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Professor Mark Wegge

Module 4: Joint Capabilities

3 or 17? November 2025

DBF 4.5: Logistics

Response

QUESTION: *“Logistics” has a far broader definition than “supply”. What capabilities are included under the category of “logistics” and how can those capabilities impact an operation? Provide examples highlighting naval, joint, and multinational operation(s) requirements. (minimum of 250 words)*

Primary Post (by November 17, 2025)

Logistics sets the ceiling for the operational objective (OPO). The force reaches the end state only if sustainment matches the commander’s chosen sequence of actions. Logistics is “planning and executing the movement and support of forces” (U.S. Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff [CJCS], 2019a, p. GL-8). This involves defining the functions, sequencing the lift and reception, integrating contracting and coalition support, then protecting the throughput.

Logistics affects feasibility because deployment, distribution, supply, maintenance, health services, and operational contract support create endurance and tempo. Strategic mobility moves combat power through airlift, sealift, and prepositioned stocks to the theater, where joint reception, staging, onward movement, and integration convert arrivals into ready formations. The naval requirement includes afloat prepositioning and at-sea sustainment through the Combat

Logistics Force (CLF) and maritime prepositioned stocks to extend time on station without port reliance (U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department [NWC JMO], 2023, pp. 182-185; Office of the Chief of Naval Operations [OPNAV], 2015, pp. 1-11). Prepositioned war reserve materiel “reduces demand for strategic airlift and sealift” and can signal commitment to allies (NWC JMO, 2023, p. 185). Joint Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration (JRSOI) “facilitates the transition” and demands balanced flow, theater distribution, and protection of nodes against interdiction and cyber disruption (CJCS, 2018, pp. xiv, VI-1). Joint requirements include synchronized common-user sealift and airlift flow, JRSOI control measures, theater distribution aligned to port throughput and inland lift, and protection, all sequenced to the OPO timeline in the time-phased force and deployment data (CJCS, 2018, pp. I-8-I-9, VI-1; CJCS, 2019a, pp. I-4, II-1-II-4). Arrival is not employment, which is why planners tie port capacity, inland lift, and distribution management back to the OPO.

Operational contract support (OCS) “is the process of planning for and obtaining supplies and services ... from commercial sources,” which requires contracting support, contractor management, and integration with finance and requirements management (CJCS, 2019b, pp. ix, I-2, I-4). Multinational requirements include using Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreements (ACSA), host-nation support, and coordinated contractor management to share fuel, movement, and services with reimbursement and legal authorities in place before D-Day (CJCS, 2019a, pp. III-1-III-3; CJCS, 2019b, pp. I-4-I-5).

In summary, logistics defines feasibility for the OPO, sequences movement to effect, and buys tempo through mobility, JRSOI, and OCS. Naval, joint, and multinational integration turns stockpiles into combat power at the point of decision. Risk falls when planning starts with the objective, then regresses through ports, contracts, partners, and protection.

References

Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. (2015, April). Navy planning: Logistics (NTTP 5-01.4). Department of the Navy.

U.S. Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (2018, January 10). Joint Publication 3-35: Deployment and redeployment operations. Washington, DC: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

U.S. Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (2019a, February 4). Joint Publication 4-0: Joint logistics (Incorporating Change 1, May 8, 2019). Washington, DC: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

U.S. Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (2019b, March 4). Joint publication 4-10: Operational contract support. Washington, DC: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department. (2023, January). Forces/capabilities handbook: Reference guide.

Secondary Post #1 (*by December 18, 2025*)

QUESTION (Patrick): *TODO (minimum of 150 words)*

Patrick, strong post. You frame the mobility triad and air refueling well. Two refinements will tighten the operational link to effects. First, move from platforms to throughput. Air mobility only translates to combat power if the node can absorb flow. Maximum on ground, parking, maintenance, fuel, offload gear, and air traffic control set the ceiling for tempo. If ramp space or ATC lags, arrivals stack, JRSOI stalls, and the OPO timeline slips. Second, name the authorities that synchronize all this. Directive authority for logistics is not automatic for a JTF, it must be delegated in writing, which matters once coalition forces share routes and staging areas.

On naval sustainment, fold in the Combat Logistics Force, hub-and-spoke forward nodes, and UNREP by CONREP and VERTREP. That is how a carrier air wing keeps flying without risky port calls. On the multinational side, highlight formal support arrangements and limits, since economies of effort sit alongside policy constraints that require President or SecDef approval. Your examples are solid. Tie them tighter to throughput and authority, and they make the case.

References

N/A

Secondary Post # 2 (*by December 18, 2025*)

QUESTION (Drew): *TODO (minimum of 150 words)*

Drew, strong synthesis on functions and their effects on reach, tempo, and risk. To make feasibility explicit, shift from platforms to throughput. Air, sea, and prepositioning only create combat power when ports, ramps, fuel, maintenance, and movement nodes can receive, clear, and push the flow. Treat the mobility triad like dials tied to the OPO timeline. Airlift buys speed at high cost for light cargo and personnel, sealift delivers heavy mass cheaply but slowly, rail moves bulk efficiently where lines exist, road provides flexible intra-theater lift with higher sustainment burden, and prepositioned stocks trade storage and protection for time.

Prepositioned stocks reduce lift demand and signal commitment. Use a simple echeloned frame to keep roles straight. Supply solves tactical problems at the point of need, logistics integrates those flows at the operational level to produce tempo, and sustainment programs the enterprise at the strategic level to keep the campaign resourced over time.

Two refinements. Fold JRSOI into your deployment paragraph so arrival becomes employment. Note who synchronizes common support in a joint fight, including the CCDR's directive authority for logistics when delegated to a JTF. For naval specifics, name the Combat Logistics Force and underway replenishment by CONREP and VERTREP, since sea-based throughput, not platform lists, keeps a carrier air wing on the schedule that the plan demands.

References

N/A

Professor Feedback

Jeff,

Meets expectations. Good examples, Excellent discussion Mod3 concepts - "...logistics defines feasibility for the OPO, sequences movement to effect, and buys tempo through mobility, JRSOI, and OCS." Excellent work.

Sustainment and logistics planning are required at all levels of war. Whether you're in the J3 or J5 shop, the J4's understanding of the forces' operational objective and needs can make or break your efforts. Keep the J4s close.+Mod3,