



ASPECTS REGARDING RSOM. THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE ROMANIAN AIR FORCE

Lt.col. Ilie ANGIU, PhD student*

Among the missions carried out by the Air Force there are those of supporting the RSOM process with specialized forces of all forces involved in conducting combat joint operations, which leads to considerable effort on their part and related support needs, mainly concerning the transport of forces by air. The involvement of the Air Force, in particular through the use of strategic transport aircraft but also through the provision of aerodrome infrastructure and cargo and passenger processing capabilities, makes the deployment of forces a key element in the economy and the success of joint operations. The RSOM process is mainly characterized as complex and the involvement of the air force through the use of specialized forces and means in the transport of forces can be considered in some operational situations as the best option, in some cases the only choice within the deployment stage of the joint operation.

Keywords: deployment system; logistic support; joint; logistic structures; missions.

Introduction. General considerations regarding RSOM

Through this article my purpose is to present a brief description of the process of Reception, Staging, Onward Movement (RSOM), providing a starting point for the deployment of national forces conducting expeditionary crisis response operations (CRO), but also to provide an image on the possible areas of involvement of the Air Force and the constraints they have on the execution of an RSOM mission.

Although this article focuses on the RSOM process, I believe that it cannot be separated from the specific steps of strategic deployment and integration of an operation. Strategic deployment, RSOM and integration processes are critical complementary aspects to the success of the operation.

The RSOM must be tailored to each specific operation, as its type and size may vary, reflecting the nature of the operation, the mission, the terrain and climatic conditions, the enemy, civil and even religious considerations, and the availability of troops.

The complexity and time required for integration depends on the size of the operation, the level of coordination and planning established at the TO level. Depending on the time of transfer, the

competent authority (TOA) will be integrated into the mission execution area, unless it is carried out before deployment. RSOM is usually limited to the depth zone where RSOM processes and activities must not be threatened by direct enemy action.

Involvement of the Air Force in the RSOM process

NATO, EU and national concepts make it necessary to address the RSOM concept as nations strive to develop expeditionary capabilities. Also, the recently revised NATO Deployment and Movement Doctrine - AJP-3.13, Edition A, Version 1, Allied Joint Doctrine for the Deployment and Redeployment of Forces, requires nations to focus on achieving conceptual coherence in the overall context of the deployment and support projection forces, in which RSOM plays a vital role.

At the national level, the NATO doctrine for RSOM operations is implemented and adjusted with national observations or clarifications, where lessons learned from current operations (Balkans, Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali) are also integrated into RSOM doctrine and national operational procedures.

At the same time at national level according to the Romanian Military Strategy – 2021 (Ministerul Apărării Naționale 2021), Chapter V presents operational concepts related to HNS and RSOMI, with the aim of providing full volume of HNS support elements for RSOMI, agreed with allies during specific planning processes. Following the

*Air Force Staff

e-mail: ilieangiu@yahoo.com



development of NATO's Response Plans (GRP), which requires a rapid NATO response to possible threats on the Alliance's eastern flank, the High Reaction Force (VJTF) will be deployed in short time, in any of the GRP variants. In this sense, the host countries (HNs), including Romania, must be able to provide logistical support for RSOMI of the component forces of the VJTF package, up to the final destinations. Starting in 2022, the support elements will target the entire NRF package.

Interoperability for deployment will probably also be based on civilian standards (eg ICAO, IATA regulations), as civilian contractors are heavily involved in the movement of force. The development of new trade standards will also

when the operation moves to another phase. This requires the ability and flexibility to accelerate flows by adding additional RSOM forces or reducing existing RSOM forces if necessary. It should therefore be borne in mind that the force requirements for performing the RSOM may vary throughout the stages of an operation.

COM JTF will provide oversight and liaison between theater commanders, military-level command and HNs at the strategic level and international/non-governmental organizations (NGOs/NGOs) in the theater. The RSOM process itself will usually be planned, coordinated and executed by the JLSG command using the allocated national, HN and / or commercial support

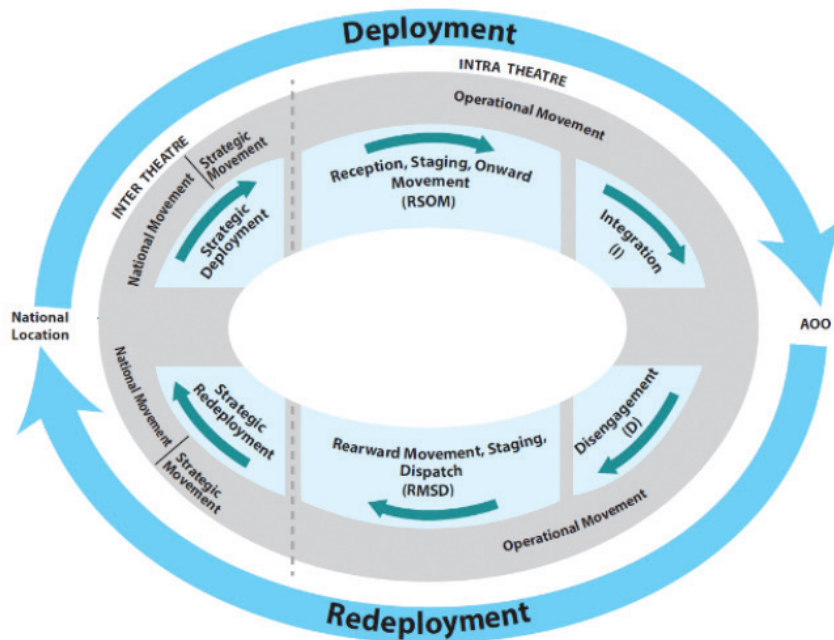


Figure 1 Generic presentation of deployment / redeployment processes

have an impact on the design criteria for military equipment and military means of transport, the ultimate goal being to provide RSOM capability in the most effective and efficient manner.

RSOM consists of essential interdependent processes carried out at the level of the theater of operations, which allow the transformation of the personnel, equipment and materials coming in most cases separately into forces capable of fulfilling the requirements of the operation. A generic structure of the RSOM process is shown in figure¹.

The intensity of RSOM activities may change

¹ Reproduced from Allied Joint Publication AJP-3.13, Edition A, Version 1, Allied Joint Doctrine for the Deployment and Redeployment of Forces.

resources (STANAG 2580 2014).

In order to carry out specific activities, RSOM COM requires command, control, communications, computers and information (C4I) capabilities to be aware of the situation, the common operational image – COP and visibility in transit – ITV. These capabilities should be available in all RSOM nodes.

The main concepts of RSOM are the following:

Reception, or rather the reception process, is the conduct of operations having as a distinct starting point the arrival of deployed forces, equipment and support materials in a POD and as a final end point, the movement of forces in the waiting area under the control of the operational

commander or RSOM commander. The main effort of the reception process is given by those components of the land forces, air and sea forces that do not self-deploy, as well as by the elements of specific forces that self-deploy and are taken over by reception as single entities.

POD transfer capabilities influence the speed, timing, order of arrival, and types of units that can be deployed. Military and non-military activities can take place in a port at the same time and they can compete for limited port capacity. Units managing reception nodes should therefore take a proactive approach to organizing and coordinating military activities with other actors in the port of landing; arrangements for this may include:

- the management of RSOM COM, which is responsible for the execution of RSOM and will use national, HN and commercial support resources allocated to it;
- landing airports (APOD), which are the main reception nodes for theater staff and materials (depending on processing capabilities);
- seaports (SPOD) which are the main receiving nodes for materials;
- railway landing facilities (RPOD), which can receive personnel and materials (SMG-38 2009).

Stationing according to the agreed NATO definition is "the process of temporarily stopping and organizing personnel and materials for their training in order to carry out the movement." The deployment process begins with the arrival of staff, equipment and logistical support capabilities in the waiting area (SA), where the main objective is to achieve the initial operational capacity and ends with the start of the movement.

The parking area (SA) provides support, facilities and other services to support the units as they prepare to continue their movement. The number of PODs, their transfer capacity and the relative location to the other RSOM facilities will dictate the required capacity of the SA.

Stationing involves activities related to: arrival of POD personnel and materials, provision of support and VET, distribution of materials in accordance with national and force logistical regulations, assembly, maintenance and functional checks of equipment to prepare for further movement, unit preparation and strength training.

The deployment ends after the commander of the forces declares that the unit is ready and the

unit receives the order to execute the continuation of the movement.

The continuation of the movement, according to the agreed NATO definition, is the process of "moving personnel and/or materials from a stationary area to the area of operations assigned to them". The process of continuing the movement includes logistical support and involves HNS. Continuous force flows and near real-time visibility (ITV) transit information are key elements in the process of continuing the movement.

The move to the designated area of operations begins when the unit has finished stationing.

The following functions and elements are necessary to ensure the success of the movement:

- performing the movement control – MOVCON which is given by the planning, directing, scheduling and control of personnel and material movements on the communication lines-LOC. To continue the movement, MOVCON is executed along the network of intra-theater routes (main supply routes, ITAS, ITSS) under the control of RSOM COM;
- existence and operationalization of MOVCON information systems supported by the LOGFAS IT platform with the necessary results of providing real-time information while traveling;
- the realization of the support, along the route, and when the long distances require it, the creation of convoy support centers (CSC), which will provide on-site support, including medical assistance and FP.
- ensuring the protection of the force, a crucial requirement of the operational commander, where the responsibilities of FP throughout the LOC are essential.

As the deployed forces go through the RSOM process, their command and control relationships (C2) may change; this poses a challenge for both deployment units and RSOM activation units. Therefore, in order to be able to direct RSOM activities, including MOVCON and FP, the RSOM commander must have clear C2 relationships.

FP is an integral part of the RSOM process. Concentrations of personnel and equipment are vulnerable targets for attack, especially when the units are not fully operational. Active and passive security measures must be implemented in accordance with NATO VET guidelines. FP measures should cover HN providers (CSAT 2015)



and CSOs that support the RSOM process.

Force tracking is the process of knowing the identity of the unit, its location, the amount of personnel and materials. This will allow planning and coordinating the support and integration efforts needed by the units. The healthcare element is responsible for developing a concept, with HNS, if possible, covering the requirement during RSOM.

Environmental protection can be described as the integration and application of environmental considerations to prevent or mitigate the environmental impact of military activities. The environmental impact of RSOM activities must be anticipated and assessed before operations and included in RSOM plans.

The involvement of the Air Force in the RSOM process can be considered very important as they are those structures that provide support for operations or as support structures with strength (personnel, transport aircraft, loading/unloading capabilities, cargo and personnel processing, provision of personal accommodation and material storage), process execution.

As a support structure, the Air Force is involved throughout the country in the process of securing HNS for RSOM by providing the necessary operations for the reception and stationing of forces at landing airports – APOD and their related areas. To this end, measures shall be provided for the designation, training and preparation of forces as well as for the organization and arrangement of all areas of responsibility of the RSOM.

The Air Force may also provide support by air transport on the one hand given that on the one hand some equipment with a high priority and with a required delivery date will usually need to be shipped by air and, on the other hand, there are situations when it is necessary to use modes of transport other than land transport even for low priority cargo. They may be carried by air in the following situations when:

- transport by air is the only mode of transport available;
- the total cost of shipping by surface transport is higher than shipping by air;
- the material to be shipped is of high value with a high security risk and needs to be shipped by air;
- the nature of the cargo requires air transport for other reasons (the cargo may be sensitive to

time factors such as certain specialized batteries).

Outside the national territory, the Air Force Component (ACC) is directly responsible for the engagement of all fixed-wing aircraft in the theater. The RSOM Command will coordinate air transport and set the priority of the transport requirement in close connection with the ACC (such as the intra-theater air transport system – ITAS). Air transport (F.A/L-2 2009) it may also include rotary wing (RW) aircraft of the air component and even of the land and sea component (LCC and MCC). Operational control (OPCON) over the Air Terminal Operating Unit (ATOU) will remain with the air component, however, the designated RSOM commander will have the coordinating authority to set priorities for the execution of the RSOM².

It can be seen that in addition to command, control, communications, computer, and information (C4I) capabilities, logistics capabilities are an operational component of RSOM. Logistics functions are applied within the RSOM, so specific activities need to be coordinated, including applying the principles specific to the logistics field, which they need to adapt, depending on their evolution. "Being an evolving field, logistics has undergone transformations determined by economic, technological and IT evolution, which have generated the expansion of logistics outside the established fields, specific to basic logistics flows, supply, warehousing, distribution, being the cause of other logistics concepts (Pinzariu and Scipanov 2016, 64). Under these conditions, the specific concepts of RSOM become adaptive to these changes.

As a supported entity, there is a situation where the air component may be assigned to command RSOM, which will involve more complex involvement in the process, including the RSOM planning process, and contribute to the establishment of C2 for logistics structures. The air component will contribute to the planning and execution of the RSOM of the Joint Force and will coordinate the national intra-theater deployment activities on behalf of the COM JTF. In doing so, it will also deploy NATO-owned forces and equipment and be responsible for deploying its designated units.

² Order M 78/2004 on the organization, training and operation of liaison teams at landing/embarkation airports and landing/embarkation seaports.



Conclusions

Expeditionary operations are different from operations carried out with national territorial forces, as in the case of expeditionary operations the process of deploying forces from their location in peacetime and reconstituting them into combat-ready units at the final destination required by the commander is a key factor of combat missions.

All entities involved in the operation have a collective responsibility for the planning, control and execution of the RSOM process.

RSOM is not just a logistical issue, but a multidisciplinary one, involving a multitude of capabilities, being a process that requires the involvement of the CIS, force protection, genius, combat support, medical and logistical support, host nation arrangements, transfer of authority, military-civilian cooperation, intelligence gathering, MOU, SOFA and TA, movement and deployment planning, financial and legal issues,

etc. This is more than a reconstitution of forces in the theater.

Technological developments will improve ITV, better deployment capacity design and C4I systems. This should lead to a concept of deployment and RSOM in the future, with all the necessary features to provide ready forces for the missions to be carried out in the TO.

The Air Force will need to be actively involved, in particular in supporting the RSOM process at home and beyond, by building the necessary capabilities to support RSOM, to establish the necessary links and procedural elements for uninterrupted and optimized action flows with collaborating/responsible structures within ministries to the central and local public administration in Romania, to participate in the planning processes of the operations that involve the deployment of forces in order to be able to provide specialized inputs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- CSAT. 2015. *Concepția privind asigurarea HNS pentru RSOM*. Aprobata prin Hotărârea CSAT nr. 64/2015.
- F.A/L-2. 2009. *Manualul pentru sprijinul logistic al Forțelor Aeriene*. București.
- Ministerul Apărării Naționale. 2021. *Strategia militară a României*. București.
- Pînzariu, Sorin, and Lucian Valeriu Scipanov. 2016. „Considerații privind unele concepte logistice utilizate în domeniile militar și civil.” *Buletinul Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I”*. No. 2. Vol. 3: 61-69.
- SMG-38. 2009. *Doctrina pentru dislocarea forțelor din Armata României*. SMG/PFA 3.13.
- STANAG 2580. 2014. *Allied Tactical Publication ATP-3.13.1*. Edition A, Version 1, Receptio Staging and Onward Movement (RSOM) Procedures.