

Brigade Combat Team Commander: How Do You Plan to Sustain a Partnered Multinational Formation?

by CPT William Russell Dean

The Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) is a unique training area where Soldiers from across the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Partners for Peace nations train as multinational brigade and battalion task forces in complex, full-spectrum operation scenarios.

Observers/coaches/trainers (O/C/Ts) at JMRC regularly identify that training units under-define or fail to recognize supply-support relationship challenges in multinational organizations. Logisticians frequently use a task-organization chart to assess a unit's sustainment needs and develop the concept of support. Understanding the task-organization is only part of the solution. The multinational brigade combat team commander must also understand the capability, capacity and unique needs of each element. To do so, logisticians must thoroughly define the supply-support relationships and how changes to the task-organization impact the sustainment of a multinational organization – and ultimately affect the ability to sustain the fight.

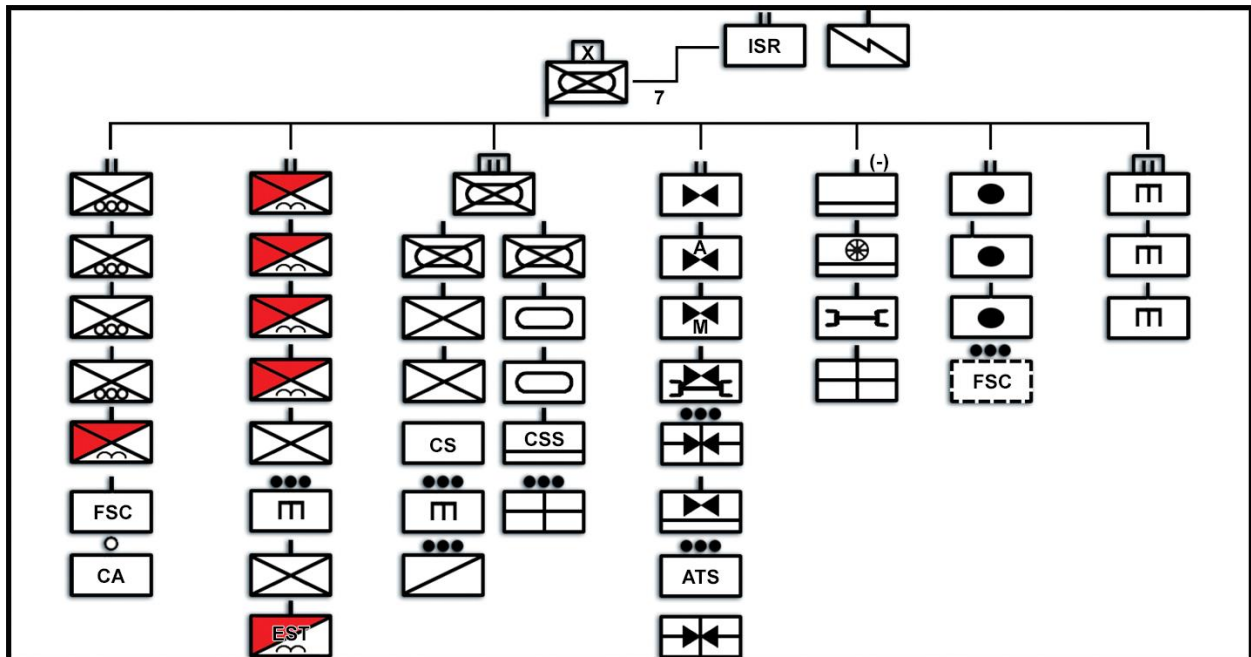


Figure 1. The task organization of a typical multinational brigade that trained at JMRC in 2015. Each of the battalions had unique sustainment requirements met by different, and sometimes inadequate, sustainment capabilities. Operating within the multinational brigade, each battalion faced significant constraints while building multinational sustainment interoperability.

'Train as you fight' vs. simplicity

At JMRC, training battalions are required to provide support to any attached elements. To interoperate as a multinational force, battalions work in conjunction with adjacent friendly forces but are autonomous for short periods of time.

The force is constrained by different logistical requirements among its subordinate units (as an example, one multinational battalion may require Jet Propellant 8 (JP-8) and Diesel Fuel 2 (DF2), but only have the capability to distribute JP-8). When a multinational battalion or service-support unit does not have the assets to sustain subordinate units, it must look outside its task-organization to develop a supply-support relationship. This can

strain a supply system, especially if a forward-support company (FSC) must provide support to a unit that is outside the FSC's area of operations.

In this situation, the supply-support relationship becomes paramount to the task-organization, and logistic synchronization becomes extremely complicated, violating a tenet of logistics: simplicity.

Classes of supply

Class I (food, rations and water). Support requirements to multinational battalions range from completely dependent for all Class I needs to entirely self-supporting. When self-supported, multinational battalions conduct sustainment along national lines, failing to sustain attachments whose nationality differs from the nationality of the battalion headquarters. This forces a brigade-support battalion (BSB) to provide Class I to individual companies that the multinational battalion's combat-service-support (CSS) company does not support.



Figure 2. 3rd Brigade Support Battalion Soldiers deliver water to Romanian and Bulgarian Soldiers at JMRC, Hohenfels, Germany. (Photo by CPT Russell Dean)

During Combined Resolve IV, a multinational battalion deployed with no bulk water storage. The BSB supplied water buffalos directly to companies in the multinational battalion, requiring the BSB to approach the forward-line-of-troops to resupply the training units daily.

During Combined Resolve V, a CSS company in a multinational battalion, building on lessons-learned from Combined Resolve IV, fielded a 5,000-liter water truck. Unfortunately, the supported companies had no system for bulk water storage. The battalion logistics officer and the CSS platoon developed a system of daily water-can replenishment that sustained the battalion but left only one day of supply on hand.

These examples are all situations in which a battalion, organized under a multinational brigade headquarters, assumed that subordinate companies would receive Class I support directly from the BSB. They did not plan or field the capability to sustain the battalion beyond organic entities.

Class III (petroleum, oils, and lubricants). The most difficult logistical challenge for multinational brigades at JMRC is bulk fuel management. Task-organization charts do not indicate the type of fuel consumed. Most NATO militaries use predominantly DF2, but some use JP-8 and/or mobility gasoline. U.S. BSBs are not equipped with a DF2 M978 (fuel truck) because U.S. Army fuel requirements are typically only for JP-8. Likewise, support units from militaries that use predominantly DF2 are not equipped to transport bulk JP-8.

Conversion of an M978 from one fuel type to another can be costly and time-consuming. During Exercise Allied Spirit II, an allied battalion drew 14 M1025 vehicles that only consumed JP-8. This is not just a JMRC idiosyncrasy since many countries field versions of U.S. equipment or draw from U.S. prepositioned stocks. This action complicated the brigade's fuel management because the battalion's CSS company was not able to organically distribute JP-8 fuel. Mixed fuels in the task force required the BSB to distribute JP-8 and DF2, both in bulk and

retail, to each unit in the task force. The brigade managed fuel distribution using a complex sustainment synchronization matrix, but fuel distribution expended more time than it would have with a single-fuel system.



Figure 3. Soldiers from 74th CSS Company (Czech Republic) prepare to conduct resupply-on-the-move operations during a rotation at JMRC. (Photo by CPT Russell Dean)

Class IV (fortification and barrier materials). The ability of a unit to distribute Class IV is heavily influenced by the capacity of its transportation equipment. U.S. BSBs distribute Class IV to maneuver battalions by exchanging flat racks with FSCs. In a multinational battalion, various other militaries use different transportation systems that are often incompatible. This prevents the BSB from exchanging flat racks and requires them to deliver Class IV directly to line companies.

It is critical for the brigade to understand the transportation capacity and compatibility of all systems in the task force to successfully distribute Class IV. Once logistic planners understand available assets, they must develop a plan that accounts for the capabilities and limitations of each unit.



Figure 4. Soldiers from 191st Infantry Battalion (Romania) prepare to relocate the unit trains by loading Class IV onto flat racks at JMRC. (Photo by CPT Russell Dean)

Class V (ammunition). Some NATO and Partners for Peace nations do not use NATO standard ammunition, or they use additional ammunition that is not in the NATO inventory. For example, the Romanian Land Forces use 7.62x39mm, RPG-7, SPG-9 (73mm recoilless), 14.5mm KPV and 82mm mortar rounds not available in U.S. supply systems. Even systems like the 120mm mortar are not the same among nations. Powder requirements for one 120mm mortar system may degrade the combat effectiveness and stability of a similar allied weapons' system.

Another example of ammunition differences among militaries is the Spike missile system. There are at least six variants to this system, with substantially different capabilities and constraints. Conversely, the U.S. Javelin system has only one missile variant.

Brigade sustainment planners must understand the ammunition requirements of each weapon system in a multinational brigade. They must also understand procurement procedures for additional ammunition from higher echelons and establish a method to resupply the force.

Class VII (major end items) and **Class IX** (repair parts). Although Classes VII and IX are unique classes of supply, their procurement and management is a similar problem set for logisticians in a multinational brigade. As an example, if a U.S. BSB recovers a battle-damaged Romanian Armored Personnel Carrier (TAB-77) to the brigade-support area, they must look outside U.S. supply channels to get necessary repair parts. A fuel pump for a Stryker, which a U.S. BSB carries as part of its Essential Repair Parts Stockage List, will not be on hand in a brigade with a multinational combat-sustainment-support battalion. The brigade logisticians must determine how repair parts for subordinate units' equipment will flow from the higher to lower echelons of support.

Echelon of support also affects replacement of end-item equipment since a TAB-77 cannot be procured through U.S. channels. This requires the logisticians to have an intimate understanding of equipment in the task force and thorough coordination with the multinational division-sustainment cell.



Figure 5. A Royal Netherlands Army BPz3 Buffel recovers a Stryker at JMRC, Hohenfels, Germany. (Photo by CPT Russell Dean)

Recovery operations are complex in a multinational unit because of recovery-system interoperability. Some recovery systems will not be able to recover vehicles fielded by another nation. For example, a BSB in a U.S. infantry brigade is ill-equipped to provide recovery support to a German mechanized infantry or armor company, but it can support a Romanian mechanized-infantry company's TAB-77 vehicles. A Royal Netherlands Army BPz3 Buffel recovery vehicle can support a U.S. Stryker company, but a U.S. M984 wrecker cannot support the Royal Netherlands Army's armor. Multinational brigade logisticians must consider recovery when defining supply-support relationships and should consider tasking units to mutually support other units based on recovery-asset interoperability.

From data to understanding

Using task-organization alone as a tool to plan sustainment oversimplifies the problem of supporting a multinational formation (Figure 6). Logisticians must also understand the actual capacity, capability and requirement of each individual unit. To achieve true interoperability, sustainment planners must continue to understand the needs of the unit as the task-organization changes and address subordinate units based on their evolving requirements. The brigade S-4 and the BSB or CSS battalion must also identify the supply-support

relationship for each class of supply and the brigade's capability to allocate the proper resources to supported units.

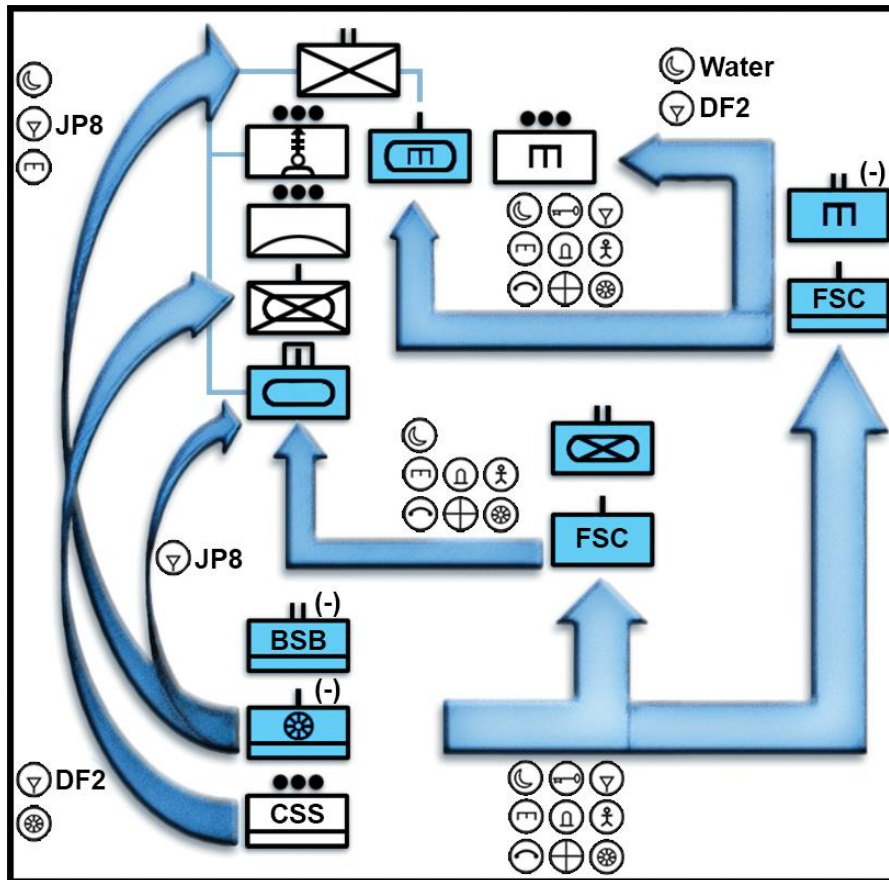


Figure 6. Supply-support relationships observed at JRMC.

BCT commanders must understand that every change to the task-organization affects the logistics support in a partnered multinational formation and directly influences the ability to sustain the warfighter.

CPT Russell Dean is the FSC O/C/T at JMRC, Hohenfels, Germany. Previous assignments include senior Tactical Analysis Facility analyst O/C/T, Joint Multinational Training Center, Hohenfels; company commander in 702nd BSB, 4-2 Infantry Brigade, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA, and Kandahar, Afghanistan; battalion S-4, 1-43 Air Defense Artillery Battalion (ADA), Fort Bliss, TX; and maintenance-control officer, 1-43 ADA Battalion, Fort Bliss and Doha, Qatar. He is a graduate of the Combined Logistics Captain's Career Course, Support Operations Course (Phases I and II) and Ordnance Basic Officer Leader Course. He has bachelor's of arts degrees in business and Spanish from Liberty University.