



PLA Fields New Rapid-Assembly Camp System

OE Watch Commentary: In July 2020, the PLA announced that it had adopted a new rapid-assembly system developed by the Joint Logistic Support Force (JLSF), an organization under the Central Military Commission established in 2016 to improve logistic capabilities at the strategic and theater level.

The system is intended to provide integrated field support for a battalion-sized force and includes command, dining storage, and other modules but is flexible depending on requirements. As detailed in the excerpted article, the system also includes improved power generation and water systems.

The field camp system also includes improvements to force protection and is designed to be more easily concealed and resistant to strikes. Accompanying images indicate this includes the use of fillable barriers similar to Hesco barriers to rapidly create a perimeter fence and protect command buildings or generators.

More importantly, this system is part of a major theme in official media coverage of the PLA, improved logistical flexibility, rapid transport capability, and integration of new technologies. This system would likely help support a rapid surge in troop numbers to one of China's remote borders that continue to be a source of tensions with its neighbors.

At the tactical level, two exercises in September showcased how the PLA is experimenting with UAVs to improve logistic capabilities. In one case, a support group under the Qinghai-Tibet Depot tested delivering hot meals and water to troops manning sensitive border positions from a position in the rear using drones. In a separate exercise in September, a unit under the Guilin Joint Logistics Support Center tested using two- and six-rotor remote control vehicles to resupply units in the field. After receiving a call for additional ammunition or medical supplies to a grid location over the radio network, the drones would be loaded and dispatched. While the technology appears rudimentary, as technology improves (consider, for example, commercially available drones that can automatically recognize and follow you), these could become a real capability to rapidly provide troops on the front line with necessary supplies.

China's geography complicates logistics. The East is densely populated and has a well-developed transportation infrastructure. The Western half of the country has a fraction of the population, tall mountains (including the Himalayas), and less infrastructure. Moreover, China has expanded its footprint abroad with rising involvement in peacekeeping missions and a base in Djibouti. Taken together, development of improved logistical capabilities at the strategic, campaign and tactical levels will impact the PLA's ability to deploy and fight effectively within its own borders or, should the need arise, abroad. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**



“The camp can be quickly completed in a short period of time, providing integrated support for a battalion-size force.”

Source: “我军首个快装式野营支援保障系统投入使用 (Chinese Military's First Rapid-Assembly Field Support System Enters Service),” *PLA Daily*, 25 July 2020. http://www.81.cn/jfjbmap/content/2020-07/25/content_266868.htm

In the summer of 2020, following the guidance of the Central Military Commission Logistics Support Department [军委后勤保障部], the PLA formally adopted a rapid-deployment outpost support system developed by the PLA Joint Logistics Support Force (JLSF).

The system is light, made up of simple structures, and can be set up quickly, and is mainly used in cases where there is not a pre-existing base structure. The system makes use of modern advancements in industrial and modular design so that living quarters, meeting rooms, canteens, etc., can be rapidly assembled or inflated. The camp can be quickly completed in a short period of time, providing integrated support for a battalion-size force.

In order to meet the requirements of forces in the field and improve the living conditions of personnel, the JSLF, in cooperation with other services, departments, and civilian organizations, has developed a number of improvements and innovations, including improved water filtration and quiet mobile power generators.

The next step for the JLSF is to continue to work with the Military Academy of Sciences and other scientific research institutions to continue to optimize and improve the system's camouflage protection, counter-strike, and other functional modules, and develop clear use cases, force composition, support processes, and related standards. The goal is to use the system to speed the development of strategic and campaign-level support, force building, and force generation.