

Welcome to the twenty sixth lesson of the DoD Supply Chain Fundamentals module, Supply Chain and the "Last Tactical Mile".

In this lesson you will learn to recognize supply chain and delivery problems related to the "last tactical mile".

You will be given an opportunity to test out of this lesson. If you pass the pre-test questions, you can decide to continue, or skip to the next lesson.

Which of the following is a characteristic problem of the "Last Tactical Mile?"

- A Slow-moving fighting units impede speed of advance for supply lines
- B Mountains of pallets and containers accumulate at distribution points
- C Harsh environments
- D Bottlenecks frequently occur at the supply base shipping point

Feedback:

The correct answer is "Harsh environments".

As a member of the DoD supply chain, you are already critically aware of how your work affects the lives of warfighters in distant combat areas. By gaining an appreciation for the characteristics and problems associated with supplying warfighters in the "last tactical mile," close to the edge of battle, you may be able to help find solutions that ultimately save lives.

This next lesson describes these problems.

Learning Objective

- Recognize supply chain and delivery problems related to the "last tactical mile."

In earlier lessons, you learned many characteristics of supply chains. The descriptions assumed you had adequate lift and transport assets, and a secure environment for completing supply requests. For this next lesson, try to personally recall or imagine a work area where you are very close to a fighting zone, and it is not always physically secure. Try to recall the times in your past work experience when it was critical to quickly fulfill supply requests, and you had meager resources available to transport and distribute the supplies.

With that mental picture in your mind, proceed through the lesson, and read about problems of the "last tactical mile" in the DoD supply chain.

According to the Government Accountability Office's report GAO-05-275, the Department of Defense moved more than two million short tons of cargo into theater during the first two years of Operation Iraqi Freedom. While a significant achievement, it was only half the story.

As mountains of pallets and containers accumulated at distribution points, warfighters frequently lacked the support they required. The logistics chain was certainly stretched thin, if not broken.

Describing the problem, Vice Admiral Keith Lippert, former Director of the Defense Logistics Agency, said in a 2004 testimony to the House Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Readiness, "One of the challenges we continue to face is 'the tactical mile.' Ensuring that the right item is delivered to the warfighter when needed - anywhere that warfighter may be located."

Accountability is also harder to maintain. In the heat of battle, getting warfighters what they need may be the only immediate concern, but sooner or later, the books need to be balanced.

According to GAO 04-305R, "The disconnect between strategic lift and tactical delivery resulted in a \$1.2 billion discrepancy between how much [inventory] was sent in, and how much was actually acknowledged as received by the units it was intended to reach."

In maneuver warfare, speed and maneuver are as important to victory as mass and firepower. At the last tactical mile, fast-moving units can outrun their supply lines, limiting their speed of advance.

Major delivery issues arise due to conditions in harsh environments with limited/no bandwidth:

Lack of in-transit visibility

- Reordering

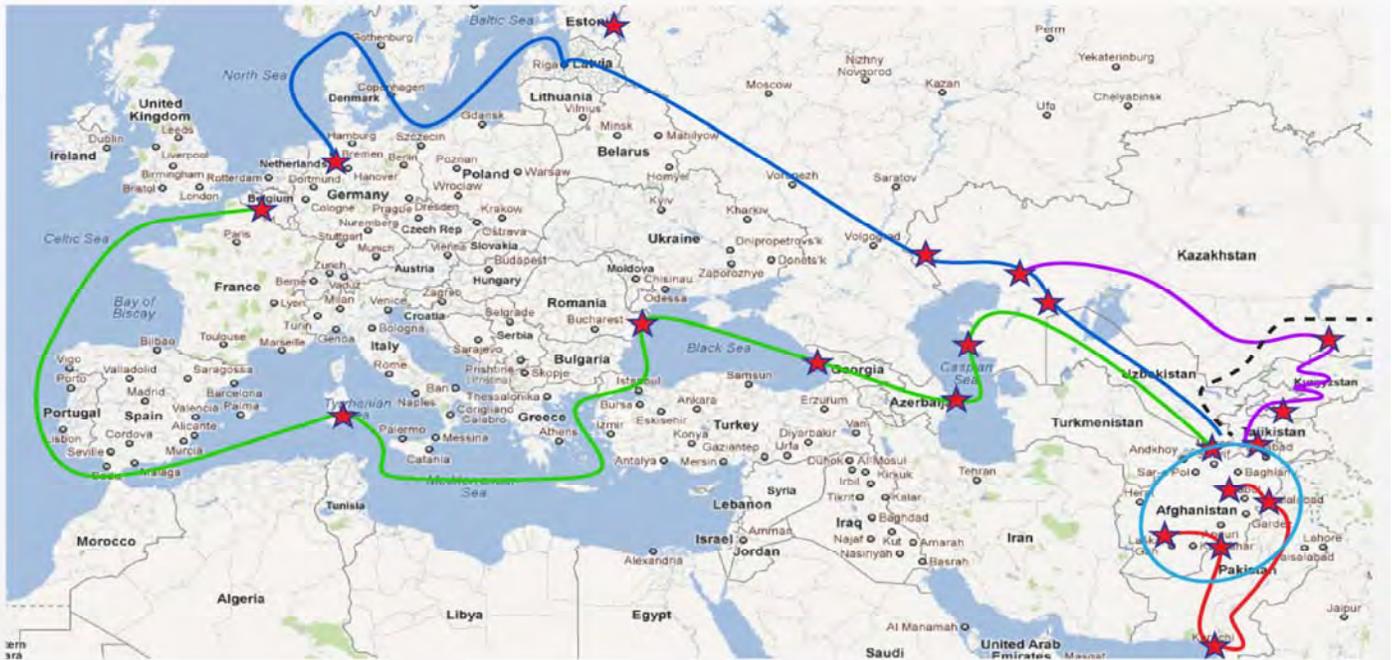
- Excess ordering

Disorganized storage

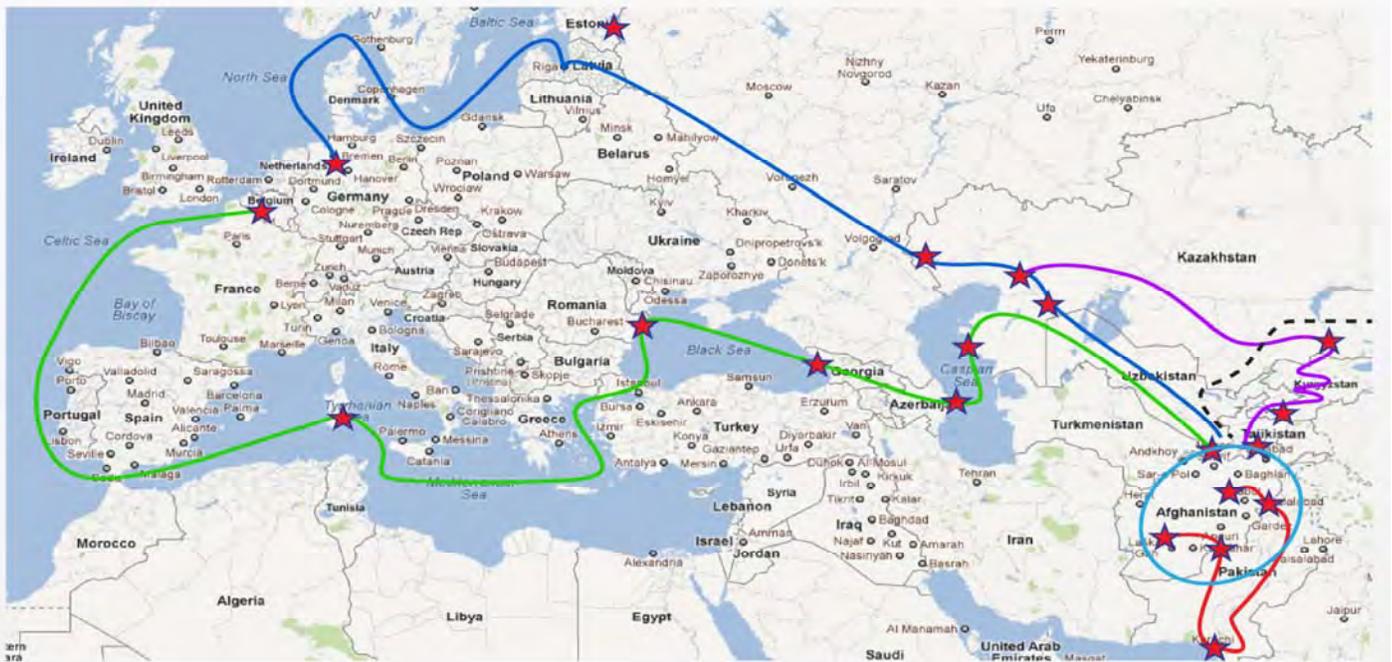
- Unused products

Incorrect deliveries due to fast-moving units

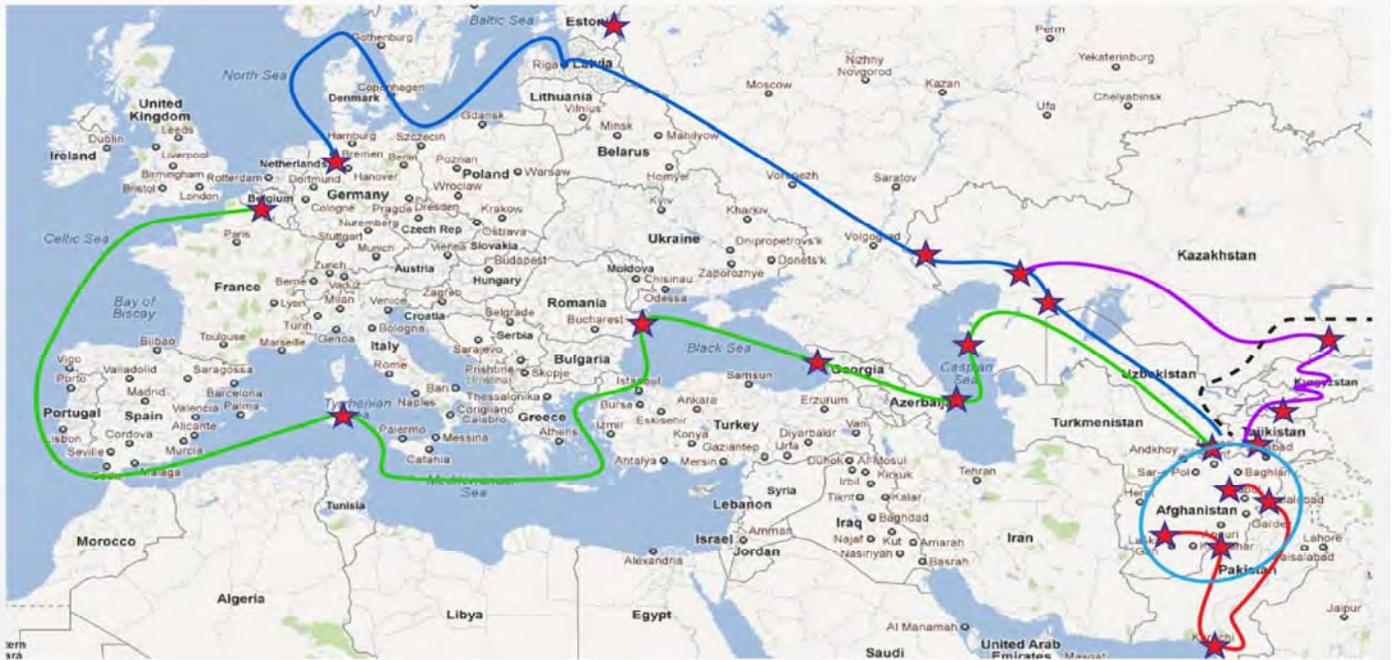
Increased costs



One way to attempt to reduce risk is to have more points of supply within the difficult environment. The Northern Distribution Network was created to give alternative supply routes in case of disruptions in the supply chain. As you can see from the picture, there are multiple routes to Afghanistan.



Even within the highlighted routes, there can be issues into theater. For example, the red routes through Pakistan travel through hostile terrain where drivers routinely leave the supply chain for various amounts of time. This lack of visibility to Forward Operating Bases results in multiple problems.



Once products arrive in Afghanistan (blue and red stars), the Last Tactical Mile begins. As illustrated in an earlier slide, the pipeline becomes smaller and smaller the closer you are to the warfighter. The blue oval represents the last tactical mile.

The Northern Distribution Network (NDN) transits the following countries:

- **Russia Route – North: Latvia (Riga); Russia; Kazakhstan; Uzbekistan**
- **Caucasus Route – South: Georgia (Poti); Azerbaijan; Kazakhstan; Uzbekistan**
- **Kyrgyzstan Route – Latvia (Riga); Russia; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan**

Tallinn Route: originates in Estonia, then transits the Russia/Riga Route

Problems related to the "Last Tactical Mile:"

- Accountability is often lost in rush to fulfill critical needs
- Harsh environments
- Lack of in-transit visibility causes reordering and excess ordering
- Disorganized storage
- Fast-moving units outrunning supply lines

Which of the following is a characteristic problem of the "Last Tactical Mile?"

- A Multiple points of supply create alternative supply routes
- B Supply pipeline becomes larger the closer it gets to the warfighter
- C Slow-moving fighting units impede speed of advance for supply lines
- D Accountability is often lost in rush to fulfill critical needs

Feedback:

The correct answer is, "Accountability is often lost in rush to fulfill critical needs." The other alternatives are misleading versions of the correct characteristics.

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Post-Test Introduction

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You have completed the learning portion of the Supply Chain and the "Last Tactical Mile" lesson. Next you will be given three attempts to demonstrate mastery of the learning objective.

If you fail all three attempts, you can still progress to the remaining lessons and graduate; however, you are encouraged to restudy the lesson to increase your understanding of the content.

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Which of the following is a characteristic problem of the "Last Tactical Mile?"

- A Prevailing "just-in-case" mentality
- B Multiple points of supply create alternative supply routes
- C Supply pipeline becomes larger the closer it gets to the warfighter
- D Harsh environments

Feedback:

The correct answer is, "Harsh environments." This was your first attempt. You will be given two more chances. [Review This Lesson](#)

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Which of the following is a characteristic problem of the "Last Tactical Mile?"

- A Slow-moving fighting units impede speed of advance for supply lines
- B Mountains of pallets and containers accumulating at distribution points
- C Lack of in-transit visibility causes reordering and excess ordering
- D Excessive amounts of cargo delivered in short time period

Feedback:

The correct answer is, "Lack of in-transit visibility causes reordering and excess ordering." This was your second attempt. You will be given one more chance. [Review This Lesson](#)

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Which of the following is a characteristic problem of the "Last Tactical Mile?"

- A Bottlenecks frequently occur at the supply base shipping point
- B Disorganized storage
- C Lift is too plentiful and communications is overly mature
- D Supply pipeline becomes larger the closer it gets to the warfighter

Feedback:

The correct answer is, "Disorganized storage." This was your third and final attempt, but you will be allowed to progress to other lessons and graduate. [Review This Lesson](#)

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Summary

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In this lesson, you learned about the problems of the "Last Tactical Mile." Here are some important points to remember about the problems; accountability is often lost in rush to fulfill critical needs, storage is disorganized, and fast-moving units often outrun the supply lines.

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Can you recall from a previous lesson which of the following is a characteristic of the "Last Tactical Mile?"

- [A](#) Slow-moving fighting units impede speed of advance for supply lines >
- [B](#) Accountability is often lost in rush to fulfill critical needs >
- [C](#) Supply pipeline becomes larger the closer it gets to the warfighter >
- [D](#) Multiple points of supply create alternative supply routes >

Feedback:

The correct answer is, "Accountability is often lost in rush to fulfill critical needs." The other alternatives are misleading versions of the correct characteristics.

You have completed the content for this lesson.

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