

THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF STRATEGY
AND LOGISTICS

15 November 1955

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COLONEL WIRAK: The need for a close relationship between strategy and logistic planning was brought home most forcibly in World War II. And yet there were occasional misgivings among the strategists about those empire builders on the logistic side, and about some of their estimates as to what could or could not be done with available resources. Accordingly, the powerful Operations Division of the War Department General Staff set up in its own shop a Logistics Group to help formulate a proper appreciation of the implications established by the logistics people.

Our speaker ended World War II at the head of that group. Later he was a member of the first military faculty of the National War College. Then he went to West Point where he is Professor of Military Art and Engineering. However, he has been called back to the National War College, to the Industrial College, and to other agencies of the Department of Defense for his always interesting and fresh viewpoint on strategy and logistics. We are happy that he has accepted our invitation to speak to us on "The Interrelationship of Strategy and Logistics."

It is a pleasure to present to you Colonel Vincent J. Esposito.

COLONEL ESPOSITO: General Hollis, Gentlemen of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces: I should like to begin my talk with a bit of historical background.

If we go back to the 18th Century--say in the time of Frederick, the Great--we find that the military establishment was, in effect, a private possession of the monarch; recruited by him, and paid from his private treasury.

These modest and well defined limits of military force naturally had an influence on the scope of national aims and the formulation of strategy. As a result, wars were limited, primarily for possession of adjacent provinces, and military strategy seemed to be a sort of chessboard affair, designed to out-manuever the opponent without exposing the difficult-to-replace military forces to excessive hazard.

Logistics raised few major problems, or limitations, on strategy, for requirements were modest and the scope of campaigns restricted. With the advent of Napoleon and the nation-in-arms concept of warfare, military strategy became expansive and dynamic. But even with this broadening of strategy, logistic requirements remained substantially the same in types and magnitude as in the days of Frederick, and demands on the economy were modest.

The first real impact, or influence, of logistics on land strategy came in the latter half of the 19th Century with the introduction and expansion of the railroad, which greatly enhanced strategic mobility. Since then, there has been a steady succession of discoveries and developments in weapons, materials, and services applicable to the conduct of war.

The growth in the field of logistics can be measured in terms of these statistics which were developed some time ago in your College: In the days of Napoleon, the cost of munitions, or war materiel, in percentage of total fiscal war cost was very small indeed. Even at the time of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 it was only between 5 and 10 percent. In World War I, the proportion had increased to between 30 and 35 percent. And in World War II, it rose sharply to 70 to 75 percent.

In the meantime, there has been a concurrent curtailment of the strategic art. (I made this remark to your neighbors upstairs last year, and haven't been invited back since.) In a 12-month period spanning 1796-97, Napoleon conducted half a dozen major victorious strategic campaigns in Italy. At no time did his forces exceed 40,000, a strength less than that of the average modern corps. Strategy, once initiated, was brought rapidly to the culminating point of decision in battle, unhampered by extraneous influences. This rapid implementation of strategy generally continued as a characteristic of war throughout the 19th Century.

But in the 20th Century, the global and total nature of war, the huge forces engaged, the tremendous areas comprising theaters of operations, and other considerations, all combined to increase greatly the time interval between the initiation of strategy and its fruition.

Strategic decisions became fewer in number, though they increased tremendously in scope and importance. The time spread between initiation and realization of strategy allowed many factors to develop which

operated to affect strategy--problems of logistics, national economics, internal and external political activities, local aspirations of allies, and the like.

The strategist found that perhaps the easier task was the formulation of strategy; the more difficult task, to implement it against various obstructions. By the nature of things, the formulation of strategy moved into the higher echelons.

Few division or corps staffs in World War II had occasion to formulate strategy, and this could be extended to include most Army staffs. I would venture also to say that the same was true of comparable Air and Naval forces.

Now, if we project into the nebulous future the trends of increasing importance of materiel and the concurrent concentration of strategic decision, what could we possibly visualize?

Well, if we increase the impact of munitions from the 70 or 75 percent of World War II to something approaching 100 percent, we could get into a world of armed, controlled satellite moons, manned launching sites with missiles directed on target, and similar materialistic deadly things, some perhaps unknown today, all ready to go at the push of a button. All that would be left for strategy would be to decide when to push the button. But even this decision would be taken from military hands by the political leaders. In all things, strategy would have been displaced by logistics.

I make this hypothetical, and perhaps somewhat facetious, deduction to emphasize the point that obviously somewhere along the course of development of the art of war, the previously parallel paths of strategy and logistics became intermingled and to a degree merged.

When did this begin? I believe we can pinpoint it to the time when there developed a choice of logistic means for employment in war. The strategist, having conceived a strategy, is, or should be, the one charged with the supervision of its execution. As such, he should have the power of decision as to the means to be employed. And this is not limited to organized military units, but extends across the field of military resources.

This may sound like a truism, but there are those who feel that everything pertaining to that general classification of functions, which

is listed under the official JCS definition of logistic, falls under autonomous control of that single element of military organization titled supply, logistics, materiel, or whatever it may be called.

In the Army in World War II, there was a persistent and determined effort to effectuate just such autonomous control. If successful, it would have placed the control and deployment of troops under one agency, and the control, development, and distribution of materiel resources under another. Hardly a coordinated way to fight a war.

Actually, this idea of parallelism is an empty one, for there are many fields of activity in which logistics and strategy have concurrent interest, and in these fields neither the strategist nor the logistician can function effectively for the general good without the cooperation and assistance of the other.

To illustrate this point, I should like to refer very briefly to a chart I used here several years ago when I was discussing the factors that affected logistics. (Chart, page 5.)

The subject was complex, with many opportunities for tangential deviations, so I designed the chart as a framework to achieve some measure of cohesion in my presentation. I haven't time, nor would it be appropriate, to go into it in detail. If anyone is interested, there is a copy of my talk on file in your school under date of three or four years ago.

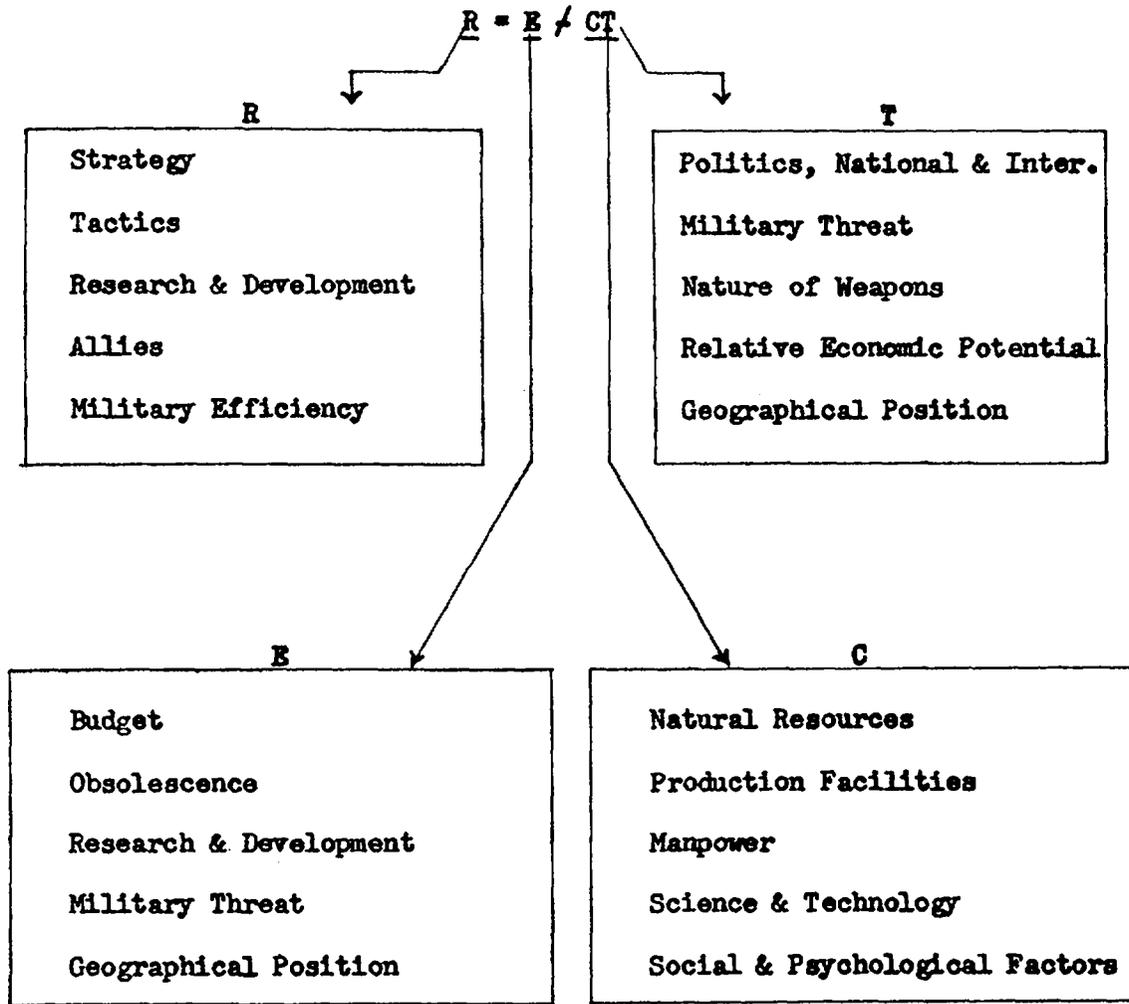
Let us look at the basic equation, first, from the viewpoint of the logistician and read it as follows:

The logistic resources needed to conduct war successfully (represented by **R**) comprise those existing and immediately available for use (**E**), plus those that can be obtained through our industrial capacity (**C**) in the time expected to be available (**T**).

Now let us read the equation from the viewpoint of the strategist as follows:

Our ability to implement our agreed strategy (**R**) depends on the overall military resources immediately available at the outbreak of war (**E**), plus our ability to meet our progressive requirements when needed (**CT**).

CHART



Though we look at it from the two different viewpoints, we find that we are in general concerned with the same influencing factors-- at one time the strategist had little interest in some of the factors listed under C; but under prevailing conditions they exert a strong influence on strategic capabilities.

It is obvious that someone must keep his fingers on the pulses of all the factors I have listed to see that the relationships in the basic equation are kept in reasonable balance. The major responsibility for this task falls to the strategist, though the preponderance of execution would rest with the logistician.

Now let us analyze briefly this vast field called logistics to see specifically where the principal areas of integration with strategy occur.

I believe we can divide logistics into three areas. One can be called operational logistics or consumer logistics. It applies to the employment in operations of logistic resources already produced. The strategist's interest here would be in the field of priorities and allocations.

A second area has been called alternately civil logistics, national logistics, or producer logistics. It applies to the procurement from the national economy of the logistic resources required. In our look at the chart we have already seen some of the interests of the strategist in this field.

The third area relates to what is to be produced or mobilized and when. The fact that this area is becoming more and more known as strategic logistics indicates, in itself, that here the strategist has the greatest interest and responsibility. In this area are established the premises that govern civil and operational logistics. Here are evaluated those logistic considerations that affect our own and our opponents strategies.

It is very difficult to draw a sharp line dividing the responsibilities in this area between the strategic planner and the logistic planner. It would be easy to say that the strategic planner lays down the magnitude and types of forces, mobilization schedules, operational bases, and the character, scope, area, and timing of prospective operations and undertakings, all of which taken together determine the what and when of logistic requirements; and that the logistic planner translates these into terms of end items, and services.

But this would be oversimplification. Actually, if the strategist's work is to have any practical value, he must plan within feasible dimensions logistically.

So in the evolution of the final basis for logistic planning, it is necessary for the strategic and logistic planners to work closely together to insure that the final basis is sound in all its aspects.

And here we should differentiate between planning in times of so-called peace and planning in actual war. Planning in peacetime is done with fewer limitations, less pressure, with more time available, and with slower fluctuation of many influencing factors, so efficiency of planning is not put fully to the test. The close relationship between strategic and logistic planners doesn't seem so necessary, and they tend to go their separate ways. But in time of war, planning is continuous and dynamic, and if this close relationship is not instigated and nurtured, all manner of confusion, inefficiency, and danger can ensue.

I believe I can best illustrate this point with a few observations from my experience in World War II. Our prewar schooling concentrated on strategy and tactics and failed to recognize the growing impact of logistics. In consequence, we developed strategists generally lacking in logistic insight. In consequence also, we developed few logisticians who could see beyond operational logistics, or the confines of a mobilization procurement district.

The logistician soon learned that in the rapidly changing scene he required continuing guidance from the strategist as to the magnitude and course of events. Here, beyond giving general indications of the possible direction of strategy, magnitude of short-range operations, and broad guides of timing, the strategist was loathe to go. He was undoubtedly impelled by the desire not to pin himself down to a specific strategy, but to permit himself latitude and flexibility in planning. On the other hand, the logistician looked for precise magnitudes and specific dates far in the future on which to design long-range programs.

Both were wrong--one asked too much; the other gave too little. Somewhere in between lay a realistic compromise which could have been arrived at if each had an understanding of the problems of the other, which, unfortunately, they generally did not. The result in the Army was that the overall supply agency set up its own strategic-logistics division which strove to fill the gaps with operational plans and strategic concepts of its own as a basis for logistic planning.

I am sure the danger here is obvious. The strategic planner who hesitates to provide information requested and needed until things have firmed up, thinking that thereby he is retaining flexibility in planning, is actually shackling himself, for the logistician must plan well ahead, and if adequate strategic guidance is not given, he must perforce make necessary assumptions and estimates himself.

The result is that, with the passage of time, the strategist finds his planning geared to the means which the logistician himself has provided, and we might say that strategy has then become a puppet on the strings of logistics. The setting for this existed, but it did not happen for the specific reason that the logisticians in all services produced so much that with rare exceptions an over-abundance of support was available when the strategist finally firmed up his plans.

Other enterprises arise in war which are outwardly purely logistic in nature but in which the strategist should have a continuing interest, if not a distinct responsibility. Let us take, for example, the Burma or Stilwell Road. When conceived, it had a legitimate purpose, political primarily. Our technical people went at the job of constructing the road with vigor and devised improvement and enlargement progressively until, if left alone, they would probably have constructed a four-lane concrete highway into China.

Here resources, particularly vital shipping, were being expended in increasing quantities while the strategic and political importance of the road were diminishing. Here the initiative in curbing the project rested with the strategist who was more aware of the changes in the influencing factors.

A similar project was the Persian Gulf Command, to push supplies into Russia. When the outcome of the war was becoming clear and shipments to Russia became more and more nonmilitary in nature, it might not have been a bad idea to softly restrain the strenuous efforts in the theater to surpass all delivery records.

We are inclined to forget the fumbles and errors if we win the game and to remember only the wide sweeps and touchdown passes. Many write about the glorious operations of World War II; few bother with logistics. The general feeling is that we had about everything we needed when we needed it so we must have done a good logistic job. It doesn't seem to matter that we had as much ammunition left over at the end of the war as we actually expended during the entire war.

And it was probably considered good safety planning to put huge theater requisitions into production even though theater shipping limitations had already piled up more than a 12-month backlog in depots extending from the coast to the heart of the country.

And, believe it or not, just a few months before the end of the war, with our forces in advanced positions in the Philippines, Okinawa, and Iwo, enjoying overwhelming air superiority, a plan was seriously advanced to construct a vast new complex of air bases in the Pacific, extending as far back as the Gilberts and Marshalls, so that the air forces freed in Europe could be employed in a system of leapfrog operations against Japan proper.

I am sure that our attitude toward precision and economy in planning has undergone substantial improvement since World War II. But conditions have also changed radically and a new look at the strategy-logistics relationship is in order.

In atomic warfare, logistics as presently conceived threatens to nullify to a significant degree the advantages which atomic weapons can provide to military strategy. The principal advantage of the employment of atomic weapons in military operations is that they can create situations favorable for exploitation by offensive action by land, sea, or air forces.

Full success in such operations will depend largely on mobility, speed, and appropriate striking power. This is the time for the dream of every commander--a fast-moving, hard-hitting, self-sufficient force, free from a complex logistic chain. One thinks of the forces of Hannibal, Napoleon, Jackson, and Sherman which performed such spectacular feats.

But today we are accustomed to massive forces with voracious logistic appetites.

A first step then in our new look would be to study carefully the combat forces that initiate logistic demands--their armament, composition, equipment--to see what can be eliminated or modified with a view to developing streamlined forces stripped of nonessential gear. A favorite gun, ship, or plane must be abandoned in furtherance of the general good, if it does not perform a vital role. Luxuries and conveniences to which we have become accustomed must be excluded as items of general supply, for the rapidity, intensity, and relatively short duration of local action is likely to provide few opportunities for their enjoyment.

Forces must be made integrally self-sufficient for limited periods to free them from logistics bonds and to permit continued operation in isolation which is likely to occur in the fluid battlefields of atomic warfare.

Having tailored the combat forces, the next imperative step is to reduce drastically the time element in resupply so as to obviate extensive, burdensome, and vulnerable supply pipelines. Current thought seems to dwell on duplication of installations to solve the problem of the atomic threat. Little attention seems to be paid to measures for elimination or reduction. Fluid conditions in the combat zone may extend to depths exceeding a hundred miles, and static supply installations within that area are likely to be more of a burden than a help.

The need is for a complete revamping of the logistic organization and doctrine to provide almost instantaneous means of requisitioning; and resupply in terms of hours or days instead of months, by the fastest possible means of ship, motor, and air transport that does not require prepared installations. In this manner we can streamline the logistic chain and reduce the need for transporting and storing large stocks. We must forget thinking in terms of 60-, 90-, or 120-day theater stocks. I doubt that they could ever be accumulated and maintained overseas in atomic warfare; and, if they could, measures for their protection would be likely to require the expenditure of disproportionate effort.

A vital problem requiring urgent attention is one in the field of your immediate concern--our continental logistic base. Here we have a vast chain of key depots, distribution depots, ports of embarkation, posts, bases, and stations, each with its prescribed level, running from 120 days down. The entire complex absorbs not only a high proportion of the tax dollar but also of natural resources.

It might be said that this complex is fine, for it provides two requisites in atomic warfare--dispersion and reserves. But the maintenance of such a system requires a constant expanded industrial base which becomes more subject to disruption as its complexity increases.

When stocks are issued from a major depot, they are considered expended, and Gargantua opens his mouth for another bite of production. Meanwhile, at the lower end of the chain there issues a steady stream of obsolete and surplus property, enough to maintain an extensive chain of Army and Navy Stores throughout the country.

There is a trend toward introducing methods of industry in Government business. It would be wise for the military to take another serious look at commercial systems of stockage and resupply to see whether military considerations actually warrant such distinct divergence.

The considerations are not for economy alone. With fixed military monetary allowances, the support of this extensive pipeline severely limits the size of the combat forces that can be maintained. Here logistics imposes an unwarranted limitation on strategy.

We live in an era of military preparedness. Our military forces and installations are very expensive, and this persistent financial burden naturally arouses great public interest. The number of civilians concerned with the military field is already large.

Two years ago I spent a good part of the summer down the hall working with a group on a special project for the President. We made our report before an assemblage in the auditorium at the White House. When everyone was seated, I was startled to note that, except for us small fry in the rear, the JCS were sitting in the last row. This started me on a disturbing chain of thought which I leave with you military students to mull over. I mean no offense to you civilian members--the chances are that you will agree with me. I'll sum it up curtly and frankly this way:

The principle of civilian control is being extended gradually beyond its basic conception into the lower echelons. The more or less permanently expanded military establishment is an interesting field; working in it carries some prestige, and incidentally 10,000 dollars to 15,000 dollars a year. If we show dissention, unwillingness, or an apparent incapacity to do what obviously must be done to run an efficient and economical establishment, there are others only too willing to pick up the reins and direct the way.

The idea that strategic and logistic planning are purely military matters beyond the comprehension of civilians is gradually being dispelled by long association of civilians with military problems since the war and by the exposure of avoidable military blunders. Unless we face the issues resolutely and resolve the obvious problems effectively, we shall within the next ten to twenty years be progressively reduced to the status of the vehicle driver, the steamship captain, and the airlines pilot, who drives, sails, or flies what he is told to, where, and when.

In other words, just another group of technicians.

Thank you.

QUESTION: I gathered from your advocacy of the elimination of overseas supply bases and for restriction of continental bases that in general you want us to have a smaller level of supplies and military equipment on hand. On the other hand, we have heard from a number of speakers recently the unequivocal statement that the only thing we are going to have to fight a war with is what we have in existence on D-day. With these two views, will you indicate where we are going to get equipment to fight a war with?

COLONEL ESPOSITO: Well, I think if we are faced with the situation where the only equipment we can have is what is available at the beginning of the war, we are in a pretty bad way. I don't believe that could actually be the case, regardless of how destructive weapons can be.

Our production base is unquestionably subject to major disturbance and disaster. Now the more complex we make that base to support our military requirements, the greater the danger of disruption in our system of meeting our military requirements. I am thinking in terms of a smaller production base for our own military items; of smaller plants for specific items, separated from these vast complexes that are likely to be destroyed; of transportation and organization that can rapidly take the flow from there to a minimum number of reserve and intermediate depots to the man in the fighting line.

The ideal would be to take a gun from a factory and fly it to the troops on the battlefield. That, I think, is not possible; but somewhere in between we have to cut out all of the time wastage and all of the stockage that we possibly can, for these operate only to increase demands on our threatened and vulnerable industrial base.

QUESTION: It has been said that the field of storage logistics is one of the two professions in which the amateur fits the profession. One of the difficulties in strategic-logistics planning is the inability to convince the O and T people and G-3 of the need to revise some of the tables of organization. Is there any reason why that phase should not be pushed over into the logistic aspects rather than remaining in Plans and Operations?

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COLONEL ESPOSITO: I think there we have to forget what the chart says our functions are and think of the general good. If I were now in the supply business and were looking over an organization in which it appeared to me that there were some things that could be done without and which were hampering the general effort by restricting the unit's activities, I wouldn't hesitate to go to G-3, lay it on the line, and discuss it with them. I would not look at the chart to see whether it came under my particular responsibility. We have been loathe to look beyond our prescribed sphere. We say, "That's his," or "He wants that." But usually the fellow on the strategy side has been thinking along his own lines. If the people in G-3 are going to get angry and pout if you make a suggestion, our whole organization is pretty poor.

QUESTION: I am just concerned about economy, as you are, I believe. However, aren't you going rather far along the road of dictating strategic plans and policies? Isn't that not quite realistic in view of the fact that the plans we fight by from here on will be pretty much our survival?

COLONEL ESPOSITO: It is not my intention to emphasize the economy aspects. I was trying to emphasize the conversion of resources into combat power rather than into an overstockage of supplies and equipment and a cumbersome and wasteful chain of supply installations. I was trying actually--I must have done a poor job--to show the total aspect that strategy is the controlling element and we should do in logistics whatever we possibly can to support and further the strategy.

QUESTION: It would seem to me that the plan you have sketched for us would require a very great expansion of transportation facilities of all kinds. I believe some of the writers at least have indicated that the collapse of the transportation system in both Germany and Japan did more than anything else to cause them to give up. Would you give us some idea as to the expansion, scope, and nature of this transportation that would have to be made available?

COLONEL ESPOSITO: My idea was not that we would have to expand our transportation, but by cutting elements of this vast pipeline and cutting out the requirements for vast stockages in theaters, we would cut down actually the demand for transportation.

My point was as to the nature of the transportation. It should be the fastest possible; that we should employ air transportation where

possible, or fast naval ships. I don't know much about the naval aspects, but I doubt that we are going to have the big convoys we had in the past to move from this coast to that coast, and to see 177 ships lying offshore waiting to be unloaded.

I am not thinking in terms of expanding transportation, but in terms of decreasing demands on transportation and increasing the efficiency of transportation. Maybe we need smoother, faster ships to go on this way individually. That I think is logical, if you don't think in terms of 30, 60, or 120 days of stockage on the shore.

I realize I haven't set up any concrete system. I am just setting up an objective, and I think the nature of warfare tends toward trying to meet that objective speedily, to deliver without intermittent piling up and stockage of as much as we can. How that is to be done is not within my sphere, but perhaps it is in yours.

QUESTION: In the Alaskan theater, the Air Force followed your concept and closed its depots and ordered directly from the states. Has the Army done that at any of the overseas installations?

COLONEL ESPOSITO: I am cloistered up on the Hudson very comfortably and I don't get around to all of the latest maneuvers. I do know ashore that one post supply officer tried to effect the system of bypassing the local depot and getting two days' supply instead of 30. It worked out fine for a week or two, then he caught the devil and they had to go back to the old system.

There is a little resistance, a reluctance that you have to overcome. We have been bogged down with the other concept for a long time. It is nice to have all these things. There's no question about it, but we have to get them where needed a lot faster and eliminate intermediate stockages. They are all vulnerable and it will take a lot of effort and energy to protect and take care of these in theaters.

The answer, as I see it, is either reduction or elimination to the greatest extent possible, made up for by very, very speedy and very efficient transportation.

QUESTION: The Army is trying that out right now for its divisions in Europe. They are trying to supply directly through electronic means, sending requisitions directly on from overseas. The question I had is how do the strategy people maintain their flexibility?

If they are going to have to give themselves a year or two years in advance, if we are going to have to deliver the goods to them in the lead times of World War II, how do they maintain their flexibility? The time comes two years from now and they are tied down to the amount of taxes they have. They are frozen in what they can do.

COLONEL ESPOSITO: Nothing in war can be ever seen and fixed for a lengthy future. I think you have to balance the factors. If you are talking about a very, very important item that is a sort of a cheap item, very inexpensive to produce, and you need quite a number of them, I suppose you could stock any number of them and not worry too much if they had a civilian use. But if you get into major items in the long-range future, actually if my understanding is correct, a plane on the board now will not be out for four or five or six years; one not on the board now will not be out in a longer time than that. So here is where the strategists' foresight, aided by the technical person's intuition, you might say, or knowledge comes to the fore.

I did work for part of one summer with the Rand Corporation out in California, which has for its particular function working for the Air Force to see what the nature of the plane would be beyond the immediate future. In other words, they are thinking of war in the future, 10 or 20 years from now, and they are trying to come up with what they should have at that time. That is the kind of thinking a strategist should be engaged in with these people and that should give some idea of future needs.

If the thing is going to take 10 years, somebody has to decide whether it is likely we will use it or not in 10 years and go ahead and do it. If he doesn't and we find later we need it, we made a poor guess or a poor calculation. But it is impossible to develop fully every idea of every person. If we had an Army, Navy and Air Force of the size we had between World War I and World War II and we weren't involved with a national threat as we are now, and we could have the funds, it would be very nice to take everyone's ideas and work them out, obtaining a little of this, that, and the other. If we found something good, we could go ahead and use it. But the thing has gotten too big now. It creates an impact everywhere.

QUESTION: If the Army strategy people decided to make a major effort through the use of water-based aircraft, for example, if they don't make that far enough in advance, they will wait a long time before they get the planes to carry out the strategic plan. They have got to give themselves quite a long time in advance.

COLONEL ESPOSITO: That is what I was trying to say. They have to look at it from that viewpoint and make the decision. Then the other factor arises as to whether they are infringing on someone's territory and getting planes that go on the water. Those are things we have got to resolve ourselves or somebody will resolve them for us. They have done it already and they will do it again.

QUESTION: Do you have any idea of how we can circumvent this production technology and modification to our present-day system so we won't be stocking a lot of obsolete parts? Do I make my thought clear on that?

COLONEL ESPOSITO: Yes, I was just trying to think of the answer for you. You don't ask very easy ones. The guide along those lines would be to get back to the streamline system I have been talking about, something like the commercial system.

Take the automobile industry. If you go to an auto repair place for a new strip for the side of your car that you lifted off along a post as I did last week, the man may have one or two handy. If he doesn't have them, he can pick up the phone and somewhere there is a place that has some. It won't have 10 million of them. But he can take a car and run over and get it. I actually had that happen a short time back. The man said, "By the time I have this off my man will be back with the other one," and he was right.

If we can streamline our system of providing requirements so that we don't have these big concentrations, if a thing does become obsolete, you don't have large surpluses to throw away.

I buy a lot of surplus military items from the ads on the back page of the Sunday paper that look pretty good to me.

So if you want to get the answer down to a brief statement, I think it would be the streamlining of our supply department and pipeline could eliminate the necessity for throwing away a lot of things if and when they do become obsolete.

QUESTION: Your remarks concerning the redeployment of the Air Force in Europe to the Pacific, I don't know whether I detected an overtone of hindsight or not. We were going ahead at that time with the invasion plans on Japan. We had air strips in the Marshalls and Marianas, about six active ones, and Okinawa. We were projecting

more for the China coast, based upon invasion plans involving the three services in the task ahead, not knowing what the capability of the atomic bomb was at that time. Would you care to elaborate on any other strategy or tactics that might have been employed at that time?

COLONEL ESPOSITO: Well, we probably both got a different impression. I was actually faced with that suggestion. I will admit it was originated at a pretty low level, but the feeling I got behind the whole thing was: We have all these planes over here, let us put them into use. The idea was that you would take one squadron, fly it up to this base and have it go into combat for two or three missions. Meanwhile the next ones would be coming along in sort of leapfrog operations, and we would be flying planes all over the place for the purpose of getting one or two or three missions.

If I remember my timing correctly, we were in the Philippines; we were in Okinawa. The last air threat was the kamikaze attacks on the fleet at Okinawa. We had aircraft flying all over Japan dropping all sorts of fire bombs and whatnot, with very little, if any, resistance. In other words, we had overwhelming air superiority right there with what we had.

The reason for my comment was to show the attitude we had then. I am not picking particularly on the Air Force. I tried to point out that the Army and Navy possessed it also.

QUESTION: I had the experience myself, as many of these problems that you have mentioned are brought about by people with good intentions putting in a safety factor. I could tell you an experience I had in that regard.

I wanted a jeep for a certain project. I sent a requisition through to my boss. He said, "Maybe you had better have two." It went to the Air Corps and they decided I should have four. It went to the Export Headquarters Command where they made it six. When it went to the Army, somebody duplicated the order and sent it to two arsenals. So the request ended up with six jeeps from each of two arsenals. I finally ended up with none. So I took a pretty dim view of these people adding on these safety factors. Would you care to comment on that?

COLONEL ESPOSITO: The basis for it is the natural instinct of self-preservation. Take a local supply officer whose commanding

officer has a particular liking for a certain vehicle. All of a sudden the transmission fails. He catches the devil. The instinct is, that he will never allow this to happen again. He won't trust one transmission, you know, but he will get two or three. If you can do anything to submerge the desire for self-preservation and self-interest, I think that is the answer to your problem. It is a psychological rather than a physical matter.

QUESTION: A few years ago Congress passed a law to force us to go to a Federal Catalog system, everybody talking the same language. Since we have gotten more into it, the various services have seen it is going to take a good long while before we can get one stock list. It may take ten years. Would you care to comment as to whether we will ever reach this happy stage?

COLONEL ESPOSITO: I don't think you ever will. Many items are peculiar to individual services, some of them very small. The difference isn't as large as a battleship, an aircraft carrier, a tank. There are many small items. There are items which could be handled on a uniform basis. Food is one. I thought at one time we had that resolved that one service would procure all food, but I saw a statement in the paper last week that the Army was going to procure all food. I don't know whether that is a repetition of something already established or something new.

But if you went around to as many theaters during the war as I had occasion to do, with stops at Army bases, Navy bases, and Air Force bases, you would note quite a disparity in what you would eat one place and what you would eat at another.

I was taking dinner in a mess at a distant isolated island one day, and they had fresh peas. They were very fine. "Where did you get these?" I asked the officer next to me. He said, "We have a big garden out there. We raise them." An orderly came along and I said, "Give me some more of these peas. They are very good." He said, "We've got freezers full of them out there, just stocked up from the last refrigerator ship."

So I think there is an area where things will be forced upon us unless we look at it carefully to see what we can do in the area of uniform supply and then present a logical case for certain areas where we need our own individual supplies. I don't foresee any single catalog that is going to take care of everything for every service. I think we are just

waving at a windmill in trying to do it, to effect uniformity for uniformity's sake. But the reason they try is that in certain cases we lack attention to little duplications in certain areas that could be eliminated if we thought about it.

QUESTION: You indicated a number of actions that should be taken to improve relationships between strategy and logistic planning and some things necessary with respect to logistics. Would you care to enlarge a little bit on where you would have to go or on what level you would have to go in order to implement those? I have in mind a situation I found myself in during the last three years when I first came to the Pentagon. I found, for example, the decision to open a commissary at an installation could be made at the General Staff level. I didn't think it had to be made there. It took a year to process a request for the opening of a commissary through all the agencies that had to approve it.

COLONEL ESPOSITO: I am trying to remember myself. I had to do with the level of planning which involved major requirements for the conduct of war and the requirements for supporting combat forces in major operations. When you get down in the local area and echelon, I don't know. I do agree with you that the matter of the establishment of a commissary should be subject to certain policy in a certain specific office and the decision should be made rapidly if it falls within the policy. I don't see any reason for having it go around for a year or so.

COLONEL WIRAK: Colonel Esposito, on behalf of the College, I would like to thank you for a very interesting presentation.

COLONEL ESPOSITO: I am very happy to be here.

(2 Feb 1956--250)K/sgh