

# THE MILITARY UNITS' LOGISTIC SUPPORT PRINCIPLES

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## ABSTRACT

*The fundamental objective of the military units' logistic system during peacetime is ensuring necessary logistic support for the military personnel to properly carry out the training and instruction activities in order to fulfill the missions assigned to the military units at every hierarchical level. Concurrently, the logistic system of the military units during peacetime tracks the supply of material assets for emergency situations, crisis, mobilization and war. Achieving logistic support for military units during peacetime depends on a number of principles that underpin the provision of high-quality logistic support necessary for the fulfillment of the basic mission and the fundamental objectives of each military structure.*

**KEYWORDS:** logistics, logistic sistem, logistic support, principles

## 1. Introduction

The permanent transformation of the national defense system at the same time generated the modernization of the military logistics system, perceived not only as a central point of the future of military actions, but also as a point of support for the struggling forces effort to train and prepare in time peace with the same logistic support and under the same conditions generated by the battlefield.

The Romanian Army's fighting forces, irrespective of the hierarchical level of the military unit, are constantly evolving due to the changes imposed by the modern, multi-national military actions. For this reason, the logistic systems that follow and support these forces must evolve in a similar way, is quickly and efficiently. An optimal logistics system will always be a stable structure with components easy to

adapt to the states, situations and processes that take place during military action.

Military actions, and especially war, are the confrontation between opposing and hostile forces, where moral factors such as fear, courage, will, spirit of sacrifice are often more important than physical and mental factors. Logistics and logistic support during military action and especially at war play an important role in the cohesiveness of the fighting forces, but the same importance and influence also have on the training and training of troops in peacetime. We believe that by providing the necessary for living and struggling, logistics and logistic support make it possible to provide personal needs, allowing the military to concentrate their efforts on fulfilling the mission. A flexible logistics system led by logisticsists who possess economical knowledges, meaning

they are correct and have an innovative spirit, can give commanders and commandments from all echelons the moral authority over those who lead them in action and who thus feel they are useful.

In other words, an optimal and efficient logistical support of the military units to peace, based on clear and coherent principles, strengthens the moral authority of the commanders, but also has a profound effect on the morale of the combat forces being trained for military action.

That is why the principles of logistic support are very important in delivering quality logistic support to each military unit, regardless of the scale they are in. Their importance also results from the fact that the logistic support in time, comes from the use of the logistics principles by all the logistic structures involved in the military activity or action. These properly applied principles underpin the implementation of effective logistical support and, when strictly adhered to, increase the chances of successfully completing the planned military activities and actions.

## **2. General Principles of Logistical Support of Peacetime**

The principles of logistical support of peacetime military units are based on the principles of logistical support for military action or war and are applicable to activities planned through the “*Plan of Main Activities*” of each military unit. Analyzing the principles of peacetime logistics support and NATO logistics documents, we have noticed that the principles of logistical support are the same and apply to both military activities during peace time and military actions during a war, such as: authority, coordination, efficiency, accountability, flexibility, visibility, cooperation, sufficiency, transparency and simplicity. These principles are found in the Romanian legal framework and can be applied by the commanders of the logistic support and peacetime structures, noting that

the main purpose of their use is to plan and execute the training and training of the fighting forces. At the same time, the basic principles of logistic support “*can be supplemented with other principles specific to functional logistics areas*” (NATO, 2014, p. 1-5).

In the light of the above, we believe that the principles of logistical support to peace must be considered in the light of two important objectives of the “*Principal Action Plan*” of each military unit, namely: training and training of combat forces; the creation of peacetime supplies and war supplies. Based on these considerations, we appreciate that the logistical support of peacetime military units is carried out and operates on the basis of principles, which are not specified, defined, explained in any regulation national, and therefore we propose to adapt those specific to military actions as follows:

**2.1. Efficiency** can be a basic principle of logistical support in peacetime as it implies the rational use of material assets at its disposal through careful planning and careful planning of the tasks set out in the “*Plan of Main Activities*” and “*List with the essential requirements*” for the fulfillment of the basic mission for each military unit, regardless of the hierarchical level in which they are located.

Material resources of good quality needed to prepare and train peacekeeping forces are usually difficult to obtain due to limited funds allocated through the revenue and expenditure budget. In this case, the use of stocks and stocks of material goods is used, but filling them up is a problem caused by the insufficiency of funds from the approved budget and complicated procurement procedures.

In this respect, the logistic microstructures of the military units draw up and submit annually requests for completing the reserves and stocks, as well as requests for endowment/endowment with material goods used in the training and training of peacekeeping forces. In their

turn, the superior echelons have, through the specifications they send to the military units for the “*Plan with the main activities*”, that the endowment of the fighting forces and the filling of the reserves and the stock of materials are made on the basis of the “*Essential Requirements List*”, the one that the basic mission received.

We believe that this principle is important because the material resources are exhaustible and the economy is permanently represented by the reality of the purchase of cheap materials. Heads of logistics structures in military units must identify from time to time the real needs of the fighters being trained to optimize the use of material assets available at a certain stage of military action. Material resources planning should take into account the saving and optimization of the use of logistical support to ensure the fulfillment of the basic mission of the military unit in peacetime, regardless of its hierarchical level.

By doing so in parallel with multinational military operations, we note that this principle requires a broader approach in the sense that logistical capabilities and resources are used in order of priority, with minimal consumption, in order to optimize the existing logistic support, to eliminate the doubling of the quantities of material goods in the area of the joint operations. This optics is supported by the techniques and methods used in the multinational logistic support, which can ultimately result in the rational use of goods materials and reducing costs for their purchase.

NATO’s logistics documents have called this “*economy*” principle, a term also used in the Romanian Armed Forces logistics regulations. At present, the name of efficiency is used in NATO documents, this term being considered more appropriate, given that the ultimate goal of applying this principle is the efficiency of logistical support of peacetime units. Finally, analyzing the arguments presented above and the existing NATO concepts in this respect, we consider that this principle should be used as the efficiency of logistical support.

**2.2. Visibility** is an important principle used in the process of developing the “*Main Activities Plans*” of peacetime military units, as this principle must lead to the achievement of sufficient, efficient logistic support, taking into account all changes in the activities underlying the training and training of combat forces. Regardless of the nature of the fundamental objectives and the basic mission of each military unit, visibility and transparency of resources are essential for the smooth running of the tasks outlined in the “*Main Activities Plan*”. Visibility involves the provision of accurate and timely exchange of information between peacekeeping militaries in order to prioritize supply/replenishment activities at the same time as fulfilling the core mission and core objectives set out in the “*Main Activities Plan*” of each military unit.

We appreciate that the application of this principle is based on the implementation of an integrated logistics program that allows for the permanent exchange of data in order to prepare situations with the necessary material goods to meet the real needs of the fighting forces but to ensure the availability of the material goods at any time and in time, regardless of the mission entrusted in peacetime.

**2.3. Sufficiency** highlights the ability to provide essential, qualitative and sufficient material resources in due time, so as to ensure that the basic mission of the peace units is fulfilled in peacetime.

From our point of view, we support the idea that the logistical support of peacetime military units must be dimensioned so as to be available in the quantity/quality required by the operational requirements of the mission when and where it is needed. Peace-based logistical support and logistical support must be permanently and consistently ensured for each task and task that emerges from the Military Unit’s “*Master Plan*”. That is why we believe that there should be no training

activities in every military unit training combat forces and missions without creating adequate and sufficient logistical support to allow for the achievement of the fundamental and specific objectives planned through the “*Main Activities Plan*”.

**2.4. Responsibility**, considered another basic principle of logistics, involves taking all measures to achieve the orderly logistical support at the right time and place. This principle is realized by identifying, realizing and maintaining minimum quantities of material goods, military equipment and services necessary for the satisfactory fulfillment of the initially planned military activities and actions. In order to apply this principle, clear tasks should be drawn up to the logistics management structures at each military unit level, to achieve their own logistic support, but also to subordinate structures, so that the mission of the military entities in peacetime is successfully accomplished.

We appreciate that the responsibility involves building a well-defined and unambiguous command unit of the military peacekeeping logistic support, whereby the commander and chief of logistics of each military unit have permanent control over the logistic execution structures, but allows the same while the decentralized deployment of specific activities of these structures, planned in time through the “*Main Activities Plan*”.

In the case of joint missions of several military units, we can consider collective responsibility, which must be perceived by assuming individual tasks of the components of the fighting forces, with the common objective of providing logistic quality support and sufficient to conduct training and training activities, taking into account the initial requirements and restrictions applicable to each military entity. The logistic structures of the military units at peace have the responsibility to endow the fighting forces and ensure the supply through the forces own or through

association agreements with other logistic structures, of the material goods needed to support the fulfillment of their core missions. In all military units, the logistical support of the combatant forces in the training and training process is carried out through its own logistic support forces, but it is very important that these forces interact through unitary coordination with the logistics.

We are of the opinion that the head of the logistics of each military unit is responsible for determining the tasks of the logistic support for the proper development of the training and training of the fighting forces and for the efficient planning of the logistic support necessary for the execution of all the military activities approved by “*Plan with the main activities*”.

Analyzing the importance of logistical support principles, we emphasize that in peacetime training and peacekeeping activities, and in wartime military action, “*standardization, co-operation and interoperability in logistics ensure the strengthening of responsibility for providing flexible and efficient logistic support that contributes to the success operational*” (NATO, 2003, p. 2-1).

**2.5. Cooperation** seeks to integrate planning and execution efforts to achieve adequate logistical support to achieve the ultimate goal of the activities carried out. In this sense, “*cooperative activities are carried out in a coherent manner, depending on the situation*” (NATO, 2012, p. 37). In the process of achieving military logistical support to peace, cooperation involves all areas of logistical support. Cooperation is an important principle underlying the planning of training and training of peace-keeping forces in peacetime, the adoption of a common logistic system whereby the logistics operators have common visions on the establishment of a high-quality logistic support to underpin the successful completion of the main mission of each

military unit. We believe that this principle must be based on the mutual trust of participants in military exercises and especially in multinational operations, so we think it would be more appropriate to rename this principle as follows: “*cooperation and trust*”.

**2.6. Coordination** ensures the synchronization of activities and efforts to achieve maximum efficiency in providing logistical support to all military units. Coordination between the structures providing logistical support is essential and must be done at all the echelons involved in these activities, as appropriate.

In peacetime at the level of military units, the coordination of the logistics functional domains is necessary for the efficient use of the infrastructure, facilities and material assets at its disposal. Applying the co-ordination principle implies the establishment of close relations between the logistic support structures of the unitary units that will contribute to the successful accomplishment of the basic peacetime mission of each military entity. We consider that the materialization of this principle requires the establishment of appropriate links, through agreements established and initially arranged which support the facilitation of coordination of subsequent logistics activities.

We appreciate that in the national territory, in peacetime, fighting forces are trained and trained in specialized and well-equipped military units, but in multinational operations there are situations in which they have to act from unfit positions, and in those situations they are used in share many material goods and logistic support services. Therefore, in this situation coordination is the responsibility of the host nation (HN) or a leading nation (Leader Nation - LN). The function of a host nation or a leading nation involves the appointment of national representatives and liaison officers from different echelons, which are part of the logistic management structure, established for

the coordination and harmonization of the logistic requirements of each logistic support unit. Therefore, we conclude that according to the basic missions of the military units participating in multinational operations, logistical support should be coordinated at the level of each military entity, but also between the structures of the governing force at all levels.

**2.7. Flexibility** involves the permanent adaptation of logistics planning and management structures as well as of logistics implementation structures to the change of military activities in the “*Main Activities Plan*”, which underlies the training and training of peacekeeping forces in peacetime. The “*Main Activities Plan*” is developed on the basis of the annual plan of logistics activities, and the latter must be flexible and correlated with the material resources at its disposal, in order to be able to support from the point of view of the logistic support each activity initially planned or not foreseen and was introduced during the fulfillment of the basic mission of each military unit in peacetime.

We appreciate that this principle must also be applied with the utmost responsibility for the planning of logistical support for all training and training activities of combat forces (exercises, marches, etc.), which must include the dislocation of these forces when the situation requires the continuous assurance of logistical support both during the deployment in the new district and during the stops. We also believe that logistics structures and their commanders must be flexible and make effective use of the material resources allocated to the deployment in good conditions, of these peace training and training activities.

**2.8. Simplicity** entails reducing the complexity of the underlying activities of delivering efficient logistic support for all foreseeable and unforeseen situations. Logistics planning and management documents that underlie the logistical support of peacetime military units must be simple

and correlated with modular logistics in accordance with mission specifics, as well as clear and concise logistics procedures that contribute to avoid confusion and to provide logistic support adapted to operational requirements. Because, we believe that the activities underlying the achievement of logistical support for peacetime military units must be prioritized, so that material asset provision and efficient service provision by logistics structures can simplify support for military activities during the implementation of “*Main Activities Plan*” approved.

**2.9. Continuity** in logistic support involves the identification and early evaluation of the needs of all military units as well as the possibilities of logistic support for their satisfaction by the structures with responsibilities in the field. This principle also presupposes the uninterrupted assurance of the optimum conditions for the living and struggle of the fighting forces in any geoclimatic conditions and unexpected situations.

### **3. The Specific Principles of Logistical Support in Crisis, Mobilization and War Situations**

During the military actions, respectively in crisis, mobilization and war situations, the logistic support of the military units respects the above-mentioned principles, but we also consider that other principles specific to the armed struggle can be considered as follows:

**3.1. The Authority** highlights the fact that the heads of the military units and the heads of the logistics structures have full rights to the logistical resources made available from time to time. In this respect, the manager of the serviced structure must be given sufficient authority over the logistical resources necessary to enable him to use them in order to support the actions in the most efficient way. We want to emphasize that this principle applies both to the commanders of NATO member

countries and to the commanders from non-Alliance countries, within the activities led by NATO.

**3.2. Concentrating** the logistics effort involves directing it, as a matter of priority, to meet the operational requirements and to successfully accomplish missions at the strategic, operational and tactical level. In the multinational actions led by the Alliance, the logistical effort is a common one of NATO and its member countries, being directed at the nations that have hired troops. Military units participating in such actions benefit from logistical support at the same time and in a similar way as similar structures of the other involved states.

**3.3. The Priority** of operational requirements refers to the fact that the entire effort to ensure logistical support is geared towards fulfilling the mission's operational requirements. Based on this principle, “*logistic structures, at all hierarchical levels, are responsible for providing the logistic resources required to provide logistical support to the forces*” (NATO, 2013, p. 2-2) involved in military action. We consider that this principle presupposes the provision of a logistic quality support and sufficient even in the beginning of the military actions, on the basis of which the commander of the joint force is assured “*that an operation should not start until risk mitigation measures are taken and that essential minimum support levels are at hand*” (NATO, 2013, p. 2-2) to meet the operational requirements of the mission.

**3.4. Multinationality.** From the name of this principle, it can be inferred that, depending on the situations where the multinational operations are carried out, it aims at harmonizing the logistic support modes of the forces participating in the deployment of these multinational military actions. The harmonization of these logistical support, based on understandings between the participating nations’ armies,

as well as between the armies of these nations and NATO, “*optimizes the logistical capabilities of each member of the alliance and reduces duplication and competition among nations*” (NATO, 2013, p. 2-3). After the deployment of the forces combatants in the theaters of operations will analyze the optimal variants of the realization of the common logistic support and specialized through the logistic structures of the participating forces and seek the adoption of adequate multinational solutions in order to achieve logistic support proportionate to the operational necessity.

The principle of multinationality has not been dealt with in the Regulation of Logistics of Joint Operations, but in the Romanian Armed Forces Doctrine, a reference regulation for other national doctrines, multinationalism is presented as an important principle underlying the joint operation of national forces with the forces of other states, within alliances, coalitions or international commitments to meet common goals. Another specialty regulation concerning the calculation, creation, storage and exchange of combat stocks in the Romanian Armed Forces establishes as a measure to streamline the planning and stocking activity, respecting this principle.

We believe that this principle must take into account agreements and understandings between the armies of the nations participating in multinational military actions so as to optimize the logistical capabilities of each nation, thus reducing the doubling of the quantities of military goods and military equipment to meet the operational requirements initially set.

From the analysis and study of some NATO and national documents, we have found that principles such as foresight, mobility and promptitude, which we do not encounter in NATO regulations, are dealt with in national doctrines, or are principles dealt with in NATO doctrines, other principles, but they are not found in national doctrines. Thus, the principle of

promptitude is contained in NATO regulations, dealing with the principle of operational requirements, according to which “*logistics must provide support, even in the right quantity, at the right place and at the right time*” (NATO, 2013, p. 2-2).

The mobility principle targets the “*dislocation/redistribution capacity, in a short time, to maintain the fighting capacity of the forces*” (NATO, 2013, p. 12), by the logistic support structures, which must have the same level of mobility as that of the fighting and combat support forces. In the spirit of NATO principles, nations must provide, either individually or through cooperative arrangements, the provision of logistical resources to support structures from strategic to tactical levels in conflict situations.

The prediction principle is dealt with only in national specialized regulations and aims at identifying and assessing in advance the requirements and possibilities of logistic support, as well as possible deficiencies and delays, in order to anticipate and solve them. We believe that this principle can be substituted by the simultaneous application of the principles of visibility and transparency, which aim at a clear picture of the requirements and possibilities of logistical support and the principle of efficiency, the application of which is conditioned by early identification logistics support needs to optimize the use of limited material resources. In explaining this principle, the Romanian Army’s logistics of Doctrine underscores the necessity of correlation with the NATO principle, meaning that the entire logistic effort, both military and civil, is focused on meeting the operational requirements of the mission.

At present, the military units of the Romanian Armed Forces undergo a new process of structural and conceptual transformation, which will bring new transformations of the logistic system from tactical to strategic level. In this respect, regulations will be developed that must be in line with the future structure of forces, and on this occasion will need to develop

logistic support regulations that can update and harmonize the principles of national logistics with those of NATO documents. In this process we believe that it is necessary to study carefully the incidence of logistics principles on the many logistical support requirements that arise in times of peace, crisis, mobilization and war. During the process of updating the regulations with new concepts taken from NATO documents, in order not to create confusion, it is necessary to analyze the interaction of newly introduced principles with some concepts already used in the respective field, in order to understand and clearly implement taking into account military activities and actions over time peace, crisis, mobilization and war.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The logistics system of peacetime military units must be flexible, react quickly and efficiently in providing logistical support for the smooth deployment of the military activities planned through the *“Plan of Main Activities”*, but this involves knowing the basic mission of to each military entity at the same time as the logistic support dimension to be achieved in this respect. By addressing the logistic support principles of military activities, we highlighted the implications, multiple determinations and peculiarities putting them into practice in the logistical support of peace training and training activities. What is important is the understanding of the interdependence between the principles of logistic support and the fact that they interpenetrate and mutually condition each other requires constant adaptation and development so as to correspond as fully as possible to the application possibilities. That is why we consider that part of them can be applied in all situations, namely peace, multinational operations, crisis, mobilization and war (efficiency, sufficiency, etc.), and others can only be applied in multinational operations and in crisis, mobilization and war situations

(multinationals, etc.). The widening of the spectrum of joint military actions tailored to NATO requirements generated the approach of the logistic support principles in accordance with the missions and tasks received by the fighting forces. In this sense, we consider that the logistical support of the peacetime training and training activities of the peacekeeping forces, as well as the logistical support underlying the constitution of war material stocks, depend on these principles, which are partly found in logistic doctrines and have been deepened by different specialists, but the approach has been taken only for multinational operations and for crisis, mobilization and war situations. In this way we propose a clear stipulation in the existing doctrines, instructions, logistic regulations of the common principles of logistical support in peacetime, in crisis situations, mobilization and war and introduction of those with novelty character.

As a final conclusion, considering the issues under consideration, we appreciate that studying, analyzing and harmonizing the principles underpinning the logistical support of the military units to peace and the principles underpinning logistical support in military action are topical and high-profile themes interest because the uniform application of these principles would lead to the creation and development of a flexible and efficient logistics system, which is a top priority for logistics specialists in the Romanian Armed Forces. In this sense, we support the idea that the current logistics system must be modernized through high-performance analysis, sensor-based technologies, automatic data collection, data storage and dissemination based on standardized replication mechanisms and supported by management information systems. This idea of modernizing the current logistics system is the future, and close to this idea is the provision of efficient logistic support for which we should have as a starting point



the reconsideration of the principles underpinning the logistical support of the military units to peace both internally, in the sense to be normally, structurally and procedurally related, as well as externally, to be in close connection with the

modernization tendencies manifested in the national and international economic environment at the level of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and those within the European Union (EU).

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