



## 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY MILITARY ACTIONS LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

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*Military action, in general, and armed combat, in particular, as social phenomena and as human practices, have always needed technical and material support in order to achieve the set political objectives. Logistics plays a key role in any type of military action, whether it is a war, an operation other than war, or simply a tactical-application exercise. Whenever military structures are used, they must be logistically supported. In a word, logistical support is expressed in the same way, either in peacetime, in times of crisis or at war, as well as in the context of non-military operations. War, in all its complexity of belligerent manifestation, is directly supported by the economic dimension of the nation (or alliance), military logistics being the most important link between the country's economic capacity and its armed forces.*

*Today's military actions can be very effective, extremely destructive and, at the same time, selective, with high-precision strikes that can cause the adversary to quickly declare defeated, politically and militarily, in an attempt to thus eliminate the side effects of war: major civilian casualties and significant loss of non-combatant personnel. The current global economic system transcends the political and geographical boundaries of states. In a way, it determines the emergence of a new type of war, characterised by increased confrontation in areas other than those that are the essence of armed combat, such as: economic, media, doctrinal etc. ones. Therefore, in modern war, logistics has new valences, considering the reorientation of its development strategies, the quality of the human factor employed, as well as the high technology incorporated in the combat assets. The battle space is fundamentally changing, time is "contracting", the pace is fast. The mobility of forces also increases, the distances expand throughout and in all forms of combat, one of the basic components of war, the logistical support, being placed in the complementary spaces and adjacent to the real combat space. The growing distances*



between own combat forces and those of the adversary represent the length of the battlefield for military logisticians. Practically, “modern” conflicts have fully highlighted the role of technological development (high-tech systems integration, battlefield digitisation etc.) as well as of military logistics (material quality and quantity, transport speed, costs etc.).

*The specific conditions for Romania’s integration into NATO and the European Union have represented complex processes, entailing important economic achievements as well as obvious advances in the military field, in which logistics is a key component. Therefore, the Romanian military logistics modelling has had as a reference element NATO member states concept, according to which logistics is responsible for the planning and execution of the movement and for the maintenance of the forces high combat readiness. In approaching the concept of logistics, modern armed forces experts start from the idea that it must define all the material and assistance conditions necessary for the successful conduct of military actions.*

*The principles of the Romanian Armed Forces transformation have been related to the need to achieve combat and logistical support structures that are modular, flexible and mobile, provided with a quick reaction capability. The development of an integrated, flexible and functional military logistics system, able to meet the needs of providing combat units with all categories of equipment and materials (at the right time and place, as simple as possible, and with minimal costs), is in line with the requirements of achieving interoperability with the logistics systems of modern armed forces in NATO member or partner countries. Military logistics, part of the national defence system logistics, is a decisive factor in achieving the goal of military actions as well as in fulfilling the missions of the participating forces and has a number of functional areas, including: supply, movement and transport, maintenance, infrastructure, campaign services.*

*As far as NATO is concerned, the strategic concept of the North Atlantic Alliance directs security policy towards dialogue, cooperation and collective defence. A firm and, first and foremost, rapid response, executed by specialised forces is needed to deal*

*with new types of confrontations. To this end, the NATO Response Force (NRF) has been created and operationalised. This force is a high-readiness and technologically advanced one, with components of land, air, naval and special forces, which can be deployed quickly wherever needed. NATO's Response Force is able to conduct the full spectrum of military operations, anywhere in the world, and consists of diversified capabilities provided by Alliance member nations. The operations have been of a joint and multinational nature, being conducted by forces of the North Atlantic Alliance and/or by forces of coalitions formed according to the economic, political and other interests of the member states.*

*The implications of this NATO strategy are primarily focused on greater flexibility in the Alliance's logistics, which is considered to be due to the mobility and multinationality of the forces engaged in providing logistical support. Although logistical support is ultimately, in principle, the responsibility of each nation contributing forces to the military action in question, more and more emphasis is placed on the joint participation in the logistical effort entailed in engaging those forces. It has become obvious and necessary as a result of the experience gained in recent years. It has thus been found, on real grounds, that each nation has more or less limited logistical capabilities that, when combined with those of other nations, result in a newly created logistical capability, which is stronger than that of any single country involved in the effort. What needs to be emphasised, however, is that the nation-specific capabilities, in order to be more than just a sum, need to work together in a coordinated manner, as the required material effort is mainly provided by the partner countries' own logistical elements, which have the role of permanently maintaining the forces high readiness.*

*In order to achieve this kind of logistical support, NATO has developed and promoted a number of concepts and structures that have demonstrated their practicality, such as: Host Nation Support (HNS), Resources in the JOA, Mutual Support Agreements (MSA), Logistic Lead Nation (LN), Logistic Role Specialisation Nation (LRSN), Multinational Integrated Logistic/Medical Support Units (MILUs or MIMUs), Third Party Logistic Support Services (TPLSS). The Romanian armed forces have collaborated with the armed forces*



*of partner and allied states, since accession, through direct or indirect participation in these structures, which has led to an efficient logistical support in the actions undertaken by the Romanian military.*

*Under the current circumstances, however, Host Nation Support (HNS) is by far crucial in ensuring effective logistical support at the national level. This is a complex process, having a continuous dynamic, adaptable to the conditions of current realities, based on a specific planning process, with an important interagency component, representing the totality of military, economic, legislative and procedural support actions that define the civilian and/or military assistance provided by Romania, in peacetime, in emergency or crisis situations and at war, to foreign armed forces entering, stationing, conducting operations or transiting the territory of Romania.*

*Following the development of the North Atlantic Alliance's Gradual Response Plans (GRP), which require a rapid NATO response to possible threats on the Alliance's eastern flank, forces will be deployed in a short period of time in any of the GRP variants. In this regard, the host nations (HNs), including Romania, must be able to provide logistical support for the Reception, Staging and Onward Movement (RSOM) of these forces to their final destinations.*

*The HNS capabilities that Romania makes available to NATO are designed and ensured during the phases of the RSOM operation, starting with the reception, at border crossing points, airports, ports and railway stations, staging, in temporary staging locations, onward movement, based on road and rail infrastructure elements, temporary stationing locations and convoy support locations, and ending with their integration into final destination locations. In addition to the HNS capabilities mentioned above, Romania may provide, upon request, as part of the HNS, a range of goods and services, Class I, Class III and Class IV, transportation, military police escort, oversize convoys escort, catering, utilities, internet, port services, maintenance etc., on a contractual basis or from the resources of the Ministry of National Defence, necessary for the reception and logistical support of the forces, both during the RSOM and in the final destinations. The annual HNS planning processes led by NATO commands, the major*



*multinational exercises conducted annually/biannually in Romania, and especially the latest events in the Ukraine area have led to the identification of other than planned capability requirements. These capabilities are in the process of rehabilitation/modernisation and it is necessary to continuously adapt the NHS legislation and instructions so that both capabilities and funds can be provided, if necessary, to support, in a timely manner and in as much volume as possible, not only the planned structures but also the structures established following last-minute decisions.*

*Moreover, the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) plays a special role in ensuring support for the Allied forces participating in multinational military operations. The main purpose of this agency is to bring together, in a single organisation, logistical, medical and infrastructure capabilities, services and operational support systems for any of the NATO member and partner nations, and its mission is to provide the Alliance with efficient and cost-effective multinational solutions.*

***T**he NSPA has a wide range of capabilities, including providing emergency response in crisis situations, an area in which the Agency has increasingly become a viable option available to national governments and international organisations.*

*The support that can be provided by this structure includes operational logistics planning, as an integrator of contracts to support NATO operations, real logistical support, infrastructure support and any other logistical services that an Alliance nation would need during operations. The NSPA also handles global coverage contracts for fuel and lubricants, which can relieve nations of the burden of identifying suppliers and negotiating individual contracts needed to support their own forces deployed in other parts of the world as participants in the Alliance's operations.*

*As a member of the Alliance, Romania may at any time request and benefit from the support of the NSPA in the multinational operations in which it participates, which may allow it to reduce its logistical footprint to ensure the support of its own forces. In this regard, Romania has within the NSPA a liaison officer who facilitates the interaction*



*between this structure and the Romanian armed forces, an aspect that can be taken into account when planning the support of the forces to be deployed outside the national territory.*

*In planning logistical support for the forces participating in both multinational operations and operations on the national territory, three structures have a primary role: the Logistics Directorate (strategic level), the Joint Forces Command (JFC), through J4 (operational and tactical level), and the Joint Logistics Command (JLC) (strategic and operational level). Thus, if the Logistics Directorate coordinates the logistical support implementation at strategic level and provides expertise in the field of logistics for concluding MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) and TA (Technical Agreements) with the armed forces of other states, to ensure mutual logistical support, the JFC is the structure responsible for providing logistical support at operational and tactical level, and the JLC provides logistical support at strategic and operational level, including the management of materials and equipment strategic stocks.*

*The actions of the three entities provide the necessary conditions for the armed forces engaged in military operations, deployed either on the national territory or on the territory of another country, in a coalition, to benefit from the appropriate logistical support at the right place and time. However, the role of the armed forces services and other support commands should not be neglected. Their action is indispensable in translating the support plans into support actions, starting from the strategic level to the lowest tactical level formation, thus ensuring adequate logistical support for the national armed forces.*

*The missions of the Romanian armed forces executed at the beginning of this century in an allied context, in multinational environments in Kosovo, Bosnia, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Baltic States, Mali etc., have represented permanent challenges in terms of logistical support in relation to everything that means the art and science of planning, namely: design, development, acquisition, storage, transportation, distribution, maintenance, personnel manoeuvre, construction, infrastructure maintenance and rehabilitation, medical support etc.*

*The elements of the NATO Response Force currently deployed in Romania, in the context of the military invasion of Ukraine, and the integration of national military structures in this force are largely the result of adequate logistical support, developed and exercised since our country joined the North Atlantic Alliance.*

*In conclusion, although there is always room for improvement, especially in such a complex field, we can say that the Romanian Armed Forces logistical support today, in the specific conditions of current military conflicts, is conceptually and structurally adapted to the forces size, configuration and missions, as a logistics system able to fulfil its basic functions, in compliance with NATO procedures, has been achieved.*

