

TASK 6

HOW CAN WASTE AND INADEQUACY OF LOGISTIC PROVISION BE AVOIDED IN PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS?

Task

- 93 The effectiveness of forces employed in PSOs, especially in rapidly mounted operations (i.e. where there has been little time for planning), depends greatly on the flexibility of logistic support. Inflexibility, or shortages of transport, ammunition, fuel, and others, may constrain commanders from using their forces as they would like. Many commentators and military experts have also noted the great expense involved in the sustainment of multinational forces engaged in PSOs – most notably in UN operations. These expenses arise both from national logistic requirements and common logistic requirements.
- 94 The waste of resources through fraud, theft or inadequate storage may impact upon the effectiveness of operations and add to their cost. Troop contributors may be critically influenced with regard to their willingness to continue their contribution, by such a factor. The syndicate was therefore encouraged to find answers to the following questions:
- *What has been the record of logistic support for PSOs in the recent past?*
 - *How can the logistic support be made more effective in future PSOs?*
 - *How can the waste that has occurred in past PSOs be avoided?*
 - *What is the proper role for commercial contractors in the provision of logistic services to forces employed in PSOs?*

Summary of points raised in discussion

- 95 Logistic support in recent PSOs has shown that the effective provision of supplies has often only been achieved with considerable waste, unnecessary costs and an adverse impact on the local economy. UN missions are renowned for poor accounting, inefficiency, mismanagement (and often for dishonest conduct by officials). Present UN regulations are not strong enough to prevent these abuses and to discipline the offenders.
- 96 To be fair to the UN, there are few examples of logistic success in multinational operations. There are always logistic problems associated with multinationality – especially in third and fourth line logistic functions,

where there are real difficulties in co-ordination and payment. There are also always difficulties in developing one logistical concept with a centralised authority and means of control, and in agreeing on standardised spares levels. The latter has worked fairly well, however, where there is a lead nation for logistics – especially in close regional groupings such as the Nordic-Polish (NORDPOL) Brigade.

- 97 In recent PSOs in Africa, the UN has found it difficult to obtain specialist military logistic units to work in some of its missions. They have therefore relied on a mixture of contracted services and military units to provide supplies and distribute them to contingents in the field. One solution to this problem might be the use of a 'lead nation' concept in logistic supply where one troop contributor took responsibility for the supply and/or distribution of all 'common user' items. (Individual contingents would remain responsible for the supply of contingent specific items.) The lead nation concept would require the lead nation to make up any shortfall in its logistic military units by placing and controlling contracted services.
- 98 It was agreed that there might be advantage in the subregional co-ordination of planning for logistic support for peace missions and emergency relief operations (of all kinds). Thus, a group of neighbouring states would agree to lay dormant contracts and stockpile logistic assets to be employed in multinational operations at some time in the future. These contingency arrangements might be available for action in the 'home' subregion or in other parts of the continent subject to the agreement of the state parties involved.
- 99 The possibility of co-operation in contingency logistic planning with aid agencies should be explored. It may be possible to amalgamate military assets with those funded by aid agencies to increase capabilities in preparation for future emergencies.
- 100 Waste, inefficiency and dishonesty need to be addressed first by training and second by the imposition of proper accountability. Delegated responsibility, under proper conditions of scrutiny by qualified personnel, would allow incidents of mismanagement to be identified and dealt with.
- 101 If the problem of finding specialist military units for the provision of logistic services in PSOs in Africa persists, there will continue to be a role for contractors in this field. The performance of contractors will be improved, and costs reduced, by the use of state-of-the-art contracting procedures, contingency planning and proper accounting. Considering the high cost of 'contracting', efforts should be made to get potential troop contributors to develop/employ military logistic capabilities ready for future contingencies. (This development would also enhance the military capability of forces in the region for roles other than participation in PSOs.)

Unfinished business/Recommendations for further research

- 102 It was noted that competition for scarce local resources during a PSO may cause shortfalls for local people and thereby increase suffering, yet this may stimulate economic growth in the longer term. On the other hand, this may create dependency. The use of local resources by competing national contingents also creates inflation, thus creating negative influence. It was therefore suggested that future research might focus on reviewing the impact of past PSOs and humanitarian operations on communities and local economies.
- 103 It would also be interesting to look at the record of logistic support for forces employed in PSOs in Africa in recent years, with a view to recommending ways of making sustainment more cost-effective. This research may be linked to the notion of subregional contingency planning and stockpiling (with or without the co-operation of aid agencies).