



Defense Logistics Management in Border Areas

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Abstract

This article thoroughly investigates the optimization of defense logistics management within national border areas, with a distinct focus on integrating a "soft power" approach. Border regions are inherently complex, characterized by extreme geographical conditions, challenging accessibility, and intricate socio-cultural dynamics, all of which demand the implementation of highly adaptive, efficient, and strategically nuanced logistics systems. Beyond its traditional function of facilitating the movement of goods and operational support, defense logistics is presented as a crucial mechanism for cultivating trust, actively supporting community well-being, and significantly enhancing regional stability. This qualitative research, conducted through an extensive literature review and descriptive-analytical analysis, meticulously analyzes various facets of logistics support systems—ranging from planning and procurement to efficient storage and diverse transportation methods—and examines various logistics distribution models, emphasizing the indispensable role of active local community involvement and robust cross-sectoral collaboration. The key findings unequivocally demonstrate that effective and strategically applied defense logistics is not merely foundational for robust military operations but also functions as a powerful catalyst for fostering positive civil-military relations, ultimately contributing to sustainable development, enhanced security, and enduring stability in these critical border regions.

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INTRODUCTION

National borders, often regarded as a nation's "front porch," are critical reflections of its sovereignty, security, and dignity. These areas are convergence points for complex dynamics, encompassing security challenges, territorial sovereignty, socio-economic interactions of local communities, and cross-border potential. Effective border protection and management are multifaceted tasks that demand a holistic approach, with efficient

defense logistics management being a cornerstone (Mogiani, 2023). Defense logistics serves as the vital backbone for all military operations and presences. In border regions, the challenges are particularly pronounced. Extreme geographical conditions, limited accessibility, and unique social and security dynamics necessitate a logistics system that is not only adaptive and efficient but also oriented towards a soft power approach (Magash & Bilonga, 2024). This implies that logistics extends beyond the mere movement of goods and operational support; it also encompasses how the presence and activities of military logistics can foster trust, support community well-being, and contribute to stability in border areas (Runturambe & Fernando, 2022).

While the importance of defense logistics is widely acknowledged, its specific application and optimization within the unique context of border areas, particularly through a "soft power" lens, remains an area requiring deeper exploration (Sevin, 2021). Existing literature often focuses on conventional military logistics or general border security, with less emphasis on the synergistic potential of logistics to build positive relationships and contribute to broader national objectives beyond direct defense (van Fenema & van Kampen, 2021). This gap highlights the need for a comprehensive framework that integrates operational efficiency with community engagement and diplomatic influence (Qi et al., 2024).

This article aims to comprehensively examine how defense logistics management in border areas can be optimized to achieve both security objectives and soft power enhancement. This study will begin by establishing the theoretical foundations of defense logistics and soft power, providing a conceptual framework for their integration (Board et al., 2025). Subsequently, the research methodology, based on a qualitative approach utilizing literature review and descriptive-analytical analysis, will be detailed. The core of the article will then delve into the analysis of logistics support systems, from planning and procurement to storage and transportation, while accounting for the unique characteristics of border regions.

Furthermore, the discussion will explore how logistics distribution can be executed efficiently, securely, and sustainably, and crucially, how the active involvement of local communities can enhance logistics effectiveness while simultaneously serving as a powerful medium for soft power enhancement (Arifin et al., 2022). Finally, the article will present key conclusions and recommendations for policy and practice (Simerly & Adams, 2024). By understanding and implementing these principles, we aim for the military's presence at the border, through its logistics function, to not only bolster robust defense operations but also to act as a positive agent contributing to development, stability, and well-being in our nation's "front porch" (Antai & Hellberg, 2023). Ultimately, defense logistics at national borders is not solely about moving goods; it is fundamentally about building trust and supporting community welfare through an efficient, transparent, and collaborative approach with various stakeholders, including local communities.

METHODS

This article focuses on the application of a soft power approach within defense logistics. The research method employed is a qualitative approach, primarily utilizing a literature review complemented by descriptive-analytical analysis (Lim, 2025). This methodology facilitates an in-depth exploration of relevant concepts, principles, and practices, alongside an analysis of how soft power can be effectively integrated into defense logistics management within border areas (Loska et al., 2025).

This research is qualitative in nature, aiming to deeply understand phenomena, explore meanings, and interpret non-numerical data (Ugwu & Val, 2023). Its objective is

not to measure or test statistical hypotheses, but rather to construct a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

The primary method for data and information gathering is a literature review, supplemented by descriptive-analytical analysis (Soares, 2021). The researcher systematically reviews, identifies, analyzes, and synthesizes relevant literature from a diverse range of sources. The overarching objective is to establish a robust conceptual and theoretical framework concerning defense logistics management, border issues, and the soft power concept within a military context (Tyagi, 2024). The scope of the literature includes books and academic journals; research reports; policy documents (e.g., military doctrines, defense strategies); reliable news articles; and publications from defense think tanks or international organizations.

Literature is selected based on its direct relevance to the article's three core pillars: defense logistics management, border operations, and the soft power approach. Following data collection through the literature review, the information is subjected to in-depth descriptive-analytical analysis. Descriptive analysis meticulously outlines various components of defense logistics management in border areas, including support systems, distribution processes, inherent challenges, and potential opportunities. Analytical analysis then evaluates and interprets this data to identify relationships between concepts, emerging patterns, and their broader implications. This includes an assessment of how soft power principles can be applied across all aspects of logistics management, as well as the potential impacts and benefits for border security and stability. The analysis also incorporates the identification of best practices derived from existing case studies.

The primary data for this research is derived from secondary sources obtained through the comprehensive literature review, encompassing:

1. Academic Literature. Scientific journals and books discussing defense logistics, border management, and soft power theory (Martino, 2020).
2. Policy Documents and Doctrines. Official documents from defense departments or military institutions pertaining to logistics strategies and doctrines in border areas (Sarjito, 2022).
3. Research Reports and Think Tank Publications. In-depth studies and analyses on border logistics and security issues (Karadeli et al., 2023).
4. Credible News and Analytical Articles. Relevant articles on military logistics operations in border areas, civil-military cooperation, or soft power initiatives (Barmpargyris, 2022).

Data collection employs a systematic literature search, which involves:

1. Conducting searches in academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and official websites of defense or research institutions (Chigbu et al., 2023).
2. Assessing the relevance of identified literature based on titles, abstracts, and subsequently, their full content (Chamorro-Padial & Rodríguez-Sánchez, 2023).
3. Inclusion criteria specifically focus on material discussing defense logistics, border operations, and/or the concept of soft power (Gauttam et al., 2024).

The data analysis techniques used are qualitative content analysis and thematic synthesis, which are applied rigorously to extract meaningful insights from the collected literature (T. et al., 2024). This technique involves a systematic and in-depth reading of the collected literature. The primary goal is to identify, categorize, and interpret key themes, patterns, and categories that emerge directly from the text (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2025). This process is iterative, involving:

1. Initial Coding. Reading through the literature to identify initial concepts, ideas, and phrases related to defense logistics management, border challenges, and the integration of soft power.
2. Categorization. Grouping similar codes into broader categories. For instance, concepts related to supply chain efficiency might form one category, while community engagement initiatives form another.
3. Theme Development. Identifying overarching themes that connect various categories. These themes represent the core insights and arguments derived from the data. This analysis helps in understanding the nuances of how defense logistics operates in border areas and where soft power elements can be integrated.

This technique builds upon the qualitative content analysis by systematically combining and integrating information from various disparate sources to construct a cohesive narrative and develop strong, evidence-based arguments (Naeem et al., 2023). It involves:

1. Aggregating Findings. Bringing together findings from different studies and documents that address similar aspects of defense logistics or soft power in border contexts.
2. Grouping by Topic. Organizing the aggregated findings by specific topics or sub-themes (e.g., logistics support systems, distribution models, the role of local communities, specific soft power implementation strategies, challenges, and opportunities).
3. Interpreting Relationships. Analyzing the relationships and interconnections between these grouped themes. This step is crucial for identifying overarching patterns, contradictions, and areas of consensus or divergence within the literature. The aim is to move beyond mere description to a deeper interpretation that generates new insights and supports the article's conclusions and recommendations (Adaga et al., 2024).

This comprehensive methodology ensures that the article is built upon a strong theoretical and empirical foundation derived from existing literature, while providing a deep and relevant analysis of how defense logistics management can serve as an effective tool within the context of soft power in border areas.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis focuses on defense logistics management for border operations, specifically examining logistics support systems and distribution, and their pivotal role in strengthening soft power. The insights presented here are a direct outcome of systematically interpreting and synthesizing the collected literature to identify key themes, patterns, and relationships, thereby building a robust understanding of the subject matter. An effective logistics support system is the fundamental backbone for successful defense operations at national borders. This system encompasses critical functions such as planning, procurement, storage, and transportation.

Defense Supply Chain in Border Areas

1. Needs Identification. This involves precisely determining the type, quantity, and timing of logistics requirements (e.g., food, water, fuel, ammunition, spare parts, medicine) based on thorough threat analysis, prevailing geographical conditions, and specific operational patterns at the border.
2. Procurement Sources. Establishing reliable supply sources, both domestic and potentially through cross-border cooperation (if feasible and compliant with

regulations), with a strong emphasis on sustainability and diversification to ensure resilience.

3. **Logistics Infrastructure.** Continuous review and development of existing infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, ports, airfields, warehouses, outposts) are crucial to support the smooth and efficient movement of logistics.
4. **Information Technology.** Leveraging integrated logistics information systems for real-time tracking, comprehensive monitoring, and precise inventory management is essential for operational efficiency.

Geographical and Demographic Challenges

1. **Difficult Terrain.** Analyzing optimal distribution routes in challenging terrains such as mountainous areas, dense forests, or swamps, which often necessitate specialized transportation methods (e.g., helicopters, all-terrain vehicles, boats).
2. **Extreme Climate.** Logistics planning must meticulously account for extreme weather conditions (e.g., heavy rain, scorching heat, floods) that can severely impede distribution and cause damage to goods.
3. **Limited Local Resources.** Evaluating the availability of local resources that can be utilized to support logistics operations, while also considering the potential socio-economic impact on local communities.
4. **Socio-Cultural Dynamics.** Understanding the unique characteristics of border communities is vital to ensure that logistics distribution activities do not create social friction but instead foster positive and constructive relationships.

Security Aspects in Logistics

1. **Distribution Route Security.** Comprehensive planning for the security of logistics convoys to mitigate potential disruptions (e.g., smuggling, armed groups, accidents).
2. **Warehouse and Depot Surveillance.** Implementing standard security procedures for storage facilities to prevent loss, theft, or sabotage of critical supplies.
3. **Disaster Risk Management.** Ensuring logistics readiness to effectively respond to natural disasters that can disrupt the supply chain and demand rapid, coordinated responses.

Logistics Distribution for Border Operations

Effective logistics distribution is paramount for the success of operations and maintaining a consistent presence at the border.

Distribution Models

1. **Centralized Distribution.** Shipments originate from a main logistics hub to frontline posts, a model particularly suitable for areas with good accessibility and developed infrastructure.
2. **Decentralized Distribution.** Establishing intermediate logistics depots at strategic points to significantly shorten distribution routes to smaller, more remote posts, making it ideal for isolated areas.
3. **Coordinated Distribution.** Integrating logistics distribution with other civilian agencies (e.g., National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB), Ministry of Social Affairs) for humanitarian or development operations, thereby strengthening the soft power dimension of military presence.

Transportation Means

1. Land. Utilizing various land vehicles such as trucks, tactical vehicles, and dirt bikes (especially for narrow or challenging terrain).
2. Air. Employing helicopters and cargo planes for rapid delivery to isolated or inaccessible areas.
3. Water. Utilizing patrol boats and small transport vessels for operations in water or riverine areas.
4. Utilization of Civilian Means. Exploring potential cooperation with civilian logistics service providers to enhance efficiency and achieve cost savings, while strictly adhering to security protocols.

Route and Time Optimization

1. Alternative Route Mapping. Identifying and preparing alternative routes to anticipate and circumvent potential obstacles or threats, ensuring continuity of supply.
2. Regular Distribution Schedule. Establishing consistent and predictable delivery schedules to ensure timely logistics availability and minimize operational surprises.
3. Use of GPS/GIS Technology. Implementing GPS and Geographic Information System (GIS) technology for real-time tracking and dynamic route optimization.

Role of Local Communities in Distribution

1. Local Economic Empowerment. Prioritizing the procurement of certain logistical needs from local communities (e.g., agricultural products, local transportation services) to foster a symbiotic economic relationship.
2. Involvement in Logistics Security. Engaging community elements or traditional leaders in the supervision and security of distribution routes, thereby building a sense of ownership and shared participation.
3. Humanitarian Aid. Integrating defense logistics distribution with the provision of humanitarian aid to communities in need, demonstrating the military's (TNI - Tentara Nasional Indonesia) crucial role as an agent of development and protection.

Logistics Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

1. Availability Rate. The percentage of logistics needs that are met on time, indicating supply chain effectiveness.
2. Delivery Time. The average duration from the initial request to the final delivery, measuring responsiveness.
3. Logistics Cost. An assessment of budget efficiency utilized for overall logistics operations.
4. Logistics Security. The number of incidents involving loss or damage to goods, reflecting the security of the supply chain.
5. Personnel Satisfaction Level. Feedback from personnel on the ground regarding the adequacy and quality of logistics support, providing a user-centric perspective.

Strengthening Soft Power through Logistics Management

Applying a soft power approach in defense logistics management transcends mere operational efficiency; it actively contributes to building positive relationships and influence.

1. Transparency and Accountability. A transparent and accountable logistics system fosters trust, both within the military organization and with external stakeholders, including local communities.

2. **Civil-Military Cooperation.** Developing synergistic cooperation models with civilian institutions, local governments, and communities for logistics distribution, particularly in non-conflict situations, enhances collaborative efforts.
3. **Local Capacity Building.** Training local communities in fundamental logistics aspects (e.g., road maintenance, goods handling) as part of empowerment programs, thereby enhancing local capabilities and self-reliance.
4. **Humanitarian Response.** Being at the forefront of logistics response during natural disasters or humanitarian crises at the border, demonstrating the military's positive and protective role in the eyes of the community.
5. **Logistics Diplomacy.** Sharing best practices or offering logistics assistance to neighboring countries in non-military contexts, thereby building strong inter-state relations and fostering regional stability.

By consistently applying a soft power approach in defense logistics management, the military's presence at the border is perceived not only as a security force but also as a proactive agent of development, a reliable aid provider, and a trusted partner for both local communities and neighboring countries.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

This article has comprehensively explored the optimization of defense logistics management in national border areas, specifically through the lens of a "soft power" approach. Drawing from a rigorous qualitative content analysis and thematic synthesis of existing literature, the findings directly address how logistics functions not only as an operational necessity but also as a strategic tool for broader national objectives. Based on the detailed analysis presented in the previous section, several key conclusions emerge:

1. **Defense logistics as a dual-purpose enabler.** Effective defense logistics management is unequivocally fundamental to the success of military operations at the border, ensuring the timely and efficient supply of critical resources. Beyond this operational imperative, the research strongly concludes that defense logistics, when integrated with a soft power approach, transforms into a powerful agent for strengthening positive relationships. This dual role allows the military's presence at the border to be perceived not merely as a security force, but also as an entity that builds trust, supports community well-being, and fosters stability, thereby affirming a presence based on interaction, assistance, and development rather than solely hard power.
2. **Navigating multidimensional challenges.** Logistics operations in border areas are characterized by significant and unique challenges, as evidenced by the analysis of geographical, demographic, and security aspects. These include difficult terrains, extreme climates, limited local resources, and complex socio-cultural dynamics. Overcoming these multifaceted challenges demands meticulous planning, adaptive strategies tailored to specific regional contexts, and the intelligent utilization of modern technology for supply chain and distribution optimization.
3. **Indispensable role of local communities.** The analysis consistently highlighted the vital importance of involving local communities in the logistics supply chain and distribution processes. This involvement is not only shown to enhance operational efficiency and security but is also crucial for fostering a profound sense of ownership, promoting local economic empowerment, and building mutual trust. This collaborative engagement represents the core of effective grassroots soft power implementation, turning logistics activities into avenues for positive civil-military interaction. **Imperative for Cross-Sectoral Collaboration.**

The success of defense logistics in border areas, particularly in achieving its soft power objectives, is heavily reliant on close and synergistic cooperation. The findings emphasize the critical need for collaboration among the military, local governments, civilian agencies (such as BNPB or the Ministry of Social Affairs), and even potential non-military cooperation with neighboring countries. Such integrated efforts are essential for comprehensive border management and for maximizing the positive impact of logistics activities on regional stability and development.

In essence, this article demonstrates that by strategically managing defense logistics with a deliberate soft power orientation, military presence at national borders can transcend traditional security roles, becoming a proactive force for development, humanitarian aid, and reliable partnership for both local communities and international neighbors.

To optimize defense logistics management in border areas with a soft power approach, several recommendations can be put forward:

1. Integrate soft power doctrine into logistics. The Ministry of Defense and TNI Headquarters need to explicitly integrate soft power principles into defense logistics doctrine. This includes guidelines on how logistics activities (procurement, distribution, maintenance) can be used to support community development and border diplomacy.
2. Develop multi-purpose logistics infrastructure. Investments in border infrastructure (roads, bridges, warehouses, medical facilities) should be designed not only for military needs but also for civilian benefit, thereby supporting local economic development and humanitarian response.
3. Enhance personnel capacity and training. Logistics personnel need to be equipped with training that is not only technical-operational but also related to cultural sensitivity, communication skills, and civil-military cooperation principles, especially in interactions with border communities.
4. Optimize technology for transparency and efficiency. Utilizing integrated logistics information systems (e.g., secure blockchain or cloud-based systems) can increase efficiency, accountability, and transparency, minimizing potential misuse and building trust.
5. Formulate clear civil-military cooperation frameworks. Establish clear MoUs or Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for logistics cooperation between the military and civilian agencies/local governments in non-conflict scenarios (e.g., disaster relief, development support) to ensure rapid and coordinated responses.
6. Develop Local Partnership Programs. Create partnership programs with MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) or local cooperatives in border areas for the procurement of logistics needs, thereby promoting sustainable economic empowerment of local communities.

In addition to the above recommendations, some further suggestions can be considered for implementation:

1. Case studies on soft power implementation. Conduct in-depth case studies on how military logistics in several border regions in Indonesia have successfully or unsuccessfully applied the soft power approach, to identify valuable lessons and best practices.
2. Measure the impact of logistics soft power. Develop more specific metrics or performance indicators to measure the impact of soft power implementation in logistics, not only in terms of efficiency but also in terms of public perception and relationship strengthening.

3. Regular cross-sectoral discussion forums. Initiate regular discussion forums or workshops involving military elements, local governments, community leaders, academics, and civil society organizations in border areas to discuss logistics issues and potential collaborations.
4. Publication and dissemination of best practices. Encourage the publication of results from logistics initiatives based on soft power in border areas to be shared with other agencies and serve as inspiration for other border regions.

By integrating these conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions, it is hoped that defense logistics management in border areas can continue to evolve into a system that is not only militarily robust but also a strong foundation for development, security, and harmonious relations in the nation's "front porch".

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