

Appendix C

The Theater Distribution System

The theater distribution system must provide the ASCC the ability to command and control the reception, distribution, and retrograde of all commodities while maintaining total asset visibility through communications and properly integrated information systems. Designed to work under a single support command in theater, it must be structured to provide responsive support and accurate information. This command may be joint and possibly multinational, if required. It must also be closely linked to the forward-deployed LSE to provide Total Army support from the national level.

FUNCTION

The theater distribution system enables US forces to request, receive, sort, maintain, distribute, retrograde, and control the flow of materiel between the point of receipt and the point of issue to using activities within the supply and transportation systems. It places emphasis on the impact of containerization on the intratheater distribution system, underpinning the organizational structure and

allowing them to maximize throughput. It grants them continuous and timely visibility of systems performance measures and all units, personnel, and cargo moving within the theater. The reception, onward movement, and redeployment from and within an operational theater will also be accomplished through the theater distribution system.

DISTRIBUTION MANAGEMENT

The materiel management, MC, and support operations organizations are the overall managers of the theater distribution system. They provide the necessary interface with supply and transportation automated systems and coordinate the movement of cargo within the theater of operations. Materiel managers are responsible for maintaining a balance of stocks at each node to support the mission. Movement managers task transportation assets within the theater. Transportation assets include common-user land transportation, HN support, and contracted vehicles, watercraft, military aircraft, rail, and pipeline. Support operations personnel interface directly with the user.

The ASCC may establish a centralized distribution activity that manages the distribution of supplies and coordinates the movement of personnel and mail. Integrating with the strategic distribution system, the

centralized distribution management center integrates materiel managers, MC managers, and support operations personnel from the highest level logistics command in the theater. The most critical aspect of centralized distribution management is planning and monitoring the operation to the extent that a balance of forward-positioned ASL with increased velocity minimizes stocks' depth to maintain acceptable levels of stock outage risk. The centralized distribution activity may be tailored to augment support for security assistance or peacekeeping missions or a single consolidated organization for large-scale joint and/or multinational operations. It consists of the appropriate level MC and materiel management activities that will deploy early in the deployment sequence. The overall goal of distribution management is to respond to the combatant commander's priorities and user requirements.

CENTRALIZED DISTRIBUTION ACTIVITY

The centralized distribution activity receives cargo that must be sorted before transshipment to the SSA or owning unit. The majority of cargo will arrive in 20- and 40-foot containers. Single consignee cargo and ammunition will not pass through the centralized distribution activity but will be throughput to the users or, in the case of ammunition, directly to the ammunition SSA. The centralized distribution activity is a terminal cargo transfer operation that could become a limited storage site if required. The composition of the centralized distribution activity is based on anticipated distribution requirements.

SUPPLY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

SSAs will coordinate with local MCTs for transportation, to include retrograde of

containers and flat racks to be returned to the system. The SSA is responsible for receiving and sending cargo to and from the centralized distribution activity or the POD.

UNITS

Units are the elements or nodes in the logistics system that either receive cargo from or retrograde items to the SSA or the centralized distribution activity.

PORTS OF DEBARKATION

Air or sea PODs are locations that receive and retrograde cargo and personnel. Containers are transported from the POD to the centralized distribution activity, SSA, or using unit.

CRITICAL CAPABILITIES

Capabilities that are critical to the success of a theater distribution system include TAV, communications, container handling, and transportation.

TOTAL ASSET VISIBILITY

TAV is the ability to provide timely and accurate information on the identity, status, and location of DOD materiel from the source of production to delivery to the user and ultimate disposal. Assured, reliable, and adequate communications, automation, and automation identification technology are required to achieve TAV.

COMMUNICATIONS

State-of-the-art signal support systems capable of secure and assured voice and data communications are required to implement the theater distribution system. Assured communications are defined as those between two or more users of the system that are guaranteed within a specified time and design parameters. Assured voice and data communications provide interface between elements of the theater distribution system and the global information network, ITV network, GPS, all services' automated logistics systems, and applicable C² systems within a time frame and at a data rate not less than the

maximum possible provided by each of these external systems.

CONTAINER HANDLING

The use of containerization for all deployments magnifies the need for a responsive theater distribution system. The system must be container-supported, focusing on the receipt of containers during both unit deployment and sustainment operations. The centralized distribution activity will be responsible for maintaining the status of containers, flat racks, and 463L pallets used for transportation of materiel between CONUS and the theater of operations. The centralized distribution activity will develop policies and procedures to control containers and flat racks allocated for intratheater use to ensure proper distribution according to command priorities. Retrograde of containers will be accomplished within the theater distribution system. They may be returned to the centralized distribution activity—if the containers will be used for distribution within the theater of operations—or the port, depending on the theater's needs.

TRANSPORTATION

The theater distribution system deals with everything entering and leaving the theater, including personnel and mail and items not

Appendix C

presently addressed by the logistics system. Depending on the volume of personnel moving into and within the theater, dedicated transportation may be required from the APOD to the personnel replacement organization. Bus

is the preferred method of transporting personnel in a nontactical environment, and, if available, HN or contracted busses should be used. Mail received at the POD will be transported directly to the responsible postal unit.
