



## China Tests Emergency Support Capabilities Along its Southern Border

**OE Watch Commentary:** China's armed forces have been making improvements to their logistical resupply capabilities, establishing the Logistic Support Department in 2016, improving equipment, and integrating civilian assets (see "74th Group Army Conducts Mobilization Exercise with Roll-on Roll-off Ships" in this issue). An under-appreciated aspect of this development is the creation of integrated support networks for China's remote outposts, including along its mountainous southern borders with India, Nepal, and Bhutan.

This accompanying excerpted article details a new system being trialed to improve logistical supply for some of China's most remote border outposts. The Kunmujia Sentry post [昆木加哨所] near the China-Nepal border is at an altitude of 4,900m. Kunmujia is part of the Shigatse Military District [日喀则军区] that extends along most of China's borders with Nepal, and Bhutan, as well as a portion of India between the two.



Shigatse Prefecture.

Source: Boqiang Liao, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shigatse\\_Prefecture.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shigatse_Prefecture.jpg), CC BY-SA

Kunmujia's remoteness makes logistic resupply difficult, so in recent years the outpost has installed wind and solar energy generation equipment, and connected it to the broader network of border defense outposts with fiber optic cables. Troops stationed in the area have suffered from severe altitude sickness and related illness requiring the creation of special recuperation facilities for rotating troops. The new support model detailed in the article allows each outpost to have a clear idea of what equipment or supplies other units nearby have. This means that if they can request something from a neighboring unit, it will save time getting it from headquarters. At the same time, it allows for more efficient deliveries from central depots.

These developments are even more important given recent events: On 15 June, Chinese and Indian forces along the border in the Galwan Valley (further to the west in the Aksai Chin region) skirmished, resulting in casualties on both sides. The spokesperson for the Chinese Western Military District issued a statement demanding that India "restrain its front-line troops and immediately stop all provocations." The Kunmujia post itself is relatively close to Doklam [洞朗], which sits between India, China and Bhutan and was the site of a standoff between Indian and Chinese forces in 2017.

China's success in its 1962 border war with India is sometimes credited to its extensive logistics preparations, roadbuilding, and establishment of caches of supplies. India has also expanded its road-building program but more slowly.

Elsewhere in China, Joint Logistic Support Force units have been depicted in Chinese media making greater use of digital supply tracking systems or semi-automated warehouses that allow units to order palletized supplies for a unit through a digital system. While this article deals specifically with emergency supplies such as oxygen tanks, as highlighted by the article, the new logistical support model appears to have achieved major successes throughout the Tibet Military District. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**

***“Since the beginning of this year, the time required to provide support to the front-line troops in the Tibet Military Region has been decreased, the total distance traveled by transports has been significantly reduced, and the utilization rate of support resources has been increased by 20%.”***



## Continued: China Tests Emergency Support Capabilities Along its Southern Border

**Source:** “探索建立区域统筹型保障网络体系 --西藏军区：雪域边关实现应急物资随缺随补 (Learning How to Build a Regional Integrated Support Network—Xizang Military District: System Snowy Border Crossing Resupplied as Needed),” *PLA Daily* [解放军报], 4 June 2020. [military.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0604/c1011-31735239.html](http://military.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0604/c1011-31735239.html)

*In mid-May, when the oxygen-producing equipment of a border guard regiment under the Tibet Military District [西藏军区] failed, the leaders of the unit deployed medical resources from friendly and neighboring units in the near vicinity, sending the maintenance equipment to the company in only four hours. The Tibet Military District is testing an integrated regional support network system to achieve the rapid deployment of emergency supplies.*

*The leader of the Military District support department explained that Tibet has many border defense points, a long border, vast area, and many points, long lines, wide areas, remote points to the superiors to claim materials cycle is longer, transport inconvenience, in the event of heavy snow-covered mountains, emergency supplies are difficult to achieve with the shortage. To this end, the military district is testing an integrated regional support network system, connecting units both vertically and horizontally (that is, between lower and higher echelons and also laterally between units) rather than simply vertically. In this new model, when remote locations encounter shortages of emergency supplies, they can be supplemented by supplies from neighboring units.*

*The military district organs have carried out significant research and explored new support models, organized the implementation of joint reserves of materials for different forces in the same region, and the operational organs have coordinated delivery of supplies according to the specific needs of different locations. At the same time, they also organized at all levels to increase funding, forming a technical team to ensure adequate equipment support for the winter road-clearing teams to create a stable emergency support network.*

*On the “support map” of the snowy high plateau, the advantages of the new support model are increasingly apparent: the most remote Kunmujia outpost in the military region is more than 200 kilometers away from the regiment headquarters, but only a few tens of kilometers from another friendly unit. In the past the outpost was take 1 to 2 days to receive supplies directly from headquarters. Now, (using the new system) it only takes 2 to 3 hours to get supplies from the neighboring units.*

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