

**STRATEGY
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COMMAND AND CONTROL OF THEATER SEAPORTS

BY

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COMMAND AND CONTROL OF THEATER SEAPORTS

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ABSTRACT

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The evolution in U.S. National Military Strategy (NMS) with its increasing emphasis on power projection, coupled with the introduction of the combat brigade in the afloat pre-positioned stocks of the Army, has fostered new challenge in determining command and control of theater seaports. This study explores seaport operations in recent military contingencies, the significance of water terminals, ambiguous joint doctrine and the related application of the principles of war and logistics. The author argues for a single, continuous seaport operator, recommends changes to joint doctrine, and proposes that the Army be designated the Executive Agent for the Department of Defense for theater seaport strategy.

COMMAND AND CONTROL OF THEATER SEAPORTS

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the cold war, our military, especially the Army and the Air Force, has undergone transition from a forward deployed force to one of force projection. Seaports, in the past critical to the reception of follow-on forces and sustainment, have become more significant. Today, the land component's first available heavy, mechanized forces may be in the initial sealift, not forward deployed and augmented by follow-on forces. In this evolution an Army heavy brigade from the afloat prepositioned force (APF) may be stationed offshore near a seaport on the first day of a crisis. Therefore, a combatant commander's water terminal plan must be thorough with clear and feasible lines of command. However, the following observation from a recent joint operation reveals an inadequacy in execution:

"One of the most basic problems was over command and control of the seaport of Mogadishu ... There was some confusion over whether the Navy, Marine Corps or Army was to be in charge of this "common user seaport..."¹

In their area of responsibility (AOR), theater combatant commanders are doctrinally required to select, resource and operate water terminals.² At that level, the lines of command and control are clear. Beyond that, however, our guiding doctrinal publications contribute to confusion regarding force reception and, subsequently, water terminal responsibility. This study will review the background of water terminals and recent

operations, doctrinal publications from the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), selected principles of war and logistics, and the contributions of the Services. It concludes with an argument for a continuous single port manager, and recommendations for changes to doctrine, to include designating an executive agent for water terminals. In light of an evolving American military structure and increasing dependence on joint operations, it is important to define clearly the command and control of theater water terminals.

II. BACKGROUND

A water terminal (or seaport) is a critical node in a theater of war. Historically, 95% of equipment and supplies will arrive in a theater aboard sealift. Two recent examples are Desert Shield and Operation Restore Hope:

	AIRLIFT CARGO (STONS)	AIRLIFT PERCENT TOTAL CGO	SEALIFT CARGO (STONS)	SEALIFT PERCENT TOTAL CGO
DESERT SHIELD	558,300	5.5%	9,493,150	94.5%
RESTORE HOPE	32,514	5.0%	616,920	95.0%

Source: U.S. General Accounting Office, *Desert Shield/Storm - U.S. Transportation Command's Support of Operation*, January 1992, pg. 3; U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Universal Lessons Learned #62829-81388*, Summary for Operation Restore Hope - Part 1, pg. 2.

Joint doctrine identifies water terminals as "key nodes in the total distribution system that must be established to ensure success of a military operation."³ Water terminals are so vital that they are among the initial key objectives secured in an entry operation, whether benign or forcible. In Desert Shield,

the first arriving combat units moved to positions north and northwest of Al-Jubayl, Saudi Arabia. Their mission was to provide a protective cordon around the seaports of Al-Jubayl and Dammam, and the airport of Dhahran. They called the concept the "area defense" plan, and it ensured security of the reception facilities.⁴

Another key element about water terminals is that when designated seaports of debarkation (SPOD),⁵ they represent the culmination of strategic lift, and the initiation of intra-theater transport; they are the critical juncture between strategic and operational logistics. Their operation, and therefore their command and control, remains vital to the supportability of a combatant commander's plan, from deployment through sustainment to redeployment. As a result, it is critical that an appropriate military unit with qualified personnel be the responsible agency for all water terminal operations at the start of a contingency. A brief analysis of Desert Shield/Desert Storm (DS/DS) and Operation Restore Hope (RH) is appropriate.

In 1990, DS/DS was the unexpected fortune teller of the post-cold war era and a modern force projection war. Securing the reception sites was at the heart of an initial defense posture.⁶ The Army component commander was directed to establish a common user water terminal at Dammam. Subsequently, the first element of Army port operators was on the ground on 9 August 1990, and they commenced ship discharge operations on 17 August. The Marine force (MARFOR) component commander was allocated a seaport at Al-Jubayl to receive forces. However, within days the

Army was directed to establish a common user operation on part of Al-Jubayl, while the MARFOR would retain port command and control. Even though the Army operated a theater common user terminal, they were competing for limited port berthing, fixed facilities, and materials handling equipment (MHE). In addition, coalition forces deployed through the water terminals at both Damman and Al-Jubayl. While the control and coordinating agency were clear at Damman, the situation was not so defined at Al-Jubayl. MARFOR owned the port, but was only resourced to support itself. Some coalition forces turned to the Army for support, but the Army did not control the resources. Even though the entire operation was successful, theater headquarters never provided a priority for the allocation of facilities, berthing, and MHE between the Marines, Army, and coalition partners.

Operation Restore Hope is a study of "who's in charge at the seaport?" and the impact on mission success. The Joint Task Force (JTF) Operations Order (OPORD) tasked MARFOR to "operate common user seaport terminals, when they were designated, using U.S. military ... resources."⁷ Additionally, MARFOR was to be prepared to turn the seaports over to the Army component (ARFOR) when they became common user facilities.⁸ The deployment date or event that would trigger the common user designation was never determined, however, the port of Mogadishu was the only water terminal able to receive U.S. strategic sealift. Therefore, the near simultaneous APF arrival of Marine (11 Dec 92) and Army (14 Dec 92) forces should have been the catalyst. It is interesting to note that neither the MARFOR nor ARFOR initially operated the

ports, but instead the Commander, Maritime Prepositioning Fleet (CMPF), a naval component. An Army transportation unit typically assigned to operate a common user water terminal was delayed in the TPFDD until 15 January 1993. Therefore, Army transportation personnel skilled in water and air terminal operations were not available to commence operations. Another circumstance surrounded the ship off-load of Army pre-positioned cargo that could support the JTF. The ships were not able to enter the water terminal due to their draft. An alternative technique, to off-load the ships 'in-stream,' uses watercraft for ship-to-shore cargo movement while the ship is anchored in open water. In-stream operations are difficult and hazardous, but Army stevedores (transporters) routinely train for the mission. Again, because the appropriate Army units were not deployed early, this operation could not be undertaken when the austerity of the environment warranted such action.⁹ Instead, the two ships never discharged their cargo. A small but critical element of the ship's cargo was a combat support hospital (CSH). One was available on the Army APF, now offshore near Mogadishu. In the absence of ship discharge, a replacement had to be flown in on Air Force cargo aircraft. As a result, the CSH could not start even limited operation until 7 January 1993, 25 days after the intended resources were available off-shore. In a conclusion of transportation issues on Restore Hope lessons learned, one authority wrote: "Above all, a clear delineation of authority within the Joint Task Force to clarify who is in charge of making things happen - and in time to make a difference" is important in

integrating those things that must work together.¹⁰ Ambiguity in seaport operations may adversely impact achieving our National Military Strategy (NMS).

The current NMS emphasizes maintaining a capability to deal with two nearly simultaneous regional contingencies as the Services continue to restructure and downsize.¹¹ To accomplish our NMS, our military forces are postured per the strategic concepts of *overseas presence* and *power projection*. To deploy rapidly a decisive military force worldwide, our NMS power projection concept identifies four strategic mobility enhancements:¹²

- 1) increased airlift capability
- 2) additional prepositioning of heavy equipment
- 3) increased surge capacity of sealift
- 4) improved readiness and responsiveness of ready reserve fleet (RRF)

As our civilian and military leaders achieve success in three of the four enhancements, demands on theater force reception at a water terminal will increase. Implementing our warfighting strategy requires that today's U.S. forces operate as a joint team, in either a unilateral or coalition operation.¹³ Therefore, deployment of joint forces, especially a logistics capability for force reception, must stress efficiency and effectiveness. To implement the NMS, our military should have clear, doctrinal guidance to develop a combatant commander's plan, especially at the water terminal with the reception of forces and supplies.

The capstone doctrine that guides the combatant commander for matters of logistics is provided in Joint Publication (JP)

4-0, *Doctrine for Logistics Support of Joint Operations.*

Regarding logistic functions and water terminals, it states:

- 1) Implementation and execution of logistic functions remain the responsibility of the Services and the Service component commanders.¹⁴
- 2) During wartime, each service has primary responsibility for loading and unloading its military units.¹⁵

A planner would logically assume from the above that each service component should discharge their unit equipment and supplies, both logistics functions. However, combatant commanders have broad latitude to direct the use of all facilities and supplies of all assigned forces as necessary to accomplish the mission. When exercising combatant command (COCOM) over assigned forces they have *directive authority*, which is:¹⁶

"the authority to issue to subordinate commanders directives ... to ensure ... the prevention or elimination of unnecessary duplication of facilities and overlapping of functions among the service component commands."

Combatant commanders are further informed that directive authority is not intended to discontinue Service Title 10 responsibility for logistics. Nor for that matter, should it disrupt effective procedures, efficient use of facilities, or organization.¹⁷ Another area of confusion in JP 4-0 is:¹⁸

"Each service is responsible for the logistic support of its own forces, except when logistic support is otherwise provided for by agreements with national agencies or allies, or by assignments to common, joint, or cross servicing."

In this situation, the element of service assignments can cause ambiguity in a combatant commanders plan. There are enough examples noted in this brief analysis of JP 4-0 to reveal the

confusion in doctrine presented to combatant commanders. The intent is probably rational. Define combatant commanders and service chiefs' responsibilities, but allow combatant commanders the authority to issue directives to preclude overlapping of functions. There are potential dilemmas: one, that Service components can interpret this guidance to satisfy their designs in resourcing force lists, at the expense of efficiencies in potential joint logistic matters; or two, combatant commanders do not ensure clarity in the command and control of seaport operations. Rightfully, they are focused on achieving national strategies, but regrettably water terminals become a mundane issue.

Continuing this discussion of doctrine is an analysis of JP 4-01.5, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Water Terminal Operations*. This joint publication focuses specifically on water terminal operations. In keeping with the responsibilities of a combatant commander, it states:

- 1) Combatant commanders select and operate water terminals in their area of responsibility.¹⁹
- 2) The provisions of the *Unified Action Armed Forces* (UNAAF: JP 0-2) will be followed when establishing command authority relationships relating to water terminal operations.²⁰
- 3) The selection of a water terminal commander is the prerogative of the combatant or JTF commander, and is normally based on the capabilities of the component to operate water terminals, together with the deployment and sustainment of the force.²¹

Again, there is confusion because this publication also states that: "water terminal operations forces are normally organized along Service functional lines," but "the Army component is normally responsible for water terminal operations in theater."²²

Another issue in doctrine surrounds the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM). Originally created to control the DOD transportation operating agencies in wartime, USTRANSCOM now directs their operation in peace and war. Today, USTRANSCOM is the DOD single manager for transportation for other than service-unique or theater-assigned transportation assets. Of its three subordinate agencies, one is the Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC), a USTRANSCOM Army component and a major Army command (MACOM). MTMC provides "traffic management, CONUS-based surface transportation, strategic seaports, designates sea ports of embarkation (SPOE) for all CONUS terminals, and mandates unit arrival times at SPOEs."²³ Furthermore, when host nation or contract labor is assured, the theater combatant commander may enter into a command arrangements agreement (CAA) with USTRANSCOM to allow MTMC to operate some or all water terminals in its theater of operation.²⁴ The above guidance allows combatant commands in certain situations to have an Army MACOM operate their water terminals.

The last item regarding selection of water terminal operators is the concept of dominant user. As defined in JP 4-0, dominant user is:

the concept that the Service which is the principal consumer will have the responsibility for performance of a support workload for all using Services.²⁵

According to JP 4-01, *Mobility System Policies, Procedures and Considerations*, "transportation service and traffic management will normally be provided by the dominant user."²⁶ What is left

to the prerogative of the combatant commander is when and how to apply this concept. If its application is not determined during the planning process, but allowed to evolve during a contingency, than a result can be the unnecessary duplication of resources.

This review of selective joint publications reveals the ambiguous guidance concerning control of water terminal operations. Resulting confusion can foster situations such as that experienced in Mogadishu in 1992.

III. NEED FOR AN EVOLUTION IN WATER TERMINAL OPERATIONS

The introduction into a theater operation of an Army combat brigade from the APF further complicates water terminal operations and highlights the need for definitive joint doctrine. In the past, in a remote, littoral contingency, a typical employment of Marine forces would be to seize and secure water terminals for the introduction of follow-on forces. The command of the port operation may fall under the maritime component, and the Marines would provide resources to aid in the ship off-load of their equipment and supplies. As the Army mobilized and deployed to theater, it would assume operation of the ports. Without the possibility of Army forces or supplies being introduced by sealift early in the contingency, there is no concern about competing for control of the seaports. As the Army becomes the dominant user, and assumes its common user missions, the transfer of ports would occur. Today, ships with afloat prepositioned materials from three Services may arrive

simultaneously and at the onset of a contingency. This very situation during Operation Restore Hope revealed a flaw in the command and control of theater water terminals. With Marine and Army APF ships offshore, there was confusion in designating common user seaports and their control. The possibility exists that this situation may be duplicated again in the future.

Consider the following scenario. Suppose American intelligence resources detect an event developing in the Asia-Pacific region. The National Command Authorities (NCA) initiate diplomatic efforts to resolve the impending crisis and direct the repositioning of heavy combat forces from the APF as a statement of US interest and commitment. A Marine Maritime Prepositioning Ships (MPS) Squadron and the APF Army combat brigade on afloat prepositioning ships (APS) are directed to the region and a potential friendly seaport for off-load is identified. The situation deteriorates and the combatant commander is directed to introduce American forces. The concept may call for the off-load of the MPS for littoral security and the heavy brigade for an initial deterrent force. The exigencies of the situation also demand that priority be accorded to the off-load of Air Force APF ammunition and its delivery to inland airfields. In CONUS, the Army is mobilizing a mechanized division, and additional combat, combat support, and combat service support forces to complete a Corps sized force. Given the anticipated size of the force, and the sailing time from CONUS, the combatant commander directs off-load of the Army APF sustainment pending arrival of surge shipping with follow-on forces. Finally, at the direction of the

President, the Secretary of State has successfully liaised through embassies and the United Nations for assistance. Now other countries will also deploy military forces as part of a coalition. Relevant to this paper, the events occurring are:

- 1) Simultaneous off-load of two Services' land forces and Air Force ammunition from the APF.
- 2) Initiation of discharge of Army sustainment from the APF.
- 3) Preparations for and then receipt of surge sealift with follow-on forces and sustainment from U.S. and coalition nations.

The issue that the U.S. combatant commander must address is who is in charge of the seaports; in other words, which component is tasked to operate and resource the SPOD? The remainder of this study will focus on the considerations that influence the combatant commander's decision. This discussion will begin with an analysis of selected principles of war.²⁷

The first consideration is that a single component should be tasked to operate the water terminal. This *unity of command* is to ensure unity of effort. One seaport operator will ensure that all water terminal operations are in support of a common purpose. One commander should coordinate port operations for joint forces, and be the conduit to the host nation for port facilities, equipment, berthing, etc. The seaport operator should not experience any conflict with customers, because he is implementing the combatant commander's priorities for ship discharge. Unity of command is at the hub of water terminal operations and the benefits of a single seaport operator.

As the next relevant principle of war, *security* enhances freedom of action by reducing friendly vulnerability to hostile

acts, influence, or surprise. Water terminals are "critical logistics installations that are high-value targets. Water terminal (operators)...must expect and prepare for sabotage, terrorism, mining, and espionage."²⁸ In force projection, maintaining the uninterrupted operation of an SPOD is critical to the warfighting commander in executing all three elements of sealift: prepositioning, surge, and sustainment. Assigning port control under one component develops a knowledgeable command and staff structure familiar with the physical facility and host nation security, and reduces the risks inherent in a transition of command organizations; in effect a seamless operation.

Economy of force is the judicious employment and distribution of forces. This principle is important if the combatant commander is considering transition of a water terminal from one component to another. Such a transition will require each component to deploy command and control capability, port operators, equipment, etc. This situation is likely if the combatant commander adheres to that portion of JCS guidance that directs Services to off-load their own equipment. Economies are realized if the combatant commander directs one component to provide common servicing²⁹ of water terminal operations to all components, or simply stated, to operate a common user seaport. In a single port operation, it is the economy gained by deploying one port operating force, not two. The benefit is reduced strategic lift and an accelerated force closure.

Selecting a single port operator facilitates *simplicity*. A simple plan of one mission/one operator; establishing water

terminal operations under one component with one port operator, will minimize misunderstanding and confusion. Operating theater water terminals in force projection is complex and demanding. It is compounded when performing those operations in a joint (or combined) contingency in a third world nation with limited, or outdated, infrastructure. Simplicity enables the port operator to focus the totality of his resources, to include his staff, in performing his mission. It negates the need to negotiate for facilities, real estate, or equipment, with other components.

The final important principle is *objective*. Its purpose is to direct military operations toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable goal. The objective of water terminal operations is the timely, efficient, safe and purposeful discharge of sealift to enable and facilitate the linking of personnel and equipment for the mission needs of the combatant commander. A single seaport operator can better oversee and integrate ship berthing and discharge, watercraft and/or tug boat support, cargo documentation, equipment staging, and hand-off procedures, to name a few of the critical elements.

The operation of a seaport is a logistics function. Therefore, it is prudent to consider the seven principles of logistics in JP 4-0.³⁰ Two principles, *simplicity* and *economy*, were addressed above and will not be restated. *Responsiveness* is the keystone of the logistics principles. Responsiveness is the "right stuff (in the right quantities) in the right place at the right time."³¹ In seaport operations, responsiveness is the right water terminal units or capability at the right moment for

timely ship discharge. Timely discharge facilitates sealift responsiveness by returning ships to the common user fleet for additional missions. Being responsive means being a participant in the planning process at its inception, ensuring the total requirements are identified, determining the capabilities of the seaport, resourcing adequate sealift discharge capability, and establishing a methodology to throughput cargo to not impede terminal operations. Being responsive will require *flexibility*. It may call for combining two or more Services' terminal capabilities, adapting water terminal units to meet other missions, developing alternate plans for items such as hazardous cargo and/or bulk products, or establishing alternate means of ship discharge when materials handling equipment may be unavailable or unserviceable. Being the port operator means knowing the level of *attainability* sought by the combatant commander and focusing seaport resources to achieve his minimum essential levels. It demands satisfactory levels of *sustainability* by the simultaneous or sequential sealift discharge of surge and sustainment cargo to support the deployed force levels. Finally, seaport operations must ensure *survivability* to perform the mission. Survivability incorporates active and passive measures to defend the facility and protect resources (personnel and equipment), thereby preserving mission capability. In a logistics operation, it is frequently a balancing act between dispersion (for protection) and concentration (for efficiencies).

IV. SERVICE CAPABILITIES

This study is not intended to be a forum for which Service is best resourced or most capable to perform the water terminal mission. Each Service has developed capabilities as a result of experience in operating water terminals. They seek efficient tailoring of water terminal units, a force structure to meet likely missions, and equipment and sealift options that best or most economically satisfy requirements. This ensures a "...flexible, well-trained and highly capable ... dynamic (base) force which can be tailored in response to further changes in the strategic environment," a key point in the *Report on the Roles, Missions, and Functions of the Armed Forces of the United States*.³²

Without delving into specifics, the Army, Navy, and Marines can conduct water terminal operations. Because an Army mission is to employ land forces in sustained combat operations, and its land forces are generally heavy (mechanized), the Army maintains the most robust capability. An analysis of ships offloaded by component during Desert Shield reveals the significant sealift requirement of Army sponsored cargo:

# SHIPS DISCHARGED BY:	DAMMAM SEAPORT	AL-JUBAYL SEAPORT	TOTAL BY SERVICE
ARMY	427	68	495 (87%)
MARINES	0	76	76 (13%)
TOTAL BY SEAPORT	427 (75%)	144 (25%)	571

Source: U.S. General Accounting Office, *OPERATION DESERT STORM: Transportation and Distribution of Supplies in Southwest Asia*, December 1991, pg. 6.

The Air Force contribution is not in ship discharge or port operations. Instead, the Air Force establishes a Water Terminal Logistic Office (WTLO) to assist the tracking of Air Force sponsored cargo and to provide disposition instructions after cargo discharge.³³

V. CRITICALITY OF SELECTING A SINGLE SEAPORT OPERATOR

The combatant commander assigns port control to a component commander, based traditionally upon the concept of dominant user. It has been typical for a maritime component to be designated the seaport (SPOD) commander during off-load of the MPS. Then, as the Army force grows in dominance and Army off-load becomes the greater mission vis-a-vis Army/Marine equipment discharge, command of the water terminal transitions to the Army component. This passing of command in the early stages of contingency operations creates unnecessary risk and can impede the efficiency and security of port operations.

The risks associated with passing the mission of seaport operations between components during force projection is similar to a division commander rotating a brigade engaged in battle. In force projection, when the water terminal is the SPOD, the port operator is in his "battle"; i.e., he is decisively engaged. The duties of the commander and his staff include coordination:

- for ship berthing with Military Sealift Command and the host nation to obtain optimum location resulting in most economical employment of forces and the maximum speed of discharge.
- with host nation and perhaps an existing contractor for

material handling equipment support to supplement or substitute for his equipment.

- with host nation for real estate and facilities, and apportion those resources among competing requirements to support the force projection operation.
- with the host nation to resolve customs procedures or cultural matters that impact on total throughput.
- and/or actually performing land transportation to deliver the equipment or supplies to intended destinations.
- for the security of the facility by incorporating organic, other service, and host nation capabilities.

Simultaneously, the seaport operator is responding to a higher headquarters to ensure the sequence of cargo off-load satisfies the combatant commander's priorities; project future ship discharge requirements with forecasted capabilities, and resolve shortfalls; project future seaport cargo clearance with forecasted capabilities, and resolve shortfalls; anticipate his unit's contributions to higher headquarters requirements as the phasing of the operation changes; and begin planning to support redeployment. While all this is occurring, the water terminal operator is off-loading APF and preparing for follow-on forces on surge shipping. These simultaneous actions point to a need for continuity of command in seaport operations.

As discussed during consideration of the principles of war, unity of command ensures unity of effort. Continuity of command also ensures unity of effort toward the objective envisioned by the combatant commander. One continuous water terminal commander and headquarters is more apt to become most knowledgeable and proficient regarding the area of operation, host nation cultures and customs that influence water terminal operations, the total spectrum of the combatant commander's concept for operations, seaport capacity and limitations, climatic influences on ship

discharge operations, etc. The continuity of commander and headquarters will simplify communications with the host nation and effectively maintain a conduit for coordinating support and requirements.

Another area enhanced by the continuity of seaport commander is the security and survivability of the water terminal. Retaining port control under one component develops a command structure expert on aspects such as: physical facilities; available host nation and joint security capabilities; participation in the rear area defense plan; and information about suspected enemy activities directed against his or an adjacent facility and that could interrupt his mission.

The final principle enhanced is simplicity. Passing a seaport operation between two components will require the combatant commander's staff to oversee the transition. The combatant commander will undoubtedly want his staff to validate the plan and monitor the transition until the new component is sufficiently capable and familiar with the operation to proceed without oversight. This exchange of a critical logistics node will undoubtedly divert the attention of the joint logistics staff from focusing on other pressing matters.

In theater water terminal operations, as much significance should be placed on continuity of command as on unity of command. The component that should be designated water terminal operator should follow the dominant-user concept with a nontraditional focus. Instead of designating the component by dominant user in terms of the phase of the operation, the dominant user should be

based upon the envisioned force endstate. As an example of a real world application, the appropriate Army resources would have been deployed to assume control of the seaport of Mogadishu from the start of the contingency. Ship discharge capability of the Service components can be deployed and assigned for tactical control (TACON)³⁴ to the water terminal operator to assist in the discharge of equipment according to the theater priorities.

Designating a single seaport manager for the duration of an operation also facilitates the vision of future joint operations. New operational concepts espoused in *Joint Vision 2010* highlight improvements in information and systems technologies, and the "fusion of information, logistics, and transportation technologies to provide rapid crisis response..."³⁵ The linkage from strategic to tactical logistics will occur instantaneously as the deployment commences. No sooner will the first transports (air and/or sea) be enroute, than demands will be placed upon intransit visibility systems. Cargo visibility will be as much a measurement of success as the speed and efficiency of ship discharges. Cargo documentation operations at the common user ports of debarkation will be critical to the total information system as they report back to strategic systems on all arriving cargo and personnel. Having competent, quality operators of these complex information systems will be the key to success. Transitioning seaport operators to satisfy Service component operations will be inefficient and could potentially interrupt the flow of 'information electrons.' Continuity of the operation of the common-user seaport will be paramount. Establishing this

continuity in peacetime by designating one Service as the executive agent (EA) for water terminals would aid in resolving current issues in doctrine and deployment, and develop the systems to implement *Joint Vision 2010*.

VI. DESIGNATING AN EXECUTIVE AGENT

Combatant commanders need a mechanism in peacetime to enhance predeployment planning relative to SPOD selection and capability, and for single component seaport operation in a contingency. While the scope of the EA authority would be established in the implementing directive, at a minimum it would designate one Service to be the lead and advocate for water terminal matters of significance to all Services and especially the combatant commanders. This Service should have the lead for doctrine and developing planning and execution guidance for water terminal operations for combatant commanders. Military education on joint water terminal operations would be incorporated into their service school programs of instruction (POI) as a capstone planning and execution course. The logical selectee to be the EA for water terminals is the Army. The Army possesses a wealth of experience and resources for operating water terminals in common user missions. In CONUS from the start of a deployment, the Army MACOM, MTMC, is the component of USTRANSCOM for CONUS seaports and their operation. Second, the Army is normally responsible for common user water terminal operations in theater. As a result, Army tactical transportation

units are based in CONUS and available for worldwide seaport missions. Third, the Army has an extensive water terminal opening package in its APF to operate independently, or in joint or combined operations to discharge common user sealift. This package includes tug boats, landing craft, a floating crane, and appropriate MHE. Finally, because EA responsibilities cannot be used as a basis for force requirements, the Army already has the most robust capability of the Services and could best resource the mission.

Combining the two key recommendations for continuity in seaport operations and establishing EA responsibilities does not conflict with United States Code Title 10 responsibilities.³⁶ Service component discharge of organic equipment is rooted in joint doctrine, not law. Regardless, the Marines can still discharge their MPS, and the Army its APF. However, at the start of the planning phases, whether deliberate or crisis planning, Army water terminal experienced personnel would be the lead planner for the combatant commander. These personnel requirements could be temporarily resourced from Army staff at USTRANSCOM, from MTMC, the Army Transportation School, or an Army transportation group. At the start of the movement, the Army would deploy elements of a transportation group or battalion headquarters to take immediate command of the water terminal. In the execution of the ship discharge operations, the port commander would implement the CINC's priorities for ship discharge, using available resources. The allocation of offload resources must meet the combatant commanders priorities first,

but consideration would constantly be given to match each components resources to the discharge of its equipment. The first advantage to this arrangement is that only one capability to command and control a seaport need ever be deployed. Second, the planners in the pre-deployment phase would have total visibility into strategic lift capabilities, theater reception capabilities, force requirements, TPFDD development, and the combatant commanders priorities. These water terminal planners can work with the appropriate J-staff to sequence the deployment of water terminal operating resources to achieve the minimal needs of the port operator.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

As our military hones its force projection abilities, it is critical that the Services provide forces organized, trained, and equipped to perform water terminal operations, and that they are efficiently and effectively employed by combatant commanders in the performance of their mission. This study suggests another option for combatant commanders to better assign seaport responsibilities to minimize risk and enhance mission performance. The traditional method of assignment by dominant user increases risks and is complicated with the APF assets of the Services that can be simultaneously employed. Designating one component as the water terminal operator from deployment through redeployment improves opportunities for mission success and achieves economy of forces. Dominant user modified to the

endstate of forces should be the determining factor.

To meet the needs of combatant commanders for planning water terminal operations, and for planning for future developments in technology and its integration, DOD should designate an Executive Agent for water terminals. The logical EA would be the Army, given its current capabilities and missions in the DOD.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Doctrine espoused in JP 4-0 should be reviewed to reduce ambiguity while retaining flexibility for combatant commanders. A possibility would be to provide a list of considerations in priority sequence for applying directive authority. More specifically, preventing overlapping of functions such as water terminal operations among service components should take priority over selective logistic functions remaining the responsibility of the service component commanders.

Combatant commanders should more liberally apply directive authority to prevent duplication of logistic functions and achieve more economy of logistic forces. In designating a component to operate water terminals, combatant commanders should consider the dominant user concept modified to the anticipated endstate of forces.

Finally, the DOD should designate the Army as the Executive Agent for water terminals and their operation.

ENDNOTES

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