

DOCUMENT RESUME

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Can the Army Provide Logistic Support for Its Troops in a Conventional Defense of Free Europe? (Unclassified Digest of a Classified Report). LCD-77-208. February 16, 1978.

Report to the Congress; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

Issue Area: Military Preparedness Plans: Transportation in Emergency Situations (804).

Contact: Logistics and Communications Div.

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Organization Concerned: Department of the Air Force; Department of the Army; Department of Defense.

Congressional Relevance: Congress; House Committee on Armed Services; Senate Committee on Armed Services.

Since the U.S. Forces' relocation from France in 1967, the Army has been trying to develop a stable wartime supply line to support its troops in Central Europe. Despite concerted efforts, there is no reasonable assurance that adequate resupply stocks arriving from the United States could be delivered to U.S. combat troops in a crisis. Findings/Conclusions: Plans for shipping material from European ports do not tie in well with U.S. troops and capabilities in Germany; plans are unclear about how shipments will be handled and where they will be forwarded. There are conflicting estimates of the size of the resupply workload to be handled through the wartime supply line, and reasonable assurance is lacking that supply routes will be secure enough to prevent unacceptable disruption. There is also insufficient assurance that host nation support required by allies will not conflict with U.S. requirements. Within the U.S. sector of Germany, shortages of transport and handling capability for distributing war reserve stocks exist at all levels. Assurance is lacking that adequate quantities of war reserves could be distributed and that expected support from host nation civilians would be available. Recommendations: The Secretary of Defense should: provide for updating, coordinating, and interfacing all plans affecting the wartime logistics support of U.S. troops in Europe; and use every means available to impress upon NATO the urgent need to determine each Ally's logistics requirements and capabilities and plan for multinational supply lines. The Secretary of the Army should reassess the plans for moving supplies from European ports to combat units to increase assurance that adequate material can be delivered. (RRS)

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a report containing classified security information.

COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S
REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

CAN THE ARMY PROVIDE LOGISTIC
SUPPORT FOR ITS TROOPS IN
A CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE
OF FREE EUROPE?

D I G E S T

Since the U.S. Forces' relocation from France in 1967, the Army has been trying to get a stable wartime supply line to support its troops in central Europe. Despite concerted efforts, including developing and funding a new supply line project, there is still no reasonable assurance that adequate resupply stocks arriving from the United States could be delivered to U.S. combat troops in a crisis. (See pp. 4 and 16.)

Plans for shipping material from European ports do not tie in well with U.S. troops and capabilities in Germany. Capability in Europe to receive and ship material forward is vast; however, plans are unclear about how shipments will be handled and where they will be forwarded to. (See ch. 3.)

For example, the master logistics plan for a European contingency provides for large quantities of war reserve stocks in the United States to be shipped to Europe, but other plans do not provide for an appropriate echelon to receive the stocks in typical wartime surges and distribute them to units within corps areas.

There are conflicting estimates of the size of the resupply workload to be handled through the wartime supply line. Reasonable assurance is lacking that the supply routes will be secure enough to prevent unacceptable disruption and that the resupply line would function adequately in a contingency. (See p. 18.)

There is also insufficient assurance that host nation support required by allies will not conflict with U.S. requirements and that

key allies will have adequate materials to hold areas critical to keeping supply routes open. (See pp. 23 and 26.)

Within the U.S. sector of Germany, shortages of transport and handling capability for distributing war reserve stocks exist at virtually every level. Also, the United States is relying on civilian support for tasks for which the host nation uses only military support. Some expected host nation civilian support may not be available in wartime because of practical considerations. (See pp. 32 to 39.)

As a result, assurance is lacking that adequate quantities of war reserves could be distributed and that expected support from host nation civilians will be available. Plans generally do not interface well, are not adequately coordinated, and include conflicting assumptions. (See ch. 5.)

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense:

- Provide for updating, coordinating, and interfacing all plans affecting the wartime logistic support of U.S. troops in central Europe.
- Use every means available to impress upon NATO the urgent need to (1) determine each Ally's logistics requirements and capabilities and plan for multinational supply lines and (2) make sure that all Allies are taking adequate steps to provide themselves with the material necessary to support a sustained conventional defense. (See p. 59.)

The Department of Defense agreed with GAO's recommendations and said that it is developing a "master plan" for a NATO logistics program which will be a United States input to the long-term NATO defense review and will serve as guidance for U.S. logistics initiatives. Defense also said that at the May NATO ministerial, the Secretary of Defense

stressed the high priority that must be placed on improving NATO conventional capabilities, including logistics, stock levels, and supply systems. (See p. 60.)

GAO recommends that the Secretary of the Army reassess the plans for moving supplies from European ports to combat units to increase assurance that adequate material can be delivered. (See p. 60.)

The Department of Defense concurred, stating that the Army continually assesses the adequacy of all logistics war plans and that the wartime movement of material from ports to combat units has long been emphasized and studied. Defense cited the recent revision of a vital plan and a recently completed Army study as evidence of the above. (See p. 60.)

Comparison of these two documents with each other and with other pertinent plans confirmed the existence of problems discussed in this report. The Army's study reaches similar conclusions to GAO's concerning several problem areas and indicates the need for additional planning work. Problems have now been recognized but not fully resolved. Decisive action is needed to correct them. (See p. 61.)