STATE AND TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOGISTIC SYSTEM OF THE BULGARIAN ARMED FORCES

Key words: transformation, logistic system, logistic capabilities

The altered security environment of the Alliance's eastern and southern flank requires timely implementation of the decisions made at the NATO Summit in Wales in 2014 on the implementation of the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) and the implementation of the Graduated Response Plan (GRP) for Bulgaria and Romania, as well as reporting and implementing the results of the NATO Summit in Warsaw in July 2016.

In pursuance of the resulting tasks, the requirements of the Alliance to the Republic of Bulgaria as a host nation have increased considerably to provide real practical actions to support Allied troops and forces in conducting exercises and operations on the territory of the country in accordance with the coalition commitments.

Our top priority is the readiness of the Bulgarian Army to conduct joint operations for an adequate response to resolving different crises. The development of the techniques used in conducting hybrid wars requires the development of new capabilities in intelligence, cyber-protection, radio-electronics, Special Forces, logistics, and transformation of the command and control system.

The logistics system of the Bulgarian Armed Forces is one of the systems to be developed in accordance with the changed security environment. The logistics system has to assist, ensure and participate in maintaining and developing the necessary defense capabilities, meeting national criteria, indicators and requirements contributing to national and collective security and defense, within the limits of the budget capabilities. The logistics system is directly dependent on
the transformation of the armed forces. According to its purpose logistics system has to provide logistic sustainment to the armed forces in their preparation and participation in the full range of missions and tasks within and outside of the country.

Allied commitments of the Republic of Bulgaria to NATO and the EU pose major challenges to the logistic system and in many aspects require the development of logistics to outstrip the development of the armed forces in order to provide them with the necessary conditions for organizational construction, modernization and fulfillment of the assigned tasks.

Until 1989, the logistic support in the Bulgarian Army (BA) was conducted by autonomous bodies for various support types: rear support, missile-artillery, armored and automobile, etc. The reformation began after the democratic changes in 1991 by the mechanical merger of the two main support structures in the Bulgarian Armed Forces - rear support body and armament body into the Military and Economic Unit of the Ministry of Defense.

The unification of these bodies aims at centralizing the processes of acquiring and managing the material resources sustaining the needs of the troops and is one of the first international forms of the support authorities at the operational-strategic level. In 1992, for the first time in the General Staff were established bodies for material, technical and rear support of central obedience, which until then were autonomous bodies for various types of support (rear, missile-artillery, armored and automobile, etc.). In 1996, these bodies were merged into "Material, technical and rear support" Headquarters.

The prototype of the united logistic support in the Bulgarian Army was established in 1997 with the foundation of "Material, technical and medical support" Headquarters. The basic reform of the Bulgarian Army and its logistic system began in 1999 with the development of the "Plan for the organizational construction of the Bulgarian Armed Forces by the end of 2004" called "Plan 2004". It sets the ambitious target to reduce the number of Bulgarian Armed Forces personnel from 81,000 to 45,000 troops in 4 years (2000-2004). Plan 2004 provides the creation of Immediate Action Forces, Rapid Reaction Forces and Reserve Forces, which also need adequate logistics.

Specific objectives are set in the field of logistics:
- usage of a NATO-compliant coding system for material resources;
- training and preparation of logistics personnel capable of continuing liaison with NATO;
- creation and development of logistical concepts, doctrines and procedures, compatible with NATO's doctrinal basis;
- developing a new logistics management system, etc.

The "Updated Plan for the Organization and Modernization
of the Armed Forces by 2015\(^1\) was adopted in 2008 by the Council of Ministers. This plan envisages the transformation of the logistics system of the Bulgarian Armed Forces to be implemented through the integration of the structures at the strategic and operational level and bringing together the three main areas of logistics - acquisition, logistic services and consumption. The Logistics Department at General Staff Headquarters was reorganized into Logistics Directorate - General Staff Headquarters in 2008. Since 1 July 2009, the Integrated Model of the Ministry of Defense structure has been introduced. As a result the General Staff of the Bulgarian Army was reorganized into Defense Staff at the Central Administration of the Ministry of Defense. The Logistics Directorate at the General Staff Headquarters has been reorganized in two directions. Part of it formed the Logistics Directorate at the General Staff, which functioned as a logistics control body at a strategic level. The other part incorporates in the departments of the newly established Support and Maintenance Staff.

Logistic departments within the Army, Air Force and Naval Forces and Logistic Department of the Joint Force Command functioned in this period at the operational level. Logistics divisions in the brigades and bases and Logistics sections in the battalions functioned at the tactical level.

The overview of the structures of the Armed Forces in 2010 and its elaborated "White Paper on Defence" and the "Plan for the Development of the Bulgarian Armed Forces by 2014" aim to improve the integrated model of the MoD and the creation and support of a "single set" of armed forces with a single command, prepared to perform tasks on the three logically integrated missions - defense, international peace and security support and contribution to national security in peacetime.\(^2\)

The next reform outlines new challenges, difficulties and weaknesses. First of all, it is clear that Joint Force Command (JFC) of the Armed Forces is overloaded. It mixes incompatible responsibilities and functions of support day-to-day activities about completion and training of troops, on the one hand, with the management of operations and their logistic sustainment on the other.

The JFC Commander had responsibilities for both planning of defense-related resources (creation, support, and management of national and institutional inventories of material resources) and operational planning. Maintaining these stocks requires organizing and conducting activities such as service, quality control, metrology, etc., which are

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\(^1\) Bulgarian Armed Forces modernization plan by the end of 2015.

\(^2\) Bulgarian Armed Forces modernization plan by the end of 2015; Report on Bulgarian Armed Forces status for 2012.
incompatible with the planning and management of operations.

The transformation of the logistic system takes place currently under a "Plan for the Development of the Bulgarian Armed Forces by 2020". The plan's objectives are:

- guarantying the fulfillment of the constitutional obligations of the armed forces and ensuring an adequate contribution to Allied operations;
- development of an integrated system for effective defense management under continuous civil control, with the potential for flexibility, planning and effective response;
- maintaining and developing existing capabilities, building and developing new capabilities and creating conditions for the development of the armed forces;
- balancing between required capabilities and available resources.

The Armed Forces logistics will be developed as a complex activity to build the physical component of the Armed Forces on the basis of the science and technology achievements in order to ensure logistic support in peacetime and the logistic sustainment of troops and forces for the preparation and conduct of operations. Logistics is the component that links the capabilities of the national economy to the needs of the armed forces. Logistic support of the armed forces is done by optimally combining the resources of the national economy with the multinational logistic support forms. The capabilities of NATO agencies and opportunities, connected with participation in Alliance and EU programs, projects and initiatives as well as bilateral or multilateral allies' agreements will be used for the logistic support of Armed Forces.

The limited financial resources require the establishment of focused logistics capable to support the Armed Forces in the execution of their particular tasks.

The main focus would be concentrated on the logistic capabilities related to:

- maintain the necessary levels of stocks and material distribution;
- armament and vehicle maintenance;
- movement and transportation;
- logistics infrastructure;
- increase in the mobility of the declared units and provision of duly effective logistics support throughout the whole operation;
- ensuring host nation support to the alliance parties;
- optimization of the existing medical structures, their connectivity and the overall management of the medical support system for the armed

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3 Plan for the organizational construction of the Bulgarian Armed Forces by the end of 2020, 30 December, 2015.
Bulgarian armed forces logistics system consists of command and control authorities and logistics executive authorities united in a strong network (Figure 1.).

The Bulgarian armed forces logistic command and control authorities are set up on the three main management levels: strategic, operational and tactical (Figure 2.).
The most superior logistics command and control authority is the “Logistics Directorate” at the Defence headquarters. Its main role is to provide expert assessment in the field of logistics. It masterminds the Minister of Defence’ key policies in the logistics support of the armed forces and maps out the pre-planning and real planning in response to crisis on strategic level. The mission of the Logistics Directorate is to supports the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Defence in implementation of command and control functions over the armed forces with regard to three main missions they have, through planning, coordination and control of the logistics at the strategic level.

The command and control authority on operational level is carried out by “Logistics” departments of the Joint Force Command and Air force, Army and Navy Commands. Those departments irrevocably facilitate the performance of the Joint Force Commander and the Commanders of the Air force, Army and Navy structures in the whole process of planning and execution of the actions related to the logistics support of their subordinate units.4

On tactical level under the direct control of JF Cdr are established different logistic management authorities responsive to the specific tasks of the particular units.

In each unit of the Bulgarian Armed forces are formed executive logistics authorities related to the specific requirements and functions of the different forces. (Figure 3.)

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On operational level, subordinates of JFC are “Logistic” Brigade, Movement and control headquarters and inferior groups of movement control, Logistic support center and garage.

The main executive logistic structure of the Bulgarian army is the “Logistics” brigade. It’s in the core of the Bulgarian army distribution system and is easy to be defined as a permanent basis of the logistics supply chain as it comprises considerable amount of the overall material resources needed by the different forces.

The tactical level military units comprise unified executive logistic structures as: in the brigades and equal to them – Logistic battalions, in the regiments and battalions and equal to them – Logistic companies. They are composed according to the type of the armed forces they service and the capabilities they should have in the support of the forces they belong to.

At the he 2014 Wales Summit, the NATO member states agreed the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) to ensure the Alliance is ready to respond swiftly and firmly to new security challenges. This is the most significant reinforcement of NATO’s collective defence since the end of the Cold War. RAP includes “assurance” and “adaptation” measures. The “assurance measures” affect NATO member countries in Eastern Europe, including Bulgaria, to reassure their populations, reinforce their defence and deter potential aggression. The “adaptation measures” which are longer-term changes to NATO’s forces and command structure so that the Alliance will be better able to react swiftly and decisively to sudden crises, especially on the Eastern flank.5

Due to the short notice to move (NTM) of Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), the importance of HNS during the RSOM process is increased significantly. During deployment, forces have limited mission capability. In order to maintain their battle potential the Bulgaria as HN could provide support in the form of:

- Facilities and RSOM installations (e.g. workspace & accommodation for RSOM enabling units in APOD, SPOD and SA);
- Supplies (e.g. fuel, fresh food, bottled water);
- Services (e.g. waste disposal & mobile toilets) including medical support, area security (e.g. HN Civil Police and/or Military Security Forces) and engineering support;
- Administrative support (e.g. support for customs clearance);
- Movement Control and Convoy Support;

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5 National Defence Strategy, 18 April, 2016; Bulgarian Armed Forces defence capabilities development program by the end of 2020 and personnel quantity determination, 1 December, 2015.
• Transportation;
• RSOM Support forces (enabling units)

In order to ensure the rapid and smooth deployment of the eNRF forces a robust and well prepared HNS system has to be in place.

These changes in the security environment and the increasing requirements of the Alliance from Bulgaria as a HNS necessitate the establishment of new structures on strategic and operational level, capable to coordinate precisely and efficiently the execution of military support as part of the HNS, while on tactical level to maintain executive structures assisting them.

The management of the logistic system is accomplished by informational system for exchange of logistic information and logistics planning. Permanent units are functioning in order to run smoothly the development, implementation and execution of the informational system “Logistics of Bulgarian army” in the JFC.⁶

The transformation of the logistics support system should be in compliance with the establishment of the logistics in the Bulgarian army in order to ensure operationally compatible units, capable to guarantee the national sovereignty. At the end of the day, the outcome for the Bulgarian army has to be an up to date, effective organization based on high technologies for communication, commanding, intelligence and logistic support in the perspective of eventual military actions as well as capabilities for participation in multinational operations outside national borders following the allied agreements.

Key factor in the development of the logistics system is the set-up of capabilities as host nation responding to the requirements of the NRF in operations and trainings on the country’s territory.

In this regard is expected an establishment of logistic system capable to generate and develop logistic structures working in multinational environment. Studying and implementing international experience is the leading approach towards an upgrade of the existing logistic capabilities.

Main directions to be followed are:
• Revision and update of the Logistics Doctrine latest by November 2018;
• Refinement of the logistic support system in all management levels;
• Effective and efficient use of the existing material resources for supply of the military units and structures under the command of the Defense Minister in order to comply with the requirements to execute the missions of the armed forces.
• Proper support as a host nation in operations and trainings hold by

eNRF on the territory of the country.

- Compliance of the declared logistic units in terms of personnel, equipment and outfit according to the NATO standardization documents; accompanying trainings and certifications;
- Normative and organizational optimization in the medical structures, improving the interactions and coordination between the different units on all the levels of the system for medical support; establishment real medical capabilities complying with the declared Targets;
- Improving the management of the logistic support by updating the informational system “Logistics of the Bulgarian army”;
- Outsourcing in terms of day to day services, security of military infrastructure, service of the technical equipment, transportation and storage of material resources;
- Upgrade in the personnel training system.

The development of the logistic support is part of the overall update and modernization of the Bulgarian armed Forces. It is constantly evaluated, upgraded and refined in order to adjust to the necessities of the surrounding environment. In respond to the increased requirements for supply of the armed forces with material resources and services, the logistic system changes under a scrutinized descending planning towards a new integrated system which is expected to be more flexible and customer-oriented.

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**STAN I TRENDY W ROZWOJU SYSTEMU LOGISTYCZNEGO BUŁGARSKICH SIŁ ZBROJNYCH**

Artykuł omawia transformację systemu logistycznego bułgarskiej armii początkowy od zmian w 1991 roku, przedstawiając historyczną analizę rozwoju tego systemu. Opierając się na podejściu systemowym, autor opi-
suje reformy, które zostały wdrożone w zarządzającym oraz wykonawczym podsystemie logistycznego systemu Bułgarskich Sił Zbrojnych oraz prezentuje obecny stan rozwoju tego systemu. Koncentrując się na działaniach związanych ze wsparciem udzielanym przez państwa-gospodarzy, autor prezentuje udoskonalenia struktur logistycznych na trzech poziomach rządzenia oraz działania jednostek logistycznych mające na celu realizację zadań w formatach zarówno narodowym, jak i koalicyjnym.

**Słowa kluczowe:** transformacja, system logistyczny, potencjał logistyczny