



# ELEMENTS OF PLANNING THE DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE AIR FORCE

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In the overall conduct of the joint operations, the Air Force through its transport component and the capabilities held in the RSOM process ensures for participants in operations, mainly the transport of forces by air, but also the provision of certain capabilities and facilities, both at tactical level as well as at operational and strategic level. The process of deploying forces with the support of the Air Force is essential in the economy and the success of joint operations, due to the fact that the transport of forces by air in certain situations may be the only mode of transport that is available, efficient and necessary to be chosen due to time constraints, price, security risks and nature of cargo.

**Keywords:** deployment; planning; logistical support; assembly; reception; staging onward movement; integration.

## Introduction. General operations planning considerations

In this article, I intend to first provide a brief description of the process of planning the deployment of forces with the support of the Air Force, but also some specific elements of planning the deployment of forces in a theater of operations.

From a doctrinal point of view, the military actions of the armed conflict are carried out on three levels: strategic, operational and tactical, and the positioning of the armed conflict and its development at one of the three levels is closely related to the desired effect and achievement of objectives.

According to the Doctrine for Joint Operations of the Romanian Army (DOIAR), at the strategic level, two types of operations planning are carried out:

a) early planning resulting in: Standing Defense Plan/SDP, Contingency Plan/COP, Generic Contingency Plan/GCOP

b) planning a response to a crisis, current or developing, resulting in the military-strategic plan.

Thus, in the two types of planning there are significant differences given by the operational context of the moment, so that in the case of early planning, where the results of early planning result in permanent defense plans/Standing Defence Plan/SDP, contingency plans/Generic Contingency Plan

/COP, generic contingency plans / GCOP (SMG-18/2014 – SMG/PF-3 2014).

The situation given by the crisis response planning, current or in development, particularizes the planning elements specific to the deployment of forces. In this respect, depending on the situation in which the operations are planned and their type (combat operations – operations to neutralize major threats; security operations – operations that facilitate stabilization, including counterinsurgency; peace support operations; military engagement on time), the elements of planning the deployment of forces with the support of the air force are differentiated and customized for each type of operation and the actors involved in the operations.

From my point of view, perhaps the most effective method of planning is collaborative/parallel planning, especially for the given crisis response situation (current or developing), because it requires continuous collaboration and coordination, both between the political, politico-military levels, military-strategic, operational and tactical, as well as with the other actors in the TO.

## Air Force involvement in the deployment process

The Air Force through its transport component can perform strategic deployment missions, where it involves the deployment of forces in the TO as well as tactical deployment missions (intra TO) to ensure the mobility of troops and materials.

Starting from these coordinates, I will first

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mention the involvement of the Air Force in the strategic deployment process, where all planning elements must be taken into account given the type and size of operations, nature of operation, mission, terrain and weather conditions, enemy, civil considerations and even religious ones, such as the availability of the air transport component available to the planner.

From this point of view we can consider the fact that the deployment process (SMG/L-2 2014) is a stage of an operation or even an operation in itself, taking into account the magnitude of the event, the deployment process is in most cases a stage of an operation, but taking into account the complexity of the deployment process can be considered an operation in itself, of course that distinct stage of a "dislocation" operation can be merged with the "execution" stage, and the "force redeployment" stage can be considered another operation and thus only respecting the doctrinal provisions we can speak of "dislocation" as an operation in itself.

Regardless the point of view we consider the deployment from, in the sense of being considered as a separate stage of an operation or as a separate operation, to carry out the deployment of forces in TO, the deciding factor must convey to the executive factor the mission, the composition of the force, the date (s) of arrival of the force (s) in TO (STANAG 2532 2021).

These elements are extremely important for planners (especially logistics planners), because at the executive level of the deploying force (s), the process of collecting the data needed to plan the deployment of the force takes place.

Regarding the participation in the UN mission in the Republic of Mali (MINUSMA) - 2019/2020, with the detachment of 4 helicopters IAR 330 LR-M / SMFA, holding the position of logistics specialist officer, I can speak from my own experience as I actively participated according to the responsibilities (FA/L-2 2009), in the deployment process of the detachment in TO Mali.

Thus, in the process of planning the deployment of the detachment, it was necessary to operate with specific data and information, starting from:

- establishing the necessary materials (of all types), ensuring them and probably the most important element of the deployment planning

being the process of putting them into containers and embarking them: selection by types of materials; arranging them in boxes – pallets and pallets or special boxes for aviation elements – helicopter blades, engines, PSA, SDV, special liquids in containers);

- weighing each pallet, box pallet, box, container as well as the personal luggage of all soldiers;

- preparing briefcases with materials from pallets, pallet boxes, boxes, containers as well as specific documents for boarding transport aircraft;

- boarding of all materials as well as the 4 helicopters.

A particular element of planning the deployment of the 4 helicopters in TO Mali was also that of conducting on-site reconnaissance (it was possible) to identify the assembly facilities, performing technical flights as well as their supply at the airport in Mali. Gao/Mali, as well as their supply at the airport of call and bringing them to the location of the Gao/Mali detachment.

Equally important was the process of planning the deployment of military personnel (deployment of the precursor detachment as well as the main corps), where customs formalities were required at airports of call.

A very important element of deployment planning is, regardless of the type of operation carried out and taking into account the international context, the interoperability for deployment which in my view will most likely focus on civil standards (eg ICAO, IATA regulations), because in certain situations when the transport capacity for deployment is exceeded, civilian contractors are a viable alternative, being strongly involved in the movement of forces by air, which also happened in the case of the deployment of the IAR 330 LRM 4 Helicopter Detachment in TO Mali.

Other important elements of the TO deployment force planning process that need to be considered are:

- the choice of the types of transport aircraft (military or civilian) that meet the given conditions of their capacity to carry the entire package of forces (personnel, materials, equipment and machinery);

- the knowledge of the elements of the specific aerodrome infrastructure of the airports of call or embarkation/disembarkation, allowing the



operation of the chosen aircraft (runway length and strength; steering elements; cargo and passenger processing capacities);

- the level of security of the embarkation/disembarkation and stopover aerodromes regarding force protection;

Another element of air force deployment planning with the support of the air force is to ensure oversight and liaison between theater commands, strategic military and HN command and international/non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the theater. The strategic deployment process itself will usually be planned, coordinated and executed by the FI command. The development of new trade standards will also have an impact on the criteria for designing military equipment and personnel in various TOs.

Knowing the answers, as well as confirming these planning elements, represent for the decision makers, in the process of planning the deployment of forces in the TO, with the support of the Air Force, maybe the decisive factors in making the decision.

### Conclusions

Operations carried out on the territory of other states are different from operations carried out with national forces on its own territory, so that in the case of operations carried out on the territory of another state, the process of deploying forces from their base location required by the IF commander is an essential factor for those forces to achieve the optimal ability to carry out combat missions.

The deployment process is a complex one that requires CIS involvement, force protection, genius, combat support, medical and logistical support, host nation arrangements, transfer of authority, civilian military cooperation, intelligence gathering, MOU, SOFA and technical agreements, planning movement and dislocation, financial and

legal issues, etc.

The transport component of the air force needs to be actively involved in the deployment process (deployment in TO – on the territory of another state; deployment on the national territory), so that we can distinguish the following aspects:

- deployment in TO – on the territory of another State, where national forces participate in a multinational operation and the transport support component of the national forces designated or notified to participate in the operation belongs to the national transport component by making available the national capabilities held (in particular of the military) or combined by using national capabilities and those of the coalition/alliance or international forces for the deployment of national forces;

- the deployment of national forces within the national territory, when the operation is carried out on the national territory and it is necessary to rapidly deploy national forces from one area to another (intra-theater deployment) or combined using both national and allied capabilities, in particular in case of triggering a NATO art 5 operation.

Regardless of the type of deployment used, planners must establish links and procedural elements necessary for the realization of uninterrupted action flows and their optimization, with the collaborating/responsible structures within the central and local ministries and public administrations in Romania and internationally.

The operations planning process, which certainly involves the deployment stage, needs to provide specialized inputs, which are absolutely necessary to be known and taken into account both in the planning process and in the operations, but also for each stage in part of the operation.

The airborne deployment component is one of the most widely used deployment methods in the latest global operations by all armies, as it is by far the fastest way to bring forces into TO.

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