



# CLIC PAPERS

**LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS  
IN LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT**

**Army - Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict  
Langley Air Force Base, Virginia**

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IN

LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

by

✓ Lt Col William F. Furr, USAF

Army-Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict  
" Langley Air Force Base, Virginia 23665-5000

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## CLIC PAPERS

CLIC PAPERS is an informal, occasional publication sponsored by the Army-Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict. They are dedicated to the advancement of the art and science of the application of the military instrument of national power in the low intensity conflict environment. All military members and civilian Defense Department employees are invited to contribute original, unclassified manuscripts for publication as CLIC PAPERS. Topics can include any aspect of military involvement in low intensity conflict to include history, doctrine, strategy, or operations. Papers should be as brief and concise as possible. Interested authors should submit double-spaced typed manuscripts along with a brief, one-page abstract of the paper to Army-Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict, Langley AFB, VA 23665.

## PREFACE

This paper attempts to articulate and highlight important logistical considerations in low intensity conflict (LIC). During my research, I was told by many people that logistics is the same at all levels of conflict; the only difference is in the scale of the operation. I have become convinced this simplistic viewpoint fails to recognize the unique challenges of the LIC environment and can result in inadequately prepared logisticians. Success in LIC will often hinge on the ability of the logistician to take the lead in defining and planning for the mission from the outset rather than merely reacting to operational requirements during a crisis. In many LIC situations, the logisticians will be the first or maybe the only military personnel deployed. Such exposure is not the usual fare for the logistician who will be expected to be a planner, operator, and teacher all at the same time. These roles will require mental agility as well as a good dose of common sense.

It is only realistic to expect the primary focus of logistics thinking and planning be directed toward supporting current operations and preparing for the "big war." The result is that LIC will be prosecuted using the logistics systems, procedures, and resources which result from this "big war" thinking and planning. However, this fact does not preclude imaginative leadership capable of adapting logistics systems, procedures, and resources to the unique challenges of LIC.

An earlier version of this paper was presented at a JCS sponsored seminar on Logistics Planning for the Low Intensity Conflict Environment. This seminar was the second in a series of such seminars ably planned and chaired by Lt Col Ray Linville, USAF, of the OJCS/J-4 Studies, Concepts, and Analysis Division. These seminars are the first steps toward developing an awareness and appreciation of the logistics challenges of LIC and preparing logisticians to meet these challenges.

## LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

### IN

## LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT

1. **Introduction.** This document provides considerations for the employment of logistical support in low intensity conflict (LIC). While the fundamental principles of logistics apply across the spectrum of conflict, it is the application or adaptation of these principles to the LIC environment that present unique challenges for the logistician. Low intensity conflict is not business as usual. It is usually prosecuted under peacetime laws and regulations. It requires ingenuity, imagination, and flexibility to tailor the logistics resources to effectively and efficiently support the mission objective. In the LIC environment, the logistician will be expected to take the lead and will be a planner, operator, and teacher. These roles will require mental agility as well as a good dose of common sense.

### 2. Definitions.

a. **Low Intensity Conflict.** "A limited politico-military struggle to achieve political, social, economic, or psychological objectives. It is often protracted and ranges from diplomatic, economic, and psychosocial pressures through terrorism and insurgency. Low intensity conflict is generally confined to a geographic area and is often characterized by constraints on the weaponry, tactics, and the level of violence." (7:--)

b. **Logistics.** "The science of planning and carrying out the movement and maintenance of forces. In its most comprehensive sense, those aspects of military operations which deal with: (1) design and development, acquisition, storage, movement, distribution, maintenance, evacuation, and distribution of materiel; (2) movement, evacuation, and hospitalization of personnel; (3) acquisition or construction, maintenance, operation, and disposition of facilities; and (4) acquisition or furnishing of services." (6:209)

c. **Combat Service Support.** "The assistance provided operating forces primarily in the fields of administrative services, chaplain services, civil affairs, finance, legal service, health services, military police, supply, maintenance, transportation, construction, troop construction, acquisition and disposal of real property, facilities engineering, topographic and geodetic engineering functions, food service, graves registration, laundry, dry cleaning, bath, property disposal, and other logistic services." (6:75)

3. **General.** In LIC, logistics elements may precede other military forces into the area of operations or may be the only forces deployed. Logistics preparation of the battlefield, as a specific task or as a collateral benefit of assistance to a host nation, can be critical to the successful prosecution of a current or future LIC operation. Logistics systems supporting either US or host nation forces must operate within the environmental constraints of the host nation and the legal and political constraints governing US involvement. Thus, such systems must have the flexibility to tailor support to the local situation. Logistics support in LIC involves not only providing materiel and supplies to US and host nation combat forces but also developing logistics systems and procedures for the host nation and the training of host nation logistics personnel.

a. Logistics support in LIC can be complicated by the wide dispersal of forces, the need to protect all bases and installations, the need to provide security for ground and air movement, and the difficulties of acquiring local resources. As a result, airlift may be the most secure means of transportation. Also, logistics facilities and stock levels should both be kept to a minimum to reduce the security burden and the chances of such supplies falling into hostile hands. Local resources should be used to the maximum, but such use should not adversely impact the local security forces or population. (11:5-23)

b. Logistics flexibility, foresight, improvisation, and rapid response, making maximum use of local resources, will be required to meet the needs of widely dispersed forces operating in circumstances of continuous, short notice changes in the operational situation. A high degree of mobility is required to reduce or eliminate excessive stocks in forward areas, restrict logistics installations to safe areas, and provide the capability to evacuate casualties rapidly. Air resupply reduces or eliminates the need for escort troops and reduces targets and sources of supply for the enemy. Special considerations affecting logistics support include continuous maintenance of strict security, close cooperation with civil authorities including assistance in community programs and the maintenance of essential services, the provision for special equipment, higher than average wear and tear on clothing and equipment, and the need for camps, services, and facilities for personnel accommodation, rest, and recreation. (11:5-32) The logistics capabilities required include the following.

- o Clearly understood command and control arrangements
- o A reliable logistics communications network
- o Secure and protected lines of communications
- o Theater mobility stressing tactical airlift and support helicopters

- o Means to exploit local resources to the maximum extent possible within the constraints of the political and social context of the conflict
- o Means to protect logistics installations
- o Automated inventory and movement control to maintain visibility, minimize, and rapidly adjust stock holdings
- o Resources for construction of camps, adaptation of buildings, provision and maintenance of services including aid to the civil community
- o Means of establishing a casualty evacuation and treatment system
- o A flexible maintenance system to meet required operational availability rates of equipment
- o Means of collecting and collating logistics intelligence before and during operations
- o Means of feeding isolated forces separated from main bodies
- o Financial arrangements to allow for payments for goods and services received and the recovery of costs for goods and services provided
- o Legal services for the interpretation of law and protection of assigned forces (11:5-32 - 5-33)

c. The principles guiding the establishment and operation of logistical systems in LIC are:

- o Maximum economy of resources
- o A flexible task force composition
- o Ability to implement in any theater or country
- o Routine use of host nation support to include local services, supplies, facilities, and transportation
- o Maximum use of existing fixed facilities such as lines of communications, ports, and airfields
- o Minimum handling of supplies to include the requirement that for short duration conflicts (less than 90 days) units will be supported by preplanned resupply packages as much as possible
- o Provisions for self-protection and passive protection measures for logistics units
- o Routine use of both strategic and theater airlift until surface transportation can accommodate
- o Elimination of unnecessary duplication of facilities and overlapping of functions (10:2)

d. Low intensity conflict operations often require the ability to execute time-sensitive, discreet deployments. In addition to speed, the system used to mobilize and deploy must function in an environment where operations security is so strict as to preclude normal predeployment coordination. This heightened security environment may require significant tailoring of established mobilization procedures. In such a case,

mobilization signatures should be no different than day-to-day operational signatures. However, such requirements must not preclude or prevent the minimum logistics planning and coordination necessary to ensure mission success. (3:30)

e. "The US armed forces' mission in LIC falls into four categories: peacekeeping, insurgency and counterinsurgency, combatting terrorism, and peacetime contingency operations." (1:2) The logistical considerations for each of these categories are examined in the remainder of this paper.

#### 4. Category I -- Peacekeeping.

a. **Definition.** "Peacekeeping operations are military operations conducted in support of diplomatic efforts to achieve, restore, or maintain peace in areas of potential or actual conflict." (1:7)

b. **Logistics Considerations.** Peacekeeping operations are usually conducted as a multinational effort with military contingents from two or more nations. Such operations may be under the auspices of the United Nations or some other international organization. The United Nations Participation Act of 1945 authorizes US forces to provide logistics support directly to United Nations Peacekeeping Forces. Such support is pursued under peacetime laws and regulations and is usually characterized by austere base development and a mixed military and civilian contractor support structure. (10:5) In their Army War College study project, "Coalition Logistics - The Multinational Force and Observers Model," LTCs Creel and Wright identified the following 35 logistics considerations which should be included in the planning and execution of logistics support for peacekeeping operations.

(1) The support concept should be divided into distinct phases to take the force from concept development to maturity. Each phase should include those essential tasks required to accomplish stated goals and time lines to provide targets for completion. The phasing concept provides a common framework that focuses every contingent's efforts and allows decision makers to prioritize activities.

(2) Direct contact between logistics planners and logistics operators is essential, and coordination of every facet of logistics operations must be discussed and agreed upon.

(3) The backwards planning sequence is the best method to ensure planning has been thorough and precise. Using this approach, the planner envisions the mature force and its logistics system and then applies the forces' requirements through reverse time phasing to achieve the visionary system.

(4) The logistics operators must deploy, acclimatize, stabilize, and become operational before other operating elements arrive in theater. If conditions do not permit this, an intermediate support arrangement must be developed.

(5) Although the force may be multinational, the logistics system must be common to all. The system should be standard, simple, and apply to all contingents.

(6) The majority of supplies are generic. Therefore, the majority of the items stocked by the force will satisfy contingent needs. Standardization of equipment also enhances system commonality. Non-generic items should be provided by the contingents themselves to satisfy their unique requirements.

(7) Using a combination of requesting items from the DoD supply system and purchasing from commercial sources saves money and provides more flexibility.

(8) Facility availability must support the deployment schedule and be prioritized to fit mission requirements. There must be backup alternatives when facilities' schedules cannot support mission requirements.

(9) Warehouse facilities must be large enough to provide a surge capacity to handle exaggerated stock safety levels during initial operations.

(10) The use of modular structures should be maximized to improve the efficiency of operations and provide for troop comfort at the least cost.

(11) Sector support sites should be considered to provide intermediate area support bases as backup to breakdowns in the delivery system and to provide a contingency stock.

(12) The purchase of commercial, off-the-shelf equipment should be considered in lieu of contingent-unique equipment.

(13) An entry point into the DoD supply system must be established. This interface should join the peacekeeping force with a materiel management center close enough to provide customer service functions.

(14) There must be an interface with the DoD transportation system and a commercial freight forwarder.

(15) There must be a reliable tracking system to allow the force to monitor shipping status and provide item visibility.

(16) The logistics support unit should provide permanent liaison personnel to work with and assist supported contingents.

(17) Logistics operators must provide comprehensive training for contingent logisticians on the supply system, distribution system, forms and records. This training should be followed up with an aggressive customer service program.

(18) The logistics concept must provide for automation of supply records as soon as the theater is mature enough to support an automated system. Automated inventory records, property hand receipts, requisitions, and management reports are essential to efficient operations.

(19) The logistics support unit should provide support to the contingents, not to subelements. Each contingent should be responsible for the distribution of supplies to its subordinate organizations.

(20) The logistics support unit must be a stable, nonrotational organization, unburdened to the greatest possible extent by personnel turbulence.

(21) Operations are enhanced by the assignment of multilingual support personnel. In some instances, the assignment of bi- or multilingual personnel may approach being a basic prerequisite for the success of a logistics operations.

(22) The deployed force must have a local purchase apparatus and the authority and sufficient funds to provide support to contingents. This is particularly important during initial operations.

(23) To the greatest extent possible, high volume, bulk items should be obtained locally.

(24) The support plan must be based on current consumption data for comparable operations. Minimum deviations should be allowed during initial operations or until sufficient demand data are available.

(25) A civilian support services contractor may be able to support a deployed force with many of the functions now provided in the CONUS. However, the contractor's support plan must be carefully reviewed to ensure compatibility with the overall support concept.

(26) To protect resources, property accountability and responsibility must be established immediately.

(27) Provisions should be made for a storage facility to accommodate supply surges at sea- and airports.

(28) Requisitioning activities must be monitored to ensure excessive quantities are not requested, the priority system is not violated, and supply discipline is observed.

(29) System design should detail flow of supplies from the origin to the user.

(30) Contingency stocks should be sufficient to support worst case potential until demand data are developed.

(31) Obtaining accurate data on supply shipments and transportation dates is critical.

(32) Transportation assets must be sufficient to clear ports in a timely fashion to preclude loss of supply visibility.

(33) The services of a movement control center to provide effective internal control of transportation assets are essential and must be incorporated in the support plan.

(34) Contingents must be required to maximize use of organic transport capability prior to seeking additional support.

(35) Specialized equipment should be centralized and operated by a transportation unit. (2:102-107)

## 5. Category II -- Insurgency/Counterinsurgency.

a. Definition. Insurgency is "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict." Counterinsurgency is "those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat subversive insurgency." (6:93,185)

### b. Logistics Considerations.

(1) The characteristics of the counterinsurgency environment which make logistics support under these conditions different from those ordinarily expected are:

- o Inadequate communication network
- o Inadequate logistical facilities
- o High level of guerrilla activity
- o Political fragmentation of local population
- o Need for rapid deployment of US forces
- o Low health and sanitation levels
- o Inadequate local forces to provide cover
- o Absence of a clear declaration of war
- o Extemporization of logistical units
- o Existence of targets and areas unlikely to be attacked (5:2)

(2) "In the early phase of an insurgency, US forces can assume various noncombat support relationships with the host nation's military forces. They can serve as advisors or instructors. . . . Combat support or combat service support units may augment the host nation's effort and also create a framework that can enhance US warfighting capabilities, if such employment should become necessary. A crucial consideration in counterinsurgency strategy is that US forces remain unobtrusive in their support role. This helps maintain the credibility of the host government and bolster its popular support." (1:10)

(3) Counterinsurgency often involves the preparation of the conflict area on a regional and country specific basis. The preparation of potential conflict areas can lessen or eliminate the requirement for employment of US combat forces. The emphasis should be on providing for indigenous tactical success, ensuring regional stability, and developing the logistics infrastructure to replace US personnel. However, if local forces are unsuccessful, preparation of the conflict area should support contingency plans for the employment of US combat forces. (10:9)

(4) "United States security assistance organizations, mobile training teams, and special operations forces elements should focus on ensuring the local military posture is credible and adequate to meet potential threats and to avoid the need for direct US combat intervention. At all levels, US organizations should take care to ensure all security assistance efforts remain within the limits of US policy guidance, support the host nation counterinsurgency strategy, and are suitable to the needs and capabilities of a developing nation. Such efforts should be integrated with psychological and civil affairs operations." (1:11)

(5) "Logistical support can be extremely important. The need to adequately sustain troops in the field is not just of military interest. Quite often in developing states, poor logistical systems mean that forces operating away from home bases tend to live off the land, which can mean off the local villagers. This leads to illegal exactions which accentuate local resentment against the government. Thus, adequate and appropriate logistical support is an important element in developing a response to the insurgency. Logistical support is an area in which the United States is particularly adept, but the trick is not to redesign local forces to conform to US logistical requirements but to design a support effort commensurate to local needs and capabilities. Given the fact that the main US role in an insurgency may be support and advice to a Host Country, logistics becomes even more important and it may be the leading element of US Army involvement. Thus it is essential to develop a system that can function with flexibility and tailor its capabilities to support local needs." (12:60-61)

(6) Humanitarian assistance may be part of a counterinsurgency program to change or prevent situations prejudicial to the interests of the US. The logistics elements involved will usually support civilian agencies and may be under the control of such agencies. To effectively carry out such humanitarian assistance operations, consideration should be given to the following planning requirements.

- o Size of supported population
- o Deployment and redeployment plans
- o Command and control arrangements
- o Communication requirements
- o Area qualified or familiar planners
- o Political considerations and legal constraints
- o Local customs and traditions
- o Local threat environment
- o Coordinated embassy and military public affairs (10:10)

#### 6. Category III -- Combatting Terrorism.

a. Definition. "Combatting terrorism consists of those defensive (antiterrorism) and offensive (counterterrorism) measures to meet the evolving terrorism threat." (1:14) Terrorism is "the unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property for coercing or intimidating governments or societies and often for achieving political, religious, or ideological objectives." (4:2)

#### b. Logistics Considerations.

(1) Because of their high visibility, logistics units, facilities, installations, and operations are particularly vulnerable to the terrorism threat. All logistics units and elements should be aware of this potential threat and the defensive measures needed to reduce their vulnerability. Logistics plans, procedures, and systems should include appropriate antiterrorism measures. Military construction plans, programs, and specifications should include appropriate antiterrorism measures.

(2) Counterterrorism operations demand particularly precise timing and execution because of the potential international political ramifications of such operations. Therefore, the logistics support of these operations can easily mean the difference between success and failure. Equipment failures are simply not acceptable in an environment where a guarantee of 100% reliability is often demanded before execution is approved. Logistics planners must participate from the very beginning in the planning for counterterrorism operations. Operations security (OPSEC) and communications security (COMSEC)

sensitivities should not prevent the early and active involvement of logisticians in counterterrorism planning. Instead, logisticians should be sensitized to OPSEC and COMSEC requirements and should be trained to use deception, cover stories, or other active and passive measures to maintain the required security. During an operation, counterterrorism logistics resource requirements must not compete with other high priority requirements. To provide the desired reliability, logistics resources must be dedicated to the counterterrorism operation until completion of the operation.

## 7. Category IV -- Peacetime Contingency Operations.

a. Definition. "Peacetime contingency operations are politically sensitive military operations characterized by the short-term, rapid projection or employment of forces in conditions short of conventional war." (1:16)

### b. Logistics Considerations.

(1) Normally, logistics planning for peacetime contingency operations will be accomplished using the concepts and procedures described in the Joint Operation Planning System (JOPS), Volume IV, Crisis Action System (CAS). The CAS is a flexible system which provides a coordinated process to produce the best method of accomplishing the mission. While the CAS was designed for rapid response, the time sensitivity of certain critical situations may require so rapid a response that the normal CAS sequence may have to be altered significantly, i.e., CAS phases may be compressed, conducted concurrently, or eliminated. (8:7-4 - 7-5) In any case, no matter how time or security sensitive the situation may be, logisticians must actively participate in all phases of the planning effort.

(2) Logistics units must have a working knowledge of the plans they are supporting so they can devise complementary plans and procedures. Logistics units, like combat units, must train together to ensure teamwork. The responsible headquarters must integrate nonorganic logistics units into the planning process and ensure those units have an opportunity to rehearse the aspects of those plans affecting their operations. (13:80)

(3) Peacetime contingency operations are likely to be conducted in a short duration, limited objective environment characterized by austerity of personnel and equipment. Austerity, in this case, will usually mean the logistics support infrastructure will be limited in favor of deploying the maximum combat power. Therefore, detailed and continuous logistics planning will be essential to arriving at the correct balance of logistics to combat power. The logistics structure must be austere but adequate to support the deployed force. (10:13)

(4) If a contingency force is deployed to a country where a Host Nation Support Agreement is in force, the logistics force structure should be tailored to take advantage of the support provided by such an agreement. If not, logistics requirements must be met initially by US resources or locally contracted services and supplies. To provide for such locally contracted resources, appropriate contracting personnel must be among the first deployed. (10:12)

(5) The contingency force will have its roots either in the CONUS or in a third country and will rely on strategic airlift and sealift for rapid deployment and resupply. Normally, time-consuming and manpower intensive logistics activities will be accomplished outside the area of operations. (10:13)

(6) Support for the contingency force will be the responsibility of the organization which normally supports the force or which may be assigned to it for such operations. The structure of the supporting unit should allow it to perform all necessary logistics functions until the operation is concluded or evolves into a different situation. An indigenous force may be available to assist in supporting US forces. The capabilities and limitations of such indigenous forces should be considered in contingency planning. (10:13)

(7) Contingency forces may be air-dropped, air-landed, or deployed by sea, depending upon the contingency area, the mission, and the time available for deployment. The deployment of the logistics support package must be phased to correspond with the deployment of the combat force. Contingency forces may be staged near the contingency area to cut down the length of the lines of communication. However, forward staging in itself presents a substantial logistics problem, requires time, facilities, and protection, and can be done only when a friendly or neutral country consents to the use of its soil for deployment of war materiel. (10:14)

(8) The deployment and management of logistics units usually pass through a series of phases. In the early stages, most logistics units will be small and without an on-site logistics control headquarters. To ensure effective command and control, some type of logistics headquarters should be included in the early deployed increments to organize these smaller elements. (10:14)

(9) Supply support of a peacetime contingency operation in an unestablished area will be provided to the deployed force through a combination of unit accompanying supplies and predetermined, preplanned supply support. Sufficient supplies must accompany the contingency force to enable it to accomplish its initial objectives and sustain itself until resupply begins. Plans must provide for normal and emergency resupply. (10:15)

(10) Initially, the combat force will depend upon organic transportation. However, as soon as airfields or seaports can be secured, sufficient transportation resources must be introduced to establish in-theater lines of communication and permit resupply operation. When appropriate, logistics planners should also consider watercraft in logistics over the shore (LOTS) operations and for use in inland waterways. (10:18)

(11) Joint movement control at the unified command level is essential to ensure resupply supports the broadest military goals and objectives and to ensure logistical decisions are linked to the practical capabilities of the Defense Transportation System. (9:2)

## 8. Conclusions.

a. Low intensity conflict presents many challenges for the logistician. The biggest challenge will be the need for leadership in a dynamic environment of competing and sometimes conflicting political, social, economic, and military requirements. The prevailing theme throughout this paper has been flexibility of logistics systems and procedures but most of all individual flexibility in planning for and executing short notice, highly visible, and constantly changing missions. If logisticians are to be effective in this environment, they must be prepared to quickly transition from a peacetime mentality to wartime employment. This can be accomplished by taking the lead in defining and planning for the mission from the outset rather than merely reacting to operational requirements during a crisis.

b. The majority of logistics thinking and planning are dedicated to supporting current operations and preparing for the "big war." As a result, the LIC challenge will be met for the most part with the logistics systems, procedures, and resources that result from this "big war" thinking and planning. However, this fact should not preclude imaginative leadership capable of adapting these systems, procedures, and resources to the unique challenges of LIC.

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