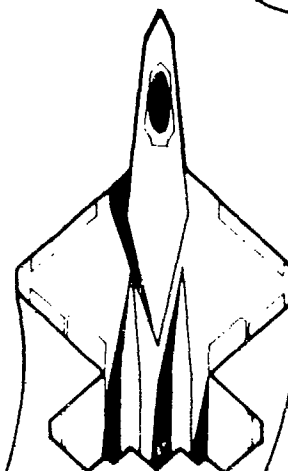


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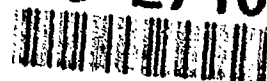
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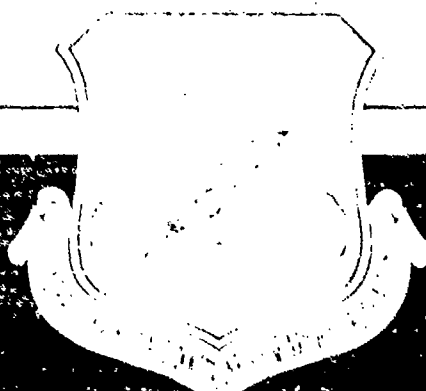
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THE FUTURE OF THE AIR FORCE



Military Unity and National Policy
Some Past Effects and Future Implications

WARREN A. TREST

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Some Past Effects and Future Implications

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by

WARREN A. TREST
Air Force Historical Research Agency

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Foreword

The stunning changes in the complexion of international politics that began late in the decade of the 1980s and continue today will profoundly affect the American military establishment as a whole, and the US Air Force in particular. Decisions about the future course of the military will be made in the early part of the 1990s which will essentially determine the course of the US Air Force well into the next century. Decisions of such importance require thoughtful consideration of all points of view.

This report is one in a special series of CADRE Papers which address many of the issues that decision makers must consider when undertaking such momentous decisions. The list of subjects addressed in this special series is by no means exhaustive, and the treatment of each subject is certainly not definitive. However, the papers do treat topics of considerable importance to the future of the US Air Force, treat them with care and originality, and provide valuable insights.

We believe this special series of CADRE Papers can be of considerable value to policymakers at all levels as they plan for the US Air Force and its role in the so-called postcontainment environment.



DENNIS M. DREW, Col, USAF
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About the Author



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Executive Summary

Since World War II, senior commanders have been at the forefront of movements to unify the preparation and employment of land, sea, and air forces in support of national policy. Differing views on ways and means for unifying national defense, however, have imposed compromises on parent legislation, nurtured redundancy in roles and missions, and fed interservice rivalry. One consequence is that national policy sometimes asked more from the armed forces than joint doctrine was prepared to give. The fragmented application of air power during the Korean and Vietnam wars are but two examples. Beneficially, however, the past 40 years of sharing in national defense have been building blocks toward greater unity. The coalition victory in Operation Desert Storm—coming in the wake of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986—proves that unified military power wins wars, that superior US military force can achieve limited political objectives when the strategy, the arms, and the doctrines are in harmony. That historical precedent commits future military campaigns to combined arms and places a high premium on doctrinal commonality. Desert Storm reaffirmed the efficacy of Air Force doctrine within the framework of three-dimensional warfare. For maximum effect on the outcome of battle, air power must be planned and executed according to a single integrated campaign plan, under the direction of a supreme commander. Air power's lethality demands early victory over the enemy's air forces. Air operations must be synergistic with surface forces to achieve military objectives. Joint training must assure compatibility of forces and methods. The stellar performance of stealth aircraft and precision-guided weaponry in Desert Storm is unparalleled in military history. In the final analysis, however, high technology is no better than the doctrine or the strategy that employs it.

Chapter 1

Introduction

HISTORICAL patterns for the development and employment of the armed forces since World War II suggest that unity in national defense is an essential counterbalance to institutional ambitions for doctrinal integrity, force composition, and force modernization. The quest for unity is a continuum, but the post-World War II trend charts reflect three well-defined milestones that have changed the way the military establishment organizes for war, prepares for war, and goes to war. Each milestone marks the enactment of landmark legislation: (1) the National Security Act of 1947; (2) the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958; and (3) the Goldwater-Nichols Act. The yields (to the efficacy of American air power) from this 40-year investment in reform legislation, which include effects on roles and missions, on force modernization, and on the employment of air forces, are relevant to force planning. These yields and their correlation with national policy form the backdrop for this paper, which offers historical background as a foundation for studies relating to future force departures.

Military unification must be resilient if it is to conform to the changing faces of national policy, which ultimately defines the external threat to national security, decides the fate of defense budgets, and determines how the armed forces are to be used. Although adjustments routinely follow new administrations into the White House, two post-World War II periods stand out as transformations in how the government purported to use its armed

forces. The first radical change was to "Nuclear Deterrence," which President Harry S Truman introduced at the outset of the cold war in the late 1940s. And President Dwight D. Eisenhower's "New Look" and "Massive Retaliation" policies continued to emphasize nuclear deterrence—to the virtual exclusion of other military options—through the 1950s. The second pronounced shift came in 1961 when President John F. Kennedy's "Flexible Response" refocused national policy away from the exclusivity of nuclear deterrence to flexible military power more capable of responding to all levels of aggression. For nearly two decades after the withdrawal of US forces from Vietnam in 1973, flexible response has matured as a viable national strategy.

A review of the trends in the armed forces since World War II reveals that military unity legislation has not always coalesced with changes in national policy; nor have legislation and national policy been consistently coalescent with the plans, aims, and ambitions of the military services. To the contrary, legislation and policy have often forced wrenching compromises on one or more of the services; and they have fueled interservice rivalries. While political compromise has been essential in the process of making national policy and legislating reforms, the ultimate compromises come from the services themselves. But while legislated changes and policy adjustments have not been perfect, they have been useful in building toward greater joint readiness and interoperability of the armed forces.

Chapter 2

The National Security Act of 1947

THE United States Air Force, as we know it today, was born of exceptional compromises by the Army and the Navy. Having validated the independent roles of strategic air power in World War II, the antecedent Army Air Forces had entered the postwar world confident of its doctrine and its ultimate destiny, but uncertain of the immediate future. Only because senior Army leaders (most notably generals George C. Marshall, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Omar N. Bradley) broke with tradition to back their airmen's drive for autonomy was it possible to gain the political leverage that President Harry S. Truman needed to reorganize the national defense structure and to establish the US Air Force in September 1947.¹

Enactment of the National Security Act of 1947 climaxed months of debate over the merits of unifying the armed forces and creating an autonomous air arm. Senior army generals argued for unification; Navy admirals argued against it. A dictum by General Eisenhower in 1946 that the Army belonged on the ground, not in the air, was a serious setback for ground commanders who placed high value on dedicated air support and who were not so ready to part with organic aviation resources. But Army officers who doubted the wisdom of creating a separate air force were not an obstacle to passing the disputed legislation because Eisenhower enjoined them to support defense reorganization and a separate air force. Senior Navy officers, however, were so opposed to the concept of unification that President Truman had to force com-

promise. Afterward, it remained clear that most Navy officers and some in the Army had accepted compromise grudgingly.²

Anxiety had built among naval officers that creating a single Department of Defense and an independent air force would rob them of organic fleet aviation—a prospect so grim that it threatened to wreck the Navy's postwar planning. America's top World War II admiral, Ernest J. King, was said to have shown an "almost pathological suspicion of anything in the form of an autonomous air force." Even after the Navy accepted the compromise leading to enactment of the new law, Admiral King (then retired) condemned it. To classify air power as a separate entity was a futile gesture, King argued, because aviation was dependent on the earth's surface for its operations. In King's view, military aviation (including the atomic bomb) was just another weapon to be integrated into the Army and the Navy.³

So much has been written about the interservice differences of 1943-49 (the uneasy Key West-Newport agreements and the acrimonious "revolt of the admirals", that these do not need full treatment here. The crux of these differences was that each military service was trying to adjust its roles and missions to the new order of global security and atomic weaponry. The Navy, like the Army, had embarked on a postwar course that would radically change its traditional outlook toward air power. However, the Navy's views toward reform appeared to be more introverted than those of the Army. Air-

mindful admirals were convinced from their wartime experience that the atomic age had thrust naval air power to the fore of Navy operations, forcing them to rethink doctrine. Previously valuing aircraft carriers almost solely for their contributions to fleet warfare, naval planners now envisioned employing them in a more global strategic role. Realizing that the great fleet engagements of World War II were likely the last of their kind, naval planners argued for more powerful carriers. They wanted the capability to strike inland targets on large landmasses like the Soviet Union and Communist China, the two powers which emerged as the most dangerous threats to international security. This revised thinking put the Navy in direct competition with the land-based strategic air forces.⁴

Senior Air Force officers believed their compromises had been as great as those of the Army or the Navy, but they knew that the legislation creating the USAF was the best they could get. Some, however, perceived it as an "unfortunate compromise" that would duplicate roles and missions, especially between the Air Force and the Navy, therefore intensifying interservice rivalry rather than ameliorating it. President Truman's Executive Order 9877, signed along with the National Security Act, prescribed the functions and roles of the armed services. Because it left much open to interpretation, it was in contention almost immediately.⁵

Differences over the executive order's general assignment of responsibilities were largely between the Navy and the Air Force, with the Marine Corps siding with its parent service and the Army supporting its former airmen. After the Navy challenged the Air Force's exclusive responsibility for strategic air operations, including the delivery of atomic bombs, the service chiefs met with Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal—at Key West, Florida, and Newport, Rhode Island, in

March and August 1948, respectively—to iron out their differences. These meetings reconfirmed that primary responsibilities for the strategic air mission were vested in the Air Force and those for control of the seas belonged to the Navy. The Navy's plans for sharing in the strategic air role were protected by the assignment of collateral responsibilities to each of the services. The Army, except for its retention of a few light planes for observation and artillery spotting and a budding interest in helicopters, agreed that the USAF should have primary responsibility for providing air support to land forces.⁶

Within the new Air Force, there were doubts about the wisdom of dividing the USAF into functional commands (strategic, tactical, air defense); but Gen Carl Spaatz, the USAF's founding chief of staff, was committed to General Eisenhower, who wanted a tactical air command to support the ground forces. General Spaatz said that he and General Eisenhower were in agreement on this arrangement—that it was a mutual understanding between them. Lt Gen Elwood R. ("Pete") Quesada, TAC's first commander, said it was a firm commitment without which Eisenhower would not have supported an independent USAF. Some airmen saw this as a compromise of the USAF's doctrine of indivisible air power: "An air force to maintain its own integrity must be so controlled as never to lose its essential character as a single force." If this was a compromise to the Army, it was an enduring one—as some airmen thought it would be.⁷

Lacking sufficient atomic capabilities at this juncture in the cold war, the USAF's strategic air forces nonetheless formed the foundation for President Truman's policy of nuclear deterrence. The Air Force's procurement of B-36 intercontinental bombers was consistent with this policy. Although the imperfect

B-36 design was controversial even within the USAF, the huge bomber was state of the art. The Navy's plans to build a giant supercarrier, the USS *United States*, were also consistent with the president's policy. But the Navy's compromise became one of anguish in 1949 when Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson cancelled the supercarrier because the austere pre-Korean War budget simply would not support both programs. When funds became available after the outbreak of hostilities, the Navy's supercarrier was reinstated.⁸

The Korean War seemed to confirm one of the paradoxes of nuclear deterrence. Military strategists generally agreed that America's meager nuclear arsenal might deter general war, but would not deter all wars per se. Moreover, the decision not to use nuclear weapons in Korea created speculation that such a policy might make small wars even more likely. A more distinct paradox was apparent in joint plans and operations, which were intended to unify the actions of the armed forces but which had some opposite effects in Korea. Moving away from traditional roles, the Navy participated fully in the Korean War (where there was no enemy fleet and control of the seas was never in question) and the Marine Corps fought alongside Army divisions in a sustained ground campaign. Joint planning to employ forces from each of the services, regardless of the nature or scope of the conflict, was not a bad thing—it made substantially more firepower available but it also tended to exacerbate problems of service rivalry where they could be least tolerated—on the battlefield.

The intermixing of service doctrines in Korea compounded the problem for the joint employment of air power. USAF doctrine required the air component commander (in this case, a USAF general answering directly to the Army theater commander) to control air forces from all services when they were employed jointly

in combat; Navy and Marine Corps doctrine preserved the integrity of their combined arms, including organic air support capabilities uniquely trained and configured to perform their services' tasks. It was late in the war before the Navy and the Marine Corps compromised on this delicate issue, and neither service ever fully accepted the Air Force position on centralized control.⁹

The Army's supreme commanders in World War II (General Eisenhower in Europe and Gen Douglas MacArthur in the Pacific) became advocates of centrally controlled air power (with decentralized execution) because it gave theater commanders the flexibility to concentrate air resources when and where they would be most effective against the enemy. This trend continued in Korea, with General MacArthur and successive United Nations (UN) commanders in chief supporting the USAF doctrine. A knowledgeable air commander was deemed the most logical person to advise on the application of air power, and to plan and direct employment of the air forces wherever the theater commander needed them. Too, air resources were not unlimited, so economy of force would not permit dissipating them in ways that would be ineffective or self-defeating.¹⁰

Not as sold on the virtues of centralized control, however, was the lower-echelon battlefield commander, whose vision necessarily was fixed on the combat situation at hand and who understandably wanted all the available firepower he could muster in support of the troops in battle. Partly because of this localized view, and partly because of inadequate joint air-ground training, misunderstandings occurred between air and ground commanders during the initial fighting in Korea; and there were times when ground commanders were disappointed with the level of air support they received. An unfortunate perception persisted that the Air Force had neglected

its responsibilities for supporting the land forces—a perception aggravated by envy of the dedicated air support existing within Marine Corps units. Because of the stringent defense budget, the Air Force's pre-Korean War efforts to strengthen its strategic air capabilities had been at the expense of other capabilities, including tactical air support.¹¹

Offsetting the initial air-ground problems was the fact that USAF's strategic bombing operations had a direct impact on the enemy's ability to sustain the ground battle. Also, centralized control permitted employing the bombers in direct support of land forces when necessary. The Air Force performed the full range of air missions in Korea: air superiority, interdiction, strategic bombing, close air support, air transport, and reconnaissance. Air Force fighters, aided by Navy fighters, gained air superiority early in the war, giving the UN ground forces freedom to maneuver unhampered

by enemy air forces—an advantage they enjoyed for the duration of the conflict.¹²

Within the permissive air environment of the Korean War, the expanded use of helicopters and light planes was a catalyst for rebuilding the Army's aviation infrastructure. In 1949, the Army and Air Force chiefs of staff had signed an agreement setting weight and operational restrictions on Army aircraft, but subsequent agreements in 1951–52 adjusted the limits to allow greater Army latitude in aircraft development. The adjustments revealed Army dissatisfaction with perceived USAF shirking of its air support responsibilities, Army intent to progressively upgrade its own air capabilities, and Air Force awareness that concessions favoring more progress in Army aviation were unavoidable. The Army's growing commitment to the task of modernizing its air complement supported an observation by Lt Gen Ira C. Eaker that the National Security Act of 1947 had perpetuated four different air forces: Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and Army.¹³

Notes

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2. Wolk, 36, 38, 97, 129, 149–51.

3. Air Chief Marshal Sir John Slessor to Air Marshal Sir Victor Goddard, letter, 11 March 1948, located in Library of Congress, General Carl Spaatz collection, Box 20; Adm Ernest J. King to the committee on the National Security Organization, letter, 5 November 1948, cited in Earnest J. King and Walter Muir Whitehill, *Fleet Admiral King, A Naval Record* (New York: W. W. Whitehall, 1952), 642–43.

4. Michael A. Palmer, *Origins of the Maritime Strategy: American Naval Strategy in the First Postwar Decade* (Washington, D.C.: Naval Historical Center, 1988), 21–28.

5. Lt Gen James H. Doolittle, "Wasted Defense Billions," *Air Force*, December 1948, 13–15. Doolittle was speaking as chairman of the newly formed Air Force Association.

6. Robert Frank Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force*, vol. 1, 1907–1960 (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 1989), 196–200.

7. Interview with Gen Carl Spaatz, by Brig Gen Noel Parrish and Dr Alfred Goldberg, 21 February 1962, USAF Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB, Ala. (USAFHRC), File 105.5-1-2; minutes of Air Board Conference, 3–4 December 1946, located in Office of Air Force History, Bolling AFB, D.C., 178–79; lectures by Maj Gen O. A. Anderson to the Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Ala., various dates, USAFHRC, File K239.7162-6.

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9. Robert F. Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea 1950–1953*, revised edition (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 44–45, 693.

10. *Ibid.*, 689–711.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. Richard I. Wolf, *The United States Air Force: Basic Documents on Roles and Missions* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1987), 237–45; Wolk, 174.

Chapter 3

The New Look in Nuclear Deterrence

AFTER fulfilling a campaign pledge to end the Korean War, President Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration undertook an extensive review, known as "New Look," of the nation's post-Korean War military posture. The result was a sharp reduction in the services' expansion programs except for those contributing directly to the sustainment of strong nuclear deterrence. The nuclear threat to free-world security had grown since detection of the first Soviet atomic blast in 1949, making strategic deterrence an even more critical item on the president's national defense agenda. Eisenhower's "New Look" was intended to strengthen the US nuclear shield against Communist aggression and to build up the conventional forces of weaker allied nations. Policymakers hoped this would enable the Allies to cope with local security problems without having to call for massive US intervention. This, in turn, would permit the United States to radically reduce the size of its standing force, with compatible reductions in the defense budget.¹

For the remainder of Eisenhower's two terms in office, the administration's firm commitment to nuclear deterrence produced annual military budgets that were lopsided in favor of the strategic air forces. During the immediate post-Korean War years, nearly half of the total defense budget went to the Air Force, with the largest share spent on modernizing and maintaining a strong strategic posture. A milestone was reached in 1955 when the Strategic Air Command began equipping its bomb wings with new B-52

Stratofortresses. Two years later, SAC upgraded air refueling support for the bomber forces by replacing obsolescent tanker aircraft with new KC-135s.²

To a lesser extent, the Air Force modernized its tactical air forces during the last half of the 1950s by equipping them with new Century-series jet fighters (F-100s, F-104s, and F-105s). Although the Korean War influenced their design, these new tactical planes were configured almost exclusively for the delivery of nuclear weapons until the 1958 crises in Lebanon and Taiwan revealed a need for greater flexibility in US military readiness, especially a need for more modern, and specialized, conventional capabilities. Generally, the USAF posture of the mid-to-late 1950s was predicated on the assumption that weapons for general war were adequate for employment in lesser contingencies.³

Part of USAF's budget also went to the strategic and tactical airlift fleets, but there were complaints from the Army that the Air Force was not doing enough in providing airlift support to the ground forces. Rep Mendel Rivers (D-S.C.) chaired a special subcommittee in 1960 to study the issue and recommended, among other things, that the Air Force do more to modernize its airlift forces. The strategic airlift forces received a boost in the early 1960s when the first Air Force jet transport (C-135 Stratolifter) entered the inventory.⁴

In keeping with national policy, the other services sought a larger role in nuclear deterrence. Although the strategic air forces were the mainspring

for deterrence, all of the services shared an interest in air and surface tactical nuclear weapons, which were part of the global strategy and were deployed to forward overseas areas as early as the summer of 1952. With the rise of missile technology in the 1950s, the Air Force gained exclusive responsibility for the development of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) but the Army and the Navy competed in developing missiles having less than intercontinental range. In 1956, Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson imposed a 200-mile limit on the range of surface-to-surface missiles developed by the Army, but the Navy's development of intermediate-range ballistic missiles continued apace.⁶

The Navy, which commissioned its first supercarrier and its first nuclear-powered submarine in the mid-1950s, became the USAF's strongest competitor in nuclear arms development. While the Air Force concentrated its research and development on Atlas and Titan ICBMs, which became operational in 1959, the Navy's efforts centered on fielding its new submarine-launched Polaris missiles. The Polaris was an intermediate-range ballistic missile, but the mobility and reach of its underwater platform gave it strategic range. Along with the ICBMs and the B-52s, the Navy's Polaris became a vital leg of the nation's strategic triad.⁷

The Army's troop strength suffered most under "New Look" reductions. Since Eisenhower intended that credible deterrence keep the country safe from involvement in another Korean-style war, he saw no need for a large standing Army. The consequent reduction in Army force levels at a time when the nuclear stars of the Air Force and Navy were rising was a difficult compromise for Army generals. Two successive Army chiefs of staff, generals Matthew B. Ridgway (1953-55) and Maxwell D. Taylor (1955-59), were among the severest critics of Eisenhower's policies. They argued con-

sistently and forcefully against a national policy they perceived as overreliant on the nuclear option to deter war.⁷

Disturbed by an apparent trend within the Air Force to expend vast sums to build costly strategic weapons at the expense of other USAF programs, especially those that were to be earmarked for the direct support of ground forces, Army planners became even more interested in the perceived advantages of organic Army aviation. During his years as chief of staff, General Taylor led Army thinking on a path that arrived eventually at the doorstep of balanced nuclear and conventional capabilities, better known as "Flexible Response." Evolving Army doctrine also embraced the greater mobility afforded ground forces by state-of-the-art helicopters—a technology that the Air Force had all but abandoned. Revised directives on Army-Air Force roles and missions issued by Secretary of Defense Wilson in 1956 and 1957 indicated an Air Force willingness for the Army to assume a greater responsibility for its own combat air support capability. The Air Force seemed content with upgrading its nuclear capabilities while reducing its conventional commitment.⁸

As interservice rivalry continued unabated and service chiefs remained split on critical defense issues, President Eisenhower started his second term with the admonition that disunity within the armed forces must end. Subsequently, at the president's urging, Congress passed the Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 for the purpose of building greater unity into the military structure. During earlier debates, the Air Force argued for a single military service, which was vigorously opposed by the Army and the Navy. President Eisenhower also favored a single force, but knew it was politically infeasible. The reorganization that the president and Congress settled on was one that centralized greater authority within the secretary of defense's office

and delegated full operational control of assigned forces to unified and specified combatant commanders. The institutional roles of the service chiefs essentially were reduced to providing combat-ready forces to the combatant commanders and to giving these respective forces whatever support they required.⁹

Unfortunately, the military reform that was enacted into law in 1958 was not the panacea that Eisenhower intended. It certainly did not heal the polarization between the Army and the Air Force that was caused by the administration's commitment to massive retaliation and the USAF's dominant role in this strategy. The sense of isolation that Army leaders felt in the joint arena, not unlike that of the Navy in the wake of World War II, did not change with the reorganization. General Taylor and the Army staff chafed under the impression that the secretary of defense and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (USAF Gen Nathan F. Twining) paid little attention to their objections or recommendations. General Taylor struggled to reverse this trend during his four years as Army chief of staff, but to no avail.¹⁰

Despite the lessons of the Lebanon and Taiwan crises in 1958, which revealed serious problems in conducting joint operations (again involving forces from all services) and deficiencies in employing conventional arms, General Taylor was dismayed to find the administration no more receptive to his ideas of flexible response than when he introduced them in 1955. One reason for the resistance to Taylor's ideas was that the nature of the perceived threat had not changed. The Soviet Union, which concentrated the bulk of its military spending on strategic arms, remained the foremost threat to world security. Consequently, the administration believed that its highest defense priority was to build and maintain forces that were a credible deterrent to the Soviet threat. Also, the secretary of defense and the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff still believed that the weapons used for deterrence could effectively assist allies in coping with local aggression. This trend continued through the end of Eisenhower's second presidential term, until President John F. Kennedy took the oath of office on 20 January 1961.¹¹

Notes

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2. Doris M. Condit, *The Test of War, 1950-1963* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1988), 536-37; J. C. Hopkins, *The Development of Strategic Air Command, 1946-1961* (Offutt AFB, Nebr.: Office of the Historian, Headquarters SAC, 1982), 53-54, 64.

3. Roger J. Spiller, *Not War But Like War: The American Intervention in Lebanon*, Leavenworth Papers No. 3 (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1981), 34-36.

4. Robert Frank Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force*, vol. 1, 1907-1960 (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, 1989), 20-21.

5. Richard I. Wolf, *The United States Air Force: Basic Documents on Roles and Missions*

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Chapter 4

The New Frontier and Flexible Response

WHILE he was serving in the US Senate, John F. Kennedy's thoughts on national security and those of a growing number of his colleagues were influenced by General Taylor's strategy of flexible response, which was articulated in the general's book *The Uncertain Trumpet* following his retirement in 1959. During his subsequent presidential campaign, Kennedy used Taylor's criticisms and other detractions like Fidel Castro's Communist takeover in Cuba and reports of an alleged "missile gap" between the Soviet Union and the United States (derived partly from Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's missile-rattling boasts of the late 1950s) to punctuate his attacks against Eisenhower's policy of massive retaliation. Only days before Kennedy's inauguration, a bellicose Khrushchev declaration of Soviet support for "wars of national liberation" convinced the president-elect that his blueprint of a "New Frontier" strategy for the country was the right one.¹

Kennedy's new frontier brought some fresh approaches to government service, including such initiatives as a reinvigorated space program, the Peace Corps to help the people of emerging nations, and the start of arms reduction talks with the Soviet Union. There were some drastic changes in store for the armed forces. Except for his keen interest in counterinsurgency forces as a means of dealing with Khrushchev's "wars of national liberation," Kennedy's military strategy was founded on the principles of flexible response espoused by General Taylor. Essentially, this meant building military

capabilities that could respond effectively to the full range of commitments from lower levels of conflict to nuclear war. After the Berlin crisis and the Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba tested Kennedy's early presidency, he brought Taylor out of retirement to be his special military advisor on defense matters. Subsequently, the president named Taylor to replace the Army's Gen Lyman L. Lemnitzer as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.² For a general officer to return from retirement to become chairman of the JCS was unprecedented in American military history.

General Taylor's strong influence on the military policies of the Kennedy administration did not bode well for the strategic-minded Air Force. Neither did the management style of Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, whose early decisions were thought by Air Force leaders to be influenced more by systems analysis than by sound military advice. A premier bomber commander in World War II, and credited with having built Strategic Air Command into a formidable nuclear force, Gen Curtis E. LeMay became the odd man out when he replaced Gen Thomas D. White as Air Force chief of staff in July 1961. Even before the new frontier, there was speculation that strategic missiles had made manned bombers obsolete (both Eisenhower and Khrushchev had sounded this theme), and these doubts grew stronger in the early days of the new administration. President Kennedy cancelled the Air Force's B-70 Valkyrie advanced bomber program, which had been under development since 1954, and cut the procure-

ment of another wing of B-52s from the defense budget. The Navy's strategic programs were also cut back when the president cancelled production of a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.³

After General Taylor oversaw a reevaluation of defense requirements in 1961, President Kennedy placed a high priority on building up general purpose forces to deal with situations like the threat of conventional war in Europe (heightened by the Berlin crisis and the Soviet buildup in conventional arms) and the threats of limited or brushfire wars. At the same time, Kennedy had instructed Taylor to develop counterinsurgency forces that could support friendly governments burdened with internal strife from Communist insurgents. Kennedy believed that special capabilities were needed to counter a rise of guerrilla activity in such places as Central America and Southeast Asia.⁴

Airmen outside of the Strategic Air Command welcomed the changes. Those in Tactical Air Command—the USAF's lone proponent of flexible response in the 1950s—had felt stifled by the overpowering influence of the strategic air forces. As President Kennedy's military policies took root in 1961–62, there was a turn-about in the USAF as the tactical air forces gained prominence in the conventional war and counterinsurgency roles. Their development became a matter of some urgency after the administration completed an assessment of the smoldering aggression in Southeast Asia and weighed the lessons of the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. Concurrently, Secretary McNamara directed the Army to develop organic air support capabilities which were in part competitive with the tactical air forces.⁵

Burgeoning rivalry between the Air Force and the Army was already evident when President Kennedy ordered the USAF in October 1961 to deploy its makeshift Farm Gate detachment of

World War II-vintage aircraft to Vietnam to train the South Vietnamese. Despite the emphasis on nuclear deterrence, there had been rapid growth in Army aviation during the 1950s. From an inventory of under 1,000 light planes and helicopters in 1950, the Army had acquired over 5,000 aircraft of 15 different varieties by 1960. In addition to its plans for an airmobility force that would be transported and supported by armed helicopters, the Army also procured two fixed-wing aircraft (the OV-1 Mohawk and the CV-2B Caribou transport) that were exceptions to existing agreements between the two services. The Mohawk was especially controversial since it could be used as an attack or electronic surveillance platform in addition to its primary role of visual reconnaissance. Secretary McNamara's belief that each service should develop whatever unique capabilities it needed to wage successful limited or sublimated warfare turned the jungles of Vietnam into a virtual laboratory for arms development from 1961 until well after escalation of the war in 1965.⁶

When Lyndon B. Johnson took office following Kennedy's assassination in 1963, he continued the slain president's military policies. He also retained key members of the Kennedy cabinet, including Defense Secretary McNamara and Secretary of State Dean Rusk. It might be argued that escalating the conflict veered from Kennedy's policy for US involvement, but this is a moot point since the two presidents shared the same circle of close advisors and the situation had changed markedly since Kennedy's death. It should be noted that General LeMay, who had argued unsuccessfully for strategic bombing against North Vietnam and who was often at odds with McNamara's decisions, retired early in 1965, less than two weeks before President Johnson ordered the Flaming Dart retaliatory strikes against the north and

approved the limited Rolling Thunder campaign employing Navy and Air Force tactical fighters instead of strategic bombers. Gen John P. McConnell, who had been LeMay's chief planner at SAC for four years (1953-57), became the Air Force chief of staff. Although more diplomatic than LeMay, McConnell too had little influence on the overall direction of the war.⁷

Aside from the lack of a clear-cut strategy for conducting the war in Southeast Asia, one of the major problems confronting military commanders was the lack of clearly articulated joint doctrine. The US Strike Command, established at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, in September 1961, was designed to resolve this problem but there was little discernible effect on operations in Southeast Asia. Continuing the pattern of the Korean conflict, all of the military services participated in the fighting in Southeast Asia. As for the impact this had on air operations, there was a shared spirit of cooperation among the air forces, but there was also a competitive edge honed by the understandable inclination for each service to operate within its own system. Having prepared for combat according to their own doctrinal principles, none of the other services willingly placed their forces under the Air Force's system of centralized control even though the air component commander (a USAF general officer) was responsible to the commander, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), for directing the in-country air war. Command arrangements for out-of-country air operations were even more skewed. The resultant fragmenting of air operations was not resolved satisfactorily during the war, even though the Army generals who commanded MACV had confidence in the Air Force's system. Gen Creighton W. Abrams compared the USAF's system to a "faucet of tremendous firepower" that

could be turned on the enemy anywhere and anytime it was needed.⁸

For all the myriad problems affecting the employment of air power in Southeast Asia (the political constraints, the fragmented air war), the protracted conflict had little lasting effect on Air Force roles and missions. One noteworthy exception was a landmark Army-Air Force agreement of 6 April 1966 that settled the long lasting dispute over the Army's procurement of fixed-wing transports. Satisfied with the favorable tactical airlift support provided by the USAF in Vietnam, the Army agreed that the Air Force should have full responsibility for tactical airlift. All of the Army's Caribou transports were turned over to the Air Force on 1 January 1967. In return, the Air Force relinquished all claims for rotary-wing aircraft designed and operated for intratheater movement, fire support, and resupply of ground forces. Meanwhile, however, the Navy and the Marine Corps provided their own airlift support in the war zone.⁹

Technologically, the combat experience in Vietnam was an influence in shaping the present-day Air Force. What started in 1961 as a counterinsurgency experiment became a proving ground for the weapons and tactics of flexible response after the war escalated in 1965. The architects of today's force posture used the post-1965 buildup as their point of departure. Much was right about the special systems (including retrofitted planes from earlier wars) that were employed in the more permissive environs of the war, and these lessons were not discarded when the war was over. Understandably, however, and wisely it seems, yesterday's long-range planners turned primarily to the high technology they thought was right for future wars when they laid the groundwork for today's force posture.¹⁰

Concurrent with the fighting in Vietnam, force planners also were engaged in the vital undertaking of strengthening

flexible response capabilities that would counter the more menacing threat against NATO Europe. Sustained combat operations by modern jet fighters and B-52 bombers were relevant to this task. The multiple contributions of the B-52s—ranging from support of ground forces to the concentrated Linebacker campaigns late in the war—dispelled the myth that ballistic missiles had rendered strategic bombers superfluous. Consequently, the Air Force gained wide congressional support for the advanced B-1 bomber as an alternative to the B-70 bomber that President Kennedy had cancelled in 1961.¹¹

Another influence of the war was reflected in the purchase of new tactical aircraft that were more capable of performing conventional air operations than those built during the 1950s. For most of the war, the USAF relied on the Navy-developed F-4 Phantom II as its primary multipurpose fighter. The F-100s and F-105s, which were designed primarily for delivering nuclear weapons, were used extensively in Vietnam, but were not suited for the air-to-air role. The F-4, brought into the Air Force inventory in 1963, effectively filled this void while also serving in multiple tactical air roles.¹²

Before the war ended, the Air Force had begun to equip some wings in Europe with new F-111 aircraft. Secretary McNamara had ordered development of the F-111 as a joint USAF-Navy program,

but the Navy abandoned its F-111 purchase shortly after the program began. The Air Force combat-tested F-111s in Vietnam, but these aircraft were not used extensively in the war. In the 1970s, as the United States withdrew its forces from Vietnam, the Air Force procured the F-15 Eagle and the F-16 Fighting Falcon as its primary tactical fighters. Designed primarily as an air superiority fighter, the F-15 was employable in a variety of tactical roles. The F-16, a compact, multirole aircraft, was an advanced lightweight fighter.¹³

During the 1970s, the Air Force also procured its first attack aircraft that was designed exclusively for the close-air-support mission. The A-10 Thunderbolt II, a rugged twin-engine jet that the Army helped design, was an anomalous aircraft within the Air Force's inventory. It was built and armed primarily as a tank killer, which made it a welcome addition to NATO's arsenal in Central Europe where numerically superior Soviet armored divisions constituted a formidable conventional threat. Perhaps more than any other new weapon system, the A-10 reflected the new spirit of interservice cooperation emerging from the protracted war in Vietnam. Closer cooperation among the services was essential if flexible response was to mature as a viable military strategy.¹⁴

Notes

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Chapter 5

The Maturing of Flexible Response

FOR THE US armed forces, the 1970s and 1980s could be defined as the decades of maturing for the flexible response strategy. Although the catchy phrase, which was coined by Gen Maxwell Taylor in the 1950s, is not heard much nowadays, flexible response has matured as a national strategy. At times, the aging process has been uneven, particularly during the period of national self-reflection which followed the withdrawal of US forces from Vietnam in 1973. Yet, over the past decade, the strategy has leveled off and its value has been manifested in such favorable developments as the strategic arms reductions talks, the political changes in eastern Europe, and the effective extension of US conventional power in transitional crises like the ones in Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf.¹

Military technology thrived under flexible response. In addition to the tactical fighters already mentioned, the Air Force gained a number of new weapon systems that increased the reach and readiness of American air power. These include the E-3 airborne warning and control system, the KC-10A extended aerial refueler, the air-launched cruise missile, the B-1 bomber, and, more recently, the F-117A stealth fighter. While the armed forces vied for shrinking post-Vietnam defense dollars, the Air Force faced temporary setbacks in the development of these systems as well as others, like the US Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), the MX missile, and the B-2 stealth bomber programs. The other services experienced their share of setbacks

as well, which has resulted in intermittent waves within the flow of interservice cooperation. Fortunately, these waves have been less frequent and less divisive than those of earlier years.²

One of the most publicized USAF setbacks during the 1970s occurred when President Jimmy Carter kept his campaign promise to cancel the cost-laden B-1 bomber program. After taking office in January 1977, Carter opted instead to modernize the B-52s to carry the new air-launched cruise missiles. Someone asked Gen David C. Jones, who was the Air Force chief of staff when the B-1 was cancelled, if he had considered resigning because of the program's cancellation. It never crossed his mind, General Jones said, because it would have been totally inappropriate. "It is up to the military to make its case, and then salute smartly once that case is made." Recalling that the Air Force had put together the finest argument possible for the B-1, Jones said that while it was appropriate to continue advocating the advanced bomber in congressional testimony, he would not permit USAF members to lobby Congress in an attempt to overturn the decision. The chief of staff knew, too, that shelved weapon systems had a history of being reinstated when funds became available, or when the political climate changed. The trend held true in the case of the B-1 when President Ronald Reagan reversed Carter's decision.³

The other services faced their share of similar dilemmas. The Navy was no less disappointed in January 1991 when Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney

killed its high-priority A-12 stealth bomber program because of excessive costs and contractor problems. At the same time, Secretary Cheney retained the Air Force's B-2 stealth bomber program in the budget (but the service had to settle for a lesser number of planes than had been requested).⁴ The Navy may eventually win reinstatement for its A-12 program, since the Air Force's operational experience with the F-117 fighters in Panama and in the war against Iraq proved the high value of stealth technology for future operations.

"High technology" was a catch phrase for developing the military forces of the late twentieth century, as was "jointness." The latter expressed the new plateau of cooperation that the military services had reached in dealing with the joint issues from the 1970s and into the 1990s. General Jones played a leading part in reaching this plateau when he served as chief of staff, Air Force (CSAF) (1974-78) and as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) (1978-82). As chief of staff, Jones helped infuse greater cohesion between the Air Force's roles and those of the other services. After concluding an agreement with the chief of naval operations to increase training with naval forces, General Jones obtained Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger's approval to arm B-52s for sea interdiction. Subsequently, SAC developed an offensive naval warfare role for the B-52 forces and took steps to enhance the B-52's antiship capabilities.⁵

Another chief of staff, Gen Charles A. Gabriel, completed a follow-on agreement with the Navy in 1982. This agreement formalized joint maritime exercises involving E-3A AWACS, F-15s, B-52s, and other USAF aircraft. The increased cooperation between the two services was a healthy trend, although there was still some question about just how useful the Air Force's strike aircraft could be in the offensive naval warfare role. As the Air

Force's own studies suggest, its collateral support for naval operations remains a lucrative field for further development.⁶

It was obvious during the 1980s that the Air Force and the Army had reached a new plateau of mutual cooperation. The Army had continued to increase its organic air capabilities in the years since the Vietnam conflict, and had developed its own AirLand Battle doctrine. In April 1983, the Army organized aviation as a separate branch to centralize management of its air resources consistent with the new doctrine. While there were conflicts between the Army's AirLand Battle concept and traditional USAF doctrine, the two services worked together to bridge their differences.⁷

For years the dialogues between the USAF's Tactical Air Command and the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) shaped mutual cooperation in matters of concepts and doctrines. In train with these dialogues, the Air Force and Army chiefs of staff worked out an agreement on 22 May 1984 to cooperate on 31 initiatives of joint concern. The agreement defined service responsibilities in joint war-fighting roles and provided the framework for developing complementary weapon systems without duplication. General Gabriel said that the agreement affirmed the mutual dedication of the two services to provide the best combat capability to unified and specified commanders.⁸

The close cooperation between the Air Force and the Army manifested itself near the end of the decade when Adm William J. Crowe, Jr., outgoing chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recommended changing roles and mission policy to reflect that all four services performed the close-air-support function. Gen Larry Welch, Air Force chief of staff, and Gen Carl Vuono, Army chief of staff, dissented—arguing that the responsibility the Air Force had for providing close air support to the ground armies since the

signing of the National Security Act of 1947 should remain in force. General Vuono explained that Army helicopters were not regarded as close-air-support weapons, but as integral elements of the ground commander's combat power. Only the fixed-wing assets could provide the flexibility required to cover an entire theater.

Gen Colin Powell, the new chairman of the JCS, agreed with the Army and Air Force chiefs. General Powell wrote Secretary of Defense Cheney in November

1989 that he saw no reason to change DOD Directive 5100.1, which codifies the assignment of CAS responsibilities to the Air Force.⁹ Although Powell believed that any service could provide CAS "as a matter of theology," he thought that assigning CAS to each service as "a primary function" would be detrimental to the progress made between the Air Force and the Army on this issue in recent years.¹⁰ The value of this progress was soon played out in the skies over Iraq and Kuwait.

Notes

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4. Molly Moore, "Stealth Jet for Navy Is Canceled," *Washington Post*, 8 January 1991, 1.

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Chapter 6

Fruits of the Goldwater-Nichols Reorganization Act

ADMIRAL Crowe's valedictory report on roles and missions, which also recommended assigning to the Air Force more responsibility for military space functions, was mandated by the Goldwater-Nichols Reorganization Act of 1986. The bill, authored by Sen Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) and Rep Bill Nichols (D-Ala.) in 1986, made "the most sweeping revision" to the joint military establishment since President Eisenhower reorganized the defense structure in 1958. The new law concentrated more power in the JCS chairman and ordered reviews of the mission, responsibilities (including geographic boundaries), and force structures of the unified and specified combatant commands. Ultimately, this review resulted in creating the US Transportation Command in 1987 to oversee the joint deployment system for land, sea, and air components. Finally, the new law strengthened the authority of the combatant commanders over their forces and subordinate component commanders, and confirmed that the chain of command ran from the president to the secretary of defense to the combatant commanders.¹

Enactment of the Goldwater-Nichols Act came at a time when joint doctrine, joint planning, and the development of compatible military systems had become matters of grave concern. After the Vietnam War, the armed forces continued to be criticized for their perceived "ineptness" in conducting even small joint operations, such as the abortive mission

to rescue American hostages in Iran in 1980 and the problems that developed during the Grenada operation in 1983. Moreover, the cost of new weapon systems kept rising, while the threat from the Soviet bloc appeared to be diminishing after the Reagan administration's renewal of strategic arms reductions talks with the Soviet Union. While conducting constructive talks with the Soviets, the administration placed a high priority on modernizing the nation's strategic systems, including the development of the antimissile Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) program commonly known as "Star Wars."²

By the 1980s, space technology had become a vital element of national security—opening "a new medium of warfare" that overarched the mediums of land, sea, and air. The services were already relying on space-based systems for communications, surveillance, and navigation, and the advent of SDI meant that the introduction of weapons into space was near. In November 1984, as National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) prepared to rocket its first secret shuttle mission into space, the Pentagon announced that President Reagan had approved forming a unified command to manage the space operations of all the services. Subsequently, the US Space Command (USSPACECOM) was established at Peterson AFB, Colorado, with an Air Force general officer in command and a Navy admiral as deputy. These developments were the

prelude to Admiral Crowe's recommendation in September 1989 that the Air Force should have primary responsibility for defending the United States against space attack, for gaining and maintaining US supremacy in space, and for defeating enemy space forces.³

Although the Crowe proposal provided for space functions contributing to land and maritime operations to remain under Army and Navy control, critics feared that the move would eventually consolidate all space authority within the Air Force—a permanent USAF preeminence in space. Some opponents argued that the next step would be to replace the unified space command with a specified command, similar to SAC, under sole control of the Air Force. When General Powell replaced Admiral Crowe as chairman, he told Secretary of Defense Cheney that he believed his predecessor's space proposal would make "not only effective but also efficient use of our military forces."⁴

General Powell commended the requirement under the Goldwater-Nichols Act that the JCS chairman provide a roles and missions study whenever directed by the secretary of defense, but not less than every three years. Admiral Crowe's rendering of September 1989 was the first such report. Not a consensus document, it gave the unique perspective of the JCS chairman. These studies would remove roles and missions "from the status of icon," Powell thought, and would put it in the context of an ongoing working document of the Department of Defense. Such flexibility for change was extremely important in view of rapidly changing world situations such as the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the reuniting of Germany, and the drawdown of US forces in NATO. The uncertainty and instability accompanying this thaw in the cold war demanded responsive and efficacious adjustments in the force structures and joint war-fighting capabilities of the armed forces.⁵

The real proof of roles and missions efficacy and that of improvements enacted by the Goldwater-Nichols Act would come on the battlefield. Except for the limited use of military force to bring Manuel Noriega to justice in Panama, the first test of enhanced joint war fighting came when President George Bush ordered US Central Command (USCENTCOM) to deploy to the Persian Gulf in August 1990 after Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait. Although Central Command was not a product of the Goldwater-Nichols Act (the command was established on 1 January 1983 as a replacement for the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force), the provisions of the Act had helped make it a model unified command. Headquartered at MacDill AFB, Florida, Central Command had no forces actually assigned in peacetime, but had designated components which provided combat forces during wartime. The command conducted peacetime field training exercises of component forces and developed appropriate plans for operations in its geographic areas of responsibility (northeast Africa and southwest Asia). The command developed a joint plan that was tailor-made when the president ordered a response to the Iraqi invasion.⁶

The deployment phase (Desert Shield) of the buildup to protect Saudi Arabia and neighboring coalition partners was supported by US Transportation Command with air, sea, and land forces deploying from both the continental United States and overseas locations. Unlike the skewed command arrangements during the Vietnam conflict, all forces deployed under Desert Shield (including specified command forces like SAC's bombers and tankers) fell under US Central Command, commanded by Army General Norman Schwarzkopf, upon arrival in the forward area. Commander in chief, Central Command, is not a permanent Army billet, however; General Schwarzkopf's

predecessor, Gen George B. Crist, was a US Marine Corps officer. The Navy and the Marine Corps had opposed the Goldwater-Nichols Act, especially the creation of US Transportation Command and the concentration of more authority in the hands of the JCS chairman, but they adjusted to the compromise. And both services performed vital roles in the Desert Shield buildup and in subsequent Desert Storm operations.⁷

Military analysts and historians will debate the pros and cons of the Desert Storm experience for months and years to come, but early evidence suggests that the campaign may have been the most efficient and effective application of combined air forces (combined arms, as well) since World War II. Judging from this evidence, the individual services flew their air missions according to their own

tactical doctrine, but did so within the context of core doctrine taught by the Air Force. The air campaign was planned under the centralized direction of the air component commander, but for decentralized execution by participating forces. By all accounts, the air campaign was characterized by carefully orchestrated multinational strike operations comprised of cohesive real-time intelligence gathering and interpreting, critical pinpoint targeting, and sustained precision strikes. Air missions were fraggged and executed under the central direction of General Schwarzkopf's air component commander, Lt Gen Charles Horner (USAF), according to a combined, integrated air plan. The results speak well for the joint application of air doctrine.⁸

Notes

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Chapter 7

Implications for Future Planning

THE Goldwater-Nichols Act and the Gulf war are certain to have a profound influence on evolving service positions within the joint arena. From past trends, one can judge that the Goldwater-Nichols-directed periodic roles and missions review and the ongoing study of Desert Shield/Desert Storm—coupled with a healthy mix of budgetary, political, and foreign policy input—will provide answers to questions of joint doctrine, force levels, and force composition for years to come. Military analysts have studied the Gulf experience “as a key to determining America’s readiness to defend its security interests in the post-Cold War Era” from the commencement of the US force buildup during the late summer of 1990. Their study will continue long after the troops come home.¹

Reminiscent of debates in the Pentagon during the late 1950s and early 1960s, some military analysts argued before the Gulf crisis that the receding Soviet threat portended a policy shift back to small wars or interventions. They suggested that the high technology weapons deployed in Europe against the Warsaw Pact threat had outlived their usefulness in a post-cold war environment. The crisis in the Gulf silenced these arguments—at least temporarily. While US forces will need to stay ready to respond to threats at the lower end of the warfare spectrum, the decisive air campaign against Iraq upheld the wisdom of keeping the US technological edge in high-intensity warfare.²

Further, the instability of Eastern Europe reminded military planners how

fragile and uncertain the political future could be. US forces must stay ready to deploy rapidly to any area where US security interests may be at risk. And instability within the Soviet Union coupled with the events in the Persian Gulf interrupted the US-Soviet progress in reducing strategic arms. These situations tend to justify the high costs of SDI and other state-of-the-art weapon systems that are needed to defend the United States from strategic attack.³

The Gulf war experience should help quantify the armed forces’ requirements for rapid deployment capabilities (airlift and sea lift) for future contingencies. An important feature of the Desert Shield phase of the war was that the United States had several months to build up its forces before beginning the Desert Storm combat operations—a luxury that may not be available in future conflicts. Force planning must also consider the roles that prepositioning and access to bases played in the Desert Shield deployment. In areas of known present and potential security risk, these matters must be negotiated beforehand; we dare not await the time of actual intervention.⁴

From the airman’s perspective, the brilliant success of the Desert Storm air campaign has special lessons for joint planners. The campaign repeated the pattern of participation by air, sea, and land forces, but there was a distinct difference between the employment of these forces in Desert Storm and the way they were employed during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. Due in large measure to the greater authority vested in the

combatant commander by the Goldwater-Nichols Act, there was more cohesion and unity in the joint employment of military forces during Desert Storm than at anytime in the past 40-plus years. This seems to have been true of all aspects of Desert Storm, including the naval blockade and ground operations, but especially so in the combined air campaign.⁵

For the Air Force, this was the first pure application of its core doctrine in joint or combined operations since World War II; and the results were favorably conclusive. Centrally planned and executed with near-flawless precision by the air component commander and his combined staff, the campaign to win air supremacy, to destroy the war-making infrastructure of the enemy, and to isolate the battlefield was classic in its application. The rapid success of the ensuing ground campaign suggests that air power had virtually completed the objective, which General Powell described as "first we will cut off the enemy's head and then we will kill him," before the ground war started. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Merrill A. McPeak called the air

campaign "a remarkable performance by the coalition air forces." It was, he added, "the first time in history that a field army has been defeated by air power."⁶

In future roles and missions forums, each of the services will have hard compromises to make. These will entail such key areas as military hardware, force levels, and joint doctrines. Such compromises are unavoidable as military requirements undergo the tough scrutiny demanded from budget cuts and shifts in foreign policy. For the present, it seems that Goldwater-Nichols has provided the right formula for making such adjustments in the interest of national security with minimum discomfort to the individual services. In Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Central Command provided the model for how this formula works on the battlefield. For the efficacy of American air power, can there be a better model than the unified Desert Storm air operations? And they were conducted without abrogating the integrity of the tactical doctrines of the individual services!

Notes

1. Sen Sam Nunn (D-Ga.), "Military Reform Paved Way for Gulf Triumph," *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 March 1991, C5; Mary H. Cooper, "Iraq and Beyond," *Montgomery Advertiser*, 2 December 1990, 1D.

2. Cooper; Jeffrey Record, "Designing an Air Force for Wars That Won't Be Fought," *Baltimore Sun*, 20 December 1989, 13; Molly Moore, "GAO Says Low-Intensity Threat Unmet," *Washington Post*, 16 March 1990, 10.

3. Donald B. Rice, Secretary of the Air Force, white paper, "The Air Force and U.S. National Security: Global Reach--Global Power," June 1990.

4. Nunn, C5; Cooper, 1D.

5. Nunn, C5; Mortimer Zuckerman, "The Triumph of Desert Storm," *U.S. News & World Report*, 11 March 1991, 76.

6. Bill Gertz, "Stealth Gave Allies Early Air-War Edge," *Washington Times*, 18 March 1991, 6.