



*Soldiers from D Company, 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, conduct combined assault river crossing operations using German M3 amphibious rigs at the Elbe River during exercise Heide Sturm Shock near Storkau, Germany, on June 6, 2015. (Photo by Markus Rauchenberger)*

## Joint Logistics and the Future of Global Conflict

Reliable U.S. military logistics leadership in the U.S. European Command theater and an adaptive and relevant defense logistics enterprise are key to effecting a strong and safe Europe.

■ By Lt. Col. Douglas R. Burke and 1st Lt. Matthew A. Gaumer

When the current geographically based combatant command (COMCOM) structure was devised after World War II, continental boundaries were defined and ideological and economic systems were divided. Recently, however, geopolitical events in Africa, Asia, and Europe have shattered that paradigm. Now, crises and insecurity

erupt in one place and spill over into others. This has left nation states, militaries, and international organizations reeling for solutions for staying ahead of this constant upheaval.

The U.S. European Command (EUCOM) has had to improvise in the face of mounting challenges: a revanchist Russia, hostilities along NATO countries' borders, the transnational

threat posed by Daesh, homegrown terrorism in Europe, and contagious disease outbreaks in nearby West Africa. The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World forecasts that this quickly evolving and frenetic environment will be the status quo for years to come.

The solution, as it nearly always is, will be for Europe to have an appro-

appropriate defense posture underpinned by a robust and adaptive logistics enterprise that is exercised with a whole-of-government approach. This can be enabled only through the concerted efforts of the U.S. military and its partners in the region.

### From Cooperation to Combat

In many ways, 9/11 marked the start of a new era for how geographic COCOMs conduct business. The U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) was the focal point of the nation's longest war and the birthplace of counterinsurgency doctrine, while the U.S. Northern Command was dedicated to guarding the homeland.

As major combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan came to their politically promised end, the U.S. Pacific Command became the strategic pivot point. EUCOM was not exempt from change either, as it was home to hundreds of thousands of troops on guard against the former Soviet threat.

With the U.S. military's operational focus shifted to the CENTCOM theater, EUCOM radically adapted its mission for the post-Cold War world with an emphasis on theater security cooperation principally with NATO allies and partners in the region. This focus was articulated in "Phase Zero" initiatives meant to shape the theater through security training.

Another feature of EUCOM after 9/11 was its importance as a supporting COCOM. It served as the gateway for operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Africa.

Since 2014, however, Europe again has become the center of global insecurity because of ongoing crises in Ukraine and Syria and the expansion of Daesh across the Middle East and North Africa. With instability in Europe and threats encroaching from all directions, the idea of Europe as a bastion of peace has vanished along with predictable Cold War paradigms.

This change has caused EUCOM to shed its exclusive emphasis on the-

ater security cooperation and recover its role as a unified command for deterrence and combat operations.

In a sense, this has required a renewed focus on Joint Publication 1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States, which states that the primary objective of a geographic COCOM is to "detect, deter, and prevent attacks against the US, its territories and bases, and employ appropriate force should deterrence fail."

But unlike CENTCOM's management of kinetic operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria that are almost entirely contained within its area of responsibility, EUCOM's combat role is a hybrid one. It is responsible for leading the defense of NATO countries in the Baltics and Turkey, counterterrorism operations on the European continent and its periphery, and sustained military-to-military training to bolster partner-nation response capabilities.

Perhaps the most distinctive part of this new arrangement is that EUCOM must frequently direct cross-COCOM operations. EUCOM's interoperability with the U.S. Africa Command and CENTCOM is a permanent reality based on solid partnerships and basing in Europe.

EUCOM's relationships with its European partners has become another critical factor that the command has had to recommit to in an era of multilateral mission requirements. The centrality of relationships guides all aspects of EUCOM logistics planning and operations. It involves a great deal of coordination, including the integration of the respective logistics assets of each NATO partner, the cross-utilization of transportation and warehousing assets from various allied militaries, and especially joint-basing agreements.

EUCOM and the United States could scarcely accomplish missions and realize their global logistics enterprise capabilities without the freedom of movement that European partners provide.

### Strategic Logistics Posture

When Europe was thrust back into the center of global security concerns after the Russian invasions of Crimea and eastern Ukraine in early 2014, a number of issues became clear to EUCOM logistics planners:

- Years of downsizing forward deployed resources (troops and equipment) reduced the ability of the United States to respond to complex contingencies.
- Recent campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq encouraged logistics planning and operating methods that are less suitable for a more mature theater such as Europe.
- Multinational and interagency partnerships are more critical than ever in supporting deployment and sustainment operations.
- Having a forward deployed presence in Europe is critical for seizing the initiative in quickly changing contingencies.

Responding to events in the EUCOM area of responsibility is largely a logistics endeavor, especially with the use of regionally aligned forces (RAF), which have been operating in the EUCOM area of responsibility for several years now.

The lead organization for planning, synchronizing, and overseeing the full scope of logistics operations is the EUCOM J-4, Directorate of Logistics (ECJ4). The central mission of the ECJ4 is to provide the best logistics guidance to the EUCOM commander, but it is also the de facto mission control organization for all distribution and sustainment planning and execution in the 51 countries within its area of responsibility. Because of this requirement, ECJ4 must anticipate and rapidly adapt to changes in the theater.

### The ECJ4 Structure

One example of ECJ4's adaptation to changing mission dynamics is the modifications that it has made to its structure to align it with operational requirements rather than the legacy

security cooperation role. Internal restructuring has made the directorate more responsive and nimble.

Until March 2016, ECJ4 was structured much like other COCOM logistics directorates. The legacy organization consisted of multiple divisions: ECJ41 (front office and personnel support), ECJ42 (medical logistics planning and surgeon general), ECJ43 (theater mission command), ECJ44 (theater engineering), ECJ45 (logistics planning), and ECJ46 (logistics information systems policy).

At the behest of a former ECJ4 director, the directorate was streamlined to achieve better symmetry with the Joint Staff J-4 and, therefore, provide complementary business processes, strategic planning, and logistics analysis. The end product of this undertaking was realizing more complete unity of effort between federal departments, agencies, military services, the Joint Staff, COCOMs, and service components.

The new ECJ4 framework consists of two divisions (replacing six) led by O-6 officers who report directly to the ECJ4 director (an O-8). The Operational Logistics Division (headed by the deputy director for operational logistics) merged medical logistics operations and engineering. In aggregate, this is a logistics powerhouse supported through the Joint Logistics Operations Center.

The directorate supports logistics information systems development, the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program, operational contract support, pre-positioned stock management, aeromedical evacuation operations, base operating support integrator oversight, force health protection, a joint munitions office, a joint petroleum office, the EUCOM Deployment and Distribution Operations Center, the International Commercial Transportation Branch (which manages third-party logistics provider bids for movement requirements), and embedded Defense Logistics Agency Energy support.

Future operations are also sup-

ported in the Operational Logistics Division. Dedicated teams pursue assessments (the EUCOM focal point for the Defense Readiness Reporting System), logistics operations plans, and civic engagements.

The other division of the directorate, Strategic Logistics, consolidates pre-existing multinational engagements with logistics strategy (governed by the Strategic Plans Branch). This enhanced strategic planning capability supports ECJ4 involvement in crafting and guiding COCOM operational and contingency planning as well as integrated campaigning.

Other sections of the division incorporate theater logistics plans and NATO programs, both of which are critical for positioning the ECJ4 to achieve the commander's lines of effort. Another critical element within Strategic Logistics is the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement Office. This capability ensures the U.S. defense logistics enterprise remains globally agile.

This leaner logistics framework provides a more responsive joint and interagency team to provide the EUCOM commander with the best logistics solutions and advice possible. So while ECJ4 retains the same capabilities listed in Joint Publication 4-0, Joint Logistics, its staffing and partners are better positioned to support EUCOM's new deterrence focus.

### **Enabling Competency**

The EUCOM footprint has been shrinking since the 1990s. It has only a fraction of the personnel, assets, and basing that was in place a generation ago.

The silver lining has been closer and more frequent communication between EUCOM and its service components, which include U.S. Army Europe, U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa/U.S. Sixth Fleet, U.S. Marine Forces Europe and Africa, and the U.S. Special Operations Command Europe.

ECJ4 has reoriented communications and relationships between the COCOM and the components from vertical to horizontal. It has emphasized component responsibilities in joint and coalition mission environments.

All planning and operations require the complete integration of logistics stakeholders throughout the decision-making process and during execution. To facilitate clarity in planning and operations, ECJ4 has striven for more efficient receipt of guidance and policies from the joint staff and more efficient bilateral communications.

Streamlined channels of communication among EUCOM, its service components, subordinate commands, and support agencies have been beneficial to planning and mission execution. One way that this has unfolded is through the discerning use of individual service or agency strengths.

While U.S. Army Europe maintains a robust maintenance, warehousing, and surface transportation capability, U.S. Air Forces in Europe is renowned for its use of the global strategic airlift network. Smartly integrating such competencies enhances supply chain resilience and reduces inefficiencies from duplicated efforts.

A future goal should be to further integrate components and agencies into a common logistics policy and operational framework. To this end, ECJ4 has encouraged components to think like functional component commanders (such as joint force land component commanders or joint force air component commanders) in order to develop processes and incorporate operational contributions from other components.

Because the EUCOM headquarters is situated in a different part of Europe than its partner commands and agencies, practical reforms have been accomplished to enhance communication among EUCOM, service components, and support agencies. These reforms include regular secure video teleconferencing and Defense Collaboration System meetings, fre-



*Light armored vehicles sit on a train in Rena, Norway, after being used to train with the Telemark Battalion in preparation for Exercise Cold Response on Feb. 19, 2016. (Photo by Master Sgt. Chad McMeen)*

quent senior logistics conferences to discuss priorities and best practices, and face-to-face joint working groups.

Making COCOM-to-component and support agency relationships more interactive and responsive has greatly enabled the timely execution of strategic distribution, materiel management, and sustainment. A heightened level of interactivity and responsiveness is perhaps the most crucial aspect of future operational logistics.

### **Common Operational Picture**

Access to an accurate, comprehensive, and intuitive logistics common operational picture will be the difference between logistics superiority and stalemate.

In years past, having an accurate and inclusive digital theater logistics overview was cumbersome. Today, there still exists a tendency for individual services and commands to use in-house processes and incompatible technology to track movements, sup-

ply levels, services, and acquisitions. With the military's overlapping lines of effort in supporting global operations, total logistics visibility of deployment and distribution is more critical than ever.

One solution the ECJ4 has promoted throughout EUCOM directorates, support agencies, service components, and their subordinate commands is the Global Combat Support System-Joint.

The ECJ4 has aggressively implemented the system, but it is only one part of providing real-time awareness for the defense logistics enterprise. The ECJ4 is actively requesting additional investment in global logistics monitoring and analysis technologies that will make logistics a truly strategic competency.

### **Mission Command**

At the same time, operational necessity has resulted in a slight enhancement to the doctrine of the unified direction of forces. Joint Publication 1 lays out the traditional

schematic for the chain of command, from the president of the United States down to the service components. The direction of this design is clearly linear, with a vertical process from start to finish.

The experience of the ECJ4 staff in integrating and synchronizing with support agencies and service components has resulted in a more dynamic model that mitigates monolithic tendencies that creep up around legacy institutions, such as a lack of cross-organizational planning and communication.

It is important to note that this new operational context does not denote parity between commands; it means only that a more functional process is required to ensure logistics support is as timely and effective as possible.

One result of this evolution is that the chain of command is more important than ever. Rapidly changing world events demand that COCOMs understand inherent authorities and funding permissions to allow more

flexibility in planning and operations.

Another nuance is the inclusion of NATO and allied partner logistics agencies. Although foreign organizations are not integrated into the unified chain of command, in the EUCOM theater NATO and its logistics agencies are an integral part of operations and are therefore critical to the communication and mission control processes.

### **Supporting Relationships**

Today's and tomorrow's conflicts are multinational and multi-organizational efforts. This will remain the norm for the foreseeable future because of deflating defense expenditures, the transnational character of security threats, and the requirement for global projection, staging, and sustainment.

ECJ4 has been at the forefront of developing logistics support for multinational logistics operations. Because of the enduring relationship among EUCOM, NATO, and European allies, a number of logistics burden-sharing methods are possible.

One is the joint logistics footprint and access that the NATO alliance makes possible. The array of interconnected army, air force, and naval installations ensures that the United States can sustain complex supply chains from a forward position for an extended period of time. Longstanding diplomatic clearances and acquisition and cross-servicing agreements among NATO partners ensure a level of freedom of movement and supply chain resilience not seen in any other theater.

But perhaps the most significant mutual benefit of U.S. and NATO support is the interoperability that a close relationship allows in deterring common security threats. Deployment and distribution is enabled in the EUCOM theater through multiple complementary channels.

Synchronized airlift is possible through a combination of assets from the United States, European partners, and combined agencies, such as the Heavy Airlift Wing (directed

by the Strategic Airlift Capability) based at Pápa Air Base, Hungary, and the Movement Coordination Centre Europe.

Altogether, unified effort brought about by the enhanced integration of resources in a time of resource constraints allows EUCOM and NATO to support a robust range of operations and exercises in a way that draws on the respective strengths of all partners.

### **Room for Improvement**

Multimodal operations would be better enabled if the United States and its European partner nations and organizations further synchronized day-to-day operations while using the respective logistics capabilities of each partner military. This would require the United States to further integrate European partner militaries into its deployment and distribution networks to allow for a greater economy of scale.

Although the United States will continue to base its global reach through the Transportation Command and its Military Sealift Command, Air Mobility Command, and Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, multinationally supported intertheater surface, maritime, and air movement would allow for an unprecedented level of interoperability and defense supply chain resilience.

Another practical initiative that would benefit U.S. and European partners would be the expansion of permanent party exchange officers at U.S. bases in Europe, at partner-nation installations, and at home. The practice already exists, but if it is expanded, it could play an important role in increasing familiarity and situational awareness among personnel and units at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.

An adaptive and relevant defense logistics enterprise will be key to effecting a strong and safe Europe and world, but it is not the most important aspect. What will prove

most critical is the assurance of reliable U.S. military logistics leadership in the EUCOM theater. In the new European security environment, the single greatest show of defensive force is force itself.

While this flies in the face of nearly two decades of thought guided by counterinsurgency and unconventional campaign realities, today's efforts to protect Europe from external hostilities require a renewed appreciation of large-scale logistics operations and the full application of combined U.S. and European partner power. This is a winning way ahead, and the United States and its partners will find new success if they apply a vigorous logistics approach.

---

Lt. Col. Douglas R. Burke is the commanding officer of the Marine Corps Ground Supply and Distribution School and the former chief of the Joint Logistics Operations Center, EUCOM J-4, in Stuttgart, Germany. He holds a bachelor's degree in international relations from the University of Wisconsin and an MBA from Boston University. He is a graduate of the Ground Supply Officer's Course, Expeditionary Warfare School, Advanced Logistics Operations Course, Marine Corps Command and Staff College (non-resident), and Joint Course on Logistics.

First Lt. Matthew A. Gaumer is a joint logistics officer at the EUCOM J-4 and the commander of the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 446th Transportation Battalion (Movement Control), in Kaiserslautern, Germany. He holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Loyola University Chicago, a master's degree in theology from Saint Meinrad School of Theology, an advanced master's degree in theology from the University of Leuven, a master's degree in transportation and logistics management from American Military University, and a doctorate in history from the University of Leuven. He is a graduate of the Transportation Basic Officer Leader Course and the Combined Logistics Captains Career Course.