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"LOGISTICS AND STRATEGY"

An Address by Admiral Robert B. Carney, USN (Ret.)
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Originally, this spot in the curriculum was reserved for Admiral McCormick. I am honored to have been asked to substitute - I hope that my appearance here as his alternate may make some useful contribution toward the objectives of the Naval War College.

I would like to say, in passing, that the Naval War College remains in good hands; in Admiral Robbins, the Navy and the War College are fortunate in having an officer of the highest professional attainments, coupled with a rare capability for clear analysis, and an even rarer capability for thorough, convincing, and brilliant presentation.

My subject today is "Logistics and Strategy". The reversal of the normal order in which those facets of policy are usually mentioned is intentional. Strategy, whatever its beauty, can be but a dream if not supported by the realities of logistical appraisal, and I would speak of realities. Therefore, by way of pointing up my own emphasis on the importance of logistics, I have accorded it semantic priority.

The nature of the War College, and its procedures, does, I suppose, require that I leave behind me a script for your more reflective and critical analysis. I have such a script, but I would prefer to use it more as a mnemonic than as the basis of an oration; and so, although I will endeavor to follow the major points that I have jotted down, I may, with your indulgence,

occasionally address myself to that most difficult of oratorical contortions: talking off the cuff and from the heart, at the same time.

I am particularly pleased to note the presence of Allied officers this morning. That is as it should be, for the basis of any successful military alliance will most certainly be rooted in logistics and therefore there must be an all-hands comprehension of the subject.

Fate, in the last decade and a half, has placed a burden of economic and military responsibility on the United States which has necessitated the organization of a vast and co-ordinated national logistical effort; the magnitude of the task has resulted in thrusting upon the military and civilian elements of our country a requirement to organize for production, supply, and maintenance on an unprecedented scale. Consequently, I believe that we have something worth studying in this field.

On the other hand, the logistical concepts and systems of our allies are an integral part of the scheme and must be understood here.

LOGISTICS AND STRATEGY

Logistics and strategy are so inextricably bound up in each other that the two terms could be properly written as one "damyankee" expression. A strategy is meaningless without logistical feasibility; it could be worse than meaningless - it could be disastrous. One only need consider the prospect of embarking on a program which could not be supported to appreciate the truth of that statement. More and more, throughout the Armed Forces of the United

States, the interrelation between logistics and strategy is becoming understood. And yet, it was not always so, particularly in the Navy.

After World War I there was a tremendous impact on Naval thinking as a result of the Battle of Jutland, and preoccupation with the tactical aspects of that great engagement tended to blind us to the requirements of protracted campaigns and wars. As far back as 1930 students of the implications of conflict between the United States and Japan were becoming well aware of the enormous support implications of any aggressive campaign projected across the Pacific; nevertheless, the preponderance of tactical thinking relegated to the background any extensive practical implementation of the dawning awareness of the vital importance of logistic support.

The realities of World War II soon forced planning thinking into more practical channels and, with the recollections of the War fresh in our minds in 1946, there was an awakening to the necessity for organizing the military effort and the economic resources of our country into some pattern which would make the optimum use of our resources to take up the shock of war's beginning and continue the national effort to successful conclusion. (As the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Logistics in those early postwar years, I was instrumental in having established at the Naval War College a course in Logistics and, as a concomitant, a course in Command and Staff Training).

The complexity of programing logistic support for any of the various types of campaigns which might confront our Naval Forces also led to the establishment of the Navy Logistic Research Project at George Washington University, and to the design and creation of the Logistical Computer, which the Logistics Research Project employs.

At some point in any such discussion as this, it is necessary to take cognizance of air power and the atom in the modern scheme of things; to neglect such recognition would be to stamp one's thinking as archaic.

In this connection, I would say first that sea power has not been relegated to any inferior position by the increasing importance of air power and the atom. I need only say, in this respect, that alliances constitute a keystone of our security arrangements, and alliances would be meaningless if any enemy gained control of the intervening or adjacent seas. Logistics is the guts of allied military preparations and operations, and the bulk of the carrying of the sinews of war for the factories, the forces, and the people must be done by sea between the countries now associated in freedom's collective security structure.

In many ways, the rising importance of air power and the advent of the atom have increased the complexity of logistics and have undoubtedly increased the burdens on national economies and national military forces. This is particularly true of the present and the immediate foreseeable future; the extremist advocate of the pushbutton and the one-week war is forced to admit that as of today, and for many tomorrows, we are in a transition period in which much of the old is still present with the new and radical and awesome; there are those - and I am among them - who believe that the so-called "conventional" weapons and equipment are still a necessary part of the national arsenal. Even admitting that the pushbutton and the awesome hydrogen weapon constitute a deterrent, it takes little imagination (and I pointed this out on this platform in February of 1954) to envisage many situations where

neither the tactical nor the political situation would call for the use of atomic weapons. The point is this: the nuclear arsenal is additive to our stockpile of conventional weapons and, in logistical terms, this merely means that to the logistical burden already existing, new and complex factors have been added. Progress being gradual, that is the normal pattern and it applies to many fields.

For example, it might be pointed out that there are ever-increasing needs for air-lift, even though the bulk of heavy goods and fuel must be moved by sea; here, in specific form, is an example of the need to retain certain proven capabilities, even while innovations are becoming more and more important, with all their implications of new equipment and greatly expanded maintenance facilities.

From the atomic standpoint, the creating of an atomic weapon stockpile, and the effecting of transition from oil to atoms in the field of power, place an enormous new and additive burden on the scientific, industrial, and financial resources of the country - one more bit of evidence that logistics is an increasingly important art and science as we march further into the atomic age.

STRATEGY AND FEASIBILITY

Whether one's operational responsibilities only encompass the activities of a platoon, a small ship, or a minor air movement, or whether the problem is on the theater or national scale, there is an initial basic process which must be undertaken on a completely objective and sound approach.

First, the commander or the responsible agency, determines the desirable objective or objectives to be sought. Next, he must carefully inventory his own resources and capabilities to determine whether his objectives are obtainable from a practical standpoint. If he lacks the necessary resources, his ambitions must be scaled down, or he must make adjustments in his time schedule, or both. This is the inevitable first step of all military planning at every level.

Having determined what can be undertaken, there follows a dovetailed sequence of planning events in which military operations and their logistical support are worked out; for the purpose of this discussion, I shall skip the operational side and proceed directly to a discussion of the factors of logistical planning.

THE THREE PHASES

As the people of our country achieved a greater sophistication with respect to the conduct of military operations, it became apparent that there are three different elements concerned with this logistics business: (1) the operational users; (2) those in uniform who are engaged in support activities behind the fighting forces; and (3) the great complex of technology, industry, finance, political, executive, and other civilian activities, without which any military force would be a mere façade. With the expanding demands of all-out war, the military service forces, including the various Bureaus, technical services, materiel command, etc., expanded to handle the vast flow of men and materials required to support a sustained military

effort. More and more, a vast number of civilians - scientists, industrialists, financiers, technical and business men, executives, and labor - were brought to the realization that they were, in fact, part of an enormous national team, every segment of which must work in co-operation and co-ordination to the complicated dual objective of maintaining military forces while at the same time maintaining a civilian economy equal to its own economic, subsistence, and spiritual needs. This enormous increase in the number of people to whom the word "logistics" was becoming a household expression quite naturally led to some very interesting and quite different ideas as to how the job should be partitioned for its accomplishment.

From contemplation of the problem from the civilian viewpoint, there arose a very interesting concept of "consumer logistics" and "producer logistics". The implication, here, is that one element produces the stuff and the military forces use it as the consumers. I have also encountered the viewpoint that the civilian economy can be considered the "producer" whereas the Department of Defense, lumping in all of the civilians in military who are directly engaged in Departmental work, are considered as the "consumers". This is a very interesting, and quite understandable, way of looking at the problem, but I submit that it does not lend itself very well to the actual mechanics of planning; by that I mean the producing of specific documents, directives, guidelines, statistics, and specifications on which adequate quantitative and qualitative delivery can be made to the Armed Forces.

A more helpful approach for the poor devils who must fit the operating and logistical plans together is one which looks at the logistical

process as a three-phase operation. Phase I is the statement of requirements; this, in its initial and unreviewed form is a job to be undertaken by the operating people. Phase II covers procurement; under this generic heading fall the tasks of preparing technical specifications, placing orders, and actual production of goods. Phase III is distribution; this is the business of getting men and equipment to the right places; distribution partakes of both civilian functions and actual military operations and includes transportation, storage, depot operations, delivery to the combat forces, and, if you like, through the muzzle for bullets and up the stack for fuel.

This three-phase approach to logistical planning, as is readily apparent, involves operating personnel, the various military staff and staff corps specialists, the civilian leadership in the Department of Defense, and a vast and complex participation on the part of the civilian economy which must produce the sinews of war. And here I come to an extremely important point.

If you have followed my line of reasoning, you can come to no other conclusion than that the military man today needs a greater understanding of the civilian economy than was heretofore the case; the civilian must have a good working knowledge of the needs of the military; the operator, who in the old days turned up his nose at logistical business, must have an understanding of the capabilities and limitations of industry and he must be able to talk in intelligent and intelligible terms to the military technicians who are entrusted to translate his strategic and tactical needs

into workable and effective hardware and equipment. The military technician may, perhaps, have the most difficult job of all, for he must understand the lexicon of the military command group while, at the same time, be able to work intelligently and harmoniously with industry.

In short, today, logistics is an all-hands maneuver and any officer who fails to keep abreast of this important facet of military planning disqualifies himself for many positions of responsibility and authority. The tactical handling of combatant forces is the spectacular pay-off of battle, but today the senior line officer must be something more than a tactician if he aspires to high command.

A moment ago I hinted - not too subtly - at an erstwhile aversion to logistical chores on the part of the command group. Conversely, I believe that it can be truthfully said that there has been a significant body of thinking to the effect that logistics is the proprietary responsibility of the civilian and staff corps groups. Further, civilian interpretation and understanding of the terms "supply" and "logistics" has resulted in a certain amount of indiscriminate interchangeability of those two terms and, in one instance, has brought about some official nomenclature which runs contrary to accepted definitions. In the Department of Defense there is a Division under an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Supply and Logistics; within the broad framework of the definition of logistics, which covers the planning for and the providing of goods and services, "supply" is but one factor. It is an important factor, of course, but it is, nevertheless,

but one aspect of the vast supporting logistical system which begins with a statement of requirement, includes all of the steps necessary for the procuring of goods and services and facilities, and only ends when the sinews of war are distributed to the hands of the operating forces. Supply is a part of the logistical system and logistics is a matter of prime participating concern to all hands and not to any particular specialized group. If this fact is not recognized, and accepted, on the one hand combatant leadership will be seriously out of tune with the times; on the other hand, there will be a dangerous trend toward a separate Service of Supply controlled by elements who are not responsible for the outcome of battle. The proper concept is one which the comprehensive nature of logistics is universally recognized, and in which there is appropriate participation in the work of the three phases by the command group, the military staff corps group, the civilian leadership in the Department of Defense, and the contributing segments of business and industry.

Next, I would like to discuss for a moment the definition of logistics. Recently, the George Washington University Logistics Research Project evolved a very broad definition which has been quite widely received with favor. The Research Project defines logistics as "the process of planning for and providing goods and services". This points up the entire system of planning for and providing these goods and services, beginning with the statement of requirements, through the business of procuring, and ending with the final distribution. Under this definition, there are implicit aspects of

personnel, transportation, supply, medical activities, maintenance repair, construction, storage, and other specialties. There is also implicit a very important management aspect involving organization, planning, execution, and supervision (those of us who have worked in this logistical trade have sometimes querulously stated that logistics was a catch-all and that we logisticians were handed every problem which could not be defined as pure strategy and tactics).

The comprehensiveness of the definition just cited spotlights another important point. Consider for a moment the global nature of the responsibilities which have devolved upon the United States and its Armed Forces; the Arctic is old hat and is but a few hours away by air; the fulminations in the Middle East immediately bring to mind thoughts of shifting sands and intolerable heat; dangers in the tropical areas call for careful consideration of jungle conditions; aerial warfare introduces the problems of the sound barrier, the rarified air of high altitudes, and speed and friction factors of great complexity. To be prepared to meet this wide range of conditions, terrains, and climates - to maintain supply lines over thousands of miles of sea lanes and air ways - these involve dealing in items which number in the millions, and which require accurate appraisal of usage rates, to the end that we have sufficient, while at the same time not be profligate with our resources. All of which makes it abundantly clear that the programing of goods and services embracing millions of items, all based on varying premises as to usage rates, poses a programing problem that is simply beyond the capability of the human mind to handle within acceptable limits of time.

There is an obvious need for assistance in the field of electronic computation and the sooner that this is put into universal use, the sooner we may be sure that we are best conserving and cherishing our precious resources.

Although I have spoken of the Department of Defense from time to time, I have not dealt specifically with the matter of unification; and this is something which should be objectively scrutinized.

Originally, unification was unpalatable to the Navy, not because there was opposition to sensible consolidations, but because of the existence, in other quarters, of some strongly-held views which were intolerably at variance with profound Navy convictions concerning the importance and utilization of sea power. Nevertheless, there were many areas in which a measure of unification was desirable and necessary from the national standpoint.

One of the concepts to which the Navy was strongly opposed was for a fourth Service of Supply; this idea has reared its head in many different forms over the past decade and its philosophy has already come to pass, to some extent, in the vesting of over-riding authority in certain divisions of the Department of Defense. The philosophical objection, here, lies in placing the control of quantitative, qualitative, and priority aspects of procurement in the hands of those who are not responsible for the outcome of military campaigns. Nevertheless, in an era in which industry is hard-pressed to find the technical and engineering talent, and to produce complex equipment from scarce materials, it is imperative that there be a centralized

control which will eliminate duplication and competition not necessary for the accomplishment of the roles and missions of the Services or not necessary for the healthy competition that produces results. Provided that the operational and tactical needs of the military Services receive proper attention and representation, unification of that sort in carefully selected areas will produce more defense from available funds and resources for the United States and must be accepted.

You have indulgently permitted me to talk at very considerable length on this, to me, engrossing subject. Merely out of my own casual recollections of World War II, more than four years as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Logistics, as a participant in the great NATO project with its vast logistical problems of equipping and maintaining the forces of many nations, and the CNO's ever-present responsibility for the readiness of our Naval Forces, I could dredge up scores of incidents and examples spotlighting the tremendous importance of logistical awareness and proficiency in the planning and execution of logistical measures. But the burden of my song would always be - as it has been this morning - that the command group has the initial responsibility for determining requirements and later has an operational responsibility for the wise handling and utilization of the goods and services placed in its hands for the conduct of operations: those who are concerned with the procuring and delivering of the military requirements must be responsive to operational needs. But no segment of the logistical organization can operate in a vacuum. No one concerned with the chain of

logistical events can afford to remain ignorant of what goes on in the other components of the vast American machine which creates and maintains the security establishment. Specifically, no captain can be said to be qualified and prepared to assume all of the duties of Flag rank if he is but a Simon-pure operator, ignorant of what it takes to create and maintain the operating forces. In my estimation, no Flag officer is fully qualified for all the duties of high command unless he is adequately and appropriately grounded in the fundamentals of the logistical organization of his own Service, of the Department of Defense, and has a reasonable understanding of the functions of the civilian economy in this field. By this I do not mean that the inspired combat leader is a thing of the past; far from it. My preoccupation, here, today with logistical matters is not to be construed as relegating all other military virtues to the background; again, far from it. I could speak with equal earnestness on the subject of leadership. What I am saying today is, in effect, that the necessary attributes of leadership now include an understanding of logistical matters as a part of that essential knowledge which is one of the cornerstones of leadership.

You can safely forget many of the incidents and details which I have cited today, but in the interest of your Service and your country, as well as in your own professional interests, you cannot afford to forget that logistics and strategy are inseparable, that the attainment of any military objective is dependent upon logistical feasibility, that an understanding of logistics is an essential qualification for command and leadership today, and that recognition of the importance and position of logistics in the military scheme of things is one of the important yardsticks of professional competence.