

# Sustaining a Complex Theater in a Manning-Restricted Environment

■ By Maj. Gen. Paul C. Hurley Jr. and Lt. Col. Sidney A. Harris



*Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christina Winfield and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Anthony Sloan, logisticians with the 310th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Advise and Assist team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), 1st Theater Sustainment Command Operational Command Post, track the receipt of a shipment of repair parts acquired by the Iraqi security forces through foreign military sales. (Photo by Capt. A. Sean Taylor)*

In an environment of shrinking Department of Defense resources, the U.S. Army Central and 1st Theater Sustainment Command (1st TSC) commanders are coping with a complex operational environment that is force manning level (FML)-restricted and contract-enabled. The complexity of these operational variables, coupled with split-based sustainment mission command, required the 1st TSC to design an innovative headquarters structure that enabled it to operate effectively at all levels, tactical through strategic, with a smaller footprint in theater.

The 1st TSC developed a solution that reduced logistics force structure overhead while increasing mission command capability and capacity. By combining the expeditionary sustainment command (ESC) and TSC structure into a mission-tailored operational command post (OCP), the sustainment community streamlined the support structure required to orchestrate tactical and operational logistics across the Central Command (CENTCOM) theater without diminishing strategic effects.

### **ASCC Enabling Units**

An Army service component command's (ASCC's) theater-enabling units include a TSC, theater aviation brigade, theater signal command, theater engineer command, theater medical command, and a military intelligence brigade.

Together these enabling commands and brigades form the architecture that deploying or rotational units plug into within a combatant commander's (COCOM's) area of responsibility (AOR). These units work under the direction of the ASCC commander and allow units to shoot, move, communicate, and sustain themselves within the theater.

### **TSC Responsibilities**

The TSC, as the senior logistics headquarters in theater, has a dual mission: setting the theater's logistics infrastructure during Phase 0

(shape) to support future operations, and providing mission command for tactical and operational logistics formations as they provide sustainment support to a combined joint task force (CJTF) or to U.S. maneuver elements.

A TSC sets conditions to enable Army and coalition land forces to win in a complex operational environment. The TSC, as an extension of the ASCC, assists with the administrative control of Army forces in theater and provides the joint force with Title 10 support, to include setting the theater, organizing (tailoring forces to requirements), supplying, equipping, training, building partner capacity, mobilizing and demobilizing units, outfitting and repairing equipment, and constructing and maintaining facilities.

As the senior logistics headquarters, the TSC plans, coordinates, and resources all Army or lead-service logistics requirements while synchronizing theaterwide distribution.

The TSC supports both the ASCC as a key theater enabler and provides sustainment in support of operations executed by the theater's combined force land component command (CFLCC). This includes maintaining logistics overwatch of the theater and sustaining U.S. and, as necessary, coalition land power forces in support of national policy, the COCOM's theater campaign plan, and the ASCC's theater security cooperation plan.

The TSC accomplishes the ASCC's theater security cooperation goals by setting the theater and continuously shaping the environment through its persistent presence, exercises, seminars, and key engagements with regional partners. In short, the TSC provides a sustainment mission command structure for the ASCC and supports all phases of operations, from Phase 0 (shape) through Phase 5 (enable civil authority).

### **TSC and ESC Planning Tasks**

The TSC is not structured with enough depth to provide long-term support for a CJTF or multinational

## FEATURES

The 1st Theater Sustainment Command provides a template that may help shape Army sustainment doctrine to support a complex theater with a smaller force.

force at the tactical and low operational levels of war while simultaneously rendering strategic- and high operational-level support to the ASCC. (See figure 1.)

The TSC relies on the ESC to assume tactical logistics responsibilities in support of the joint operations area (JOA) so that it can resume its operational-level sustainment mission command and strategic-level theater-setting responsibilities.

To ensure understanding of the TSC's and ESC's roles in the current operational environment, we must examine the planning capability in both the ESC and the TSC within the FML-restricted, contract-enabled sustainment environment.

Contract-enabled logistics is necessary primarily because of theaterwide FML restrictions. The heavy reliance on contracts for sustainment means that the TSC and ESC must anticipate logistics requirements much farther in advance. Unfortunately, the ESC does not have a G-5 (plans) "long range" planning section autho-

rized on its modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE).

Ideally, an ESC supports CJTF operations by executing support at the tactical and low operational levels within the G-3's current operations (CUOPS) and future operations (FUOPS) planning horizons. The ESC provides sustainment and synchronizes its support with the TSC, which operates at the high operational and strategic levels within the G-3 FUOPS and G-5 planning horizons in support of the ASCC and the COCOM.

Any migration of TSC staff energy to the tactical level, the domain of the ESC, degrades the ability of the TSC to plan and operate at the strategic level. This typically occurs when the TSC conducts sustainment support for unified land operations in support of the CFLCC or a CJTF.

If the ESC concentrates on the JOA's requirements in support of the CJTF, the TSC is not encumbered with tactical- and low operational-level sustainment requirements and

can focus on long-term, theaterwide support to the ASCC.

In essence, the TSC commander assumes the role of the deputy commanding general for sustainment for the ASCC and uses the TSC staff to execute ASCC shaping tasks at the strategic level and in long-range planning.

### Creating a Hybrid OCP

The 1st TSC has maintained a forward presence in the CENTCOM AOR since 2006 when it replaced the 377th TSC. The 1st TSC assigned personnel to one of three teams (red, white, or blue). It deployed each team for a nine-month period corresponding to the deployment rotation of an ESC.

The staff was a combined TSC and ESC headquarters in Kuwait that provided sustainment mission command for up to 22,000 Soldiers, civilians, and contractors across the CENTCOM AOR. Even with a hybrid sustainment headquarters structure, consisting of a full ESC

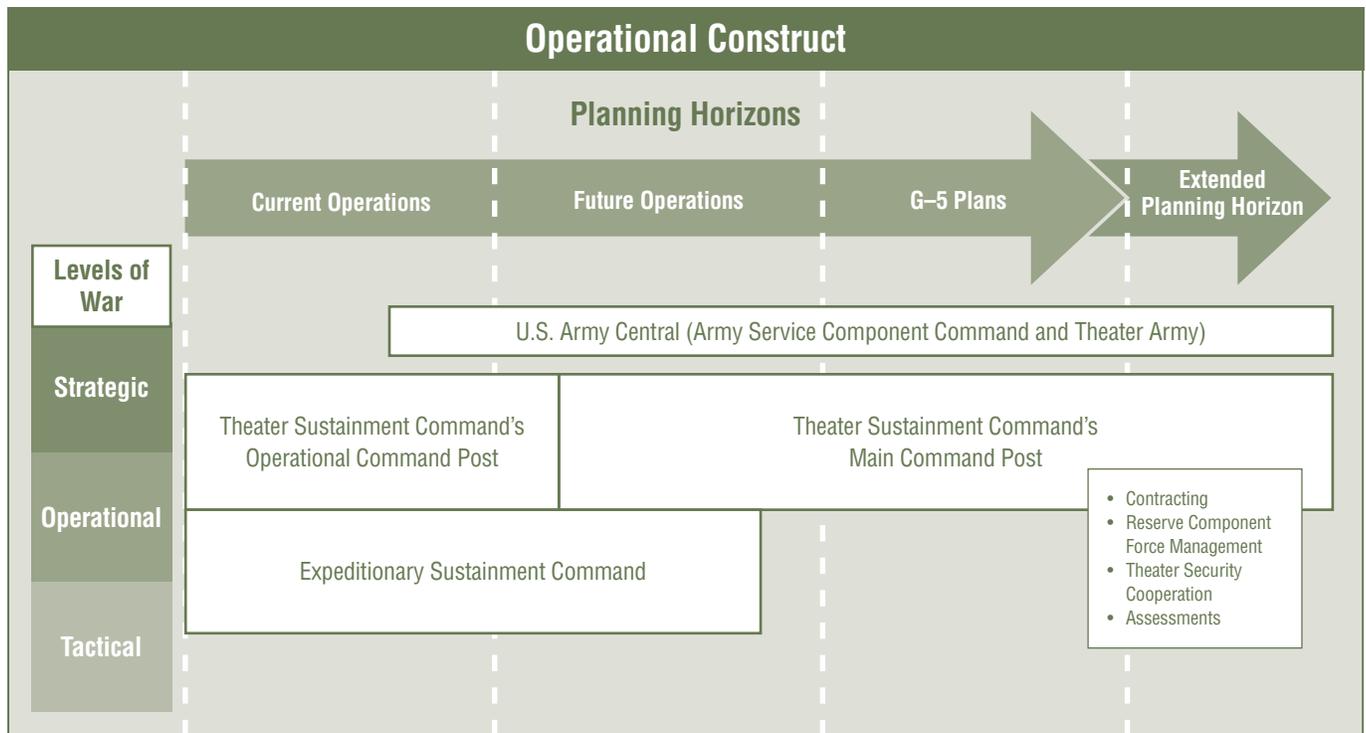


Figure 1. This figure illustrates the roles of the theater sustainment command (TSC) and expeditionary sustainment command (ESC) in planning. The ESC staff operates at the low operational and tactical levels of planning, while the TSC focuses on the strategic and high operational levels of planning in support of the Army service component command.

with TSC augmentation, the OCP still did not have the depth needed to maintain multiple command posts with full functionality across all staff sections.

To meet the increasing velocity and complexity of sustainment operations in the CENTCOM region, the 1st TSC developed a unique solution in which the TSC main command post (MCP) located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, shapes long-term conditions and provides rapid reach-back support to a hybrid TSC and ESC OCP in theater. This solution reduces force structure overhead and increases mission command capability and capacity.

To compensate for its split-based operations and growing operational mission set in theater, the OCP leveraged the CUOPS and FUOPS execution capability of the ESC and the long-range plans capability of the TSC. This hybrid OCP has effectively managed sustainment operations across the most active and volatile region in the world.

### Assigning Responsibilities

The hybrid structure required the staff to develop terms of reference that outlined the specific responsibilities of each command post. These responsibilities were broken down by functional area and planning horizon.

**The TSC MCP.** The TSC MCP focused on the long-range (G-5) planning horizon and on the tasks of setting the theater, theater security cooperation activities, force management and generation, predeployment training for incoming units, and reach-back support across all staff sections at Fort Bragg.

**The TSC in the OCP.** The TSC forward element (part of the hybrid OCP structure) focused on near-term planning (CUOPS and FUOPS) and sustainment mission command at the high operational and strategic levels. Additionally, the 1st TSC OCP team coordinated with strategic partners such as the Army Materiel Command, Trans-

portation Command, Defense Logistics Agency, and CENTCOM to obtain sustainment effects in theater.

**The ESC in the OCP.** Lastly, the ESC focused on near-term planning for sustainment mission command at the low operational and tactical levels. Fundamentally, the ESC staff was dedicated to day-to-day tactical-level logistics across the theater.

### Considerations

Because of its unique role to set logistics conditions at the high operational and strategic levels, the TSC OCP cell that augments the ESC staff must be configured with the maturity and depth of experience required to assist the ASCC with its theater-shaping functions. This is especially important given the staff reductions associated with the new 5.4 ASCC MTOE.

The residual effects of the ASCC 5.4 MTOE transition, in which some operational and strategic ASCC responsibilities were migrated to the TSC, increased the requirement for an experienced TSC augmentation cell. In response to this unique situation, the 1st TSC developed a hybrid OCP that combined the full ESC staff and a mission-tailored TSC OCP team to meet current and future sustainment mission command requirements of the CENTCOM AOR.

Whether it was by design, good planning, or pure happenstance, the 1st TSC developed a hybrid ESC-TSC structure that could be the start point for future force management design initiatives targeting perceived excess structure in the ESC and TSC.

The complexity of the current operational environment, coupled with the reduced size and experience level of the ESC and TSC, required the 1st TSC to innovatively address expanding mission command requirements while minimizing the size of the logistics footprint in theater. Under this construct, the TSC OCP cell provides tactical and operational sustainment mission command in

theater while simultaneously setting operational and strategic conditions for the ASCC.

The 1st TSC has developed an innovative way to operate in the increasingly complex, FML-restricted, contract-enabled operational environment with lower structural overhead and proven sustainment results. Ultimately, the Army could adjust sustainment doctrine and make the hybrid OCP approach standard across the TSCs to create efficiency in support of the Army's reduction to 450,000.

By combining their capabilities into a mission-tailored OCP, the ESC and TSC improve the synergy between the ASCC's theater-setting and shaping activities and streamline the support structure required to orchestrate tactical and operational logistics across the theater.

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Maj. Gen. Paul C. Hurley Jr. is the commanding general of the 1st Theater Sustainment Command. He was commissioned through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Texas A&M in July 1986. He holds a bachelor's degree in engineering technology from Texas A&M, a master's degree in industrial engineering from the University of Tennessee, and a master's degree in strategic studies from the U.S. Air Force Air University. He is a graduate of the Transportation Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the Army Command and General Staff College, and the Air Force War College.

Lt. Col. Sidney A. Harris is the deputy chief of staff for the 1st Theater Sustainment Command. He was commissioned through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Virginia Tech in 1995. He holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Radford University and a master's degree in health science from Touro University. He is a graduate of the Transportation Officer Basic Course, the Combined Logistics Captains Career Course, and Intermediate Level Education.