

We are making progress in recognizing how difficult and how essential the logistics/management job is. By "we" I mean all the Services and the Department of Defense as a whole. But I am going to talk mostly about the Air Force, since it is the Service I know best.

I remember in 1946, when I first came into the Air Force, that of all our Air Force depots only one was commanded by a general officer. As you know, today all of our depots are commanded by generals, and most of them by major generals. It is a step in the right direction and long overdue.

Now, I am not detracting from the job and the indispensable functions of the combat leader, but it must be said that the job of the logistician has its own, special complexities. The associated techniques of being a good, logistical manager--and I include so many branches of effort in this that it would be almost impossible to detail them--the many support functions--change so rapidly that new ones are being introduced before the old ones have been firmly installed.

Underlying the job of the manager in the military today is the fact that our needs are more subtle and more finite than they were, for example, in World War II, when the United States just outproduced, outshipped, and outsupplied its enemies with a torrent of weapons, munitions, and materiel. At the close of World War II, the Air Force had 24 depots. These have since been reduced to nine and soon will be cut to five. We no longer have depots overseas. We base our system on the principle of direct support from the United States and capitalize on airlift. We have tried to make our logistics mission-oriented, fast and flexible.

This is a much more difficult job than handling--as difficult as that was--the torrent of stuff that was produced in World War II. Our success, I believe, in this more discriminating way of handling our logistics is shown in our cost comparisons. Every dollar spent for premium transportation is equal to \$10 spent on an inventory build up to achieve the same combat capability. In other words, if we buy a dollar's worth of airlift we save \$9 worth of inventory procurement. With the coming of the C-141 and the C-5, we expect to do even better.