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The Joint Force Commander and Global Mobility

By WALTER KROSS

Napoleon's campaign in Russia, the British army's failure to secure oil fields and pipelines in Mesopotamia in 1915, Field Marshall Rommel's defeat in North Africa in 1942, the demise of German forces at Stalingrad in 1943, the American failure in Korea in 1950, and the capitulation of the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 have something in common. Each was a failure resulting in part from an inability to deploy forces and keep them in the fight. On the other hand, Alexander the Great's conquest of the Persian Empire, the Normandy invasion and Burma campaign during World War II, the battle for Khe Sanh, and the Yom Kippur War were victories brought about by the ability to effectively deploy and sustain combat forces.

Future joint force commanders (JFCs) need to learn from these lessons in order to fight and win tomorrow's battles. Understanding the unique and dynamic nature of global mobility and the mobility issues faced by U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) is a vital first step toward best using scarce mobility assets in war.

In the wake of the Cold War, national military strategy has steadily shifted from a reliance on forward-based forces capable of fighting in place to significantly downsized CONUS-based forces with emphasis on power projection and joint force deployments. Consequently, demands placed on the defense transportation system require JFCs and their planners to become intimately familiar with the composition and character of national global mobility forces and with impending issues which might hinder the future warrior's ability to get to the fight.

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The Nature of Global Mobility

One characteristic constrains national military strategy above all others: TRANSCOM force structure is sized to support one major theater war (MTW). It can support two only by rolling from the first to the second in succession. That ability depends on the agility inherent in mobility forces, leveraging the close TRANSCOM partnership with the transportation industry, and tightly coordinated planning among the Joint Staff, the geographic unified commands, and TRANSCOM. This third element—smart planning and execution—is the most important.

As the name implies, mobility forces are inherently able to move rapidly among theaters and can tailor force composition to meet a wide range of contingencies. Air mobility forces—both airlift and air refueling—are perhaps the epitome of force agility, offering the capability to establish an air bridge on short notice and provide a significant ton-mile capacity. They can also be quickly tailored to meet flexible deterrent options or changing needs of a deployment. For example, when inclement weather ruined the surface deployment timeline for Bosnia, Air Mobility Command—the TRANSCOM air component—rapidly shifted key elements of the effort from rail to air.

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Boarding commercial aircraft for Southern Watch.

1st Combat Camera Squadron (David W. Richards)

Sealift—the force of choice to move heavy equipment and the vast tonnage of materials necessary to sustain a modern combat force for protracted periods—achieves its flexibility through tailored response ability and surge capacity. The surge sealift forces of Military Sealift Command (MSC), the Navy component command of TRANSCOM, can respond to a contingency with a variety of ships to include roll on/roll off (RO/RO), large medium speed RO/RO (LMSR), and fast sealift (FSS). MSC can tailor these forces as the contingency unfolds. However, timing is critical to roll sealift forces to the second MTW. It is also incumbent on the supported forces to ensure the right forces are at the right port at the right time to facilitate rapid upload and embarkation.

the Civil Reserve Air Fleet constitutes 93 percent of all planned strategic passenger and 41 percent of cargo airlift capacity

Military Traffic Management Command can also quickly move surface transportation assets to support the second MTW. Its fleet of railcars can rapidly shift the focus from the first MTW. Its mobility forces are positioned with lead Army units to ensure swift deployment. Its presence at the ports of embarkation is critical to an effective and timely up-load and down-load. Coordination between the joint task force and TRANSCOM is essential for movement to the ports.

Partnership with Industry

Inherent agility is critical, but in terms of supporting JFCs, the total TRANSCOM capacity depends on rapid access to the surface, sea, and air assets of America's cutting-edge transportation corporations. This is possible through close teamwork with industry. The Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF), Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA), and Maritime Security Program (MSP) all help ensure that the warfighter has strategic lift when and where needed.

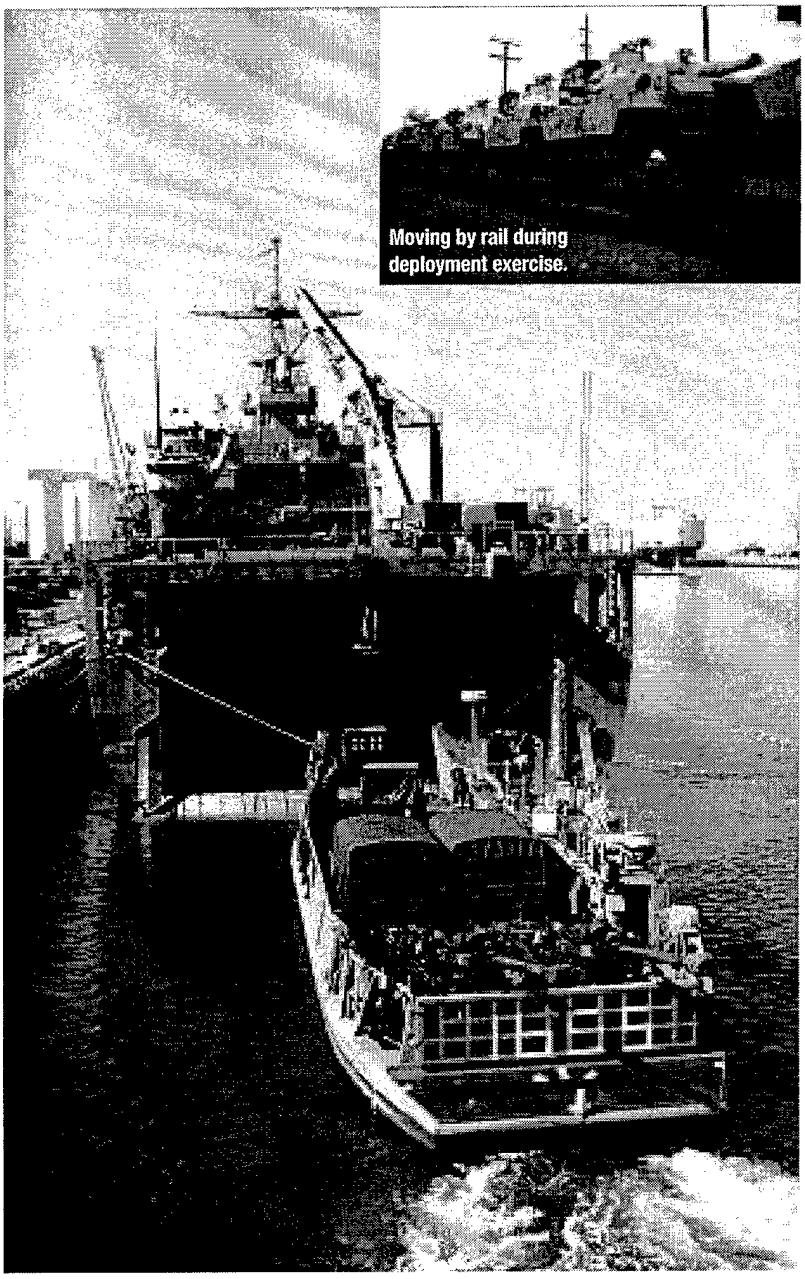
CRAF, instituted in 1952, is a voluntary contractual program wherein U.S. carriers receive government airlift business in exchange for commitments of aircraft to assist in emergencies when airlift needs exceed military capability. The program constitutes 93 percent of all planned strategic passenger and 41 percent of cargo airlift capacity.

VISA is a program developed by TRANSCOM, Maritime Administration (MARAD), and industry that leverages government business for door-to-door sealift capacity during contingencies. The commander in chief, U.S. Transportation Command, is responsible for activating it. In order to improve military responsiveness, industry leaders play a key role in developing their portion of operation plans (OPLANs). The objective is to leverage commercial sealift capacity, vessel, crew, port facilities, and other corporate assets in a contingency, as opposed to leveraging only ships as in the past. VISA works in conjunction with the Maritime Security Program.

The 1996 Maritime Security Act required the Secretary of Transportation to establish the Maritime Security Program which retains a fleet of U.S.-flagged, militarily useful vessels to meet national security requirements and maintain a U.S. presence in international commercial shipping. In addition the act requires the vessels to enroll in VISA and the emergency preparedness program. Maintaining a U.S. presence in international commercial shipping also ensures a U.S. merchant marine force large enough to crew the Ready Reserve Fleet (RRF).

Detailed Coordinated Planning

In the end, however, capabilities offered through TRANSCOM component forces and their close working relationship with industry provide a force structure sized to meet only one MTW. Detailed planning is the enabler which will permit this structure to satisfy the daunting two-MTW requirement. This planning is a massive team effort that starts with detailed practical steps among supported and supporting CINC staffs. It begins



DOD (Don Teft)

DOD (Alexander C. Hicks, Jr.)

***USS Ashland*, Kuwait City.**

with national security strategy and the joint planning document but relies heavily on a fully developed joint strategic capabilities plan (JSCP). The plan apportions strategic lift forces to support both major theater wars, laying the foundation on which geographic CINCs build OPLANs. The plans are then linked to time-phased force and deployment data (TPFDD) to provide unit-level details needed for global mobility forces to support two nearly simultaneous MTWs. Detailed planning by geographic CINCs and the commander in chief, U.S Transportation Command, is critical for the most effective use of scarce mobility assets.

OPLANs and related TPFDDs have only a limited potential for predicting the future. Each contingency and regional conflict unfolds differently and necessitates a distinct level of response. However, existing plans provide a frame of reference which enables a better allocation of assets. When a deployment is directed to a smaller scale contingency or humanitarian mission, the lack of an OPLAN and TPFDD presents a formidable problem. A response requires close coordination between the JFC deployment team and TRANSCOM to build the required OPLAN and TPFDD. No one would disagree, however, that the joint operation planning and execution system (JOPES) is difficult and time-consuming. To address this problem TRANSCOM is examining technologies and processes for a system to complete TPFDD-level detail deployment planning in one hour.

Undoubtedly, global mobility depends on its inherent agility, industry partnerships, and effective planning, areas in which TRANSCOM undoubtedly faces significant issues.

Joint Deployment Training

While planning is imperative for both JFCs and TRANSCOM, the ultimate success of any deployment lies in the ability to transition smoothly from planning to execution. Both require close coordination and teamwork. In introducing Joint Pub 1, the Chairman described joint warfare as "team warfare." JFCs want a diverse group of "pick-up players" to quickly form a cohesive team to facilitate successful deployment. Common experience and training form a cohesive team. The Joint Deployment Training Center (JDTC) will provide the common deployment experiences and training to facilitate team formation.

The JDTC mission is to improve the deployment process through doctrinal developments, education, and training to offer effective and efficient support to JFCs. The center will ensure that joint deployment and transportation core curricula are available for military and civilian personnel directly associated with planning and executing joint force deployments. Joint deployment and transportation education and training will be based on doctrine which will at the same time maintain service-unique capabilities. The intent is to create common mission-based requirements that each service understands and teaches as core proficiencies.

JDTC has several goals which will contribute to a successful joint force deployment. Most importantly, it will work to standardize instruction and develop doctrine related to joint deployment

and transportation. It will also increase the knowledge level of participants in the joint deployment process. Moreover, it will provide a core of joint deployment and transportation for all services, joint professional military education,

the United States is the only nation able to conduct large scale, joint operations far beyond its borders

and professional continuing education institutions. Finally, it will develop and offer an installation transportation office/transportation management office joint course. Common deployment doctrine and training are the overarching JDTC objectives. Through these tools, JFCs will be able to establish a truly effective joint force deployment team.

1st Combat Camera Squadron (Paul R. Caron)

Disembarking in Tuzla.

Intransit Visibility

Once execution is underway, TRANSCOM and supported commanders rely on movement information to provide the in-transit visibility (ITV) and command and control required to deploy more effectively. Recent history offers an example of how poor ITV impacts deployment effectiveness. During Desert Shield/Desert Storm the dozens of DOD transportation systems lacked interfaces and data standardization. The result was an almost total lack of ITV manifested in two ways. First, weakened customer confidence resulted in the same item being ordered several times and in various fashions. Second, multiple ports of entry suffered backlogs because of unknown time and location of cargo arrival.

Conversely, identifying and tracking cargo and passengers en route offers major benefits to the warfighter. Real-time verification of cargo location instills confidence in the system, reducing unnecessary reordering. Intransit visibility also allows JFCs to decrease, redirect, accelerate, or even stop the flow. This capability directly supports the concept of focused logistics. In the words of *JV 2010* it is: "the fusion of information, logistics, and transportation technologies to provide rapid crisis response, to track and shift assets even while en route, and to deliver tailored logistics packages and sustainment directly at the strategic, operational, and tactical level of operations."

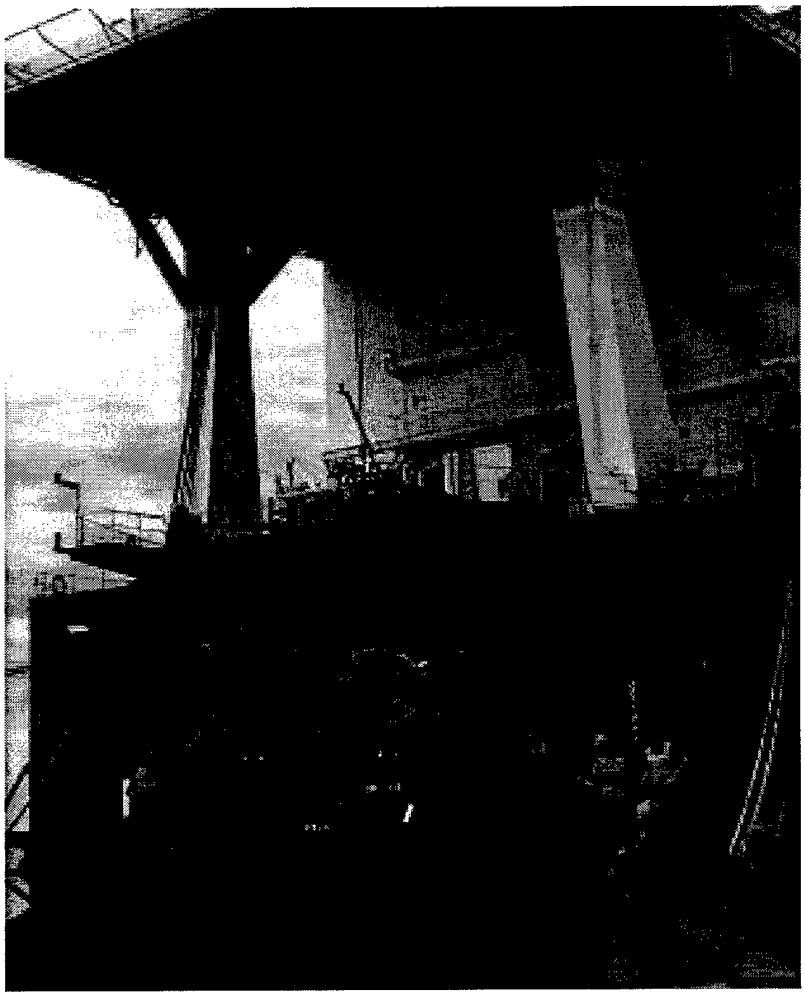
Make no mistake, it is accurately and promptly entered movement information that gives TRANSCOM and the supported commanders the ITV and command and control required to deploy more effectively. A JFC and his subordinate units must enter the movement data into the system. TRANSCOM and the supported unified commands must team up on developing processes and procedures to ensure that movement data gets into the system. Once ITV and command and control are reliable, JFCs can move more swiftly and decisively due in part to confidence in the transportation system.

Global Air Traffic Management

The United States has unparalleled military capabilities. It is the only nation able to conduct effective large scale, joint operations far beyond its borders. This may not be true in the future. Increasingly restrictive rules for operating in domestic and international airspace—the global air traffic management (GATM)—will bring about substantial and costly changes to equipment requirements. Advances in communications, navigation, surveillance, and air traffic management technologies are allowing domestic and global air traffic agencies to reduce lateral and vertical separation between aircraft thereby increasing throughput on the optimal air traffic routes. This has a bottom-line impact on JFCs because non-compliant aircraft will not be allowed to fly in the optimal airspace, which affects closure. For example, non-compliant aircraft deploying to Europe or the Middle East will be excluded from minimum navigation performance specification (MNPS) airspace on the North Atlantic, increasing en route time and corresponding growth in force closure. Circumnavigating this airspace would have added another 10 days to Desert Shield deployment. These requirements must be identified and budgeted.

Logistics over-the-Shore

Although high priority units may send equipment by air, the vast majority will deploy only troops and then join them with equipment either arriving by sea or prepositioned on land or sea. Before it becomes combat power forward in the assembly area, all equipment afloat must pass through a seaport of debarkation. A deploying joint force may expect one or more of three port conditions: a good port with plenty of berthing for deep draft ships, a restricted port that has been damaged or lacks the capacity to throughput large amounts of matériel, or no port at all. DOD has experienced all three almost everywhere it has deployed major forces in recent years.



DOD (Robert Shanks)

Loading *USNS 1st Lieutenant Jack Lummus*, Tandem Thrust '97.

When facing a restricted port or no port at all, regional CINCs have identified joint logistics over-the-shore (JLOTS) as a required capability to support their operations and contingency plans, especially since 95 percent of dry cargo and 99 percent of liquid cargo will likely move by sea. In Uphold Democracy, JLOTS capabilities were included in the operations plans in case the Haitian military closed Port-au-Prince. As it turned out, selected capabilities—such as tugs, cranes, and landing craft—were used to increase port capacity.

To ensure adequate JLOTS capability, TRANSCOM is focusing on two major initiatives: equipment and training. First and foremost, acquisition efforts must continue to ensure necessary JLOTS equipment to meet CINC throughput demands. This equipment includes RO/RO discharge and causeway platforms that greatly facilitate in-stream vehicle offloading. The lack of platforms forces a lift-off/lift-on operation, extending the time to offload a ship by up to 600 percent.

There is also concern about the ability to conduct JLOTS operations in rough seas. Current equipment inventory limits these operations to wave heights of three feet, a condition existing at only certain times. Increasing that capability to five feet would raise the ability to perform missions during a much broader range of operational conditions and environments worldwide.

TRANSCOM has program oversight responsibility for JLOTS and continues to press for adequate levels of training to ensure peak proficiency. In the past, JLOTS exercises have revealed low operational proficiency because of a lack of training opportunities. In response, TRANSCOM coordinated and finalized DOD training for both warfighting CINCs and the Joint Staff to exercise service JLOTS forces. The program, which runs through fiscal year 2003, will ensure readiness to conduct JLOTS operations whenever and wherever needed. In addition, the Joint Staff allocates $15 million each year for one dry and one liquid cargo exercise which are rotated among CINCs. TRANSCOM is proud of its efforts to develop a JLOTS capability to meet the needs of CINCs and will continue to advocate increases in this critical area.

When national interests require projecting power beyond our borders, TRANSCOM will be ready to respond. However, it can only accomplish its mission through close cooperation with the supported unified commands and services. Understanding the composition of mobility forces and the ingredients to ensure their effectiveness is vital for joint force commanders. TRANSCOM and the Joint Staff, other unified commands, and the services also must team up on those issues which might adversely affect our ability to deploy in the future. Together, we will continue to possess the finest power projection force in the world. **JFQ**