combat teams (BCTs) that include task-organized, multinational formations.

Sustainment may be a logistician's responsibility, but this does not alleviate BCT commanders of being concerned about it. Maneuver commanders may want to move their formations, but if they do not consider their logistics tails, they will not be maneuvering far.

National Caveats

Defense spending is diminishing while international security demands continue to rise. It is more important than ever that we as a NATO fighting force continue to fight together as a multinational force. All contributing nations, including the United States, have restrictions, or "national caveats," to which they are tied.

These caveats outline what their Soldiers can or cannot do and what support their Soldiers can provide during a training exercise. The caveats can vary from tactical applications to which countries can provide medical care for their Soldiers to operational concerns for materiel acquisition.

Before sustainment commanders can truly understand task organizations and the necessary support requirements, it is imperative that their staffs carefully think through what resources each country brings to the fight and at what capacities they can participate.

To mitigate logistics shortfalls, strategic-level negotiations take place with authorities at the State Department, the combatant commands, and Army service component commands. The result of these negotiations is known as an acquisition and cross-servicing agreement (ACSA).

An ACSA is a bilateral agreement between the United States and its allies or coalition partners in exchange for support. This support could include classes I (subsistence), III (petroleum, oils, and lubricants), V (ammunition), and VII (major end items) and transportation. ACSAs are carefully composed to provide mutual logistics support in order to reduce an individual nation's burden, enable flexibility for critical common logistics enablers, and increase interoperability between nations.

ACSAs feed into exercise support agreements (ESAs), which clearly define what countries can or cannot contribute to a training exercise. These agreements are contractual and determine cost estimates for all signing nations. Each participating nation's ministry of defense must sign the



Capt. Jason Nolan, part of the Joint Multinational Readiness Center Falcon Team, teaches a class of German 472nd Logistics Battalion soldiers about the 9-line medevac report during multinational medic training in Hohenfels, Germany, on March 23, 2015. (Photo by Sgt. Gemma Iglesias)

ESAs in order to establish the support relationships. Without clear pictures of these agreements, it is very easy to accidentally break the law or spend unauthorized funds in support of multinational partners.

At JMRC, logisticians must carefully consider the resources each nation brings with it as well as what resources the United States is allowed to provide. Not all countries bring the same resources for training and the United States cannot always solve their resourcing shortfalls.

A prime example of this consistent trend was observed during a recent JMRC rotation. One nation arrived with .50-caliber machine guns but did not bring firing pins.

JMRC saw that its supply system had the same firing pins in stock, but it could not legally provide that nation with the firing pins needed for the training exercise because resupply for weapons parts was not included in the ESA for that exercise. This same issue can arise for any type of support if it is not clearly anno-

tated in the ESA and understood by the sustainment personnel on the ground.

National caveats and international agreements are critical elements of operating with multinational task forces. The training at JMRC provides insight to these challenges that will be faced in any coalition partnership in the future.

Task Organizations

JMRC asserts that three groups of Soldiers must understand both task organization and command and support relationships. These Soldiers are commanders (brigade and battalion), operations officers (brigade and battalion S-3s), and logisticians (support operations officers [SPOs] and brigade S-4s).

Everyone has seen task organization charts posted in command posts—the units depicted in boxes with solid or dotted lines drawn to align units underneath a headquarters element. The task organization represents types of formations by

function on the battlefield. Typical U.S. brigades have two combined arms battalions, one cavalry squadron, an artillery battalion, a brigade engineer battalion, and a support battalion.

When supporting an armor regiment, one should understand how many tanks are in a tank company, how much fuel the tanks will consume, and how many personnel will require food, water, and a basic load of ammunition. By studying task organizations, commanders can identify what missions their units can conduct with the equipment and personnel available and also what can or cannot be logistically supported.

Logisticians must have mitigation strategies for what cannot be supported to overcome the shortfalls in logistics or must clearly articulate the shortfalls to their commanders, identifying where the unit can and will assume risk during operations.

Likewise, commanders and logisticians must understand the multinational partners operating inside a



A Romanian officer briefs Col. John DiGiambattista, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, on battlefield components during an exercise at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, on Nov. 3, 2014. (Photo by Sgt. Ian Schell)

brigade’s task organization. Supporting multinational partners is not a new concept; we have seen this throughout U.S. history, through both world wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and in Iraq and Afghanistan.

U.S. forces must not only embrace but also take ownership of the multinational units operating within their assigned task organizations. This obstacle is often remedied by assigning liaison officers with proper communications equipment in command posts.

To overcome persistent language problems, liaison officers should focus on relaying critical information about the formations. Some logistics examples include the following questions:

- How many personnel do they have?
- What equipment did they bring?
- What is their bulk fuel capacity?
- What types of fuel do they use?

- How will they make repairs and requests for parts?
- What ammunition do they require?
- What are the national caveats that outline what the nations will do and provide?
- With what resources will they sustain themselves?
- What are they legally allowed to provide?

Despite differences within each nation’s military, the basic needs are the same. All classes of supply are necessary to sustain any force. U.S. logisticians cannot always provide sustainment for all in accordance with the national caveats, the ACSA, or the ESA, so the brigade’s lead logistician (the SPO) must ask with what and how these multinational formations are going to support themselves.

Once logisticians understand the multinational task force’s task organi-

zation, how multinational forces will sustain themselves, and what support U.S. forces can provide, they can begin to focus on the subsequent impacts on sustainment plans.

The focus can now shift to determining the capabilities of the formations, the support requirements, and the shortfalls in logistics that either higher-level U.S. logistics forces or partner nations will fill. With this understanding, logisticians can start analyzing the command and support relationships within multinational task forces.

Command and Support

In addition to understanding the task organization, planners need to appreciate command and support relationships. At the most basic level, these relationships identify who is responsible for resupply and who supports whom within the task or-

ganization. With the national caveats and international agreements, we know what is authorized, but command and support relationships reveal exactly who is responsible.

Although a command relationship may change, it does not necessarily mean the support relationship will also change. A company may be attached to a different battalion for a specific mission, but the original support relationships remain unchanged. This will have an impact on resupply operations and the overall concept of support.

Another implication of command and support relationships that is often overlooked concerns the brigade support area (BSA). Many units, such as logistics support companies from both multinational and U.S. formations, can be located and operate inside the BSA. Higher echelons of logistics can be tenants inside the BSA. Elements of the brigade engineer battalion are also generally BSA tenants.

The BSA houses not just the brigade support battalion (BSB) but a conglomeration of formations that have converged in one location under the control of the BSB commander. This makes command and support relationships critical within the BSA.

The BSB cannot possibly defend the BSA by itself. Therefore, the BSB commander must develop a command relationship with the tenant units and have it approved by the brigade commander. The relationship inside the BSA is called tactical control.

Every tenant unit must be integrated into the base defense plan. Although employment location and terrain clearly dictate who provides support and security, available assets are also an important consideration. It is the logistician's responsibility to advise the commander on these issues, ensure there is a clear picture of all available logistics support assets across the brigade area of operations, and avoid placing all direct support responsibilities on the BSB.

Task-organizing multinational companies or platoons with other nations'

forces increases combat power and capability; however, it also creates shortfalls in logistics. In terms of national caveats, it is possible that a nation will not agree to feed and fuel attachments, generating a logistics shortfall.

For example, task-organizing a Danish tank company to a Romanian task force forces the brigade logistics officer to consider how this temporary task organization change will be sustained. With no task organization change, the Danish tank company receives its sustainment from the Danish logistics company and the Romanian task force receives its supplies from the Romanian logistics company.

With the task organization change, the Romanian logistics company cannot conduct sustainment operations for the Danish tank company. Because of incompatible equipment, the Romanian logistics company cannot cross-level repair parts or provide fuel for the Danish tank company. Therefore, the Danish logistics company must maintain its support relationship with the attached Danish tank company.

The problem remains when task-organizing U.S. Army companies into

other nations' task forces. For example, a U.S. tank company is attached to a Romanian task force. The Romanian forward support companies are not equipped to make repairs on U.S. equipment, and fuel compatibility is a challenge because U.S. forces use JP8 and NATO forces use diesel fuel. The Romanian task force also cannot feed the U.S. formation because of national caveats.

The solution may be to have the U.S. forward support company remain in direct support with the attached U.S. tank company or the BSB, sending supplies to the Romanian task force for the U.S. tank company.

Also, who is responsible for reporting logistics data for the attached U.S. formation? This requires synchronization and a common understanding of the support plan. Without understanding task organization changes and command support relationships, units will struggle to figure out who is supporting whom.

Key Enabling Systems

The next step is for logisticians to help their brigades see themselves in terms of combat power. Logisticians must help their brigades to better visualize combat power by understand-



A German soldier practices moving a litter onto a UH-1 Iroquois helicopter during multinational medic training at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, on March 23, 2015. (Photo by Sgt. Gemma Iglesias)



Dutch army Sgt. Bart Berkhout, a Leopard II armored recovery vehicle commander, hooks into his vehicle's internal communications network to assist his driver with backing up to connect with a Stryker. (Photo by Sgt. Jacob Sawyer)

ing the key enabling systems available. Logisticians in U.S. formations must look at the unit's modified tables of organization and equipment, be cognizant of key battlefield equipment, and zero in on prescribed pacing items. They should look at the key enabling systems by warfighting function and assess readiness by using the methodology of "shoot, move, communicate, and sustain."

Why do we need to track equipment by warfighting function? Equipment is designed to fulfill a specific mission and purpose. For example, the M9 armored combat earthmover, high-mobility engineer excavator, and D7 bulldozer are critical enablers during defense preparation. If the unit does not track this equipment properly, then it may not be fully mission capable when needed.

Conversely, when the unit transitions to the offense, assault breacher vehicles may be the most needed

pieces of equipment. Understanding the mission, the equipment, and what the BCT wants to achieve is a balancing act.

By understanding the key enabling systems, the logistician can recommend a shift in maintenance priorities in order to support mission requirements. This applies equally to multinational formations.

What primarily concerns logisticians is the equipment used to distribute, refuel, store, lift, recover, and evacuate personnel and equipment. The multinational S-4 or logistics company commander must provide the SPOs with information about their logistics equipment. By understanding the key logistics enabling systems, one can glean information about bulk fuel capacity, evacuation assets, and recovery assets.

Logisticians must define assets relative to combat power and develop ways to display such information in

an easy-to-read format. The graphic representation of the combat power and sustainment capabilities of the formations is called the logistics common operational picture.

This picture is the start point, or what we call start exercise data, which allows the unit to see itself logistically before operations commence. Without start exercise baseline data, logisticians cannot provide viable or suitable concepts of support capable of sustaining maneuver task forces.

COAs and Concepts of Support

Developing concepts of support requires logisticians (the BSB commander, brigade S-4, and the SPO) to understand the brigade's COA. COA development is a critical step, and logisticians must be represented throughout the process.

The logistician's job is to use the running estimates for key enabling systems and combat power to deter-

mine how to provide sustainment to the maneuver forces. The logistician assesses the logistics feasibility of each war-gamed COA, determines critical requirements for each logistics function, identifies potential problems and deficiencies, and decides if support can keep up with the tempo of the operation.

Logisticians must constantly assess the status of all logistics functions required to support the COA and compare it to available assets. To a logistician, the availability of the assets includes not only what equipment is on the battlefield but also what is not mission capable (NMC). The logistician must then let the BCT commander know whether or not NMC equipment will be available in time for mission execution.

Logisticians must identify potential shortfalls in logistics and develop mitigation strategies to eliminate or reduce the effects of these shortfalls. Accurately predicting requirements for each logistics function can ensure continuous sustainment.

Logisticians verify movement times and ensure assets are available to support each COA. What comes out of the COA approval is a warning order that provides the overarching brigade mission and subordinate battalion missions (the main effort and supporting efforts), the updated commander's intent, the concept of the operation (what unit is going where and what it will be doing), principal tasks assigned to subordinate units, updated time lines, and rehearsals.

Once logisticians understand the approved COAs, they can then write concepts of support. When logisticians take part in COA development, the concept of support outlines are scripted simultaneously in a parallel and integrated process, not after the brigade's planning efforts. Logisticians run into problems when they wait to produce the concepts of support until after the operation orders are produced.

The concepts of support detail how logisticians will sustain units throughout each phase of operations. Ro-

tations at JMRC generally occur in three phases: movement to contact, defend, and attack. Three operational phases require three separate and distinct concepts of support.

A change in phase is a change in task; a change in task is a change in the concept of operation. If the concept of the operation changes, so does the concept of support. Once the concept of support is scripted, the logistics plan becomes an executable operation.

Support Rehearsals

The logistics leaders within the brigade must ensure that other leaders understand the concept of the operation, the concept of support, and the synchronization of movement, maintenance, medical evacuation, and resupply. The brigade's logisticians do this by conducting support rehearsals.

The rehearsal illustrates the commander's intent and creates the conditions for common understanding of the concept of the operation. Commanders use rehearsals to identify additional friction points and increased risks and to develop mitigation techniques for both.

Logisticians conduct sustainment rehearsals to confirm that subordinate logistics units understand when, where, and how sustainment is going to occur through all phases of operations over time and space. The rehearsal allows leaders to specify what the brigade is going to do and how the logisticians will sustain the fight.

A rehearsal script is key to understanding the operation. A script is the start point that focuses the rehearsal, organizes it, and keeps it on track. The support rehearsal script sets the conditions for synchronization throughout each phase of the operation, ensuring all participants know their roles and what they will be expected to brief. Without a script to focus the rehearsal, the lack of synchronization results in a lack of common understanding of time, space, adjacent units, and subordinate logistics formations.

Scripting has some challenges. For example, reading the script verbatim may cause inflexibility during re-

hearsal execution. It is important that subordinate units are aware of their opportunities to relay pertinent information and coordinate all issues.

In multinational formations, if the partners, because of language barriers, do not understand what they are reading or are confused by what is said, it might create a logistics shortfall during execution. If the script has not allowed room for deviation or no one has taken the time to ensure all U.S. jargon has been clearly translated, both the U.S. Soldiers and multinational partners will be set up for failure. The script should generate an opportunity for the use of creativity, critical thinking, and initiative.

Multinational allies and partners come to JMRC to train alongside U.S. formations, offering opportunities to train together and to grow stronger and better. These opportunities include improving logistics operations and interoperability.

In order to accomplish this effectively, logisticians must understand the complexities of working in multinational formations and the unique challenges logisticians face in the form of national caveats and orders, complex task organizations, unorthodox command and support relationships, unanticipated key enabling systems, and the inclusion of all multinational partners in developing concepts of support and sustainment rehearsals.

Logisticians cannot be the weak link in a multinational operation. All who come to JMRC arrive prepared to train with open minds and ready to learn. JMRC fulfills its obligation to make every unit better.

Lt. Col. Adrian Gamez is the senior sustainment observer-coach/trainer at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany. He holds a bachelor's degree from North Georgia College and a master's degree in management from Webster University. He is a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College.