

# Chapter 81

## Military Involvement in Humanitarian Supply Chains

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the multitude of activities that military logisticians can provide throughout the various stages in relief supply chains. Most military joint doctrine identifies humanitarian assistance (HA) as one of the “Military Operations Other Than War” (MOOTW) that military personnel are trained to undertake. Part of this HA involves contributing to humanitarian supply chains and logistics management. The supply chain management processes, physical flows, as well as associated information and financial systems form part of the military contributions that add to other aid in the relief supply chain. The main roles of the military to relief supply chains include security and protection, distribution, and engineering. Examples of these key contributions will be provided in this chapter.*

### INTRODUCTION

Military supply chains are dedicated to warfare, peace keeping missions and since the 1990s disaster relief and humanitarian aid. Military logistics and their command and control systems are very suitable for operations in disaster areas. The lack of stability, infrastructure, and communications in harsh and/or remote areas are situations that military logisticians are trained and prepared to operate in. Military command and control systems

are able to deal with large scale disaster situations or war. They, like other humanitarian agencies, can deploy very quickly. The key contributions to humanitarian supply chains include: security and protection, mass provisions and distribution and engineering reconstruction. Very recently military logisticians have been involved in training host nation personnel to take over various tasks of the supply chain activities. These activities can be used across all phases of humanitarian relief from the initial five to ten days of disaster relief through to the longer term to the reconstruction and redevelopment stages.

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In the main, military forces enter into humanitarian aid in natural disasters or complex emergencies under a UN specified mandate. The mandates differ markedly between humanitarian agencies and defense organizations. These mandates become morphed within supply chains. Humanitarian agencies have a clear mandate to implement impartial aid programs to all sufferers as an inalienable right where as military involvements especially in peace keeping operations have their inevitably partial and political mandates. The separation of these mission goals must be kept distinct in the humanitarian space but within the supply chains delivering the aid the humanitarian issues seem to have won out in most cases.

This chapter will discuss the various roles military organizations fulfill within humanitarian supply chains. It will discuss some of the pros and cons associated with such involvement and conclude that when military organizations work in close co operation with humanitarian agencies the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the total humanitarian supply chains are improved.

## **Definitions**

The Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals defines supply chain management as: "Supply chain management encompasses the planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, and all logistics management activities. Importantly it also includes coordination and collaboration with channel partners, which can be suppliers, intermediaries, third party service providers, and customers. In essence, supply chain management integrates supply and demand management within and across companies."<sup>1</sup>

Their definition for Logistics Management is: "Logistics management is that part of supply chain management that plans, implements, and controls the efficient, effective forward and reverses flow and storage of goods, services and related information between the point of origin

and the point of consumption in order to meet customers' requirements."<sup>2</sup>

A military definition of logistics is given as: "The science of planning and carrying out the movement and maintenance of forces... those aspects of military operations that deal with the design and development, acquisition, storage, movement, distribution, maintenance, evacuation and disposition of material; movement, evacuation, and hospitalization of personnel; acquisition of construction, maintenance, operation and disposition of facilities; and the acquisition of furnishing of services"<sup>3</sup>

The Australian Defence Force Doctrinal Definition of Logistics is: "The science of planning and carrying out the movement and maintenance of forces. In its most comprehensive sense, the aspects of military operations will deal with:

- a. Design and development, acquisition, storage, transport, distribution, maintenance, evacuation and disposition of materiel;
- b. Transport of personnel;
- c. Acquisition, construction, maintenance, operation, and disposition of facilities;
- d. Acquisition or furnishing of services; and
- e. Medical and health service support."

(Land Warfare Procedures – General 0-1-6  
Land Glossary, 2004)

Academics have been defining supply chain management in similar broad terms as the military logistics definition above. One of the most definitive sources on the definitions of supply chain management is given in a comprehensive literature review that provided the following definition of a supply chain. "A supply chain is defined as a set of three or more entities (organizations or individuals) directly involved in the upstream and downstream flows of products, services, finances and/or information from a source to a customer". (Mentzer *et al.*, 2001, p. 4.)

Generally speaking, and for the purposes of this relevance to this chapter, military perceptions

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