

The evolution of the Hungarian military logistics

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Since its operation, NATO has four strategic conceptions: massive retaliation (1949), flexible response (1967), transformation after the Cold War (1991), and renewal-expansion (1999). As new members entered the community, the definition of “certain countries” function became difficult. The differentiated army-development conception would allow the progress of the most developed countries as regards the improvement of network-centric and effect-based military abilities, while smaller countries would focus on the formulation of network-enabled warfare accepted by the Union. All these plans would be achieved by the acceleration of civil potentials, especially in the sphere of logistic support.¹

“If we are together nothing is impossible and if we are divided all will fail.”²

W. CHURCHILL

Introduction

The new, global and also Eastern-European approach and interpretation of security transformed the armies of different countries and at the same time, reformed their supply systems from the end of the '80s. Similar changes can be recognized in the Hungary Army also where the former Warsaw Pact member Hungary passed into the NATO after a temporary period. This huge paradigm change covered almost 10 years; however its influence defined the issues of the defence branch for decades. This is the standard the logistic system of the military tried and tries to correspond, furthermore, aims at providing peace and the satisfaction of claims throughout doctrinal, structural, and approach changes.

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From the Head of Material and Technical Support command to the Agency for Development and Logistics

Hungary had, and nowadays also has a lot of problems to solve.³ Our country started to change her system of government in the late 80s, and the process continued in the early 90s. The withdrawal of Soviet troops, the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, the Warsaw Pact, and other events of this sensitive region required the creation of various policies, primarily in the field of security. The civil war of our neighbours – the countries of the former Yugoslavia – also demanded special efforts at that time. Under these unusual circumstances the Hungarian Armed Forces had to strive for the accomplishment of its mission, and increase the effectiveness of its logistics system.

Logistics is defined as “branch of the military art which embraces the details of the transport, quartering, and supply of the troops in a military operation”⁴ as Webster writes in his second edition of unabridged dictionary (page number 866). Recently logistics adopted other denotations, such as a method of efficient organization and optimal utilization of human, material, financial, and communication resources. In other words, logistics is a modern military science, and the mission of its experts is to determine present-day objectives.

In the future, the Hungarian logistics system has to be a new and special support-supply system, although its military logistics branch will be different from the systems belonging to the U. S. Army and the German Bundeswehr.

The Hungarian Republic is a small country (10 million inhabitants, occupying 93 thousand square km), so it must build and reshape a highly economic and efficient logistics system via deep involvement of civilian logistics resources. There were more than hundred-thousand people in the Hungarian Armed Forces during peacetime who needed supply, support, and sustainment. Despite this fact, a large percentage of our military technical instruments were ancient and amortized, moreover, due to the crucial economic reforms, our Army did not have enough money for further development. The Defence Budget did, nonetheless, provide for the maintenance and augmentation of the 1992 achievements. Although there was a huge difference between the United States and Hungary, the problems were almost the same.

The operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm proved that future wars would be renamed “wars of logistics”. Even though the Hungarian Armed Forces provided only medical troops during the Desert Shield and Desert Storm operations, our reformed and modernized logistics system had, and now has objectives similar to those General D. Ross (now retired) outlined in the October 1991 issue of the Army magazine as regards the reduction of supply system costs, the consolidation of supply depots (central idea of

nowadays' logistics), the change of clothing and textile policies (due to NATO missions), the streamline of the Army Material Command based on the Army management review, and the decrease of inventories.⁵

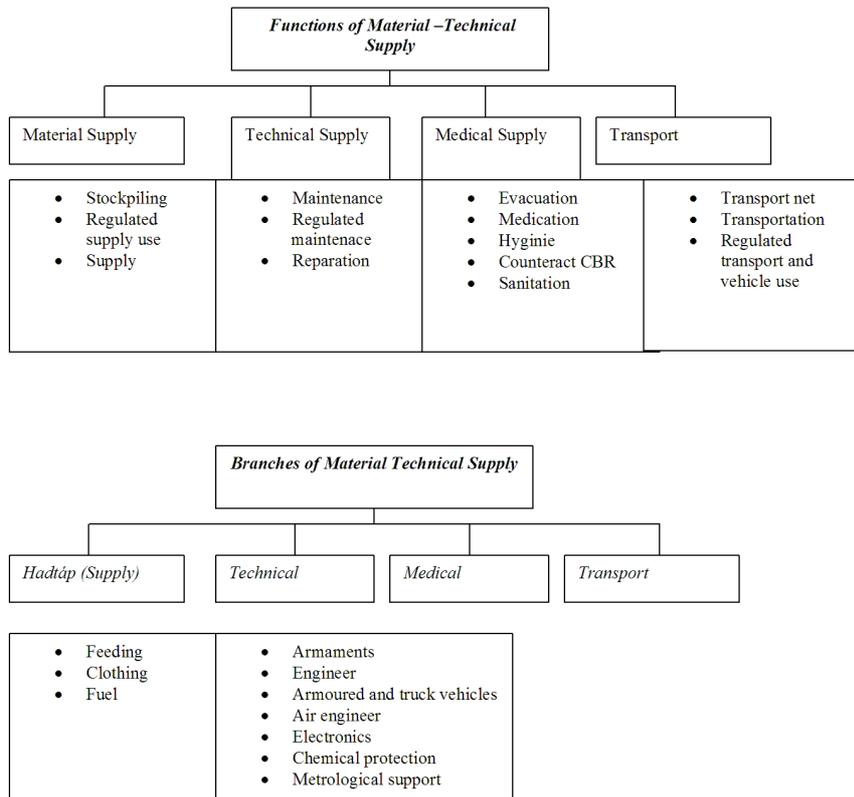


Figure 1. Functions and branches of Material-Technical Supply

Colonel-General Kálmán Lőrincz, former commander of the Hungarian Armed Forces (HAF), praised the achievements of 1992, and declared that the HA was totally aware of its duties.⁶ He highlighted the aims to be accomplished in 1993, and decided that the leadership of the Head of the Material-Technical Supply must start to formulate its new structure, as the logistics system of the Hungarian Armed Forces is called (Figure 1). Furthermore, its new structure should be integrated into the national economic system.

Our experts elaborated a new logistics support system, and planned to work with other experts from developed countries, together with Hungarian civil science societies, and research centers. The technical development of the Hungarian Armed Forces would have began in 1995. Consequently, the draft of a new and modern logistics system was necessary to be created, and the improvement claimed support based on economical, rational, and advanced computer system capable of sustaining the necessities of the logistics method.

Although there were a lot of differences among the armed forces of NATO countries, we could successfully combine the common efforts to help each other by a mutual exchange of ideas, joint experiences, human and financial resources which is clearly proved in the Bosnia operations (IFOR and KFOR), and also in various programs called NATO Partnership for peace (Pfp).

Strategic review 2001⁷

After joining NATO in 1999, the strategic review of the military force started in 2000–2001 targeting to achieve the harmonized organization structure of the national and federal obligations, the formation of command and control, dislocation, and training system including logistic support and infrastructural improvement, furthermore, some armed force development aimed at the military know-how of the future. The defence review, conducted in 2002–2003, determined the creation and generation of a volunteer military force, drilled on light, flexible, and professional grounds, according to four tasks as follows:

- Defence of Hungary and the alliances
- Taking part in international crisis management
- Contribution to preserving the global peace and security
- Carrying out the national defence duties during peacetime

The previously listed issues can only be achieved by the continuous supply and assurance of operational conditions for the troops of the Hungarian Army together with the management of the reception and preparation of new devices and armaments. One of the most important aims is the establishment of a centralized stockpiling involving useless tools and materials – relieving the Land and the Airforce troops which solves as a huge challenge for environmental protection. Modelling the new training system of the logistic division and providence of missions, and logistic support for troops in operational fields are also key targets of the central logistics branch.

If we consider only the latter task, it means that logistics had to face such challenges which had never occurred since the existence of the Hungarian Army, for instance, to

deploy troops at huge distances, to secure and support the transportation of their staff from home; finally, the transportation of the troops home. We had to plan the necessary combined transportation methods (by sea, by air, by railway) in the framework of all these.

All the involved realized that an up-to-date military force cannot exist any longer without a modernized transport and mobile system reaching the requirements of the new age. The above mentioned were confirmed in one hand by the Defence Capability Initiatives (DCI) accepted at the Washington Summitⁱ (23–25 April 1999) concerning deployment and mobility, on the other hand the issues were set in the Prague Capability Commitmentⁱⁱ (2002), demanding for quick settlement of troops and their operational supplement.

The reception of Gripen tactical airplanes and their infiltration into the system according to the requested conditions is under continuous progress. We extremely focus on the acquisition of 3D radars, and the formation of MODE IV capability of the IFF system. The four ground stations, and the MODE IV capability acquired at certain air devices are milestones in moulding the air C” capability. We signed the Multinational Implementation Agreement (MIA) with the main purpose of assuring the necessary sea transportation for the armed forces of the member nations, and joined the High Level Group on Strategic Airlift in order to secure supplementary and temporary air transportation capacity for the forces entering the NATO Reaction Forces – or for other national transportation targets – up to the point where the nations can grow their own military aircargo capacity.

Transportation support and surplus management in the spotlight

Concerning the Transportation Services, in the next two years we will not have to count with the solution of new problems, but the aim is to develop what we have achieved so far, to improve the already existing processes, and to be able to react quickly to new challenges occurring meanwhile. Within this scope we have to strive for the

ⁱ Washington Summit Alliance Foreign and Defence Ministers met informally in separate meetings on 23 April 1999 in the framework of the Washington Summit in order to take stock of developments in the Kosovo crisis.

They exchanged views on the political and military situation and underlined that NATO airstrikes would continue until President Milosevic had met the demands of the international community as reaffirmed by Heads of State and Government today in their statement. They also reviewed the extensive humanitarian support which NATO is providing in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (1). They welcomed the support for NATO offered by Partners in the region and elsewhere. At Washington, NATO Heads of State and Government launched a Defence Capability Initiative, DCI), and the Membership Action Plan, MAP.

ⁱⁱ Prague Capability Commitment 2002 At their meeting in Brussels, NATO defence ministers approved the military and political concept for the NATO Response Force, which will give the alliance a high-end expeditionary capability. They also reviewed progress on the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC), through which the allies have pledged to develop the military assets needed to perform NATO missions.

accomplishment of a successful troop tryout in the uniform superstructure family; each service should consider their already tried and modelled container as a base for their own superstructure in order to help the improvement of the moving and transportation ability; must monitor constantly how Hungary could build up an independent strategic air transport capacity, and secure sea and air transportation capacities with the help of already existing methods in the interest of HA's professional tasks. However, the most important issue of the next few years is the creation of transportation conditions for the hazardous materials in connection with a regulation order missing for long time, and also the creation of a training system for the troops. In addition, we are planning to found a Central Logistics Base which really meets the standards of the new age, equipped with adequate, integrated storage system, conveyance of materials and records.

The main task of the past few years was to move the unnecessary materials, tools to the Incurrency Storage Warehouses, furthermore, to prepare and formulate the new order of handling incurrency. The destruction of 4166 tons of munition was conducted at Pusztavacs. We have begun two other munition destruction tenders for the garrisons of Pusztavacs and Hajdúnánás in the scope of a four-year-treaty. During the realignment of the armed forces 218 combat cars, 441 combat vehicles, 1070 automobiles, and 240 energy inductors were stockpiled centrally.

Conclusions

The transition of the Hungarian Home Defence Forces from the Hadtapⁱⁱⁱ of the Warsaw Pact to Logistics of NATO has not finished yet. In November 2006, the Hungarian Army established a new organization structure, the HA's Development and Logistics Agency (Fejlesztési és Logisztikai Ügynökség-FLÜ-Figure 2), instead of the old Joint Logistics Support Command (Összhaderőnemi Logisztikai Támogató Parancsnokság – ÖLTTP), which lies on NATO comfort standards and provides a stable base to the achievement of military missions and trainings having the necessary logistic background with NATO interoperable systems.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hadtap is/was meaning of Supply and/or Logistics Support for feeding, clothing and fuel

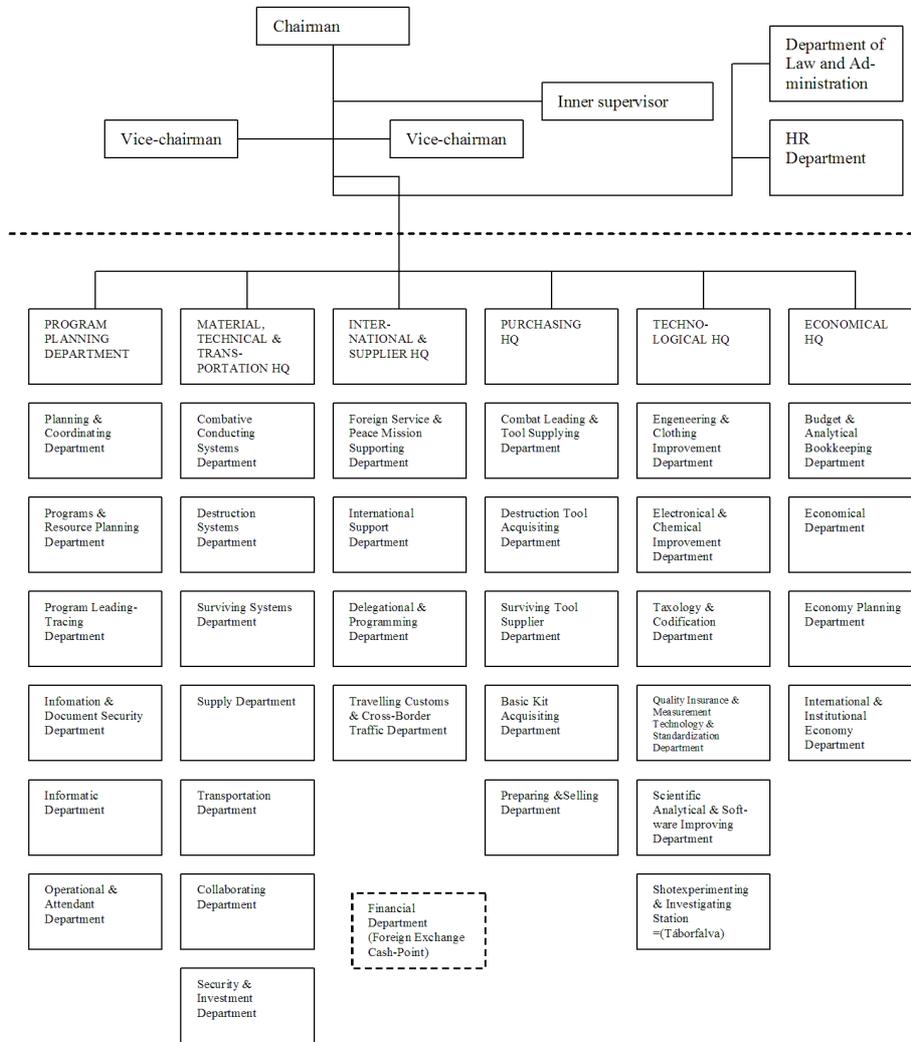


Figure 2. The HA's FLÜ organization structure

Armies – like the Hungarian Home Defence Forces inclined to constant transformation due to dynamic processes in the world. Global challenges, the UN and NATO missions, financial criteria, and scarce resources need the continuous monitoring and improvement of supply chain management. Efficiency and success are the main objective of both military and business sphere that is why they can be achieved and maintained only by tight cooperation.

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