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CH-46 moving cargo from  
USS John Paul Jones.



U.S. Navy (Rodger W. Dellinger)

## In Search of

# Focused Logistics

By JOHN J. CUSICK and DONALD C. PIPP

**D**esigned as an operational template to guide the Armed Forces, *Joint Vision 2010* has four major tenets: dominant maneuver, precision engagement, full dimensional protection, and focused logistics. A judicious application of technological innovation and information superiority is billed as the critical enablers of this process. Any initiative of this breadth is bound to be controversial. Critics have

raised various points: that maneuver, strike, protection, and logistics are hardly new operational concepts and that technology is stressed over the human element. But our objectives remain fundamentally the same. What will change is how they will be achieved.

Soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen fight and win wars, not technology. All the technological sophistication in the world is of little value without high quality and trained people. However, technology enables the warfighter to accomplish the mission with increased precision, lethality, and at a human, political, and economic cost we can afford. Technology goes a

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long way toward improving the quality of life of warfighters by accomplishing tasks more effectively and efficiently, thus allowing them to “work smarter not harder.” Focused logistics, a full partner in *JV 2010*, takes a basic issue and seeks the best way to provide combat support to the warfighter. The most often quoted reasons for developing focused logistics are downsizing, changing threat environment, technology, and political and fiscal realities. Attracting little attention is the fact that logisticians in all services are dissatisfied with the level of support provided to warfighters. They know they can be more effective and efficient. They have the opportunity and high caliber people to make a genuinely evolutionary change in how they do business.

Air Force lean logistics and Army velocity management programs are literal springboards for quantum improvements in logistics. By accelerating movement of assets through transportation and repair cycles, support has been improved at less cost and confidence is building that the system will work when

### the logistics footprint of the future will strike a more precise balance

required. Advancements in strategic lift—sea and air—will go a long way toward providing deployability, a vital element of our military strategy. Senior leadership has successfully argued for the acquisition of C-17 aircraft and roll-on/roll-off ships. The air mobility express and integrated use of commercial carriers by the Air Force are illustrations of innovations that provide unprecedented strategic force projection capability. While we have not yet finalized the elements of joint reception, staging, onward movement, and integration or of theater distribution or joint logistics command and control, there is unanimous agreement on the necessity of more clearly defining roles and responsibilities in the area of force projection. Thus near-term resolution is probable.

Supporting the entire network from the source of supply to point of need will be the global combat support system (GCSS). It is intended to do for logisticians what the global command and control system does for operators. GCSS will facilitate access to critical resource data anytime and anywhere in the world without specific hardware. Developments in joint total asset visibility and in-transit visibility will culminate in quantum leaps in the effectiveness and efficiency of logistics support to warfighters by providing critical resource information throughout strategic, operational, and tactical levels of any military operation.

Each service has a way of ensuring logistics connectivity and resupply to deployed forces. Problems often arise where these methods not only vary among the services but sometimes from

unit to unit. GCSS will provide logisticians much-needed visibility of critical resources in factories and wholesale locations, in transit to and from the theater, and in storage at units both in and out of theater. Multiple requisitioning of an item in the hope that at least one will arrive when needed will become a thing of the past. The logistics footprint of the future will strike a more precise balance: just in time and just in case = just enough.

New developments in automated information technology will provide automated tracking of assets worldwide. Incorporating requirements for this technology in the acquisition process could offer global visibility of assets throughout their life cycle. These efforts are noble indeed but are of little consequence unless conscious efforts are made to monitor progress through to completion.

The Logistics Directorate (J-4), Joint Staff, is developing a focused logistics action plan to identify initiatives to improve support for the warfighter. Focused logistics takes its cue from two processes: the joint warfighting capabilities assessment (JWCA) and the joint monthly readiness review (JMRR). CINCs and the services articulate issues that they feel have adverse impacts on their capabilities through these processes. While the programs require intensive management, they have already proven their worth as a vehicle for channeling and resolving joint issues. They have resulted in considerable cost savings, improved support to CINCs, contributed to our goal of being the premier deployer in the world, and made significant contributions to joint logistics operations. While JWCA/JMRR is a key element of the process it is by no means the only one.

Strategic direction found in the National Military Strategy, Joint Strategy Review, *JV 2010*, Quadrennial Defense Review, and other planning guidance form a baseline for developing the focused logistics plan. Meanwhile service vision statements and strategic logistics plans of the CINCs, services, and Office of the Secretary of Defense were reviewed for common themes and innovative concepts with the intent of drawing on the many talents of strategic planners across the services. Other sources included the exceptional work done by the Defense Science Board, think tanks, and Joint Warfighting Center. The target date for publishing the plan is this summer after extensive coordination with CINCs and the services.

Evolving concepts influence various dimensions of the operating environment, and focused logistics is no exception. It has major implications for doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership, and personnel. Not surprisingly,



U.S. Air Force (John E. Lasky)

Pushing cargo onto  
C-17 Globemaster III  
at Rhein-Main.

GCSS forms a common thread through these areas. The quality of life benefits derived from focused logistics are boundless: computer based training, reliable modeling and simulations, state of the art decision tools, medical readiness, asset visibility, smart card technology, and estimates of the extent to which industry can provide logistics support. Logistics organizations will be streamlined as the logistics footprint is adjusted and more progress is made in areas such as logistics command and control and theater distribution. Logistics doctrine is being reviewed and modified to keep pace with rapid developments and to provide overarching guidance regarding traditional as well as developing capabilities.

The focused logistics plan will be a concise publication of joint logistics issues of highest concern to CINCs and the services as identified in the JWCA process. It will provide logisticians with a concise overview of the principal issues and projects under development on behalf of the joint logistics community. In addition, it will furnish metrics for programs identified to the extent possible. The plan will be a think piece for unified

commands and the services in either developing or reviewing various strategic logistics plans.

The focused logistics plan will be a living document and as such will be subject to change. Its utility will not be judged by how many pages or graphs are produced, but by validated progress in identified programs. Focused logistics is not the latest fad to be encountered in the introduction of some new regime. It is a dynamic plan of action as well as a state of mind that we must sustain throughout the joint logistics community for combat support to the warfighter. **JFQ**