

Elements of procedure of shipment and transit

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Because of the functioning of society and economy, demand for dislocation gets differentiated depending on needs that may diverge from one another substantially in many ways. The primary purpose of transportation is to act upon and to satisfy needs and its changes in the highest, the most complete, the most effective, and the most economic degree. To organize and to accomplish such needs happens to become a more complex and expansive task than the public or the lay might think. The Hungarian Defence Forces had executed numerous transport missions in the previous years, in vain, the problems drawn by the professional on the grounds of observations has not been solved to this very day. It is to be regretted that military transport missions are widely and generally used, yet lacks the professional. The major aim of this article is to reveal and to ease a delusion, namely, planning, organizing, and implementing transport tasks is a simple task. The article is based on civil side, or more exactly, on economy, since military transport missions are quite similar to carriage and haulage.

On Conference about “Experiences Of Supporting International Missions” organized by The Joint Forces Logistics and Support Command of the Hungarian Defence Forces and held on 6th April 2005 there had been functional problems expressed that concerned the professional of transportation, just a little, since the sub-fields and the tasks of each sub-field within the shipment process are well known and completed by the professional. A conclusion could have been drawn that the conference had an effect on accomplishing the objects of the following years. Nevertheless, the professional of transportation has been facing the same anomalies that had been expressed on the conference day by day since then.

Problems expressed on the conference, briefly:

- In many cases, implementation lacks the logistic leader in charge, therefore lacks precise setting and personalizing tasks, as well;
- Due to inadequate legal regulations, several sub-fields and part-functions are unregulated or outdated;
- As a result of continuous realignment and cut-back, the fields of transportation lack the professional;

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- Since procurement and setting active service of incomplete military equipment takes time, whoever is in charge for planning military transport missions has no or little and imprecise information on supply and circumstances;
- Because of lack of time, quantitative procurement has become preferred to the detriment of the qualitative one, so the list of the supply has to be corrected and refined continuously;
- There is no single database and pertinent identifying system available, which would contain the whole and accurate registry on all materials and equipments of the Hungarian Defence Forces. Such database would eliminate useless procurement and save time during planning operations;
- Delivering information among organizations, operational units, and the personnel in charge for planning and organizing is unsatisfactory, namely, data are frequently unspecified, and delivered late, so has to be refined and corrected continuously;
- Organizations, operational units, and the personnel responsible for accomplishing duties connected to planning, organizing, and implementing military transport missions are unaware of national regulations, and take no notice of reports and warnings of the professional of transportation;
- Document forms and handling documentation are not standardized, yet especially defective;
- Insufficient information about the facilities, the capacity, and the scope of shipment of the Hungarian Defence Forces and of the civil side.¹⁻³

The above mentioned problems might seem to be broadly defined, yet concern not only planning and operating military missions but also everyday road transport in civil side (in economy). When, how, and under what circumstances do these problems occur? By what means can they be eliminated? These questions will be answered only if we get capable of knowing and applying the elements of and the influential factors on road transport appropriately in every detail.

The process of general road transport can be divided into three parts, basically:

1. Elements of planning and organizing the task, namely, duties before implementation;
2. Duties on implementing haulage (forwarding);
3. Other duties, not compartmentalized above, namely, duties after implementation.⁴

The above grouping of duties, however, is less suitable. It misses relevant duties and activities of organizations and the personnel that belong indirectly to the implementation process, yet need thorough and specialized knowledge and are essential in order to accomplish tasks quickly, precisely, effectively, and economically. Therefore, it is even more practical to list elements according to scope of duties, as follows:

1. Plan and organize forwarding goods (materials);

2. Prepare goods (materials) for carriage (transit);
3. Prepare goods (materials) for forwarding (haulage);
4. Store goods (materials);
5. Load goods (materials);
6. Forward goods (materials);
7. Deliver goods (materials);
8. Provide supplementary activities;
9. Evaluation, post-calculation.⁴

By reason of restrictions in volume, this article presents only the first three points of the above list in details. Those elements are recommended to draw the attention of civil servants to and to acquaint the personnel holding posts related to military transport missions.

1. Plan and organize forwarding goods (materials)

At first sight the following statement may seem to be odd: a military transport mission starts long before a claim is put in. The professional dealing with planning and organizing forwarding has to be aware of the potential and the capacity of transport. In other words, it can be called a marketing research, since a portion of military transport missions is implemented with vehicles taken from the civil side. Before each mission it must be clear what kind of own (military) vehicles are available and if own (military) capacity is sufficient for implementation. The assigns at the Military Transport Centre occasionally have no information about the transport capacity of certain corps to implement the mission with having recourse to own (military) vehicles. Furthermore, there is no nation-wide information base, yet it would be requisited to include, at least, basic data of civilian capacity, such as company, site, capacity of vehicles, etc. Organization may suffer delay in default of sufficient information, which has to become available further steps to be taken:

- A. Choose traffic sub-sector(s);
- B. Choose means of transport;
- C. Choose route;
- D. Organize loading, discharge, and tranship.

A professional responsible for planning and organizing transport is also in charge for choosing traffic sub-sector(s) (A). In case of military transport, it can be realized on various levels, e.g. sub-units (daily routine), central organ (Military Transport Centre, HDF), or higher level command (supply missions), but influential circumstances have to be taken into consideration.

The decision on choosing traffic sub-sector is determined basically by the following terms:

- How long;
- Under what circumstances;
- In what quantities;
- What kind of goods

has to be delivered to its destination.

Time factor has to be examined in every condition. For example, it is essential to know how long takes to provide supply to an operation area. Particularly, it counts in case of valuable, sensitive, and deteriorative consignment and dangerous materials. In order to keep the deadline the period of delivery is influenced by the speed of delivery, which means the period of time, which consignment is delivered from the sender to the addressee in; so each period of time of forwarding, handling, and dwelling counts.

Regarding the *circumstances of forwarding and handling*, the organizer of transport is obliged to consider the safety of consignment. Terms of handling (e.g. number and means of loading), weather conditions, the lie of the land, and economic and political factors have to be taken into consideration; especially, in cases of missions overseas or to military operation areas.

The quantity and the property of goods might be one of the most important factors to take into account on choosing traffic sub-sector. The basic features of traffic sub-sectors, such as flexibility, period of delivery, costs, transport capacity, etc., differ from one another. These features have to be taken into account when the most feasible method of implementing the task is designated (division of transport/traffic labour).

The most important properties of goods to be forwarded to be considered:

- Quantity;
- Physical and chemical features;
- Effect on the environment;
- Way of packaging;
- Dimension (size) of goods and cargo (freight);
- Sensitivity;
- Ability to be loaded;
- Rules of handling (dangerous material);
- Ability to be placed on vehicles;
- Common shipment of various goods.⁴

Because of the previous reasons a question may arise: what kind of function and significance does the above mentioned information have for those holding posts other than transportation professional posts? Basically, demand for shipment starts with

whomever in charge of managing, realizing, and utilizing materials and equipments. He sends demands to the personnel and the organizations in charge of planning and organizing forwarding. In case the demand (order) lacks proper data, whoever is in charge is not able to start effective planning until he the data are missing. For instance, there are thousands of kinds of chairs available. It does matter what kind of material they had been made of, what kind of dimension (size) they were available in, how they could be piled up, how they were packed in, how they could be loaded on vehicles, etc.

The quantities and properties of goods lay down means of transport (B) fundamentally. Need should not only determined according to carrying capacity, but also according to area and volume of cargo bay. Besides, superstructure is also important; for example, in road transport goods may require a drag, a van, a superstructure with awning, or a refrigerator wagon.

Route (C) is determined by the goods, by the shipment, and by the alternatives of routes. Generally speaking, the period of time of implementation is the most important factor to be taken into consideration, when route is chosen. Nevertheless, this statement is true in case of civil transport or military transport missions to national regions. In case of international transports or strategic transports to operation areas the properties of goods are the significant terms; e.g. forwarding valuable or dangerous goods should make allowance for attacks, raids, and interventions, therefore the data of claim for transport have to be definitive as soon as possible without any modifications and any additional claims.

Organizing loading, discharge, and tranship (D) is also determined by the properties of goods to be forwarded, i.e. quantity, way of packaging, and dimension (size) of cargo (freight). For instance, a container is not one of stock size and the loader in the international port (harbour) is unable to get hold on it. Consequently, it would be essential to secure in the application what kind of utensils or vehicles and what method of loading (manual or mechanical) the goods should be loaded with and moved in.

Loading possibilities should occasionally be looked at in the first place, and goods should be prepared for transport in possession of such information. Basically, it does not refer to transport to quite short distances, but does to international transports or transports to operation areas, when several nations participate.

Time factor counts considerably to organize loading. For example, in case of a quite simple entrainment date of pulling out a wagon and date of loading has to be co-ordinated. Moreover, railway companies order maximum period of time to load, exceeding of which means extra expenses. In the course of implementing a multi-national task several workers of several nations might load in the same place and at the same time, timing is significant.

2. Prepare goods (materials) for carriage (transit)

As seen previously, the quantity, the packaging, and the properties of goods (material) determine organizing transport and implementing haulage basically. The purpose of packaging is protection: first, protect goods from environmental strain (mechanical, climatic, biological), second, protect environment from the goods (e.g. dangerous material, sharp edges). Besides, packaging encapsulates goods (container, pallet) and unburdens loading. When packaging is unsuitable for the goods to be forwarded, the driver of the vehicle, the carrier, or the shipper refuses forwarding. According to legal regulations he is entitled as well as obliged to do so.ⁱ The abstraction of ability suited for forwarding (haulage) includes freedom from damages and changes (e.g. corrosion), complement in weight and by piece, accordance with ordinal numbers, sameness of contents, as well as required documents and permits, proper marking and packaging according to agreement, and united cargo.⁵

To arrange consignments into one united load is quite useful from the point of view of forwarding and handling. United load should be created whenever conditions allow of doing so. United loadⁱⁱ simplifies planning, organizing, and implementing transport. It, however, has got some disadvantages (e.g. plus weight and special handling), yet they are irrelevant according to the advantages, such as:

- Create a forwarding chain and possibility to standardization;
- Apply up-to-date technologies and equipments, automation;
- Save manual labour;
- Decrease number of tranship and period of time for loading;
- Optimise utensils or vehicles and method of loading to enable exemption within a short(er) period of time;
- Optimise storage areas (piling);
- Decrease specific costs of packaging (i.e. manpower and wrapper);
- Decrease possibility of damages and pilferage of goods and number of contingencies;
- Create from-door-to-door transport.

ⁱ Paragraph (1) in Article 490 in Civil Code: The sender is obliged to pack the consignment in, so the packaging should protect the consignment, yet endanger neither the others, nor the property of others. Paragraph (2) When the packaging does not correspond recognizably with the requirements, the carrier shall undertake forwarding the consignment with the written demand of the sender and only if the consignment endanger neither the others, nor the property of others.

ⁱⁱ United load: Sorted quantity of homogeneous or various kinds of goods, which protects goods and enables handling and forwarding with applying appropriate utensils (container, pallet), without handling goods uniquely, in economic conditions.

In case of military transports united load should be arranged with international standards taken into appropriate consideration. As a matter of fact, standards are quite like the civil standardized system, since considerable part of military transport missions are in connection with it, i.e. civil suppliers, loading utensils and vehicles, and stores.

3. Prepare goods (materials) for forwarding (haulage)

Actually, preparation for forwarding means signing various contracts (i.e. transport, supply, and loading contracts) and getting required documents.

Unfortunately, there are problems emerging from signing contracts, which originate in defining claims imprecisely and changing claims long after the deadline expires. The Hungarian Defence Forces are bound by the regulations in the Act on Public Procurement, keeping the provisions of which comes up against difficulties because of problems outlined above. The procedure to purchase any kinds of services under scope of this Act needs time to be carried out. Therefore, whoever is in charge for putting the claim into shape, he has to see much further and to make much more specified plans. A transport cannot be done by half in default of precise data. For example, in case of strategic air transport it does matter what would be loaded on the flying deck, since this is regulated in full details among all sub-sectors; or rather, it is quite difficult to change capacity as an afterthought, which might implicate further costs. Shipping overseas is quite similar, though it is still easier to manage and replenish capacity of air transport than of shipping overseas (where implementation might be days out).⁶

To get the required documents and permits is as troublesome as (or even more worse than) signing a contract. Basically, documents can be mentioned in connection with the following groups:

- Vehicles to forward by;
- Goods and materials to be forwarded;
- Personnel.

To own documents of each group is essential to start or to implement forwarding. In default of those nothing can be done. By reason of restrictions in volume, this article omits who is in charge for procuring all the documents. Notwithstanding, it is worth mentioning that special documentation is compulsory (i.e. travelling warrant and travelling command of the NATO) to implement military transport missions, apart from the applied and required documents in public transportation. The special documentation is an advantage as well as a disadvantage. Problems are arising from imprecise claims and from personal causes. In generally, whoever takes part in the implementation is appointed just before transport mission sets forth. Consequently, all personal documents

are in default: they either fail, or need useless waste of energy to have them ready when transport mission sets forth.

Summary

The article dealt with only the minor segment of the procedure of supply and transit, since even the procedure of organisation itself consists of several part-functions. The article omits mention implementation and other activities proceeded to it. Yet conclusion shall be drawn, namely, only the competent professional, who should possess professional knowledge, cannot complete a transport task. It is a must to take cognisance of appropriate approach to achieve effective and cost-saving transport process. This way of thinking shall be confirmed by the future, for the transport missions of the Hungarian Defence Forces are going to increase instead of decreasing in the next couple of years.

Accordingly, capacity of civil carriers and shippers will become even more emphasizes on military transport missions. It is a must to take cognisance of time had gone by, when civil transports conformed itself to the military. The tendency has changed, and military transport missions have to conform themselves to the civil side. In a short while, legal regulations that are not applied to military transport missions so far will be enforced.

It is necessary to amend the Act on Public Procurement in order to implement the emerging tasks in due time. For example, military transport missions need facilitations and exemptions to strict provisions in order to respond to the changed conditions in an optimal way.

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