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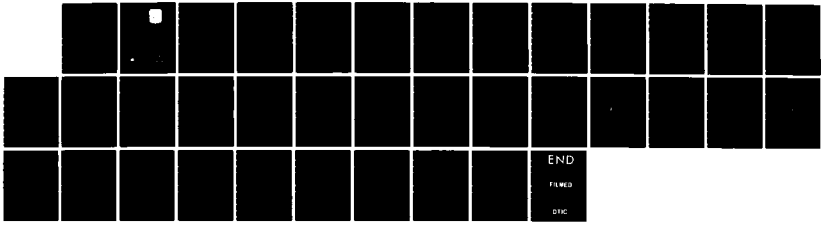

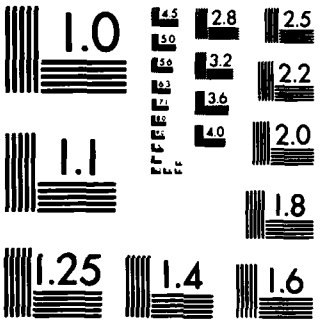

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THE AIRLIFT REQUEST SYSTEM: AN ENIGMA UNRAVELED

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ERIC E. WHEATON
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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The airlift request system has evolved over the years and has experienced major modifications both in the services that operate the system and procedures, terminology and organizational structure that make-up the system internally. As a result disconnects have surfaced, particularly in the regulations that detail the system and during exercises when the system is put to the test. Additionally, disagreements between the US Army and US Air Force prevent rewrite of the promulgating regulations thereby exacerbating the problem. This study examines those disconnects, obsolete regulations and differences and recommendations are presented to solve those problems.

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM

THE AIRLIFT REQUEST SYSTEM: AN ENIGMA UNRAVELED

INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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17 May 1984

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ABSTRACT

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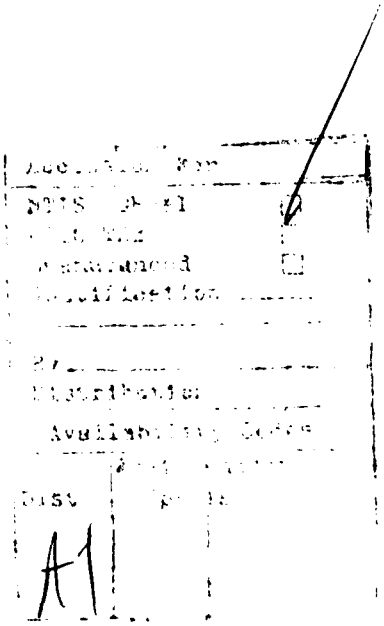
The Airlift Request System has evolved over the years, and has experienced major modifications both in the services that operate the system and procedures, terminology and organizational structure that make up the system internally. As a result disconnects have surfaced, particularly in the regulations that detail the system and during exercises when the system is put to the test. Additionally, disagreements between the US Army and US Air Force prevent rewrite of the promulgating regulations thereby exacerbating the problem. This study examines those disconnects, obsolete regulations and differences, and recommendations are presented to solve those problems.

PREFACE

This Individual Study Project was designed to present the major elements of the Airlift Request System (ARS) in an effort to remove the clutter that often surrounds a complex and often maligned military system. It describes the system, describes the overall system in which the ARS functions, using Europe as the example then provides recommended solutions to this author's view of the problem.



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GLOSSARY

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABCCC	Airborne Battlefield Command Control Center
ACC	Air Component Commander
AFM	Air Force Manual
ALCC	Airlift Control Center
ALCE	Airlift Control Element
ALO	Air Liaison Officer
APCC	Aerial Port Control Center
ARFOR	Army Forces Commander
ARS	Airlift Request System
ASOC	Air Support Operations Center
ASRT	Airborne Support Radar Team
ATAF	Allied Tactical Air Forces
ATOC	Air Terminal Operations Center
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
CINC	Commander in Chief
CINCMAC	Commander in Chief, Military Airlift Command
COMALF	Commander of Airlift Forces
CONUS	Continental United States
COSCOM	Corps Support Command
CP	Command Post
CPX	Command Post Exercise
CRAF	Civil Reserve Air Fleet
CRC	Control and Reporting Center
CRP	Control and Reporting Post
CS	Combat Support
CSS	Combat Service Support
CTO	Corps Transportation Officer
DISCOM	Division Support Command
DMMC	Divisional Materiel Management Center
DOD	Department of Defense
DP	Departure Point
DTO	Division Transportation Officer
EAC	Echelon Above Corps
EDRE	Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercises
FAC	Forward Air Controller
FAST	Forward Area Support Team
FEBA	Forward Edge of the Battle Area
FM	Field Manual (Army)
FSE	Fire Support Elements
FTX	Field Training Exercise
JACC	Joint Airborne Communications Center
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JFC	Joint Force Commander
JMC	Joint Movement Center
JTF	Joint Task Force
MAC	Military Airlift Command

MACAF	Military Airlift Command Numbered Air Force
MCC	Movement Control Center
MCT	Movement Control Teams
MMC	Materiel Management Center
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
SOC	Sector Operations Center
STANAG	Standardization Agreement
TA	Theater Army
TAC	Tactical Air Command
TACC	Tactical Control Center
TACCP	Tactical Command Post
TACP	Tactical Air Control Party
TACS	Tactical Air Control System
TALO	Tactical Airlift Liaison Officer
TAMCA	Theater Army Movement Control Agency
TAMCC	Theater Army Movement Control Center
TAR	Tactical Air Reconnaissance
TOC	Tactical Operations Center
TOE	Table of Organization and Equipment
TOT	Time Over Target
TUOC	Tactical Unit Operations Center
UNAAF	Unified Action Armed Forces
USAF	United States Air Force
WOC	Wing Operations Center
ZM	Zone Marker

INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempt to solve a riddle of just how does the Airlift Request System (ARS) really work and, attempt to reconnect the functional elements of the system explaining the intricate and, in some places, disfunctional system for handling airlift requests.

The ARS as it exists today only vaguely resembles the system described in the promulgating regulations. Specifically, the system has gone through several iterations as a result of organizational restructuring of participating forces, varying degrees of force modernization and magnitudes of command, control and communication changes and improvements that were not imaginable when the directives were published. Therefore, the two primary joint regulations, AFM 2-50/FM 100-27, US Army/US Air Force Doctrine For Airlift Operations, and AFM 2-51/FM 57-1, US Army/US Air Force Doctrine for Airborne Operations, no longer accurately describe the system that has evolved. That is understandable since both joint manuals were written and distributed to the field in 1967. Seventeen years of changes have crept into the ARS which partly explains the problems that exist today.

This study will review as a primer, the airlift request system using the European system as a working model, examine the governing joint regulations with a focus on their impact on the system and briefly look at the airlift assets themselves in order to better understand the critical need for efficiency in the airlift system and its application today. The Tactical Air Control System (TACS) will be examined since it is an integral part of the air operations in any theater as it provides

the framework in which the airlift system operates. Following the TACS discussion will be the crux of this study, a detailed look at the several problem areas that have had the greatest impact on the system. Recommendations for correcting those deficiencies will then be presented in an effort to improve the overall effectiveness of a very complex and vital part of this nation's backbone of deterrence, the airlift system of the US Air Force.

A PRIMER ON THE AIRLIFT REQUEST SYSTEM

Before a detailed analysis of the airlift request system itself is undertaken, an overview of just how the system interfaces with the air operations within a theater is necessary. Not only will this provide a basic understanding of the complete air organization but will put the specific subject into perspective relative to and within other air systems. This study will focus on the European system for two reasons. First, and most logically, it is the overseas theater our national command authorities place the highest strategic importance for securing our national objectives. Second, it is the most lift demanding theater we must plan and train for. No other theater has as much lift programmed into its various war plans with the same high priority.

The European theater's US airlift needs are satisfied primarily by the strategic airlift fleet (for inter-theater airlift), of military airlift command, 70 C-5As, 234 C-141s and a Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) of 330 long-range commercial aircraft, of which 215 are passenger and 115 are cargo configured. These figures do not include those aircraft assigned to training units nor do they include the 50 C-5s on order.[1] Strategic Air Command's 14 KC-10A tanker/cargo aircraft

assigned and 46 on order may satisfy some airlift requirements, however, their primary mission is tanker support for air refueling operations.[2]

For this study, inter-theater and strategic are considered synonymous as is intra-theater and tactical. To refine this, even though the C-130 is capable of flying inter-continental, its assigned to and is under the operational control of each theater's commander-in-chief while strategic airlift forces remain under the operational control of Military Airlift Command's CINC worldwide.

Intra-theater airlift is handled primarily by the 512 C-130s in the Active, Reserve and Air National Guard inventory. Research and Development funding for the new C-17 remains budgeted, however, Initial Operational Capability (IOC) of 1992 continues as the earliest that aircraft can be expected to help relieve the current shortfall. Airlift buys of the on-order 50 C-5Bs and further CRAF enhancement expect to improve the airlift capability dramatically.

Headquarters European Command (HQ US EUCOM) provides planning and execution guidance in addition as acting as coordinator for all US forces in Europe. These forces are: US Army Europe (USAREUR), US Air Forces Europe (USAFE) and US Naval Forces Europe (USNAVEUR) and links with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for reinforcement of Europe.[5]

Lift responsibilities to the theater are divided primarily by types of lift. Army's Military Traffic Management Command (MTC) is responsible for the majority of movements within the continental United States (CONUS), Military Airlift Command manages the airlift, both strategic (inter-theater) and tactical (intra-theater) while sea lift is the responsibility of the Navy's Military Sealift Command.[6]

Once the strategic lift flow is established, the airlift system within the theater becomes fully activated. Each of the debarkation ports, be they air or sea, have movement specialist teams assigned to coordinate the priority decisions as they are made and passed down through each component commander from HQ USEUCOM. Those decisions are based on primarily two major factors, first, the tactical, or intra-theater movement plan as prepared by EUCOM in concert with each component, and second, the priority of movement needs as established by the theater commander or NATO Standard Agreement (STANAG). In the case of EUCOM, the JCS guidance for passenger and cargo movement priorities are published in JCS Pub 15.

At this juncture, two aspects of this study require definition. They are, first, a definition of cargo lift capabilities of the various airlift aircraft to facilitate a better understanding of limitations on cargo handling, particularly for tactical operations and, second, a sufficient description of the JCS guidance for airlift priorities to further aid in understanding the complexity of the airlift system.

Cargo lift definitions are important because of the vast differences in airlift capabilities of the airlift aircraft. The strategic movement plan, published as the Time Phased Force Deployment List (TPFDL), is essentially a cargo/passenger/timing/vehicle flow diagram, as is the intra-theater movement plan. However, a key element to both is the necessity to match cargo to vehicle. All cargo cannot be carried by all aircraft. Cargo is generally described as either outsize or oversize. By definition, outsize cargo is of such dimension (not normally weight but girth) that only a C-5 aircraft is capable of loading and transporting. Similarly, oversize cargo is that which a C-141

and C-130 is capable of carrying. A C-5 can, of course, carry outsized and oversized cargo but a C-130 cannot carry outsize just as a C-141 cannot carry outsize cargo. As a result, judicious use of critical airlift is essential and in theater, maximum use of surface transportation becomes mandatory, particularly if delivery time is not critical. A percentage of theater airlift capability is allocated to each component commander and integral to that allocation is having a working and workable priority system for allocating that airlift. That brings us to a detailed look at the JCS and NATO published priority system.

JCS Pub 15, Ch 1, outlines the priority system governing movement precedence dictating that priorities used must be related to the urgency of need of the unit. The following priorities are established for non-channel (channel traffic is a pre-established air route system designed to operate into designated aerial ports maintaining an airlift flow throughout the theater) airlift.

a. Priority 1A

1. A Presidential-directed mission. Missions in support of the White House and approved by the Military Assistant to the President will be identified after the priority; i.e., Priority 1A (1) COLD BANNER. Missions in support of the Vice President/Secret Service will be identified by the nickname COLD SILVER. The US Air Force project officer for Presidential flight support will be the only source for assigning priority to COLD BANNER and COLD SILVER missions.

2. US Forces and other forces or activities in combat designated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

3. Programs which have been approved by the President for top national priority. NOTE: Such programs are set forth in the BRICK-BAT 01 Category of the latest DOD Master Urgency List (Enclosure 1 to DOD Instruction 4410.3).

4. Special Weapons.

b. Priority 1B.

1. Missions specifically directed by the Office of the Secretary of Defense or the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

2. Units, projects, or plans specifically approved for implementation by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

c. Priority 2A.

1. US Forces or activities and foreign forces or activities which are being deployed or are positioned and maintained in a state of readiness for immediate combat or direct combat or direct combat support.

2. Industrial production activities engaged in repair, modification, or manufacture of primary weapons, equipment, and supplies to prevent an impending work stoppage or to reinstitute production in the event a stoppage has already occurred or when the material is required to accomplish emergency or controlling jobs.

d. Priority 2B.

1. JCS-directed exercises.

2. JCS-coordinated exercises.

e. Priority 3A.

1. Readiness or evaluation tests when airlift is required in support of unit inspection or evaluation tests, including emergency deployment readiness exercises (EDRE).

2. US Forces or activities and foreign forces or activities which are maintained in a state of readiness to deploy for combat and other activities essential to combat forces.

f. Priority 3B.

1. Service training when airborne operations or airlift support is integral to combat readiness (e.g., field training exercises, proficiency airdrop, and air assault).

2. Combat support training (e.g., flare drops, unconventional warfare activities, and JACC/CP).

3. Service schools requiring airborne, airdrop, or air transportability training as a part of the program of instruction.

4. Airdrop/air transportability or aircraft certification of new or modified equipment.

g. Priority 4A.

1. US Forces and foreign forces or activities which are planned for employment in support of approved war plans and support activities essential to such forces.

2. Static loading exercises for those units specifically tasked to perform air transportability missions.

h. Priority 4B.

1. Other US Forces or activities and foreign forces or activities.

2. Other non-DOD activities which cannot be accommodated by commercial airlift.

3. Static display for public and military events.[7]

The priority system spans twenty-one levels of urgency, considering each sub-set as a different level and that is how users are expected to apply the priorities. The highest priority for combat operations is 1A2. Troops in contact (being actively engaged in combat operations) enjoy the second highest movement priority, second only to Presidential directed operations. Note priority 2A1 and consider both its relatively high priority in the overall scheme of the system plus what activities or forces that merit such a level; deployed or ready to deploy forces for immediate combat or direct combat/support. In view of the twenty-one levels in the system and contemplating what forces or activities would make use of the system as published, its apparent every reinforcing unit, supply organization or service unit that required movement to the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA) in any kind of combat or

anticipated combat situation would logically and appropriately elevate its movement request priority to 2A1. With the number of forces required to move to Europe, particularly during the first thirty days of force build-up, the priority system could be taxed to the ultimate and would the instant airlift requirements exceed airlift capability.

In addition to the JCS established priority system, NATO has provided wartime air movement priority system for NATO forces. It is standard agreement (STANAG) 3631 (Edition 2), and the class of priorities is extracted verbatim.

> Subject to the approval of the Joint Task Force Commander or other higher authority, the following constitute(s) the standards for use in the evaluation and assignment of priorities for specific movements:
>
> a. Class 1 (IMMEDIATE). The movement of traffic which is required by an emergency so acute that precedence should be given over all other traffic and which should under no circumstances be delayed en route for other traffic.
>
> b. Class 2 (URGENT). The transportation of traffic which is of an urgent nature, to meet a deadline, for the accomplishment of an essential mission.
>
> c. Class 3 (ROUTINE). The transportation of traffic which is desirable but does not meet the requirements for movement as specific in Classes 1 or 2 above. This class of traffic comprises requirements which qualify for air movement but for which there is no deadline or immediate urgency.

Exemption

> The provisions apply only to logistic support operations provided with tactical airlift resources or those airlift resources assigned to and under control of the Joint Task Force Commander. However, nothing provided herein will preclude the Joint Task Force Commander or other appropriate higher authority from modifying or amending these instructions to meet the specific circumstances in which the operations are conducted.[8]

Now that we have looked at the European theater lift system in general, we will now turn to another facet of the air operations in Europe, the Tactical Air Control System (TACS). Following the TACS explanation, I will focus in on the airlift request system, the process and the agencies responsible at each level.

THE TACTICAL AIR CONTROL SYSTEM

During the early years of Viet Nam, General Curtis LeMay, as Air Force Chief of Staff, when advised by General Harkins, then Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) and Military Assistance Command Thailand (MACThai), that air power was not as responsive as it could and should be, elected to expand the Tactical Air Control System that had been instituted to control the air assists in the conflict. "Proper use of the TACS and a more direct method of processing requests would eliminate much of the delay."[9] Delays often prevented effective strikes against ambush forces choking major land lines of communication, placing increased emphasis on need for effective air cover. A Tactical Air Control System was in being in World War II and the Korean war but this example during the Viet Nam conflict provides the best example for discussion in this work. Specifically, the Tactical Air Control System provides the Air Force Component Commander (ACC) the structure to effectively manage all the air resources for the missions of counter air, air interdiction, close air support, tactical air reconnaissance, special operations and tactical airlift. A TACS organization is made up of key elements that, by virtue of their flexibility, allow expansion or contraction to handle varying degrees of force management. As described above in the early stages of the Viet Nam era, expansion was essential with additional resources being assigned to counter increased enemy

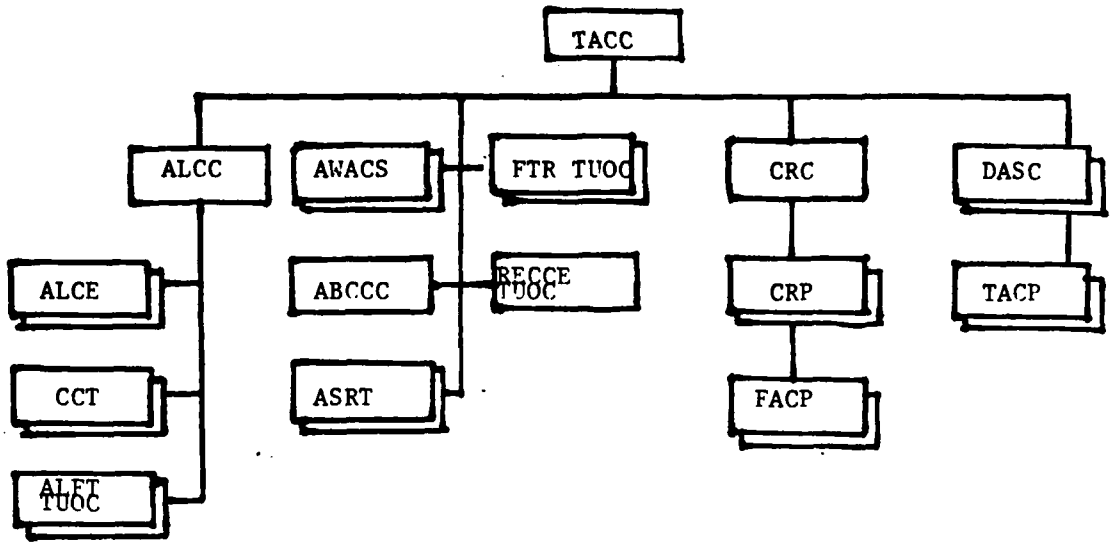

Figure 1: Tactical Air Control System[10]

activity and to better manage more air assets assigned to the theater. The TACS system is essentially the same system today with minor improvements resulting from technological advances in Command, Control and Communication. Figure 1 displays the key elements of the TACS as depicted in AFM 2-7. Since AFM 2-7 has been published, the DASC has been eliminated from the system as a link between the Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) and the Tactical Air Control Center (TACC).

The Air Force Component Commander exercises operational control over theater assigned airlift resources through the Commander of Airlift Forces (COMALF), the theater airlift manager designated by CINCMAC. The COMALF then insures the Airlift Control Center (ALCC) interfaces with the TACC. The TACC, as the senior air operations element of the TACS, is comm-linked with operations, logistics and intelligence centers/ staffs, upper and lateral headquarters, subordinate units to facilitate centralized control and decentralized execution of the air operation within the respective theaters. This is essentially a national organization description as described in AFM 2-7, however, it is very similar to the actual process used in our example theater, Europe.

The focus of this study is on the airlift elements, the airlift Tactical Unit Operations Center (ALFTTUOC), the Combat Control Team (CCT), and the Airlift Control Element (ALCE) directly under the Airlift Control Center (ALCC) shown in Figure 1. The other functional elements of the TACS are further detailed.

Surveillance and Airspace control activities are handled by the Control and Reporting Center (CRC), Control and Reporting Posts (CRPs) and Forward Air Control Posts (FACPs). Tactical Air Support Coordination and Control Functions are provided by Tactical Air Control Parties (TACPs) and Forward Air Controllers (FACs).

Airborne Surveillance and control is handled by the Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center (ABCCC), Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) and Airborne Support Radar Teams (ASRT).

Linked to the TACC is the Fighter Tactical Unit Operations Center (FTR TUOC) and Reconnaissance Tactical Unit Operations Center (RECCE TUOC). In the NATO environment, these activities are controlled by the Allied Tactical Air Forces (ATAF), The Allied Tactical Operations Centers (ATOC) and the Sector Operations Centers (SOC).[11]

Now that we have looked at the TAC system in which the airlift system functions and how the priorities of cargo movement affect the decision process, we will now concentrate on the major thesis of this study, the airlift request system.

The following description, using the European model as an example, examines the process for elevating a request for support by a battalion commander in the field and follow that request to completion.

The request from the battalion commanding officer comes initially as a routine request--generally a request forecast more than twenty-four hours in the future but could be as far out as thirty to sixty days. If

the request is generated as a result of a relatively short notice event, by accepted standards less than twenty-four hours, it is labeled an "immediate" or, in some cases depending upon the nature of the situation, an "immediate request of an emergency nature." The requester does not determine the mode of transportation for request satisfaction, but rather indicate time frame required. This in a sense begins forming a priority for the request by describing what is needed, when, for what purpose or short fall. That request is then forwarded to Division Material Management Center (DMMC). From there, it is forwarded to the Corps Support Command (COSCOM), Material Management Center (MMC). In a multi-corps environment, the Movement Control Agency (MCA) would take the request and forward it to the Joint Force Commanders' (JFC) agent. At each level, if surface transportation can handle the request, it never matures into an airlift request but is worked within the component command. If, however, the request cannot be satisfied by surface transportation and airlift appears to be the only method of transportation, the request is then validated by the JFC Agent and forwarded as a requirement. The requirement is then tasked to the appropriate flying unit through the system. Figure 2 graphically depicts the process as described above.

There are four component command airlift validators in Europe that are authorized to validate airlift requests to the Airlift Requirements Center (ARC), the agency that is responsible for common user airlift support; and they are: 4th Transportation Command MMC for the Army, CINCUSNAVEUR/N-4, US Navy, HQ USAFE/LGTAR for the Air Force (this is also the ARC) and the 322 Airlift Division (ALD)/TRR for MAC special mission support. MAC Special missions, for example, would be support

for natural disasters or in support of special actions like the US peacekeeping mission in Lebanon. In these cases, USEUCOM forms a crisis action team to monitor the airlift operations.

Once the component command has determined the request is a valid airlift request, it is forwarded to the ARC. The ARC reviews for adequate justification, realistic priorities and required delivery dates/times. The ARC then forwards the tasking to the 322 ALD, the theater ALCC, for execution.

In the final analysis, if agreement cannot be reached for priorities of airlift when requirements exceed capabilities, the USEUCOM Joint Transportation Board convenes to resolve the conflict. They determine which request receives the highest priority, which will be delayed and, in some cases, which will be denied airlift altogether. In the case of our example, the request left the unit, traveled up to the respective component staff agencies, was determined to be non-supportable by surface systems in adequate time to meet mission requirements and was then forwarded to the JFC Agency, the ARC. The ARC reviewed the request, determined it was an operable mission, confirmed the priority given the mission exceeded a currently scheduled mission and tasked the 322 ALD ALCC to execute the mission. A tactical airlift C-130 squadron under the operational control of the 322 ALD that was capable of accomplishing this requirement was tasked to do so by cancelling a lower priority mission and instead satisfy this requirement. Since airlift would be at a premium in any given period, assuming wartime conditions, it would be safe to assume airlift would be tasked 100 percent, therefore, preplanned (routine) missions would most likely be cancelled in favor of more urgent immediate ones. Of course, the more preplanned

PREPLANNED (ROUTINE) REQUEST ROUTING

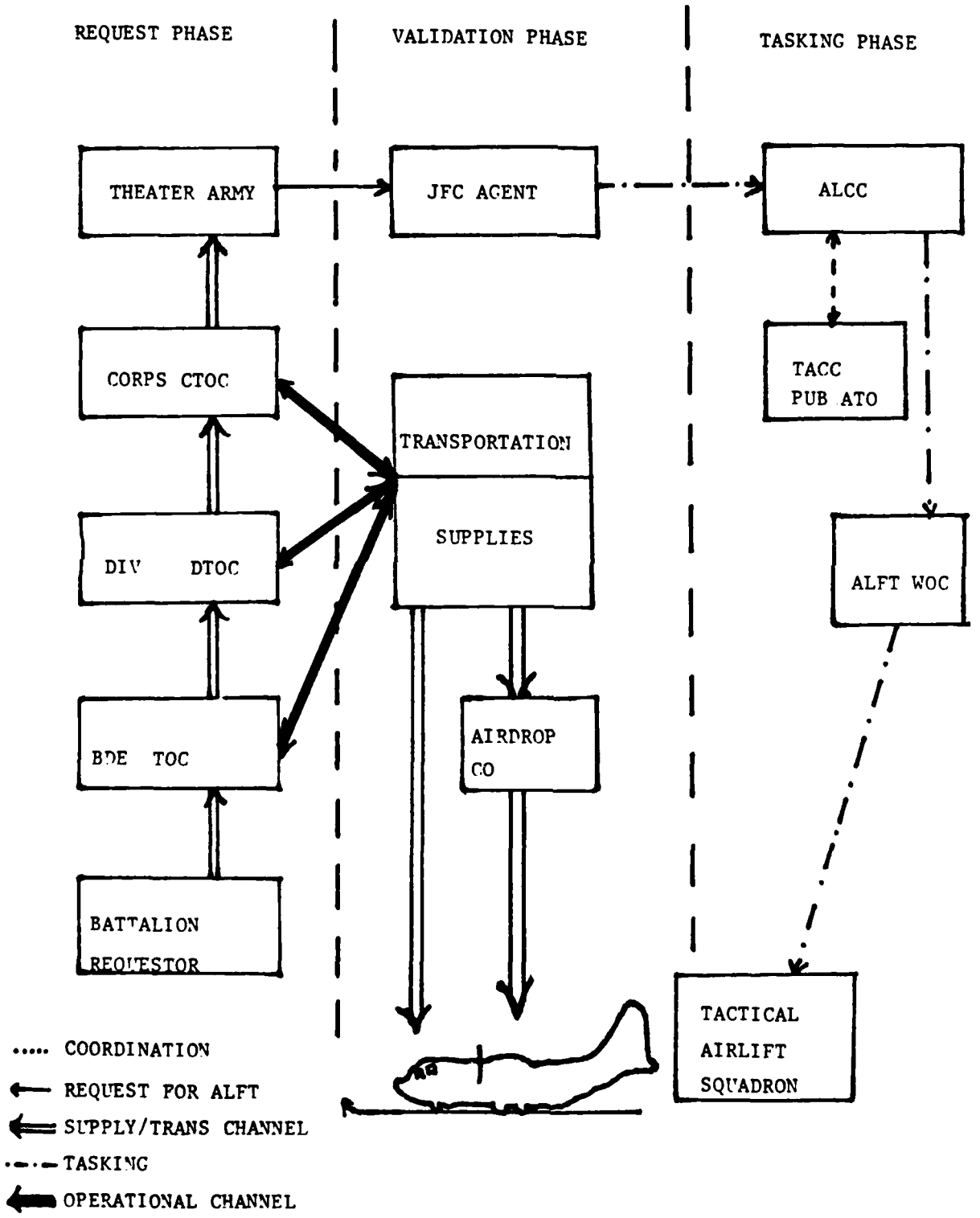

FIGURE 2

missions that are cancelled, their urgency increases, in essence, creating a "robbing Peter to pay Paul" scenario.

At this juncture, definitions of the types of missions should be helpful to more clearly present the problems that often arise concerning handling airlift mission requests and satisfying known requirements in a timely manner.

Specifically, according to the current joint Air Force/Army AFM 2-50/FM 100-27 dated 1967, there are two types of requests, routine and emergency. When these requests are validated they may be satisfied by corresponding airlift missions, preplanned and immediate respectively. However, as is often the case, the system has evolved, as seen previously in this study, and the terms used in the field have changed. An Air Force regulation, AFM 2-7, dated 1979, relabeled the requests to that of the mission--dropping routine and emergency in favor of preplanned and immediate.

Regardless of the label, each request followed essentially the same channel as before and the mission was flown based upon validated priority and availability of aircraft. For example, the previously called routine, later dubbed preplanned by the Air Force, was based on known, scheduled requirements in accordance with the preplanned programs--generally up to one to three months in advance. They could be scheduled as few as twenty-four hours in advance but never less than that. Otherwise, the request and mission would be in support of unanticipated, urgent or priority requirements, hence the immediate label. This relabeling by the users in the system without formally changing the joint regulations creates friction in the system that will be discussed in more detail later in this paper.

The following definitions are extracts from the Air Force recommendations to the proposed joint AFM 2-50/FM 100-27.

a. Preplanned Airlift Missions. Within the theater of operations, a requirement may exist to provide rapid, dependable airlift of personnel, cargo, mail, and courier material on a regular basis. These airlift missions are based on known or projected requirements and are programmed in advance. The amount of time required to coordinate preplanned airlift support is established by the COMALF based on operational requirements and the capability of available airlift resources. Preplanned airlift support is available to components of the joint force in accordance with the apportionment provided by the JFC. Tactical operations and special missions use preplanned airlift support when sufficient time is available to schedule necessary assets.

b. Immediate Airlift Missions. Immediate airlift missions result from unanticipated, urgent, or priority requirements. To meet these requirements, the ALCC may provide aircraft on a quick reaction basis at designated onload locations. Also, immediate airlift requests may be filled by diverting or cancelling preplanned missions or be generating a standby capability. (See AFM 2-7.) An airlift mission of an emergency nature may use a preplanned airlift sortie, but usually is filled by an immediate mission using the highest priority established by the theater commander. Airlift missions of an emergency nature are those critical to the accomplishment of the tactical mission or the survival of a unit and should be attempted at the required time if at all possible.[12]

The request process for preplanned and immediate requests are quite similar, however, for immediate requests, an alerting net is activated by the tactical airlift liaison officer (TALO) as depicted in Figure 3. The TALO is a member of the TACP and is assigned to brigade and higher echelons. His function is to provide technical tactical airlift operations expertise to assigned Army organizations. Simultaneous to the battalion, brigade, corps and theater Army chain of processing, the TALO notifies the ALCC of impending need. When a requirement is received

IMMEDIATE (EMERGENCY) REQUEST ROUTING

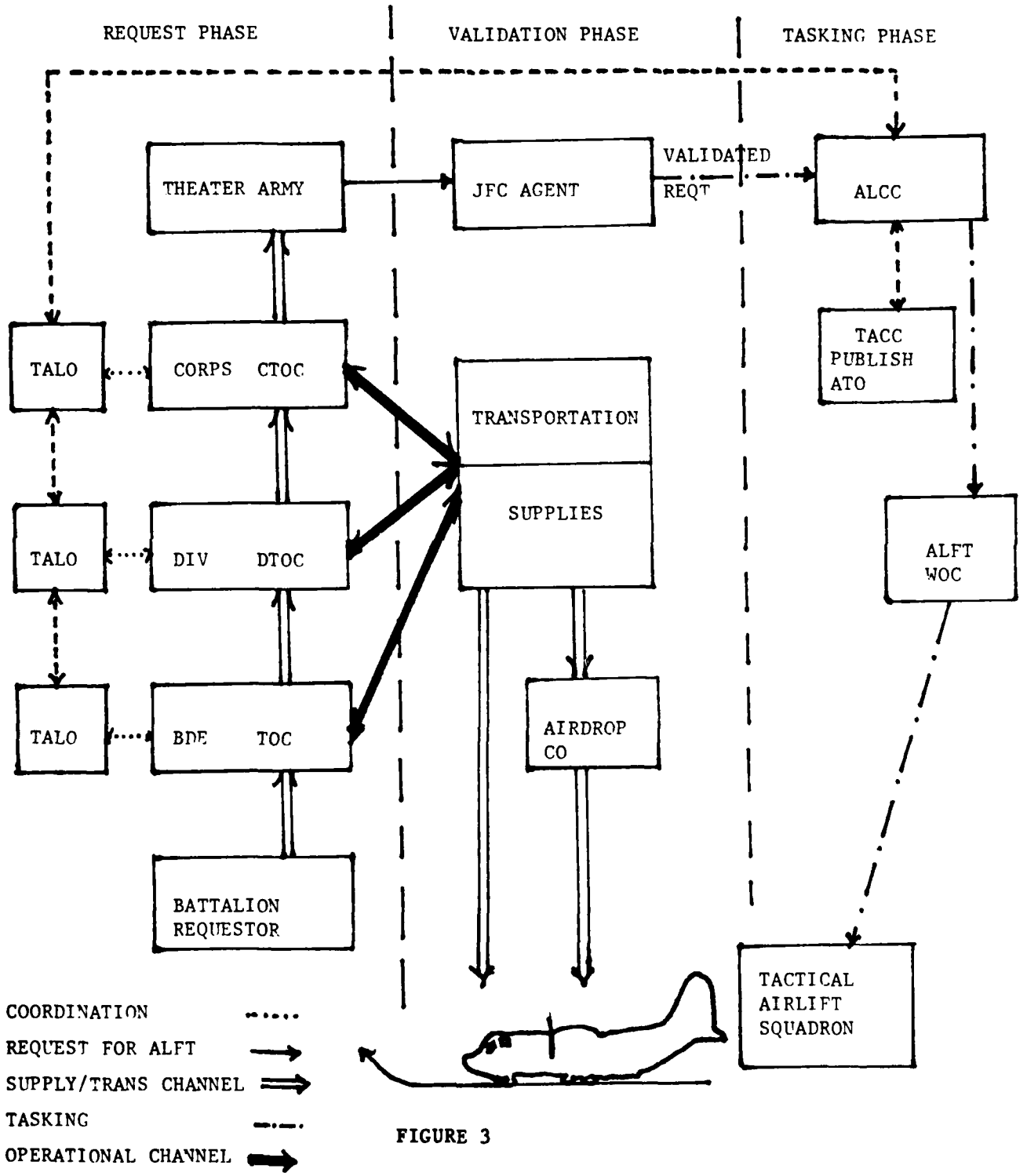

FIGURE 3

from the JFC Agent, in Europe's case, the ARC, aircraft and crews have already been alerted. Figure 3 depicts an immediate request routing.

PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE ARS

The system discussed earlier, both the TACS and the ARS, as they have evolved over the past decade are somewhat different than as described in the directives. Enough variations have surfaced, causing disconnects during exercises and most certainly would be the root of serious problems if we ever deployed to Europe and attempted to shift to a wartime footing, exercising the system as it is published today. It is often said the next conflict will be a "come as you are" affair, with precious little time available to adjust our peacetime procedures to those mandated by war. A rewrite of AFM 2-50/FM 100-27 is in coordination at this writing and will incorporate AFM 2-51/FM 57-1, US Air Force/US Army Doctrine for Airborne Operations, with an update to AFM 2-7. Unfortunately, the joint regulation draft has been coordination for over twelve months and agreement has not been achieved. Other than differences encompassing wording or phrasing, a major disagreement centers on airlift request definitions and procedures.

As stated earlier, the US Air Force believes that only two types of requests exist or are necessary; preplanned and immediate. They state that to label a request as emergency, a third and unnecessary request will be created. See Figure 4 for a matrix table displaying the various terms and proponent service/regulation. Additionally, since a different channel for a more urgent request is not used but only a sense of urgency is applied, it is not a third-type request but rather a priority of mission that is being presented.

REQUEST SYSTEM ISSUE MATRIX	ROUTINE REQUEST	EMERGENCY REQUEST	PREPLANNED REQUEST	IMMEDIATE REQUEST	IMMEDIATE REQUEST OF AN EMERGENCY NATURE
CURRENT FM 100-27/ AFM 2-50 DATE: 1967	xxxx	xxxx			
AFM 2-7 DATE: 1979			xxxx	xxxx	
ARMY VERSION (DRAFT) FM 100-27/AFM 2-14		xxxx	xxxx	xxxx	
AIR FORCE (MAC) RECOMMENDATIONS TO DRAFT			xxxx	xxxx	xxxx

FIGURE 4

The Army argues differently. It is their contention that a different channel does exist, that is, preplanned and immediate requests are to be worked up through strictly Army channels and it is the emergency request that will go to the TALO through the pre-alert radio network to the ALCC. Additionally, since twenty-four hours is the accepted cut-off between immediate and pre-planned requests, they advocate a cut-off of six hours be used to differentiate between emergency and immediate requests. That is, requests that must be satisfied within six hours should be labeled emergency, between six and twenty-four, immediate, and more than twenty-four hours, preplanned.

These differences in concept are not limited to theoretical discussions concerning the rewording of a new regulation. Historically, the regulations have not kept pace with the system evolutions but rather have been used to describe how the system use to be, much as they do today. Most likely this is because they do not have the highest priority for scarce action officers to make the necessary changes and

also because of differences between notional systems as depicted in regulations compared to working systems in each theater of operations.

An example of those differences was illustrated during a recent US Central Command (USCENTCOM) joint exercise, Gallant Knight 83 (GK-83), with XVIII Airborne Corps participating. Representatives from USCENTCOM Joint Management Center and XVIII Airborne Corps agreed to follow procedures depicted in Figure 3. The preplanning meetings surfaced the need to streamline the request system and by simultaneously working the requests through both operations and logistics levels/channels of coordination, the respective TALOs would be alerted to advise the ALCC of the impending mission. The mission must be and was validated by the JFC Agent, in this case, the Joint Management Center (JMC), prior to tasking the ALCC with the mission. However, since the ALCC had been alerted by the ARFOR TALO, precious minutes would be saved by using the TALOs.

During exercises, particularly Command Post exercises (CPXs) but even field training exercises (FTXs), airlift capability generally provided in volume nearly equal to requirements. This is not very realistic particularly in the European and Central Command theaters where lift is so essential to meet supply/resupply demands. Therefore, even though the airlift request system is exercised routinely, it is only partially tested. The priority system is not fully pressed since airlift is rarely over-tasked. To do so would limit valuable training for user forces at great expense.

The Commander Airlift Force's (COMALF) in his after action report for GK-83 highlighted the difference in thinking between the services concerning the preplanned and immediate requests. It was not surprising to find in the COMALF's after action report recommendations for correcting the current (but woefully outdated) regulations with a clearer

picture of just how mission requests should be labeled. The report states

> An airlift mission of an emergency nature may either be preplanned or immediate mission and will be given the highest priority established by the theater commander. They are considered critical. . . . The key here is that an airlift mission of an emergency nature is a priority of 'airlift movement' as opposed to a type of airlift request.

And that is the crux of the argument that separates the two services. The US Army advocates breaking out the emergency mission from the others, using as its critical argument a different channel for the request (going through the TALO for emergency requests only) and that the requirement must be satisfied within six hours to prevent unacceptable loss of people/materials and/or failure or an assigned mission will result.

When the Army proponents for the ARS revision recommended the above, the Air Force in a 13 September 1983 response to the Army draft of AFM 2-14/FM 100-27 stated

> There is not and should not be a third type of request for missions of an emergency nature. There are only two types of requests--preplanned and immediate. Despite the critical nature, emergency missions must still be evaluated within the priority system established by the theater commander.

The Air Force position is that all requests are either preplanned or immediate and if a mission is of an emergency nature, an immediate request should be submitted (with the understanding that it must be validated and given appropriate priority by the ARC in Europe or JMC in USCENTCOM) and will most likely be flown in lieu of either a preplanned or immediate mission already scheduled. Predominate factors in that decision are port of embarkation, load, location, response time of available aircrew and aircraft, etc.

Coupled with the terminology problems in the ARS of today is the priority system as it is currently stated in JCS Pub 15, Ch. 1. In this author's opinion, they are too general and they establish combat priorities with no published method to break out urgency differences.

In Europe, the Joint Transportation Board meets to resolve disagreement over airlift priorities, however, since high intensity combat will most assuredly overtax available airlift, particularly intra-theater assets, to pull key decision makers in to make movement decisions is not only ill advisable but a misapplication of critical resources particularly when those type decisions can be predetermined with a more comprehensive priority system. The USEUCOM Joint Transportation Board is chaired by the USEUCOM S-4 with the J-3 and J-5 on the board. Each component commander is represented also.

NEED FOR EFFICIENCY

If any system must operate at peak efficiency under adverse conditions, it is the airlift request system. Numerous studies in the last two decades have repeatedly highlighted the airlift shortfall, both tactically and strategically, as briefly discussed earlier. The original C-141 buy, to meet a demonstrated requirement, was cut from 350 to 250 aircraft. The original C-5 buy was also cut from 126 to 81; the advanced medium short take-off and landing (STOL) transport (AMST) was cancelled entirely; the C-17 has been delayed and is not due for IOC until 1992, and the CRAF has had only one aircraft modified since 1974, further exacerbating the problem. Without adequate airlift, the pressure to use airlift with unprecedented efficiency is utmost, however, as demonstrated, our current request system will not stand up to the test.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE ARS

Recommendations for problems surfaced in this study will not alleviate the airlift shortfall this country currently experiences but will, if followed, provide for improvement in efficiency that can only aid in reducing friction and correct the deficiencies that currently exist. A timeframe for actions is provided for each critical action.

First action that should be taken is to publish the joint regulation AFM 2-14/FM 100-27 that is currently in draft form. Realizing there is a major difference of opinion regarding airlift request terminology and recognizing the obsolete regulations dated 1967 includes routine and emergency requests, the term emergency has precedence for being included in airlift request terminology. Therefore, as a recommendation, and since the user, in this case the US Army is the requester, adopt terminology advocated by that service. Specifically, label requests as either preplanned or immediate, with routing for requests in accordance with Figure 2 and a third request as emergency with routing in accordance with Figure 3. This will create a third type of request but it is not the number of requests that is critical but rather the routing and priority which drives the mission.

Timeframe: Publish the joint AFM 2-14/FM 100-27 mid-calendar year 1984 with revision scheduled for Spring 1985.

Second action: Form an ad hoc committee to rewrite the JCS Pub 15 priority system with representatives from each proponent command plus representatives from each theater CINC. The purpose of this committee is to create a priority system that is responsive to each commander but, more importantly, incorporates time factors in mission accomplishment to more adequately serve the needs of each user. For example, improvements

should address time constraints for request validation and submission to each respective ALCC to ensure a sense of urgency and priority is taken into proper account. Additionally, each respective priority level include degrees of urgency with time elements included, coupled with level of requester, i.e., top level priorities must be validated by appropriate level commander for respective percentage of allocated airlift. These specific recommendations are by no means all inclusive, but rather suggestions on how to improve the system. More importantly, it is essential that the representatives meet and hammer out the new priority system with agreement based on majority, vice unanimous consent of representatives. The critical aspect is to develop a more specific framework and must be presented to better deal with the ordering of priorities.

Timeframe: The ad hoc committee should meet in the fall of 1984.

Third action: Based on ad hoc rewrite of priority system in JCS Pub 15, schedule representatives from both the Army and Air Force doctrine offices to incorporate JCS Pub 15 priority system into the joint regulation AFM 2-14/FM 100-27 plus negotiate differences between service proponents as presented in the earlier publications.

Timeframe: Service representatives meet in early 1985 to review JCS new priority system to ensure appropriate revisions are included in applicable regulations.

It is apparent the airlift request system has evolved into a theater unique system much unlike the notional system described in current regulations. The system is complex enough and difficult to manage without allowing changes to creep into the system that are not fully coordinated between services and, more importantly, are not reflected in the so called promulgating regulations.

The airlift request system is a system of inter-service procedures established to ensure Air Force operated airlift is responsive to user needs in concert with established procedures and terminology effectively utiziling the apportioned airlift to satisfy the most urgent missions first based upon agreed priorities. Hopefully this has helped to make an often maligned and misunderstood system made simple.

ENDNOTES

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2. Ibid., p. 4.

3. Air Force Magazine, Vol 67, No. 4, April 1984, p. 90.

4. USAF Fiscal Year 1984 Report to the 98th Congress, p. 24.

5. Lieutenant Colonel Shoemaker and Major Jackson, "Role of Eucom in Europe," Airlift, Vol V, No. 1, Winter 1983, p. 7.

6. Ibid.

7. JCS PUB 15 Chg. 1, p. 41-43a.

8. Military Agency for Standardization, Standardization Agreement (STANAG), Wartime Air Movement Priority System for NATO Countries, STANAG No. 3631, Edition 2, 27 October 1983.

9. General William W. Momyer, Air Power in Three Wars, p. 73.

10. Tactical Air Force Operations-Tactical Air Control System (TACS), Air Force Manual 2-7, 2 February 1979, US Department of the Air Force, p. 2-3.

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12. MAC Comments on Draft FM 100-27/AFM 2-14 to Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, 13 September 1983, p. 2.

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