Chapter 6

SUPPORT TO PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Amateurs talk tactics, professionals talk logistics

1. The ASF consists of multiple components, configured to perform various tasks in continuously changing conditions and in different environments. The ASF must be able to deploy rapidly over vast distances to face unfamiliar conditions and perform a multiplicity of peace support operation (PSO) tasks. These may include, inter alia, preventive deployment, peacekeeping, peace-building, post-conflict disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and humanitarian assistance. All this so those, through the ASF, the AU Commission (AUC) can contribute to a safe, secure and prosperous Africa. As elaborated in earlier sections, mission support embraces all those elements required to sustain the mission, including administration and logistics. The concept needs to be clear, simple and designed for efficiency. The support function is fundamental to any operation and without it successful missions would not be possible.

2. Logistics is the science of planning and carrying out the movement and maintenance of forces. In its widest sense, it covers those aspects of integrated operations that deal with supply, support and maintenance. It includes the design and development, acquisition, storage, distribution, maintenance, construction or modification, transportation, evacuation, and the disposition and disposal of materials. The support functions include the management of personnel, legal issues, health-support services, finance, budgeting and contracting, and all other related administrative issues.

MISSION SUPPORT

3. There is a need for mission support whenever the ASF is mandated to deploy in order to intervene in a conflict. In most cases, the ASF will include different components – military, police and civilian – provided by different troop contributing countries (TCCs) and deployed in a joint operations area (JOA). The mission plan will invariably be an integrated mission plan and it follows that mission support must be similarly integrated. Mission support must be taken into consideration at the very start of mission planning and must build on existing logistical practices and resources, as instituted in both the logistical depots and the planning elements (PLANELMs). Mission support implies considerable coordination to enhance the efficiency of multinational support to an ASF mission.

4. ASF components (military and formed police units) will be self-sustained during the initial part of an operation to maintain the mission until logistical channels are established and supplies are assured. Sustainment will be a key component of any Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the AU and regional economic communities (RECs)/regions/TCCs, and the ability for continuous sustainment from the region/TCC must be factored into mission planning. Coordination of mission support takes place in the Joint Logistics Operations Centre (JLOC).

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1 www.quotes.stevenredhead.com/special/MilitaryQuotes
5. At the AU headquarters (HQ) level, PSO Support is responsible for providing support to PSO missions, and does so in collaboration with the other AUC departments. The proposed PSO Operations Division (PSOD) organisational structure includes, amongst others, functions like human resource management, some financial management functions, logistical responsibilities, and other administrative and general management issues. In the field, under control of the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AUC (SRCC), the support component of the PSO provides administrative and logistical support services that enable the mission to carry out its core functions in an effective, coordinated and timely manner. This has to be done in accordance with the applicable regulations and procedures prescribed by the AU and managed in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Related AU procedures need to be aligned with the applicable UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations (UNDPKO) and the Standing Operating Procedures (SOPS) of the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDFS) to allow for a smooth transition once the UN assumes responsibility for the mission.

6. Mission assets are distributed to all mission components on an equitable basis, depending on functional needs and assessed priorities. The Head of Mission Support (HOMS) is responsible for delivering common support services and reports directly to the SRCC/HOM. The HOMS must have current information on the status of all resources available within the mission and must have direct access to all available acquisition sources.

7. A PSO may be deployed in environments that are both volatile and unpredictable, and where the host-nation infrastructure is minimal or severely degraded. Within this challenging operating environment, a PSO undertakes a broad spectrum of civilian and military tasks that may need to be sustained over several years. Moreover, an operation may be required to switch to a more robust posture and back again at various points in a mission’s lifecycle, and may need to shift the emphasis of operations between different components of the mission, i.e. to support a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme, an election or a security operation.

8. A mission support element, which is flexible enough to adapt quickly to changing circumstances on the ground, must allow for greater internal capacity to respond to the mission’s substantive operations. This requires good logistical planning, communications and resourcing, and close integration between all components of a mission. Most of all, it requires strong integrated planning and priority setting by the MMT. There also needs to be flexibility in the management of mission assets by the mission support element.

9. The logistical and administrative support for AU operations is complex owing to the need to support contingents deploying with widely varying levels of self-sufficiency, and the different requirements of military contingents, civilian staff, police and military observers. PSOs are also subject to financial accountability procedures, which do not align operational responsibility with budgetary accountability. At present the AU system of logistics supply support is still in its infancy and requires close collaboration with regional standby forces (RFSs) and TCCs to ensure availability and readiness when called on.

10. When formed military units are deployed to a mission, the logistical support concept is based on the integration and alignment of contingent-provided resources to
support all components of the mission. Civilian and military logistics personnel that coordinate the logistical needs of mission components, support services and a common administrative system at the JLOC, manage all a mission's support resources jointly. The JLOC often becomes a focal point for cooperation and mutual assistance on logistical issues between the AU, the UN PSO, other agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs).

11. Financial accountability controls on AU PSOs are essential and are demanded by the member states. Yet, for the system to work effectively in support of mission leadership, financial controls need to be balanced with the operational principles of flexibility and responsiveness, and administered with a view to effective risk management.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

12. The ASF concept requires the regions and TCCs to supply suitable personnel as per mission requirements. The conditions of service in PSO missions often make it extremely difficult for RECs/regional mechanisms (RMs) and TCCs to attract sufficient qualified and experienced personnel. In the field, the provision of adequate welfare arrangements for both uniformed and civilian personnel is not only crucial for maintaining morale, but is also a key tool for preventing instances of gross misconduct. Within their existing resources, missions should make an effort to establish welfare committees and provide recreational facilities for peacekeeping personnel.

13. Individual personalities are a major factor in any mission and it is vital to ensure that the right individuals with the right skill-sets occupy key positions. Ultimately, it is the example and guidance provided by the senior leadership of a mission that will unite the components and ensure that the PSO system is working as a team.

14. Mission leadership. The selection of senior mission management/leaders must be a carefully considered process. Mutual respect and the ability to transcend “turf” issues are essential qualities for successful management and a well-integrated multi-dimensional PSO. Appropriate education and training of potential mission leaders, and their further development into an integrated team is important. The formation of mission management teams must be based on a process of nomination and objective selection, preferably by a reputable selection agency. Thereafter the teamwork skills of those selected should be sharpened to enable the members to function as an integrated management team. The MMT should be given adequate training and preparation for the challenges that they are likely to face in the field. All personnel in leadership positions should exemplify the highest standards and should be held accountable for their behaviour and performance. If the performance of a member is not up to expectations, he/she should be counselled and, if necessary, removed from the mission.

15. Security of personnel. It is usually the responsibility of the host government to provide security and protection for AU mission personnel and mission property. This responsibility flows from a government's inherent function of maintaining law and order, and protecting persons and property within its jurisdiction. It is also enshrined as a special responsibility in the UN Charter. Those responsibilities must be formalised
through the necessary MOUs/Status of Mission Agreement/Status of Force Agreement (SOMA/SOFA) or other arrangements.

16. The SRCC/HOM is accountable to the Chairperson of the AU Commission (CC) (through the Commissioner Peace and Security) for the security of all civilian personnel in the mission, throughout the country or designated area. The AU must ensure that applicable minimum security standards like the UN’s Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) are documented and that all TCCs are familiar with and complying with them. Military and police components are usually not governed by such standards, but component heads should work closely with the chief security advisor to ensure that the best possible security arrangements are put in place for all personnel. The heads of the military and police components are accountable to the HOM for the security of uniformed personnel.

MANAGING MISSION IMPACT

17. The MMT of a PSO must be aware of and proactively manage the impact of the mission, both real and perceived, on the host country and community. PSOs are highly visible and generate high expectations from the local population and stakeholders, and mission personnel should therefore be careful to mitigate the possible negative consequences of their presence. All PSO personnel must adhere to the national laws of the host country provided these do not violate fundamental human rights standards and respect local culture. They must also maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct.

18. PSO personnel should be alert to any potential, unforeseen or damaging consequences of their actions and manage these as quickly and effectively as possible. Poor driving and vehicle accidents, and lax waste management practices are just some of the negative impacts that may seriously undermine the perceived legitimacy and credibility of a mission and erode its popular support. The size of an AU/UN peacekeeping operation’s human and material footprint is likely to have a direct bearing on its impact, or perceived impact, in the community. The example set by the mission could have positive or negative influence on the local population and the MMT should be aware of the possible side-effects the mission may generate.

19. In assessing mission impact and devising strategies to address it, the mission should be careful to ensure that the differential impacts of the mission on men and women, as well as on children and vulnerable groups, are considered. Although no mission can control all of the side effects of its presence, it must take due diligence in managing its own impact. Where problems do arise, they should be addressed swiftly and honestly. At the same time, rumours and vexatious or erroneous accusations against the mission must be countered with vigour to maintain the good reputation of the international presence. As Douglas MacArthur once said, “[O]ne cannot wage war under present conditions without the support of public opinion, which is tremendously moulded by the press and other forms of propaganda”.

CONCLUSION

20. The continuous support of PSOs by competent staff is essential for the efficiency and success of missions. It is important therefore that the support team is integrated into mission management and that it is in turn empowered to perform optimally.