

Some Austrian and German solutions for Peace Support Operations

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The present study illustrates international trends in logistic support to operations through the examples of Peace Support Operations conducted by the German and Austrian armed forces.

Introduction

On the basis of basic political documents (National Security Strategies) it can be stated that the strategic objectives of both Austria and Germany include the containment of comprehensive security and, for this reason, their participation in multinational military and humanitarian operations. Because of its NATO membership Germany's involvement is understandable and in spite of the lack of an EU obligation Austria also declared its will to participate and identified its forces to commit for deployment in the framework of a common EU military operation.

Nowadays in the armed forces development plans of every country principles like force deploy ability, mobility, flexibility, response capability, interoperability, creation of flexible Command Control and Information Communication systems, modular structure, preserving and re-deploy ability of existing capabilities, specialization in various capabilities, and efficient logistic support are top priority.

Austrian and German solutions

Multinational operations already reached such magnitude that they became decisive factors in everyday life of armed forces. However, the high number of multinational missions and the strength of forces involved in these operations tie up significant logistic resources. Soon it was realized that this level of support cannot be managed through mere branch capabilities.

To this end in German Bundeswehr support capabilities, including logistic support, were centralized. In accordance with centralization tendencies in 2000 a decision was

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made on the establishment of a Joint Service Support Command, which is headed by a General with a legal state similar to that of branch inspectors. This organization is interesting not only because it is a centralization effort for logistic and administration capabilities but also because command support, military police, and intelligence were also reallocated to the Joint Service Support Command.

In the new German support system the command of foreign operations was also taken from the responsibilities of Service Commands and was included into that of the Operations Command (Einsatzführungskommando) belonging to the structure of Combined Basis. In order to ensure the economical concentration of resources a Combined Support Command was established with the new Logistic Centre incorporated in its structure. Since 2004 the centralized command and execution of material supply and transportation have been conducted through this command element.

In the present study I use primarily the structure of logistic support to troops abroad as a starting point in accordance with the current tasks of the two armed forces. At Peace Support Operations the use of a two-level structure is clearly efficient. It is useless to insert a supply level between the Centre and troops because it is not justified either by the distance of transportation or the used transportation sublevel. Moreover, the many transmissions – handover-takeover of materiel, registration, loading, etc – would significantly slow and overcomplicate the entire system.

In the case of multinational operations logistic support is influenced by the following operational circumstances:

- “a. nature and content of operation;
- b. typical theatre features of operation;
- c. spatial and time dimensions of operations;
- d. composition and personnel of military organizations involved in operation.”¹

The nature and content of operation determines the tasks and composition of a contingent designated for deployment. The requirements of a contingent involved in a humanitarian mission can be fundamentally different from those of a unit in a peacekeeping or peace-enforcement operation. The influence of typical theatre features of operation means that the infrastructure in the theatre of operations is usually less developed than that in Central Europe which creates permanent difficulties both during the deployment and mission. The overwhelming majority of crisis regions is in areas where the climatic conditions are extreme for Europeans. Another threat can be presented by health risks, such as dangers of epidemics and infections. A typical feature of theatre can also be the support and reception opportunities provided by a particular State or States. The structure of logistic support is directly influenced by the extent of requirements of needs to be met by either Host Nation Support (HNS) or local

contractors. In every mission – but mainly in the case of large distances – the most economical way of supply is the use of local supply resources in some way. However, the lessons learned from Peace Support Operations in the past decade indicate that local services in theatre are extremely limited moreover, it is often the Multinational Forces that have to participate in providing supplies for local population.

The spatial and time dimensions of an operation determine besides the size of forces the structure of logistic system to be set up. The question is whether a direct supply from home bases can be managed or intermediate stages should be included and if so where and what types? In the case of longer distances and combined transportation RSOM&I (Reception, Staging, Onward Movement & Integration), NSE (National Support Element), or in accordance with the procedures of multinational logistics MJLC (Multinational Joint Logistic Center), MILU (Multinational Integrated Logistic Unit), and JLSG (Joint Logistic Support Group) can be deployed.

The composition and personnel of the military organizations involved in an operation determine the structure of logistic support since the type of support should be identified clearly on the basis of economy and efficiency of efforts that is what support should be provided to meet the strength, materiel, supply requirements of a particular mission. The supply of a small guard platoon with light armament is an entirely different job than that of a combined arms battalion or brigade.

On the basis of the above listed factors each nation can decide which of the support systems they wish to establish and operate.

In accordance with the system formed by now “... in EU-led operations similar principles are to be applied as in NATO-operations since the EU has entirely taken over NATO doctrines and procedures.”² In Austrian principles both NATO and EU principles applied in PSOs are fully incorporated (Figure 1).

The support system of Bundesheer takes into consideration all those solutions that can be used in a multinational operation. Missions are led by a Combined HQ (Streitkräfteführungskommando). Home base is, naturally, comprised by a central unit of consumer logistics, Logistic and Support HQ (Kommando Einsatzunterstützung) and the subordinated central stores and logistic centre's. In the case of a two-level structure the supply of a contingent can be ensured directly by the strategic level.

In the case of longer distances to bridge national support element is an important element of national support system that can also be a turntable of logistics.

Structuring the Austrian support system the opportunities provided by multinational logistic support are naturally taken into account (Figure 2).⁴

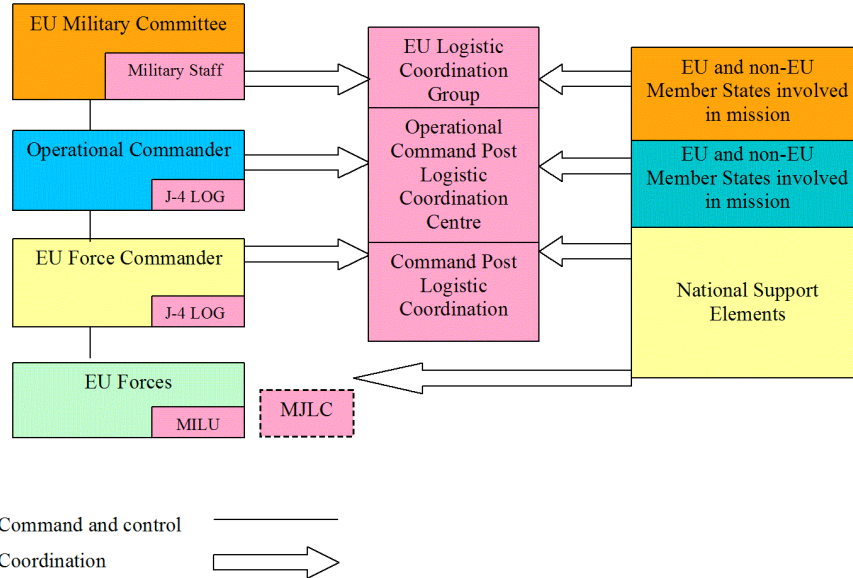


Figure 1. The structure of logistic support of EU operations³

In its framework they can participate in the establishment of MJLC and a MILU. Besides Belgium, Luxemburg, and Greece Austria also had a role in BELUGA, the first Multinational Integrated Logistic Unit, thus it can be stated that Austrian logisticians played a determining role in the first testing and operating a significant element of multinational logistics. The Austrian system of mission support has no significant differences in its principles from international regulations.⁵

The structure of the subsystem of national support of the Austrian Armed Forces basically meets the international principles (Table 1, Figure 3).

Table 1. Logistic support system

Logistic support system			
National support subsystem	Host nation support subsystem	Multinational support subsystem	Local contracts

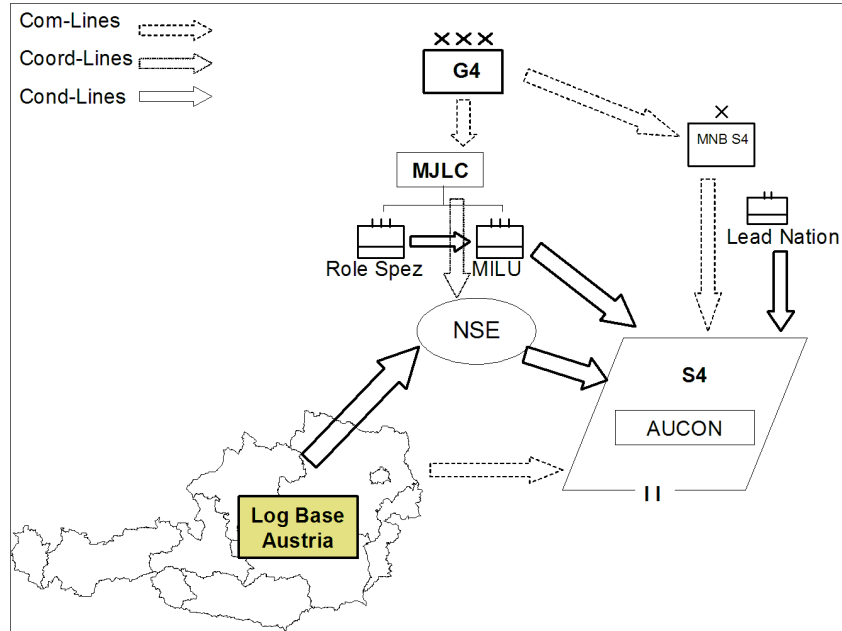


Figure 2. Logistic doctrine

Home bases are comprised by the domestic – both civil and military – resources of sending countries. The support services are coordinated by a military organization designated for supply, in accordance with the actual requirements. Such requests can be fulfilled either from central stores or from purchase from national economic resources.

If only buildup is taken into consideration in the theatre of military operations (30 DOS) it can be seen that the 23 day of supplies should be created at the NSE. There are several options for establishing NSE. In dependence on the actual situation it can be established either directly in the area of operations, or in the territory of Host Nation, or in an area between mission area and Host Nation Support region.

The third level of national support subsystem is the contingent to be supplied in the area of operations. As a general requirement it can be claimed that the logistic capabilities of a particular unit – either a regular one or a task force established for a particular mission– should be able to ensure the logistic preconditions of accomplishing a mission. This includes the storage of seven-day supplies, the provision of daily supplies, the receiving of incoming materiel, services with the use of various logistic procedures (Host Nation Support, Lead Nation, local contractors, Figure 3. The

structure of the national support subsystem role specialist support, etc.). To this end logistic capabilities should be reinforced with additional capacities according to specific theatre requirements.

After an overview of principal structure it is reasonable to examine the structure of the Austrian National Support Subsystem in relation to the strength of forces designed for deployment in conflicts of different intensity.

In Austria the operation of logistic support is the responsibility of the Logistic and Support Command. Significant elements of home base is comprised by the subordinated regiment and central stores, and supply centres, which are complemented by national providers and commercial storage facilities. The fundamental designation of the Austrian Armed Forces is national defence. Apart from this there are three other basic tasks to fulfill: participation in disaster relief, support to civil authorities (see border protection), and participation in PSOs in the framework of international organizations. To this end Austrian operational planners worked out the structure of Austrian logistic support system for different types of operations (Figures 4, 5, 6).⁶

Figure 4 shows a classic operation with the deployment of a combined brigade in accordance with Security and Defence Strategy. The distance between the theatre of operations and the contributing country is several thousands kilometers which clearly requires the deployment of a National Support Element (NSE). The distance between NSE and tactical units, according to the Austrian approach, should allow the NSE to transport 2 DOS supply every 2 days. In such a case one company of the 1st Supply Regiment would execute road transportation. Naturally, the higher echelon executing the mission has its own logistic subunits in its area of responsibility – in the case of a mechanized brigade one support-transportation company and one repair company, in the case of a light infantry brigade one support-transportation-repair company – which are capable of taking over materiel arriving from strategic level units.

In accordance with the Security and Defence Doctrine of the Republic of Austria Bundesheer must be capable of using a division strength force for the collective defence of the territory of the EU. This option takes into account a conventional war in which logistic support is planned to be structured as depicted in Figure 5. The distance to the theatre of operations can be up to 1,500 kilometers therefore there is no opportunity to ensure direct logistic support for users by the strategic level units in accordance with the two-level supply. Consequently, the deployment of a NSE is justified. A fundamental difference with regard to high-intensity PSOs is that the theatre of operations is in Europe therefore the infrastructure is more developed. Since it is a collective defence operation of the EU high-level HNS services can be relied on.

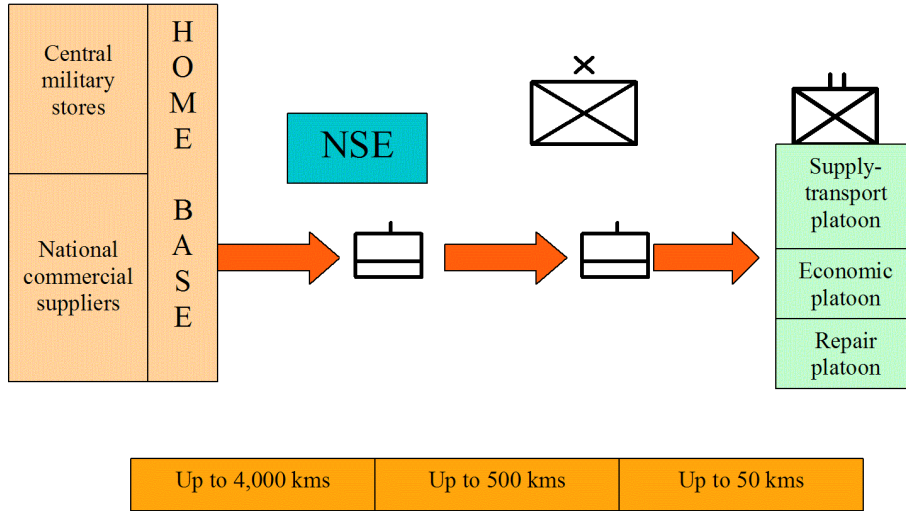


Figure 4. The structure of Austrian National Support Subsystem in a high-intensity PSO

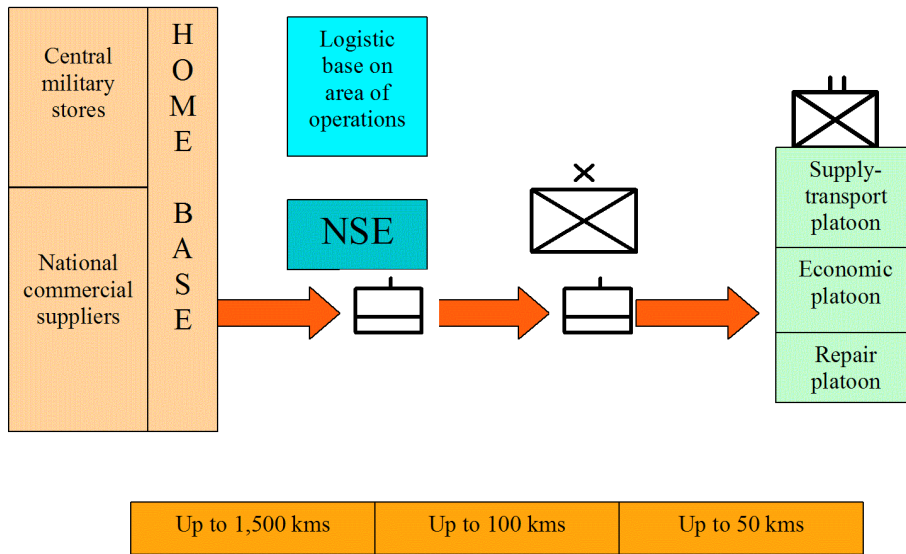


Figure 5. The structure of Austrian National Support Subsystem in the case of the defence of the territory of the EU with the use of a division-size force

In PSOs Austria has participated in long-term missions with battalion-size forces. When taking part in a low-intensity conflict an area of responsibility maximum 2,000 kilometers away is taken into consideration (Figure 6). In such a case NSE, some 1,500 kilometers from home bases, is operated as a logistic base in the theatre of operations. This structure of logistics is basically a three-level system without a brigade supply stage and between strategic and tactical levels as a logistic turntable there is the NSE of the operational level.

I did some research in the Land Force Supply School of the Bundeswehr during my work. The national subsystem of logistic support is reorganized in the German Armed Forces too. The current development phase ends in 2010 and its objective is to establish a smaller logistic organization for providing logistic support to operations.

The system of logistic support to operations abroad is divided into three parts by the German approach too (Figure 7).⁷ As it is shown in the figure strategic, operational, and tactical levels are clearly separated. The operational level is located in the theatre of operations in accordance with classical principles.

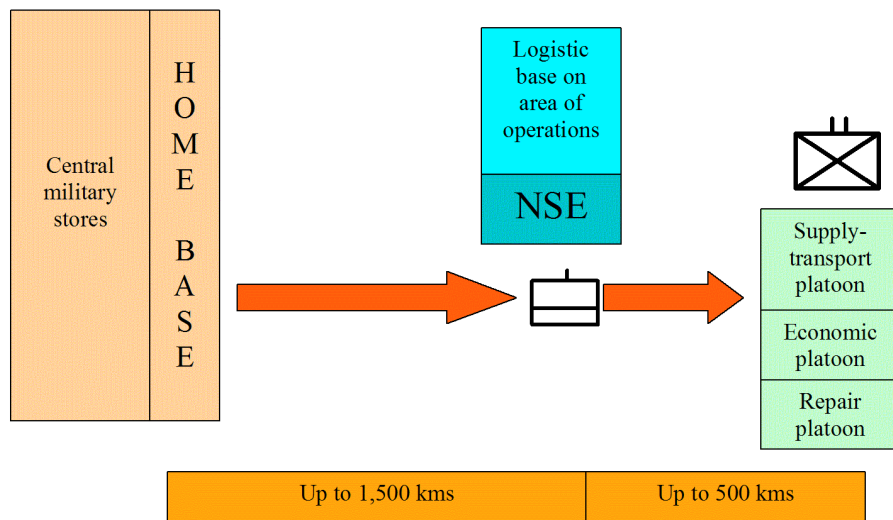


Figure 6. The national support subsystem in the case of low-intensity operation with the use of battalion-size forces

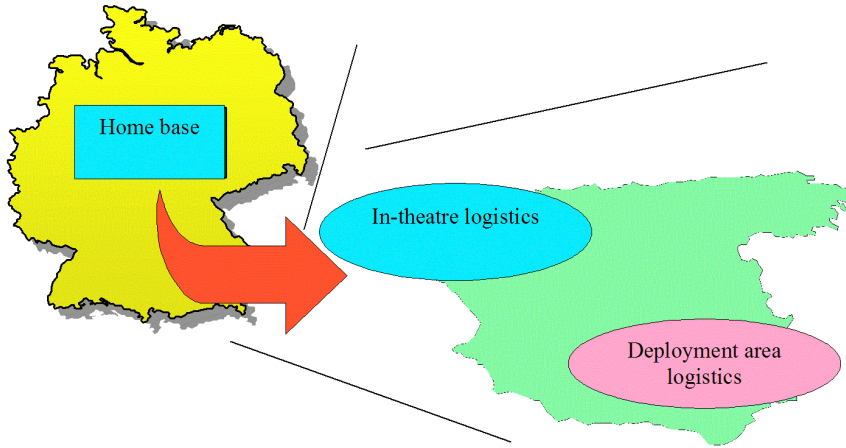


Figure 7. The system of logistic support in Bundeswehr

In Bundeswehr it is the Combined Base established at strategic level that possesses central logistic resources for all branches and services.

Because of such a concentration of capabilities the capacities of branches significantly changed and several responsibilities were taken over by the central unit. Thus a new concept was approved for the logistic support to operations abroad (Figure 8).⁸

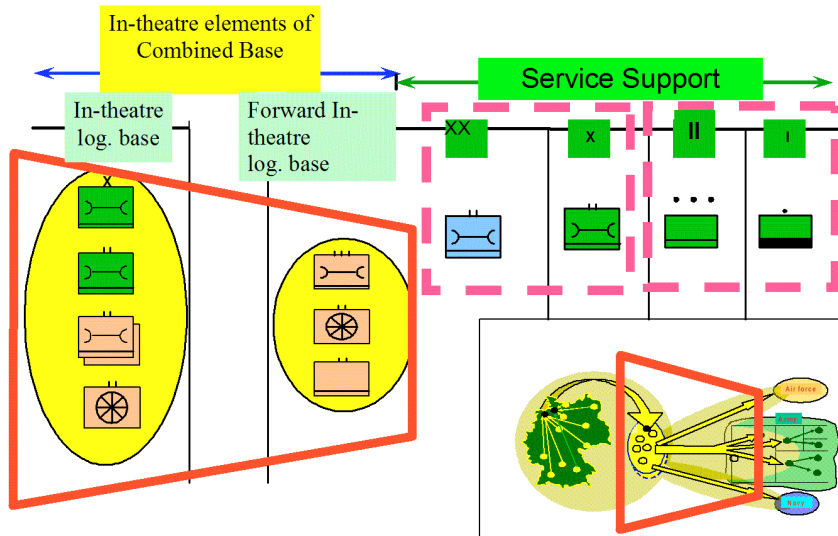


Figure 8. The new concept of in-theatre national logistic support system in Bundeswehr

Naturally, in its structure strategic level or central unit is present as a home base because this level must always be operational. The structure of theatre logistics, however, has changed. The classic three-level structure – home base; NSE; user – fundamentally changed in the German system. The in-theatre logistic base and the forward logistic base do not belong to the responsibilities of service but they are established and operated by the central unit. This structure resembles the Austrian solution where only the Logistic and Support Command has a logistic regiment which is to operate the in-theatre NSE.

The German in-theatre logistic base can be of a brigade strength with the appropriate repair, supply, and transportation battalions therefore it is capable of providing full-scale services.

The forward base represents a logistic regiment force and is also capable of providing full-scale services.

Consequently the in-theatre logistic forces function in two echelons in similar subordination. Branch support capabilities are limited to the tactical level exclusively to the support to troops in direct subordination to division.

A division has no incorporated logistic subunits therefore the support to the units in its direct subordination is ensured by branch logistics. Brigades have their own logistic battalions with appropriate capabilities thus they are capable of providing support to incorporated subunits. Battalions comprise an independent supply level within tactical units. In the figure companies are depicted as independent however, they cannot be considered as an independent supply level. In the comprehensive figure a five-level national support structure can be seen, comprising a home base, in-theatre logistic base, forward in-theatre logistic base, and at tactical level a division-brigade and a battalion level supply stage. This structure, of course, is typical for a country with significant military and economic power.

The above described system must ensure the supply of contingents of different size: in a high-intensity conflict to supply 35,000 troops for six months; in PSOs to continuously support 70,000 troops in five different regions. On the basis of Austrian and German system of logistic support it can be stated that three-level separation can be regarded as a generally accepted principle. The strategic, and tactical/user levels must be present in every system. The tactical level involves subunit type users usually battalion-size forces. A battalion has its own logistic subunits thus it is capable of receiving support from higher echelons and of preparing it for use by subordinated units. When a company is independently deployed the national support system will definitely be two-level.

In the case of strategic level or of a home base it is a common feature in both systems that the central tasks of user logistics are executed by a combined logistic lead organization at the level of branches in Bundeswehr and of Combined Command in Austria. Such “Logistic Command” coordinates the use of all military and civil resources necessary for supporting missions.

The most exciting element in the structure of National Support System is in-theatre support base or element. Some organization conducting operational tasks is included in the principles of both armed forces.

Both the in-theatre logistic base and support element in the Austrian and German systems are established and operated by the strategic level. It is particularly interesting that in the German system branch capabilities are concentrated in the central stage and this is also tasked with ensuring operational level support.

Conclusions

In all it can be stated that both Austrian and German national support subsystems operate the classic three-level structure. In both countries it is the central unit that is capable of building in-theatre logistic support. The home base activities are coordinated and guided by a lead organization with combined logistic functions.

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