GTP-C Load and Overload Control on MME

Feature Description

Overload of packet core network nodes in the network results in service degradation. Overload conditions can occur in various network scenarios. Overload issue can be addressed through improved load distribution over the network.

GTP-C load and overload control feature adds MME support for GTP-C load and overload control mechanism on S11 interface. GTP-C load and overload control is a standard driven (3GPP TS 29.807 V12.0.0 and 3GPP TS 29.274 V d30) feature. For standards compliance information see the Standards Compliance section in this feature chapter.

Important

This feature is license controlled. The "EPC Support for GTP Overload Control" license is required for successfully configuring and enabling this feature. Please consult your Cisco Account Representative for information about the specific license.

GTP-C Overload Issues and Resultant effects

A GTP-C overload occurs when the number of incoming requests exceeds the maximum request throughput supported by the receiving GTP-C entity. The GTP-C is carried over UDP transport, and it relies on the re-transmissions of unacknowledged requests. When a GTP-C entity experiences overload (or severe overload) the number of unacknowledged GTP-C messages increase exponentially and this leads to a node congestion or even node collapse. An overload or failure of a node further leads to an increase of the load on the other nodes in the network and in some cases into a network issue.

Listed below are some examples of GTP-C signaling based scenarios which lead to GTP-C overload:

- A traffic flood resulting from the failure of a network element, inducing a signaling spike.
- A traffic flood resulting from a large number of users performing TAU/RAU or from frequent transitions between idle and connected mode.
Overview

GTP-C load control and overload control are complimentary concepts which can be supported and activated independently on the network. This feature uses the existing EGTPC infrastructure to gather and distribute load and overload control information across session managers. In broad terms GTP-C load control can be described as a preventive action and GTP-C overload control can be described as a corrective action. A GTP-C entity is termed as overloaded when it operates over and above its signaling capacity resulting in a diminished performance (including impacts to handling of incoming and outgoing traffic).

The advantages of enabling GTP-C load control are listed below:

- Load control allows better balancing of the session load; this prevents an GTP-C overload scenario.
- Load control enables a GTP-C entity (for example SGW or PGW) to send its load information to a GTP-C peer (for example a MME or SGSN, ePDG, TWAN) to adaptively balance the session load across entities supporting the same function (for example SGW cluster) according to their effective load. The load information reflects the operating status of the resources of the GTP-C entity.
- Load control does not trigger overload mitigation actions even if the GTP-C entity reports a high load.

The advantages of enabling GTP-C overload control are listed below:

- Overload control prevents a GTP-C entity from becoming or being overloaded to gracefully reduce its incoming signaling load by instructing its GTP-C peers to reduce sending traffic according to its available signaling capacity to successfully process the traffic.
- Overload control aims at shedding the incoming traffic as close to the traffic source as possible when an overload has occurred.

Operational Benefits of GTP-C Load and Overload Control Support on MME:

- Improved load distribution on SGW and PGW this in turn reduces the occurrence of PGW/SGW overload.
• The MME pro-actively advertises its overload information so that the peer nodes SGW/PGW can reduce the traffic.
• The MME can reduce the traffic towards the peer SGW/PGW if they are overloaded.

Relationships to Other Features

This feature utilizes the existing EGTPC infrastructure to gather and distribute load and overload control information across session managers.

How it Works

This section describes the detailed working mechanism of this feature.

Limitations

• APN level load and overload control is not supported

Standards Compliance

The GTP-C load and overload control feature complies with the following standards:
• 3GPP TS 29.807, version 12.0.0
• 3GPP TS 29.274, version 13.3.0 and beyond

Configuring GTP-C Load and Overload Control on MME

The following configuration procedures are used to configure the GTP-C load and overload control feature.

Configuring GTP-C Load or Overload Control Profile

The `associate` command associates or disassociates supportive services and policies with an MME service. New keywords `gtpc-load-control-profile` and `gtpc-overload-control-profile` are introduced in the `associate` command to configure the GTP-C load control profile and GTP-C overload control profile.

```
configure
context context_name
  mme-service service_name
    associate { { egtp-service egtp_svc_name | egtp-sv-service egtp_sv_svc_name
               | foreign-plmn-guti-mgmt-db db_name | gtpc-load-control-profile profile_name
               | gtpc-overload-control-profile profile_name | henbgw-mgmt-db db_name |
               hss-peer-service hss_svc_name | ipne-service ipne_svc_name | location-service
               location_svc_name | lte-emergency-profile profile_name |
               network-global-mme-id-mgmt-db | s102-service s102_svc_name [ context
               context_name ] | sbc-service sbc_svc_name | sctp-param-template template_name |
```
Configuring Usage of GTP-C Load Information in SGW/PGW Selection

The gw-selection command configures the parameters controlling the gateway selection process. A new keyword \texttt{gtp-weight} is introduced as a part of this feature which is the weight value calculated from the Load Control Information received from the GTP peers.

\begin{verbatim}
configure
call-control-profile profile_name
   [remove] gw-selection {co-location [weight [prefer{ sgw | pgw }]]|gtp-weight | pgw weight | sgw weight | topology [ weight [ prefer { sgw | pgw } ] ] }
exit
\end{verbatim}

Notes:

- The option enables the MME selection of SGW and PGW based on the advertised load control information.
- This configuration can be applied selectively to subscribers.
- This CLI is not enabled by default.

Configuring MME Manager and IMSI Manager CPU Utilization to Calculate Overload Factor

This new command allows the user to configure the inclusion of CPU utilization of Session Manager, Demux Manager, IMSI Manager and MME Manager under GTP-C overload control profile for overload factor calculation.

\begin{verbatim}
configure
gtpc-overload-control-profile profile_name
cpu-utilization {sessmgr-card | demuxmgr-card | imsimgr | mmemgr}
no cpu-utilization
\end{verbatim}
**Sample Configuration**

```plaintext
configure
call-control-profile profile_name
gw-selection topology weight prefer pgw
gw-selection gtp-weight
exit
operator-policy name policy_name
  associate call-control-profile profile_name
exit
lte-policy
  subscriber-map map_name
    precedence .match-criteria all operator-policy-name policy_name
  exit
exit
context ingress
mme-service service_name
  bind sl-mme ipv4-address x.x.x.x
  sl-mme sctp port xx
  mme-id group-id xxxxx mme-codex
  plmn-id mcc xxx mnc xxx
  associate egtp-service egtp_mme context ingress
  associate mme-hss-service mme_hss context hss
  associate subscriber-map map_name
  associate gtpc-load-control-profile profile_name
  associate gtpc-overload-control-profile profile_name
  exit
exit
end
```
Verifying the Configuration

The configuration of this feature can be verified using the following show commands.

Execute the `show configuration` command to verify the configuration, the part of the output related to Call Control Profile displays the following parameters based on the configuration:

- **gw-selection: gtp-weight**

  The parameter `gtp-weight` identifies GTP-C load based SGW or PGW selection.

Execute the `show configuration` command to verify the configuration, the part of the output related to MME Service Configuration displays the following parameters based on the configuration:

- **associate gtpc-load-control-profile profile_name**
- **associate gtpc-overload-control-profile profile_name**

Execute the `show configuration` command to verify the configuration, the part of the output related to GTP-C overload control profile Configuration displays the following parameters based on the configuration:

- **cpu-utilization: sessmgr-card demuxmgr-card imsimgr mmemgr**

  The `cpu-utilization` is used to configure the inclusion of CPU utilization of Session Manager, Demux Manager, IMSI Manager and MME Manager under GTP-C overload control profile for overload factor calculation.

Monitoring and Troubleshooting the GTP-C Load and Overload Control Feature

This section provides information regarding show commands and bulk statistics for this feature.

Troubleshooting

Listed below are the troubleshooting steps for any issues encountered during configuration or functioning of the GTP-C Load and Overload control feature:

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**Important**

All configuration parameters newly added will be recovered during Session Manager re-starts. The LCI/OCI information of SGW/PGW peer nodes are recovered during Session Manager restarts.

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**Step 1:**

If the CLI commands required to enable the feature are not visible, ensure that the GTP-C Load and Overload feature control license is present and enabled.

**Step 2:**

If MME selection of SGW and PGW based on load control information is not working, verify the following:

- Ensure that the load control profile is associated with the MME service, for more information see the section on “Configuring GTP-C Load or Overload Control Profile” in this feature chapter.
• Ensure that the overload control profile is associated with the MME service, for more information see
  the section on “Configuring GTP-C Load or Overload Control Profile” in this feature chapter.

• Verify if the load and overload feature is associated and feature is enabled, execute the show commands
  show mme-service all and show egtp-service name service_name.

• Verify if the MME has started learning the LCI/OCI information from peer nodes using following show
  commands:

  
  show egtpc peers
  show egtpc peers sessmgrs
  show egtpc peers address x.x.x.x
  show egtpc statistics sgw-address x.x.x.x
  show egtpc statistics remote-peer-address x.x.x.x
  show subscribers summary mme-service service-name sgw-address x.x.x.x
  show subscribers summary mme-service service-name pgw-address x.x.x.x
  show egtpc statistics egtp-service service-name

  
  • Ensure the configuration to consider LCI/OCI information in node selection is enabled. For more
  information see the section “Configuration to use GTPC load information in SGW/PGW selection” in
  this feature chapter. Execute the show command show call-control-profile full all to verify the same.

• For the GTP dynamic weight (that is, LCI/OCI) to work in case of DNS based node selection, following
  DNS weight based configuration should be present in the call control profile.

  • In case of SGW selection:

    configure
    call-control-profile profile_name
      gw-selection sgw weight
    end

  Please refer to the section "DNS SGW selection with Load Control Information" in this feature
  chapter.

  • In case of PGW selection:

    configure
    call-control-profile profile_name
      gw-selection pgw weight
    end

  Please refer to the section "DNS PGW selection with Load Control Information" in this feature
  chapter.

  • During Topology based selection:

    configure
    call-control-profile profile_name
      gw-selection topology [ weight [ prefer { pgw|sgw } ] ]
    end

  Please refer to the section "Topology" in this feature chapter.

• When Co-location is enabled:

  configure
  call-control-profile profile_name
gw-selection co-location [ weight [ prefer { pgw|sgw } ] ]
end

Please refer to the section “Co-location” in this feature chapter.

**Step 3:**
If the MME Selection of SGW using DNS does not result in expected session distribution on the SGW.
- Ensure that Steps 1 and 2 are working as explained earlier in this section.
- Collect the data for following show commands at regular intervals of time to observe if the distribution is happening or not:
  
  ```
  show egtpc peers
  show egtpc peers sessmgrs
  show egtpc peers address x.x.x.x
  show egtpc statistics sgw-address x.x.x.x
  show egtpc statistics remote-peer-address x.x.x.x
  show subscribers summary mme-service service-name sgw-address x.x.x.x
  ```

**Step 4:**
If the MME Selection of PGW using DNS does not result in expected session distribution on the SGW.
- Ensure that Steps 1 and 2 are working as explained earlier in this section.
- Collect the data for following show commands at regular intervals of time to observe if the distribution is happening or not:
  
  ```
  show egtpc peers
  show egtpc peers sessmgrs
  show egtpc peers address x.x.x.x
  show egtpc statistics remote-peer-address x.x.x.x
  show subscribers summary mme-service service-name pgw-address x.x.x.x
  show egtpc statistics egtp-service service-name
  ```

**Step 5:**
If MME Selection of SGW and PGW using topology is not resulting in expected session distribution on SGW/PGW.
- Ensure that Steps 1 and 2 are working as explained earlier in this section.
- Collect the data for following show commands at regular intervals of time to observe if the distribution is happening or not:
  
  ```
  show egtpc peers sessmgrs
  show egtpc peers address x.x.x.x
  show egtpc statistics sgw-address x.x.x.x
  show egtpc statistics remote-peer-address x.x.x.x
  show subscribers summary mme-service service-name sgw-address x.x.x.x
  show subscribers summary mme-service service-name pgw-address x.x.x.x
  show egtpc statistics egtp-service service-name
  ```
Step 6:

If the MME is not reporting overload control information, follow the steps described below:

- Ensure that Step 1 is working as explained earlier in this section.
- Ensure that the overload control profile is associated with the MME Service. For more information see the section “Configuring GTP-C Load or Overload Control Profile” in this feature chapter.
- Execute the following show commands to verify if the feature is enabled:
  - show mme-service all
  - show egtp-service name egtp_mme
- Verify the parameters configured through the commands inclusion-frequency, message-prioritization, overload-control-handling, overload-control-publishing, self-protection-behavior, tolerance, throttling-behavior, validity-period and weightage under the GTPC Overload Profile Configuration Mode. Execute the following show command to verify the same:
  - show gtpc-overload-control-profile profile_name