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AIR TRANSPORT OPERATIONS AND ITS SUPPORT DURING CRISIS RESPOND OPERATIONS (CRO)

Abstract / Absztrakt

The crisis respond ability of the Hungarian Air Force and the responsiveness of NATO to protect its own units and troops wherever and whenever during airlift operations depends on the capability of air support and the potention of transport aircrafts and their crews. The importance of NATO being able to accomplish a successful war anywhere in the World, raises the significance of this specialized area of the Air Force. In addition, airlift provides the military with a humanitarian capability to aid areas hit by famine or natural disasters or blockaded by war or enemies.

A repülőerők három dimenzióban való szabad manőverező képessége lehetővé teszi, hogy kiaknázzák a sebesség, hatótávolság és rugalmasság jellemzőit. Ezek a jellemzők képessé teszik az erőket arra, hogy erőkifejtésüket összpontosítsák az ellenség felépítésének valamennyi elemével szemben: A Magyar Légierő jövőbeli válságreagáló képessége, valamint a NATO azon felelőssége, hogy saját csapatait a levegőből bármikor és bárhol meg tudja oltalmazni, nagyban függ a Légierő logisztikai támogató képességétől, valamint a légiszállító repülő erők technikai és személyzeti potenciáljától. Természetesen, mint minden haditechnika, a légierő szállító gépei is függnek az üzemanyag-ellátástól. Ez pedig feltételezi egyrészt az üzemanyag hadszíntérre történő szállítását, valamint a harctevékenységbe bevont repülő technika levegőben történő üzemanyag ellátását. Az a kritérium, amely szerint a NATO-nak képesnek kell lennie nemcsak klasszikus háborús katonai műveletek, de az aszimmetrikus kihívásoknak megfelelően a nem háborús katonai műveletekben való aktív részvétel a Föld bármely pontján, kiemeli a légi utántöltés és a légiszállítás szakterület jelentőségét. A légi utántöltés és katonai légi szállítás témaköre a NATO tagországok 2006-os Riga-i konferenciáján kiemelkedő helyet foglalt el, mint olyan szakterület, amit a NATO-nak sürgősen fejleszteni kell.

Keywords/Kulcsszavak: *Airlift, Air refuel, Crisis Respond Operations, NATO/ légi szállítás, légi utántöltés, válságreagáló műveletek*

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Air Transport Operations

Air transport provides a military commander with the capability to deploy, employ and re-deploy forces and equipment quickly and over considerable distances, sustain those forces and support effective application of their military effort. The inherent speed, range and flexibility of air transport make it ideally suitable for operations beyond NATO's area of responsibility including those of a humanitarian nature. Airlift operations are not supposed to be as exciting as to give a great idea for a Hollywood movie director to make a bestseller but airlift operations, and the planes that support them, are essential to the successful outcome of modern war. Without transport planes delivering soldiers, weapons, trucks, food, fuel, communications equipment, and many other things to a war theater, a military's ability to fight anywhere on Earth is compromised.

In addition, airlift provides the military with a humanitarian capability to aid areas hit by famine or natural disasters or blockaded by war or enemies. I will write about the characteristics of the Crisis Respond Operations (CRO) in the second part of my article. The importance of NATO being able to accomplish a successful war anywhere in the World, raises the significance of this specialized area of using Air Force. The importance of the Airlift Operations was one of the „hot spot" during the meeting of NATO Defense Ministers in Riga Summit in 2006. (27 November - Remarks by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the demonstration of C-17 Strategic Airlift Capability –). They agreed that NATO must improve it's Airlift capability package int he near future. *„The Alliance recognised this need four years ago at our Summit in Prague, and we committed then to increase our strategic airlift capability. „*

Historical overview

Airlift was not a mission concentrated on in the early years of flight, primarily because the small size of airplanes did not allow for large cargo or passenger loads. Then in the 1930s, Germany developed the Junkers Ju.52 trimotor as an 18-seat airliner that could double as a transport or bomber for the Luftwaffe. When civil war broke out in Spain in 1936, Germany sent assistance to the Fascist Nationalists. Twenty Ju.52s were sent immediately to Spanish Morocco, where the main part of the Nationalist Army, including leader Francisco Franco, was trapped, unable to sail across the Strait of Gibraltar. Throughout August and September, the German transports airlifted the stranded troops to Seville, Spain. During 677 flights they transported 20,000 soldiers. From Seville, the Nationalist Army was able to expand and eventually defeat the Republicans and win the war.

With this first successful airlift, other nations rushed to develop their own transport planes. The British Air Force relied on transport-bombers, such as the Vickers Victoria. The United States developed transports that were modified airliners—the Douglas DC-3 was converted to the C-47 Skytrain by removing the airline interior and adding heavier floors and a large cargo door. The same plane with a smaller door was designated the C-53 Skytrooper and used for dropping paratroopers. By the time World War II began, all the combatant nations were equipped with transport planes which dropped paratroopers, carried troops and supplies, and supported the rapid movements across the European Theater.

Airplanes meeting the special demands of transport operations began to be built after the Berlin Airlift. Cargo planes must have:

- large, unobstructed interiors,
- flat floors with various cargo fixing points,
- a capability for easy to load and unload,
- strong walls and doors that can open in flight,
- powerful engines to be able to take off from short runways,
- built in crank,
- and have strong airframe and landing gear to survive dirt landing strips.

One of the first planes what built to these specifications was the Lockheed C-5 Galaxy, the ultimate giant cargo plane--second in size only to the colossal Russian Antonov An-124, which is used mostly as a commercial plane. The Galaxy has room enough for two lanes of traffic and can carry 16 trucks, more than 24 compact cars, two Abrams tanks, six Apache helicopters, or 10 Pershing missiles.

During the Gulf War in 1991, three-quarters of the cargo and a third of the personnel sent to the region were delivered on either C-5s or C-141 Starlifters. In the first 21 days, the C-5s alone carried a tonnage equivalent to what was carried during the entire Berlin Airlift. The effort was so massive one pilot said, "You could have walked across the Mediterranean on the wings of C-5s, C-141s, and the commercial aircraft moving across the region." And within the region, C-131s moved cargo and personnel. The airlift operations were essential and repeated when the action was over, in bringing everyone and everything home.

Since the Gulf War, Air Mobility Command (result of merge the Military Air Transport Service with Strategic Air Command’s refueling operations in 1992 to form Air Mobility Command - AMC) has provided humanitarian aid around the world, including to Bosnia during the Balkan War. AMC C-17 Globemasters carried the first Marines into combat in Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom in autumn 2001. The transport planes of AMC give America a global presence, both as a military power and a humanitarian helper.

Air Transport Categories:

a. Strategic Air Transport

Strategic air transport involves the intertheatre movement of personnel and equipment. It may be augmented by the use of civil charter aircraft. This is particularly important for the carriage of passengers and outsized cargo. Air transport is a national responsibility. For strategic air transport, nations retain operational command and control. Strategic air transport deployment/redeployment airflow planning will be coordinated and deconflicted by the Allied Command Europe (ACE) or Allied Command Atlantic (ACLANT) Allied Movement Coordination Centre (AMCC). The AMCC also assists nations or NATO organisations that require AT to find a nation to meet the requirement. The AMCC can also assist with identifying available civil air transport through close liaison with civil advisors provided by the NATO

Civil Emergency Coordination Centre. The strategic air transport flow into a theatre of operations will be coordinated by the Airlift Coordination Centre (ALCC).

b. Tactical Air Transport

Tactical air transport provides the intra-theatre movement and delivery of personnel and equipment. Control of specified air transport aircraft may be transferred to a NATO commander. If required, an intra-theatre air transport pool will be established to support the JFC's requirements. Control of those assigned air transport aircraft is exercised on behalf of the JFC by the ALCC in accordance with the priorities recommended by the Air Transport Allocations Board (ATAB) and approved by the JFC. The ATAB is normally chaired by either J-3 or J-4 and includes representation of joint staff agencies in need of air transport and the Joint Theatre Movements Staff (JTMS)

Types of Air Transport Operations

Within these categories, air transport aircraft can perform the following types of operations:

a. Air Logistic Operations

Air Logistic Operations include those tasks, other than airborne missions, conducted to deploy, distribute and recover personnel, equipment, supplies and the extraction of non-combatants. **Scheduled air transport** services involving the programmed movement of aid, support personnel and supplies.

b. Airborne operations

These operations are involving the movement of combat forces and their logistic support to an objective. Air delivered combat power can be used to seize ground or installations that are vital to the opponent by delivering land forces directly onto the objective. This may be achieved by airdrop or air-landing delivery. Ports of entry, airfields, and key installations or structures, all offer potential objectives. Airborne operations should not be confused with air logistic operations. The significance of airborne operations may be operational or strategic within the joint campaign plan. They pose high risks, but the potential gains make them a valuable element of the air power inventory.

c. Aeromedical and Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO)

Aeromedical Evacuation is the movement of patients to and between medical treatment facilities by air transportation under medical supervision.

d. Special Air Operations (SAO)

SAO support special operations and may be conducted during peace, crisis and conflict. SAO activities may include both combat and noncombat tasks involving the deployment, infiltration, support, exfiltration and withdrawal of Special Forces. SAO may be conducted in conjunction with other joint operations or may be autonomous. Often, SAO must be carried out regardless of the overall combat conditions, and under air situations not normally considered suitable for other air operations. The specialised nature of SAO, and the abrasive and challenging environment in which operations are usually conducted, require employment concepts, organisations, training methods, aircraft and equipment tailored to each situation. Assets. Fixed-wing and rotary-wing assets may be used for SAO. Most aircraft

conducting SAO are of a specific design or modification to meet the demands of a special force operation.

Air Transport operations during CRO

AT operations will always be a fundamental part of CRO. They offer a high profile demonstration of political commitment that attracts significant media attention. Strategic AT can quickly move large numbers of Allied troops and quantities of equipment into a crisis area. AT can also act as a tool for building trust and confidence. It has an important role to play in the movement of the key players in crisis, whether they are belligerents or their representatives, mediators, observers, members of aid agencies or other NGOs, security or inter-positional forces, or the media. It can also be used to bring medical, engineering or other expertise and „enabling elements" to a particular area in need of relief or support. AT assets are particularly vulnerable. Threats may include sabotage, small arms, mortars and artillery to aircraft on the ground, and automatic weapons, Man Portable Air Defense System (MANPADS) and SAMs to aircraft in flight. The necessity for self-defense aids will be dependent upon the theatre environment. Minimum time on the ground through the use of integral freight handling systems, short field performance to increase available landing sites and reduce vulnerability during approach and departure, and ability to operate at night and in poor weather, will all help to reduce vulnerability.

Overview of CRO

CRO focus on deterring war and promoting peace. CRO embrace Peace Support Operations (PSO) which specifically are concerned with the promotion of national reconciliation and the re-establishment of effective government following the collapse of state institutions. It is the impartial nature of PSO that makes them different from other military operations. CRO are more sensitive to political considerations because the operational level military activities often will be directly in support of political objectives. It is essential that NATO personnel involved in CRO should understand the political objectives and the potential impact of inappropriate military actions.

The role of Air Transport Operations in the support of Crisis Respond Operations – CRO

The Airlift power bears all those capacities which enables the Air Force to gradually spread its operations, considering the situation, with the support of CRO. These days, when there is no major crisis around the World, the tasks of the Air Force has the same importance than in war time. The flexibility of Air Force provides advantages during the time when the political alignment is not reliable enough and its timeframe and popularity is untrustworthy.

CRO tasks

CRO activities encompass a broad range of military operations and support a variety of purposes including supporting national objectives, deterring war, supporting PSO, maintaining national influence and supporting the civil power. These objectives are achieved by providing military forces to accomplish a wide range of missions, military operations other than warfighting (MOOTW). CRO tasks can take place in peace through conflict to post-conflict. Air operations will sometimes play a key role. NATO forces may undertake the following tasks:

a PSO, which includes Peacekeeping (PK), Peace Enforcement (PE), as well as conflict prevention, peace making, peace building and humanitarian relief.

b Humanitarian Operations (as an independent task).

c Disaster Relief.

d. Search and Rescue Operations (SAR).

e. Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) – permissive and nonpermissive.

f. Military Aid/Support to Civil Authorities.

g. Enforcement of Sanctions.

Conclusion

Air transport aircrafts and crews have achieved such respect and honour with their active participation in several successful warfare and local crisis respond operations, that should be considered by all military planners of present and future operations if they want to carry out successful land and air operations. Finally, let me recall former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who once said that „transport is the stem of the rose." It may not be beautiful, but it supports and provides sustenance to the blossom.

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