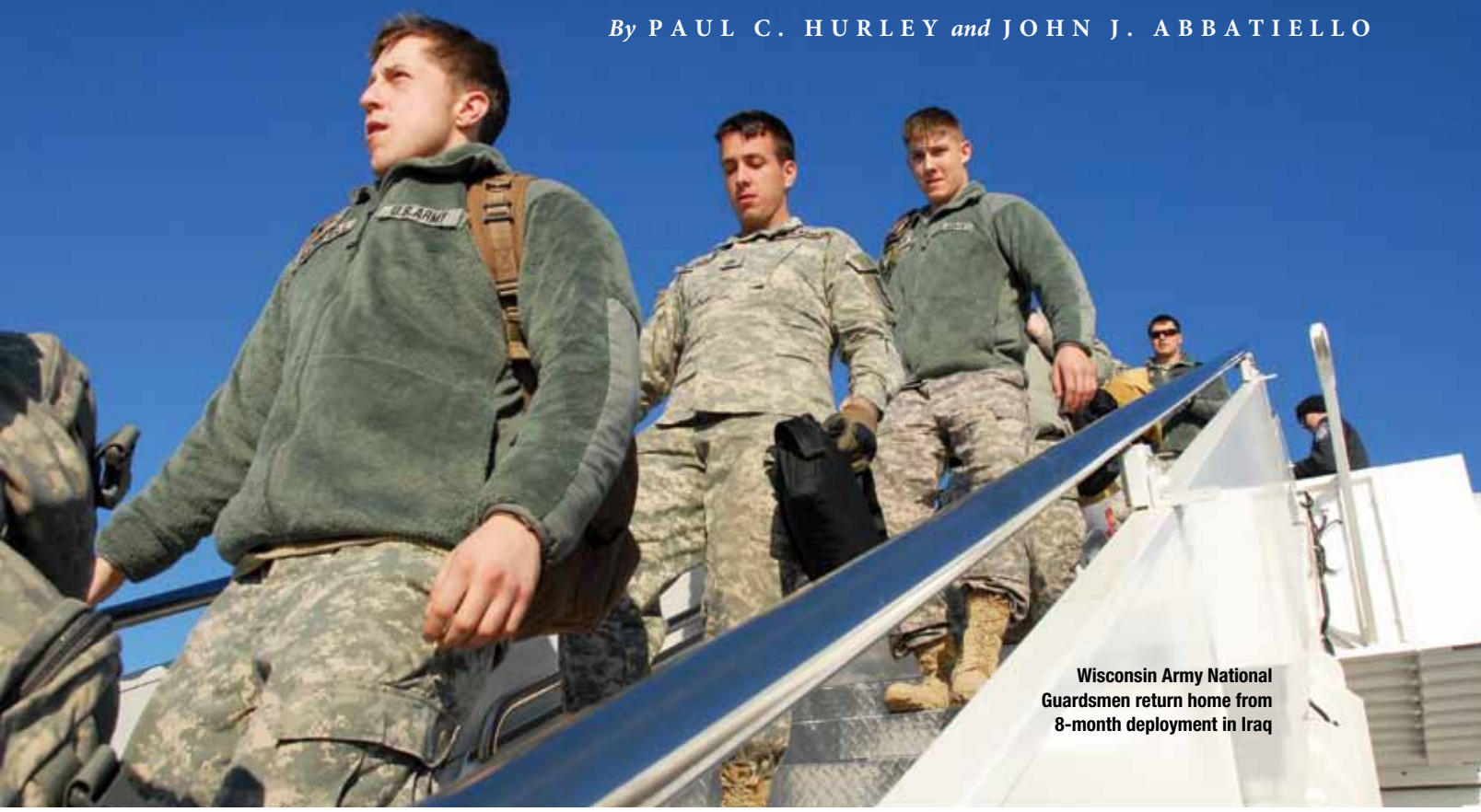
Responsible Drawdown
Synchronizing the Joint Vision

By PAUL C. HURLEY *and* JOHN J. ABBATIELLO



Wisconsin Army National Guardsmen return home from 8-month deployment in Iraq

U.S. Army (Vaughn R. Larson)

When in human history has an armed force ever enjoyed the quality of logistical support that our forces in Iraq do today? The U.S. military possesses the capacity, budget, organization, and doctrine to keep personnel in the field well stocked with food, water, ammunition, vehicle parts, and anything else they need to accomplish their mission. Although our processes are not perfect, most would agree that our efforts to supply our fielded forces deserve high praise, especially when comparing the current system either to foreign armed forces' capabilities or to our own historical record.

Our doctrine empowers that logistical competence. Joint Publication (JP) 4–0, *Joint Logistics*,[1] guides our headquarters staff officers and sustainment formation commanders in efforts to plan and execute joint logistical support of operations. It spells out the roles and responsibilities of each organization in the joint sustainment chain of command. The Army's guidance, Field Manual 4–0, *Sustainment*,[2] likewise clearly delineates functions and informs decisionmakers about how they should prioritize and carry out the various tasks associated with logistics support to a fielded force. But when it comes to guidance for our most recent logistics challenge—responsibly withdrawing equipment and personnel from Iraq—our existing doctrine falls short of the target. In fact, only a few pages of doctrine address what might be considered the most difficult task in logistics planning: *partially* redeploying a large military force in the midst of an extremely fluid political and security environment.[3]

On November 17, 2008, Ambassador Ryan Crocker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari signed what has come to be known as the Security Agreement between the United States and Iraq, setting the stage for an immense logistical challenge. This historic document spells out numerous requirements and expectations for the signatory parties, but perhaps the most complex one for the U.S. military is Article 24, which states that "All . . . United States Forces shall withdraw from all Iraqi territory no later than December 31,

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2011." In February 2009, President Barack Obama further stipulated an intermediate force cap of no more than 50,000 troops remaining in Iraq—to train the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and to "conduct counterterrorism missions"—by the end of August 2010.[4]

It was for this new environment that the leadership of U.S. Army I Corps, based at Fort Lewis, Washington, completed preparations to assume the duties as Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC–I). During its year in Iraq, "America's Corps" took on the burden of planning and executing the Responsible Drawdown of Forces (RDoF), which—because of its speed and complexity—arguably is the most challenging redeployment effort that our Armed Forces have ever faced. Over the next year, I Corps discovered that synchronization through an established battle rhythm with a clearly defined critical path for effective decisionmaking produced unprecedented velocity and precision across all areas of responsible drawdown.

As I Corps settled into its new role as the MNC–I, the staff quickly confirmed what our joint logistics doctrine emphasizes: "It is at the operational level that strategic and tactical capabilities, processes, and requirements intersect, and it is here where the essence of joint logistics resides."[5] Additionally, according to JP 4–0, the seven core capabilities of joint logistics are supply, maintenance operations, deployment and distribution, health services support, engineering, logistics services, and operational contract support (see figure 1). However, it was not until MNC–I nested the responsible drawdown horizontally across all joint logistics capabilities and vertically across all levels of warfare, tactical through strategic, that logisticians in Iraq started to achieve the results required to meet the President's mandated timeline.

MNC–I logistics planners found that the core logistics capabilities as outlined in JP 4–0 served as a useful and comprehensive framework to develop drawdown plans. Accordingly, in March and April of 2009, they used this framework to develop the plan that initiated the responsible drawdown from Iraq by retrograding non–mission essential equipment and commodities from the theater, sometimes simultaneously with ongoing combat operations, without sacrificing operational capability (see figure 2). MNC–I staff identified the key components of the drawdown, determined the tasks associated with these components across all of the core logistics capabilities, and then leveraged supporting enabling agencies to achieve the desired velocity and precision.

Furthermore, once MNC–I understood the tasks across the tactical, operational, and strategic levels, staff officers linked them to deliverables to produce the synchronization framework that defined the desired effects, identified how they were to be achieved, and decided which products needed to be published to achieve the retrograde goals. In this manner, we dissected each major drawdown task and produced a comprehensive plan that enabled MNC–I to simultaneously execute several complex activities. They included retrograding non–mission essential equipment from Iraq; sourcing the follow-on Advise and Assist Brigades (AABs) to 100 percent of their authorized equipment requirements; providing badly needed combat power to Operation *Enduring Freedom* to meet the growing equipment needs of the surge forces in Afghanistan; and finally beginning the long overdue return of equipment to the Army inventory for reset.

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Figure 1. Core Logistics Capabilities

Core Capabilities	Functional Capabilities
Supply	▪ Manage supplies and equipment ▪ Inventory management ▪ Manage supplier networks
Maintenance Operations	▪ Depot maintenance operations ▪ Field maintenance operations ▪ Manage life cycle systems readiness
Deployment and Distribution	▪ Move the force ▪ Sustain the force ▪ Operate the joint deployment and distribution enterprise
Health Services Support	▪ Casualty management ▪ Patient movement ▪ Medical logistics ▪ Preventive medicine and health surveillance ▪ Theater medical information
Engineering	▪ Combat engineering ▪ General engineering ▪ Geospatial engineering
Logistics Services	▪ Food ▪ Water and ice services ▪ Base camp services ▪ Hygiene services
Operational Contract Support	▪ Contract support integration ▪ Contractor management

Since November 15, 2009, the Multi-national Corps, Multi-national Force, and Multi-national Security Transition Command logistics directorates have been combined to form the U.S. Forces–Iraq Joint Logistics Directorate (J4), and this vital synchronization continues under the USF–I Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics J4 and the USF–I sustainment leadership. To further illustrate the challenges of the RDoF in Iraq, we must consider each of the JP 4–0 joint logistics capabilities and highlight a few of the major synchronization issues theater logisticians faced.

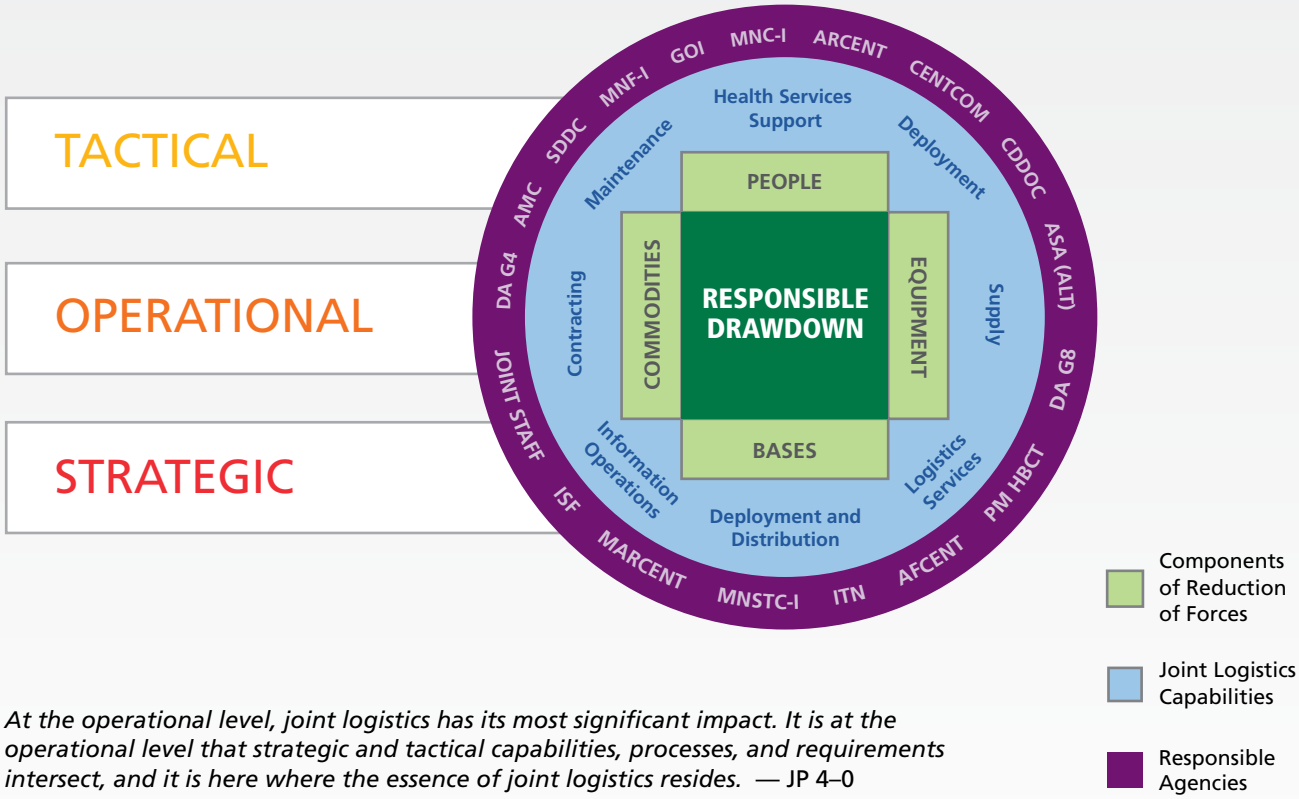
Supply

Joint doctrine identifies supply as a core capability that includes right-sizing commodity and equipment stockages, facilitating inventory management, and managing supplier networks. The supply capability became critical during RDoF as MNC–I reduced stocks and trimmed equipment numbers to the precise levels required for the footprint of 50,000 troops by August 2010 and eliminated unnecessary inflow of commodities to match endstate force requirements. As the drawdown commenced, it immediately became apparent that without adequate synchronization across all levels of operation, the simultaneous goals of right-sizing the equipment and commodity stockpile in Iraq, maintaining regional engagement, and beginning to balance ongoing combat operations with Army equipment reset could not be achieved.

Theater management of fuel stockage levels provides a clear example of the link between supply acquisition and theater engagement. As the drawdown of forces proceeded, the requirement for fuel at the tactical level was naturally reduced by a significant margin. Additionally, at the operational level, the availability of convoy security force (SECFOR) units was reduced by such an extent that U.S. forces no longer had enough SECFOR to secure fuel convoys traveling over the western ground line of communication (WGLOC) from Jordan. The troop-to-task ratio simply did not permit the smaller number of U.S. forces in Anbar Province to accomplish their primary mission of advising and assisting their ISF counterparts as well as perform the WGLOC SECFOR taskings.

Consequently, the initial assessment based on the tactical and operational dynamics was to discontinue the fuel shipment from the west and to compensate for this loss by increasing the fuel shipment into Iraq from the north and south. However, at the strategic level, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) had leveraged the economic

Figure 2. Doctrinal Sustainment Considerations



At the operational level, joint logistics has its most significant impact. It is at the operational level that strategic and tactical capabilities, processes, and requirements intersect, and it is here where the essence of joint logistics resides. — JP 4–0

Key: MNC–I = Multinational Corps–Iraq; ARCENT = Army Central Command; CENTCOM = U.S. Central Command; CDDOC = CENTCOM Deployment Distribution Operations Center; ASA (ALT) = Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology; DA G8 = Department of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff; PM HBCT = Program Manager, Heavy Brigade Combat Team; AFCENT = U.S. Air Forces Central; ITN = Iraq Transportation Network; MNSTC–I = Multinational Security Transition Command–Iraq; MARCENT = Marine Corps Forces Central Command; ISF = Iraqi Security Forces; DA G4 = Department of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics; AMC = Army Materiel Command; SDDC = Surface Deployment and Distribution Command; MNF–I = Multinational Force–Iraq; GOI = Government of Iraq

benefits of shipping fuel over the WGLOC to reward Iraq's neighbors for active and passive support of U.S. efforts in Iraq. Although the final decision was in fact to halt the shipment of fuel over the WGLOC, MNC–I and then USF–I worked with USCENTCOM to offset that loss of commercial revenue generated by the fuel shipments by increasing the commercial shipment of retrograde equipment over the WGLOC to the United States.

Balancing Class VII (end use items) requirements also provides an example of the careful supply synchronization planning essential across all levels of warfare and throughout the joint operations area. Logisticians in Iraq had to balance the requirements of completing the sourcing of AAB equipment sets with 100 percent of the mission essential equipment lists, sourcing critical pieces of combat equipment for the *Enduring Freedom* buildup, and retrograding all non–mission essential equipment to Kuwait for induction into reset programs in both Kuwait and the United States. At the tactical and operational levels, we clearly understood the necessity of retaining operational flexibility within Iraq throughout the drawdown. Consequently, planners developed flexible division and separate brigade monthly rolling stock and nonrolling stock retrograde goals that allowed commanders to choose the types and quantities of excess equipment to retrograde, as long as they met their minimum goals. This allowed commanders the ability to both right-size and shape their equipment sets based on their assigned operational mission and battlespace conditions.

After the headquarters merger on January 1, 2010, USF–I had to consider the strategic requirement of sourcing the *Enduring Freedom* buildup with critical combat power (to include coalition requirements in Afghanistan), as well as retrograding as much equipment as possible to seed the depot reset programs and to relieve critical shortages of equipment in the Army inventory. Consequently, logistics planners synchronized the tactical, operational, and strategic equipment requirements, and, using the base plan of flexible monthly retrograde goals, USF–I increased the retrograde of equipment from theater. However, on a case by case basis, the headquarters deviated from its policy of flexible retrograde selection and directed the transfer or retrograde of specific excess equipment—either by line item number or capability—to meet strategic requirements. These

Redistribution Property Assistance Team Soldier straps package at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, for shipment to United States

U.S. Air Force (Brittany Y. Bateman)

two examples, importing fuel and exporting retrograde equipment, clearly illustrate how expeditious supply transactions, synchronized across the theater, helped us retain operational capability while also meeting the RDoF and theater engagement goals. However, as each month of retrograde passed, the operational readiness of the remaining equipment became increasingly important.

Maintenance Operations

In conjunction with right-sizing our inventory, we faced the next hurdle of ensuring that the smaller set of equipment was maintained appropriately to preserve operational capability over time. Maintenance, the second core logistics capability, links maintenance activities from field through sustainment (depot) levels—across the life cycle of systems—to preserve equipment availability and operability. For the tactical and operational level, the headquarters sought to set systems in place to maintain the operational readiness of U.S. combat power as well as to ensure that all equipment being transferred to the ISF met minimum operability standards. The U.S. Equipment Transfer to Iraq program was designed to transfer selected pieces of non–mission essential equipment to the ISF in order to ensure they possessed the equipment required to reach a minimum essential capability prior to the departure of U.S. forces. Obviously, the last thing the U.S. military wanted to do was to transfer non–mission capable equipment to the ISF. Consequently, logistics planners established systems to monitor the readiness of equipment identified for transfer and to establish maintenance processes both before and after the ISF signed for the equipment.

While these maintenance systems ensured the operability of potential ISF equipment, there were greater strategic maintenance considerations to consider. Much of the Army's theater-provided equipment had been in Iraq for up to 6 years and had seen extensive use in an unforgiving environment. Additionally, until the drawdown of units occurred, this equipment could not be released to leave theater for reset maintenance.

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Understanding this, logistics planners in Iraq coordinated with Army Materiel Command (AMC) to determine the projected location for reset or refurbishment of the retrograde equipment—whether in Iraq, in Kuwait, or in the continental United States. Using this process, the headquarters leveraged AMC maintenance capabilities within Iraq to reset equipment for *Enduring Freedom*, seeded the Army Forces Central Command (ARCENT)

reset capability in Kuwait for both *Enduring Freedom* and theater reserve stocks, and retrograded equipment to the United States for induction into stateside depots for long overdue reset.

Deployment and Distribution

The deployment and distribution joint logistics capability directs the efficient use of the joint deployment and distribution enterprise to both move and sustain the force. USF–I achieved increasing levels of velocity and precision to balance the competing movement demands for retrograde, sustainment, and operational mission movement requirements. Additionally, through innovative software developments, USF–I was able to identify excess equipment by line item number and serial number, determine the ultimate disposition of that equipment, and then rapidly ship the equipment to its final destination. Of the 3.4 million pieces of equipment in Iraq in May 2009,[6] roughly 2.2 million were pieces of organizational equipment that would redeploy with the units back to home station. USF–I had to determine the disposition of the remainder of the equipment, both military and commercial, and to move it to its final destination.

As of March 2010, we had provided disposition instructions for over 150,000 pieces of equipment in Iraq. Ultimately, by the time the drawdown from Iraq is complete, logisticians from USF–I and ARCENT will provide disposition instructions for approximately 650,000 pieces of Army gear and 650,000 pieces of commercial equipment.[7] Additionally, U.S. forces will transfer hundreds of thousands of pieces of commercial equipment in conjunction with base transfers from U.S. control to Iraqi control under the Foreign Excess Personal Property Program. In each case, the potential transfer required logisticians to screen the equipment for conflicting requirements among U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, reserve equipment stocks in the USCENTCOM area of responsibility, home station modified table of organization and equipment requirements, and even individual state and local agencies under the National Association of State Agencies for Surplus Property Program.

Clearly defining the equipment requirements within Iraq was the start point for the screening process. After 7 years of conflict, one would think that it would be easy to define those requirements. However, this was not the case, as the drawdown coincided with the transition from full spectrum operations using Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) to a more training- and partnership-oriented mission set using newly formed units, the AABs, as the baseline modular force in theater. The AABs had some distinct personnel and equipment differences from the traditional BCT structure. Consequently, USF–I identified equipment shortages across all AABs and enabler force formations in theater and laterally transferred equipment as it was nominated for retrograde to fill shortfalls within the AABs. USF–I leveraged the AMC theater property book teams and doubled the number of asset visibility personnel within the logistics staff to achieve the volume and velocity of disposition instructions required to set the AABs while simultaneously retrograding thousands of pieces of equipment each day.

Equipment retrograde to Kuwait, lateral transfers internal to Iraq, and sustainment flowing both in and out of the country taxed an already heavily burdened distribution network in theater. To orchestrate movement requirements, the sustainment staff hosted daily synchronization videoteleconferences that were attended by transportation officers from the USCENTCOM Deployment and Distribution Operations Center, ARCENT, USF–I staff, U.S. divisions in Iraq, and the 13th Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC). In this forum, staff officers coordinated strategic distribution concerns about intertheater airlift and sea port workloading with the operational level movement plan and the tactical concept of support with the 13th ESC. USF–I logisticians used this daily meeting to orchestrate large and complex milestone events such as the removal of U.S. forces from inside Iraqi cities, securing polling stations in advance of the Iraqi national elections, closing hundreds of bases across Iraq and removing all evidence of U.S. presence, and moving the more than 100 convoys per night required to sustain the force and support the retrograde of equipment.

Health Service Support

Health service support is vital to maintaining "the individual and group health needed to accomplish a military mission."[8] However, within the current environment in Iraq, it actually means much more than that. The health service support capability provides the doctrinal template to provide world-class care to casualties, synchronize medical logistics into the larger sustainment construct, and leverage the drawdown of medical capability to simultaneously build Iraqi medical capacity. Contrary to public perception, the President's 50,000 force cap did not leave much room for enabling forces in support of the AABs within Iraq. Accordingly, the drawdown plan included a proportional reduction of medical assets such as medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) helicopters, combat hospitals, and associated medical logistics footprint. The robust medical footprint Operation *Iraqi Freedom* enjoyed over the preceding 7 years was reduced over time to a minimum essential capability with strategic reachback to clinical services provided by Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany and in some cases medical facilities in the continental United States.

With the surge of troops flowing into Afghanistan, medical units and assets were at a premium. Medical planners retained only the minimum number of medical assets within Iraq to provide emergency lifesaving care to casualties, routine healthcare to uniformed personnel, and limited clinical services to U.S. forces within the country. The MEDEVAC coverage plan across Iraq garnered greater attention, and while the map rings depicting the "golden hour" did not cover the entire country, they did cover 98 percent of the American troop concentration inside the country. The limited number of forward operating bases (FOBs) outside the golden hour of MEDEVAC coverage was reinforced with medical personnel and equipment to compensate for the additional flight time to Level III medical care.

U.S. forces will transfer hundreds of thousands of pieces of commercial equipment in conjunction with base transfers from U.S. control to Iraqi control

Operationally, as the medical footprint was right-sized to support the force density within Iraq, medical logisticians integrated their planning into the larger sustainment construct. As USF–I adjusted the overall U.S. base footprint across Iraq, medical planners had to position both MEDEVAC assets and medical units to support the changing force

structure. This required the medical logisticians and sustainment planners to work in unison to synchronize medical capability locations, FOB infrastructure requirements, and MEDEVAC aircraft basing and support requirements. Staffers achieved this level of coordination by fully integrating the medical support planning into the sustainment critical path that synchronized all aspects of the basing, property accountability, and the support planning across all levels of operations.

As daunting as the medical drawdown was, there were strategic opportunities that surfaced that allowed the United States to assist Iraqi citizens as the drawdown progressed. One of these opportunities was the ability to transfer desperately needed medical facilities and equipment to the Iraqi Ministry of Health. One facility was Ibn Sina Hospital, located in the International Zone close to the current site of the U.S. Embassy. Ibn Sina was Saddam Hussein's personal hospital that, after the 2003 invasion, had been transformed into a first-class American hospital with a state-of-the-art emergency room capability (featured in the HBO documentary film *Baghdad E.R.*). As U.S. forces complied with the Security Agreement and left the cities, the troop density and corresponding casualty rates in downtown Baghdad dropped significantly. Consequently, transferring a fully functioning Ibn Sina Hospital with all associated equipment to the government of Iraq not only right-sized U.S. medical capability within the Baghdad city limits, but also reinforced a positive information operations effort by transferring one of the last remaining visible reminders of Saddam's regime back to the Iraqi people. Lastly, and most importantly, the transfer of Ibn Sina Hospital provided badly needed medical capability to the Iraqi people within the heart of their capital city. Ultimately, our headquarters worked closely with the Office of the Secretary of Defense to receive the appropriate authorities to legally transfer the hospital, and on October 1, 2009, the hospital and all of its equipment were transferred to the Iraqi Ministry of Health.

Engineering

Just as the medical drawdown was integrated into the larger sustainment planning construct to build synergy between the U.S. drawdown and buildup of Iraqi civil capacity, so too was the concept of engineering support. Engineering planners integrated all aspects of base planning, route clearance, and U.S. engineering capability into operational and civil capacity planning. This ensured that as the drawdown proceeded, U.S. forces were preserving the necessary critical engineering capability within the USF–I force structure, as well as providing much-needed equipment and expertise to American forces in *Enduring Freedom*, the government of Iraq, the Iraqi civil sector, and the ISF. More than any other joint logistics capability, engineering became the area where the American tactical military capabilities, operational level civil capacity and environmental planning expertise, and strategic level plans to regenerate the Iraqi infrastructure intersected into a unified campaign plan. Consequently, American engineers were required to balance U.S. regulatory guidance, operational command directives to build both ISF and *Enduring Freedom* engineering capability simultaneously, and the Joint Campaign Plan that required the United States to rebuild the Iraqi civil sector in an effort to bolster the fledgling democratically elected government by showing the Iraqi people tangible proof of how the quality of life was improving over time.

U.S. Navy (Ron Kuzlik)

Navy Seabees return from 6-month deployment in Iraq

At the tactical level, ongoing operations and civil capacity-building efforts necessitated the movement of U.S. military forces and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) across the country. Unfortunately, as the drawdown commenced, there were fewer U.S. forces providing counter–improvised explosive device coverage on U.S. supply routes. Consequently, USF–I was careful to preserve route clearance capability throughout the drawdown to ensure freedom of movement for AABs and the associated enablers during stability operations. The route clearance equipment required for this effort was in high demand throughout the USCENTCOM area of responsibility, particularly with the surge of forces into Afghanistan. Accordingly, USF–I assessed the amount of specialized engineering equipment against tactical and operational requirements, our ability to replace the engineering equipment with a similar, nonstandard capability using AAB equipment, and the threat in each of the divisional areas of operation. Ultimately, all nonessential equipment was dispositioned for release to *Enduring Freedom* for immediate employment in Afghanistan.

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Some pieces of tactical engineering equipment and projects became operationally and strategically important. For example, as U.S. forces began to rebuild the country after the initial invasion of 2003, they emplaced "temporary" military bridges until permanent bridges could be rebuilt by commercial contractors. Unfortunately, as the insurgency continued from 2004 to 2008, many of the bridges were never rebuilt. As U.S. forces began to remove equipment, USF–I was faced with the quandary of crippling the limited recovery in economically depressed areas of Iraq by removing the bridges and severing the economically critical road networks into those areas. In short, the tactical recovery of U.S. engineering equipment and bridges quickly turned into a strategic level economic problem for the Iraqis. Engineering planners conducted a thorough analysis of the economic impact of removing each temporary bridge and determined that many of the bridges needed to remain in order to preserve the economic revitalization of the surrounding areas and freedom of movement of military forces in the area.

Similarly, some tactical engineering projects took on strategic level importance. Very early in *Iraqi Freedom*, senior American leaders identified the port of Umm Qasr and the city of Basrah as future economic lifelines for the Iraqi economy, leading to a great effort to develop infrastructure in southern Iraq. Simultaneous to this rejuvenation effort was the proposed turnover of FOB Bucca to the government of Iraq.

FOB Bucca, which at one time held a large population of Iraqi detainees, was the site of a large and functional sewage treatment plant. Although underutilized and on the verge of being shut down after the detainee population was either transferred to the Iraqi government or released as a part of the reconciliation process, the sewage treatment plant on Bucca offered an incredible capability and economic stimulus to both the port of Umm Qasr and the city of Basra. By connecting the sewage plant at Bucca to both areas, the plant would provide essential services to the residents of Basra and allow the ships using Umm Qasr to download raw sewage into the system instead of the open water around the city, thus avoiding additional environmental damage to the area.

USF–I was sensitive to the environmental impact of U.S. forces on the Iraqi landscape. Consequently, as with the Bucca sewage plant, engineering planners created a country-wide environmental cleanup plan that included all aspects of base closure and transfer, sanitation systems development, and civil capacity-building projects. Military and civilian civil engineers embedded strict environmental cleanup standards as a part of the base closure and transfer process to ensure that the U.S. military set the example for the Iraqi leadership in this critical area. Additionally, Defense Logistics Agency personnel offered expertise and assistance to establish a scrap recycling program across all U.S. bases in Iraq that sorted and removed scrap using local Iraqi contractors. Not only did this program facilitate the removal of unwanted trash and scrap from bases prior to transfer, but it also provided economic and civil capacity benefits as Iraqi businesses involved in the booming Iraqi scrap recycling business began to thrive and expanded their newly acquired business acumen into the civil sector.

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Logistics Services

As responsible drawdown commenced, logisticians attempted to balance the requirement to reduce the amount of equipment, materiel, and fiscal expenditures in Iraq with the goal of maintaining the same quality of life for U.S. forces in theater. Intuitively, sustainment planners initially considered these two goals as mutually exclusive. However, as logisticians and contracting specialists within the Joint Contracting Command–Iraq (JCC–I) looked at logistics services in a holistic manner, USF–I leadership discovered ways to preserve the high quality of life for U.S. forces while realizing a significant reduction in contracting costs, contractors, and their equipment in theater. As the largest contracted service provider in theater, the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP) became the logical place to begin to trim excess capability. The key to the success of this effort, however, was to link any reduction in LOGCAP services to a corresponding reduction of forces at each site, as well as to integrate this reduction to a potential expansion of capabilities provided by smaller contracts administered under JCC–I using the local national workforce.

Although the timing of the potential transition from one LOGCAP provider to another was problematic, given the volume of contractor-managed, government-owned equipment and military units leaving theater during the same timeframe, we needed to ensure continuity of service despite the volatility created by the wave of departing units. Although we are just beginning this process, logisticians and contract specialists put the pieces in place for a smooth transition. Clearly defining all tasks associated with LOGCAP services was a key requirement in our analysis, as well as integrating the transition plan within the overall RDoF planning effort and identifying selected services that could be off-ramped to local contracts administered by JCC–I. By linking the descope of LOGCAP services to the expansion of Iraqi business capability, USF–I built the foundation of economic revitalization using contracted logistical services to drive this development.

Not all services were migrated to local contracts, and USF–I looked at innovative ways of trimming the amount and cost of LOGCAP and other services. Rejuvenated sustainment-related synchronization meetings such as the Contract Review Board (initially chaired by the MNC–I chief of staff and C8, later by the USF–I deputy chief of staff and J8), the Base Management Working Group (chaired by the J7), and the Joint Sustainment Integration Board (chaired by the J4), helped the sustainment staff to significantly reduce the amount of contracted services on FOBs without a corresponding reduction in quality of life at each base. In short, planners nested the contracted services plan within the overarching drawdown design to realize significant cost avoidances while preserving essential capability. In fact, MNC–I was so successful at trimming unnecessary expenditures and services during I Corps' tenure that the cost of *Iraqi Freedom* operations in fiscal year 2009 (FY09) was $5 billion less than FY08. USF–I continued this initiative by teaming with AMC's Team LOGCAP and Defense Contract Management Agency and realized a cost avoidance of $60 million in LOGCAP costs alone during the first half of FY10.

Since contractors provide a substantial portion of logistical services in the Iraq joint operations area, contracting is obviously a key

DOD (Cherie Cullen)

General Ray Odierno, commander, U.S. Forces–Iraq, gives operational update on state of affairs in Iraq

enabler of U.S. operations. The next section explains how our synchronization efforts were key to developing successful contracting strategies among the many stakeholder agencies in the headquarters as well as with units in the field.

Operational Contract Support

Operational contract support is a capability integral to providing alternative sources of logistics and services, such as the Iraqi Transportation Network (ITN) transportation capability in support of U.S. forces in Iraq. Contracting expertise to develop and execute individual contracts is primarily provided by the JCC–I, which is fully integrated in all planning efforts. Also, the JCC–I commander co-chairs several of the key synchronization meetings within the USF–I battle rhythm. With JCC–I assistance, units are able to fill critical shortages in force structure with contracted capability, to leverage local contracts to help build the Iraqi commercial sector, and to use money as a weapons system to achieve specific battlefield effects such as blunting the effectiveness of insurgent recruiters by offering military-age citizens an alternative to violence to earn a living.

For example, in some cases MNC–I accepted a higher cost for logistics services if the higher cost was required to support stability operations. The commercial transportation sector was an excellent area where U.S. forces could link a requirement for logistical services with an abundance of semi-skilled and unemployed Iraqi laborers to produce a program that provided U.S. forces with mission critical support while simultaneously building an essential Iraqi civil capacity. The ITN was organized around a consortium of sheikhs willing to work with the United States to carry American cargo on commercial trucks. Initially, ITN was not cost competitive with LOGCAP trucking costs. However, USF–I and the Department of Defense ensured the program was funded at a baseline level to guarantee the survival of the Iraqi commercial transportation network and to build commercial capacity. ITN had the additional benefit of keeping local military-age males employed and in support of the U.S. military and ISF activities. Over time, the ITN sheikhs were persuaded to reduce costs in order to begin reducing their dependence on military cargo and to prepare the consortium for transition to commercial business. By using ITN as a model for future efforts, MNC–I discovered the synergy and potential of integrating logistics and contract planning in support of the drawdown.

Although the potential benefits of timely contracted support are great, these contracts come at a cost in manpower to our units. Unfortunately, the complexity and magnitude of the mission in Iraq left few military personnel available for contracting officer representative (COR) duties to adequately monitor and ensure proper execution of contracts. Although CORs are an essential part of maintaining adequate performance of local contracts, USF–I units were often short of trained personnel. The limited number of COR-trained personnel within the units often accomplished contract oversight functions as a secondary or additional duty. Although JCC–I recommends that contract oversight responsibility be the primary (only) task assigned to the COR, it became nearly impossible to achieve this based on the unit's tactical mission and the shortage of school-trained CORs. Consequently, both sustainment planners and contracting specialists had to take this into consideration as they developed the concept of support in the post-drawdown environment.

Plans Integration and Synchronization

Although JP 4–0 provides a sufficient doctrinal foundation to develop functional plans based on individual logistics capabilities, it does not adequately address what arguably is the most important part of drawdown planning: plans integration and synchronization. Immediately upon arrival in theater, I Corps realized that although an operational battle rhythm already existed, it failed to address key sustainment issues critical to the success of responsible drawdown. The operational battle rhythm included a series of synchronization meetings where issues were vetted for adequate development and synchronization prior to presentation to the I Corps commander for decision. This series of synchronization meetings was labeled as the Critical Path, and all briefings requiring command group decision were pushed through the Critical Path.

planners nested the contracted services plan within the overarching drawdown design to realize significant cost avoidances while preserving essential capability

As MNC–I, I Corps developed a parallel sustainment critical path that quickly became an effective method of not only integrating the planning efforts across the USF–I staff, but also synchronizing plans across the theater. This Sustainment Critical Path consisted of three primary general officer decisionmaking forums:

- The Joint Sustainment Synchronization Board (JSIB) focused on integrating all planning efforts across the USF–I staff and with divisions and the ESC.
- The Executive Sustainment Synchronization Board (ESSB) focused on synchronizing Operation *Enduring Freedom* plans across the USCENTCOM theater of operations.
- The Joint Logistics Procurement Synchronization Board (JLPSB) focused on synchronizing joint contracting efforts with the concept of support and responsible drawdown.

In other words, the JSIB integrated our planning efforts across and down, the ESSB focused up and out, and the JLPSB supported the first two.

The JSIB was a multifunctional sustainment board that highlighted and socialized planning efforts from the entire logistics planning community, and it developed into the workhorse of critical path meetings where the MNC–I leadership orchestrated the specifics of the drawdown.

The JSIB was not a stand-alone entity. Each functional staff directorate had its own series of meetings designed to feed the JSIB. Some notable feeder meetings were those of the daily Sustainment Synchronization Board, Base Management Working Group, Contract Review Board, and Operational Needs Statement Review Board.

Once the topics were vetted at the individual feeder boards at the colonel/captain level, they were placed in a queue for the JSIB. Ultimately, this board grew into the single most important synchronization event at the USF–I level and normally had numerous topics on the agenda for presentation and decision.

The ESSB was also an important synchronization meeting that had a slightly different focus and audience than the JSIB. The ESSB was the premier communications tool USF–I used to present information to the larger sustainment community across the theater and to synchronize the drawdown efforts with external support agencies and to coordinate equipment transfers between theaters with logisticians located in Afghanistan. The coordination conducted in the ESSB enabled USF–I to identify needed equipment for *Enduring Freedom*, coordinate refurbishment with AMC and the 402d Army Field Support Brigade, and organize intratheater transportation from Iraq or Kuwait to Afghanistan.

Lastly, the JLPSB was the newest key meeting in the Sustainment Critical Path. This meeting was JCC–I's premier coordination event that ensured all contracting initiatives were synchronized with and in support of the concept of operations. As the requirement for contracted capability in Iraq grew commensurate with the drawdown of forces, the JLPSB became increasingly important to efforts to bridge the gap between force structure shortfalls and required operational capability.

The joint logistics doctrine outlined in JP 4–0, when combined with a Sustainment Critical path that integrates and synchronizes responsible drawdown planning across all concerned agencies within the USCENTCOM area of responsibility, becomes a powerful mechanism to plan, organize, and execute all aspects of operational sustainment. I Corps used this joint doctrine not only to frame the concept of sustainment in Iraq but also to plan and orchestrate the responsible drawdown from Iraq. Although not all inclusive, joint doctrine does in fact provide a viable construct for tactical, operational, and strategic level logistics planning, and I Corps used this doctrine with great success.

Over the course of a year, the I Corps team sustained ongoing combat and security operations and helped orchestrate successful Iraqi national elections, while simultaneously managing to retrograde over 30,000 vehicles and 150,000 pieces of equipment. We produced cost avoidances of over $5.5 billion from previous years, returned repair parts valued at $1.1 billion to the wholesale system, and set the conditions for U.S. Forces–Iraq to withdraw from Iraq "with Success and Honor." **JFQ**

U.S. Marine Corps (John A. Krake)

Contractor moves equipment at Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron compound during downsizing at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq

NOTES

[1] Joint Publication (JP) 4–0, *Joint Logistics* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, July 18, 2008).

[2] Field Manual (FM) 4–0, *Sustainment* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, April 30, 2009).

[3] Although JP 4–0 barely mentions redeployment, JP 3–35, *Deployment and Redeployment* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, May 7, 2007), devotes a 10-page chapter to this task. It includes a generally useful list of factors to consider during planning and executing a redeployment operation, but as we will show, it misses a significant number of key considerations. FM 4–0 devotes a half-page (page 4–18) to "retrograde of materiel."

[4] Christina Bellantoni, "Obama Outlines Withdrawal from Iraq," *The Washington Times Online*, February 28, 2009, available at <www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/feb/28/obama-outlines-withdrawal-from-iraq/>.

[5] JP 4–0, x.

[6] Including 2.8 million pieces of Army standard and nonstandard equipment plus 651,000 pieces of contractor-managed, government-owned property.

[7] Through the ARCENT Support Element–Iraq, forward deployed in support of USF–I J4.

[8] JP 4–0, xiii.