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# AIR BASE GROUND DEFENSE: EMPLOYING THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD TO PROTECT US POWER PROJECTION CAPABILITY



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**"It is easier and more effective to destroy the enemy's aerial power by destroying his nests and eggs on the ground than to hunt his flying birds in the air."**

The Command of the Air

**Giulio Douhet, 1921**

**ABSTRACT**

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The current US national military strategy is contingent on maintaining an unchallenged aerial power projection capability. It is difficult to conceive of an enemy in the near future with the ability to seriously challenge our aerial platforms while they are airborne. But what if our adversaries focus their attention on destroying our forward-based aircraft while they are on the ground? This paper postulates that the consequences of successful enemy standoff attacks on our air bases could not only affect the tactical situation, but the strategic outcome as well, as the national will is negatively influenced by low-risk, high-payoff enemy level II standoff attacks. The paper traces the fundamental historical shift in air base ground attacks from penetrating, to standoff attacks, explains why technology will accelerate this trend, and identifies the Army National Guard divisional "medium" brigades as the logical force to be assigned the joint rear area defense and ABGD missions.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

LTC Ballard graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1974 and was commissioned as an Infantry lieutenant. He has had assignments in the 82d Airborne Division, the Berlin Brigade, and 1st Special Operations Command. He served his battalion command time with Air Base Ground Defense Command, the TRADOC organization whose mission was to train Air Force security police in ground combat skills. Most recently he served as the Fort Dix Director of Force Projection (formerly the Deputy Chief of Staff for Training). He is currently serving for a year as an Army Fellow at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies in Washington, DC.

**AIR BASE GROUND DEFENSE: EMPLOYING THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD TO PROTECT US POWER PROJECTION CAPABILITY**

**Executive Summary:** The current US national military strategy of flexible and selective engagement is contingent on maintaining an unchallenged aerial power projection capability. As the US continues to acquire technologically advanced aircraft and support systems, its aerial dominance over potential adversaries widens, increasing the prospect that its airframes will face little threat while airborne. But what if our adversaries focus their attention on destroying forward-deployed aircraft while they are on the ground, or as they are departing from/returning to their air bases?

Air Base Ground Defense, a subset of the joint rear area defense mission, protects air base assets from ground attack. It is further delineated into the internal and the external missions. US doctrine states that the Air Force is responsible for the internal mission; the Army is responsible for the external mission.

This paper postulates that technology is simultaneously making the internal mission easier to accomplish, while escalating the difficulty of the external mission. Increases in weapons capabilities have made the standoff zone, the area external to the air base from which an adversary can successfully launch indirect fire weapons against the air base, progressively larger. As the Air Force mission becomes more feasible, the Army mission becomes increasingly untenable to accomplish with military police alone, the force we have identified to protect against level II threats.

The consequences of one or a few successful enemy air base standoff attacks in the next conflict involving US military forces could be devastating. Destruction of military aircraft and personnel could not only hamper employment and sustainment, compelling the combatant CINC to reallocate maneuver forces to defend air bases in the rear area; the psychological consequences on the national will could galvanize public opinion to reassess its willingness to be militarily involved. Thus a successful level II threat could achieve results grossly out of proportion to the forces committed to the attack. The results would be direct hits on our intangible strategic centers of gravity: public opinion, and the will of our leaders.

This paper traces the fundamental historical shift in air base ground attacks from penetrating, to standoff attacks and explains why technology will accelerate this trend. It concludes by arguing that the external mission against a level II threat must be accomplished by maneuver forces, not military police. It argues that it could best be accomplished by Army National Guard units specifically focused on the rear area defense mission, a limited but essential mission which would allow Guard units to match their resourcing to well accomplish the mission, while simultaneously leaving more versatile active component units on the front lines.

**AIR BASE GROUND DEFENSE: EMPLOYING THE NATIONAL GUARD TO PROTECT US POWER PROJECTION CAPABILITY**

**Introduction:** In the aftermath of the Cold War as the US military nears the completion of a massive downsizing, it is now more dependent than ever on power projection to implement the national military strategy of flexible and selective engagement.[1] On the heels of our highly successful aerial campaign during Desert Storm, some might conclude that this era of revolutionary technological advancement has made our aerial platforms virtually invulnerable in the execution of their assigned missions. It is difficult to conceive of a credible threat to our ability to project power from the sky. As forward presence is reduced, it follows that power projection becomes all the more critical to our military strategy. But what if the enemy resorted to low technology ground operations against our forward-land-based aircraft--are our forces correctly identified and sufficiently organized, armed, equipped, and trained to safeguard our air assets while they are parked on the ground?

Although our current research, development and acquisition (RDA) efforts have taken a sudden downturn, the United States continues its forward advance to the end state that Alvin and Heidi Toffler refer to as a "third wave" society.[2] Our reference plane is fast eclipsing that of our current and potential adversaries. We are in danger of losing our ability to understand our opponents and the methods they may employ to strike us. With the myriad intelligence technologies we have to provide early warning of potential enemy air and missile attacks, we may be becoming self-satisfied in the belief that there is nothing any enemy has, or

will have in the near future, which can threaten our ability to project power into a theater of operations. This fascination with technology was exemplified by Air Force Chief of Staff General Merrill A. McPeak, who stated at a briefing in 1991:

> By itself the F-117 has made all other air forces obsolete...overnight. The United States is pushing the technology area with B-2 and ATF. Continued stealth investment will keep us in a league by ourselves for a long time.[3]

More recently, Seth Cropsey wrote in Policy Review:

> America now has within its technological grasp the ability simultaneously to reduce defense spending and construct a military that can move swiftly to any part of the world, and from a safe distance wield decisive conventional power.[4]

There is no problem with either of these statements so long as we place the required emphasis on maintaining forces required to seize and control terrain, when the mission so requires.

**This paper contends that historically through the present, we have failed to deal adequately with the issue of air base ground defense as a joint issue, and have failed to formulate a seamless doctrine to adequately safeguard our forward-deployed aircraft.** The few instances when the chinks appeared in our air base ground defense capability, resources were marshalled to treat the symptoms, and not the disease itself. When the medicine was withdrawn, the disease remained, dormant and incipient.

The next major regional conflict could have devastating consequences on our ability to project power, amplified by the significant inventory reduction, due to force downsizing, of airframes of every kind. Now is the time to correct our flawed joint doctrine and deficient resource allocation before they are put to the test and our vulnerabilities are exploited by our next

adversary. Our military structure must allocate appropriate maneuver forces to accomplish the ABGD external mission, because to paraphrase noted British military historian Sir Julian S. Corbett:

> We speak glibly of 'air power' and forget that its true value lies in its influence on the operations of armies.[5]

**Terms defined:** The term *air base ground defense (ABGD)* refers to those actions taken to safeguard air bases against enemy ground attack. It excludes defense against air and missile attacks, which is the air defense mission.[6] ABGD concerns stopping threats varying from *level I* (primarily acts of sabotage) through *level II* (irregular, regular or special forces units of less than battalion size) through *level III* (battalion or larger sized forces). Typically, level II attacks include penetrating, standoff, or a combination of both attacks. A *penetrating attack* requires the attacker to gain entry onto the air base complex, for example to emplace satchel charges. A *standoff attack* uses weapons that are effective from beyond the air base perimeter, such as mortars and rockets. *Combination attacks* use both types of tactics, such as a rocket attack to divert attention while sappers cut through the wire and emplace charges.[7]

Current doctrine[8] divides the ABGD mission into two broad components: the *internal mission*, which involves securing the flight line, parking ramps, ordnance and fuel dumps, repair facilities, aircrew support facilities, and $C^3$ operations within the confines of the air base itself; and the *external mission*, which encompasses the area of operations outside the air base perimeter. US doctrine assigns responsibility for securing the air base to the

base commander. Air Force personnel are responsible for securing everything within the air base perimeter, or internal area, and depending on available resources, a portion of the external area immediately surrounding the air base. The Army is responsible for securing the remainder of the external area of operations. The purpose statement of Joint Operational Concept for Air Base Ground Defense specifically assigns the external mission to Army **military police**[9] (boldface is the author's.)[10]

There is confusion as to who is responsible for command and control of forces assigned to defend air bases, particularly when a threat is present.[11,12,13] The implication in relevant manuals is that only military police will be committed by the Army to level I and II threats; combat units will be committed only against level III threats. This position relegates us to a reactive rather than proactive posture in dealing with air base threats.

Whereas the first historical examples of air base ground attacks used penetrating tactics, technological advances have resulted in decreased probability of success with penetrating attacks.[14] In essence, the advent of technology has allowed defenders to rely increasingly on electronic means for detection, sufficing a quick reaction (i.e., reactive) response once the penetration attempt is detected.

**The WWII/North Africa experience:** Historically, small forces have been extremely successful in conducting attacks whose purpose was to destroy aircraft and equipment. The Rand report Snakes in the Eagle's Nest cites shortages in high-quality rear-area security forces and lack of adequate surveillance assets as being the major

factors relating to the success of both standoff and penetrating attacks.[15] For example, in North Africa the British Special Air Service (SAS) was repetitively successful in conducting penetration attacks which took a steady toll on Axis air power projection. The Axis forces seldom established night listening posts, nor did they conduct night ambushes in the vicinity of airfields. One reason for this was that the air and ground forces reported to two different field commanders: the ground forces were commanded by Rommel, who communicated with Berlin, often with Hitler. The Luftwaffe in fact reported to Air Marshal Kesselring in Rome.[16]

During SAS operations in North Africa, penetrating attacks were so successful that standoff attacks were not necessary and therefore not attempted. There were several reasons for this. Attacking forces were very small, usually patrols of thirty men mounted on twelve light vehicles. To remain mobile and low-profile, heavy caliber weapons were not transported. Since rear area security often was almost nonexistent, the attackers could infiltrate by vehicle deep behind enemy lines, establish a rendezvous point a few kilometers from the objective airfield, and dismount on foot to conduct surveillance. Having noted the enemy defensive positions, the commandos would return under cover of darkness to place satchel charges on parked aircraft and fuel dumps. Although set at the same time to detonate nearly simultaneously, sometimes one would detonate prematurely. When this happened, they would use the confusion as an opportunity to set additional charges before making good their escape.[17,18]

By the time Allied commando raids ceased in July 1943, they

had destroyed at least 367 aircraft, heavily cutting into the Luftwaffe's ability to project air power.[19] The heaviest weapons used were vehicle-mounted anti-aircraft guns. The significant aircraft and equipment losses inflicted by only a handful of commandos during just two dozen raids, demonstrate how effective ground attacks can be in whittling down an enemy's ability to project air power.

**The Vietnam experience:** Responsibility for preventing air base ground attacks in Vietnam varied as the conflict progressed. The US Air Force operated from 10 main operating bases (MOBs) in Vietnam and 5 in Thailand. Air base security was divided into 3 types: internal; perimeter; and external. The external zone encompassed the terrain surrounding the air base perimeter from which standoff attacks could be launched. During the period 1961-4, the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) was responsible for both external and perimeter security of the 10 MOBs in Vietnam; the VNAF (Vietnam Air Force) was responsible for internal security. In the summer of 1965, US policy--according to GEN Throckmorton--was:

> to hold the government of Vietnam to its responsibility for static defense and to **take a calculated risk on air base security.** This would free US Army forces for offensive operations and thus successfully conclude the war.[20] (boldface is the author's)

The overwhelming majority of ground attacks against MOBs in Vietnam were standoff. Until 1966, the enemy used only mortars and recoilless rifles as standoff weapons. Beginning in 1966, the VietCong added rockets, including the 122-mm with an 11,000 meter range, to the arsenal.[21]

In 1965, to counter the threat from standoff attacks, MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) assigned allied battalions

to supplement the ARVN units operating around MOBs. These included US, Republic of Korea, and Australian troop units. Where feasible, defoliants were employed to reduce concealment. At some air bases, Army counter-battery radars were installed to rapidly identify weapons launch points. Aerial platforms were assigned to conduct both day and night reconnaissance to discover enemy activity. Rapid reaction aircraft, both helicopter and fixed wing gunships, could be scrambled to target enemy sightings. Fencelines, minefields, towers, light systems, tanglefoot, patrol dogs, seismic intrusion devices, listening and observation posts were all employed to detect and defeat enemy sappers from penetrating the airfield perimeter. Despite all of these measures, there were 475 ground attacks against these MOBs, leading many to the conclusion that the enemy could attack at will.[22]

**The Soviet experience in Afghanistan:** Numerous sources cite the demoralizing impact on Soviet fixed-wing and rotary-wing pilots that the Mujahideen effected with US-supplied Stinger and British-manufactured Blowpipe surface-to-air missiles (SAMs). Soviet journalist Gennady Bocharov describes the landing of transport aircraft at Kabul Airport:

> As soon as the plane starts its descent to the runway combat choppers are scrambled to give escort. The passengers look out and see the surrounding air filled with bright, soundless flares. These protect the plane from ground-to-air rockets. Such rockets home in on bodies emitting heat, such as the engines of your plane. In order to throw the rockets off course, the choppers surround the descending plane with more intense sources of heat. So the plane is surrounded by numerous blossoms of bright light, until it either lands on the runway, or if it is taking off, reaches an altitude of three thousand meters.[23]

Unclassified sources cite the number 1,000 as being the

quantity of Stinger missiles supplied to the Mujahideen between 1985 and 1989. Of the 340 Stingers fired, 269 resulted in aircraft kills, terrorizing Soviet and Kabul forces, according to Anthony Cordesman, who has conducted a seminal study of modern wars.[24] Pakistani sources reported that in 1988, 100 helicopters, 31 transports, and 49 fighter-bombers were destroyed by Stingers.[25]

> The main impact of the Stinger was not the number of targets killed, however, but the fact that the Soviet and RA loss of the ability to control the air environment in combat gave the Mujahideen far greater freedom of action.[26]
>
> By 1987, the obvious inadequacy of their countermeasures suites had created a morale problem among Soviet and Afghanistan government helicopter crews. In 1988, one former government pilot recalled that "some time ago, the pilots went on strike and refused to fly in areas where Stinger missiles were present."[27,28,29,30]

To defend against these rear area level II threats, the Soviets created counterinsurgency forces which aggressively patrolled the rear area. They developed a counterinsurgency doctrine, heretofore unknown in the Soviet military, which relied on active reconnaissance, ambushes, and rapid maneuver to detect and defeat the Mujahideen. They dedicated highly trained forces to ABGD.

**The fundamental shift from penetrating to standoff attacks:** In comparing the ground attack tactics used by the British in North Africa, the VC/NVA 25 years later in Vietnam, and the Mujahideen 40 years later, it is striking to note a fundamental shift in tactics. Penetrating attacks were employed by the SAS 100% of the time, while standoff attacks were employed by the VC/NVA during about 97% of the ground attacks against air bases, and SAM-dominant standoff attacks in Afghanistan all but eliminated emergency aerial

logistical resupply in that conflict after 1987. During the formative years of the US Air Force, technology was such that standoff attacks of air bases were largely ineffectual: indirect fire weapons ranges were minimal, throw weights were less, and there were no precision guided munitions. Successful ground attacks required physically penetrating the air base to ensure that aircraft and logistics were destroyed. This is no longer the case.

The potential still exists for penetrating attacks by zealots who lack concern for their individual lives. For example, there are Islamic fundamentalists who believe that during a "Jihad," or Holy War, that death while participating in an act of combat guarantees a place in heaven.[31] Speaking of zealots, Kreis states:

> They are very dangerous, in part because it is so difficult to defend against them. Usually, the decision to shoot has to be made quickly, if such a decision can be made at all, by low ranking people...this can lead to all sorts of complications and poses a serious base defense challenge.[32]

Notwithstanding the threat imposed by zealots, technology has contributed immensely to securing the internal area. The reverse is true in the external area, where successful standoff attacks have become more feasible. Technology has greatly increased the ability to succeed in destroying aircraft, facilities, and disrupting aircraft sortie generation with near impunity. Weapon range, accuracy, lethality, and portability have increased dramatically.[33]

To those who recognize that combat aircraft generally use flares and other means to evade SAMs, let us not forget that the vast majority of US soldiers deployed to Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm arrived on unarmed, low and slow military transports and commercial airliners. Imagine the stunning effect the loss of even

one such aircraft, loaded with 470+ American lives, would have had on the American psyche, not to mention the effect on the pilots flying the Civil Reserve Air Fleet.[34]

*Our doctrine fails to recognize the imperative to deny the enemy the opportunity to launch standoff attacks from the area of operations surrounding air bases.* In fact, we have failed to differentiate this vulnerable area from the rest of the area of operations; only the inclusive "external area," sometimes called the "main defense area," is named.

Our doctrine fails to name this area, because its tactical significance has not been recognized. We fail to even designate **main operating bases as key terrain.** Thus, no units are specifically trained to defend the external areas controlling them. Only military police units have the loose mission to secure the external areas within the context of patrolling the entire rear area. This failure to recognize the imperative to adequately secure our bases and the external area controlling them is the Achilles' heel in our ability to project air and land power. We must come to grips with the most vulnerable aspect of our rear area defense concept--the security of the area surrounding our bases from which the enemy can initiate actions influencing our ability to conduct air operations.

**Identifying the standoff zone:** The first requirement is to name this beast. Since it will be defined as that area from which the enemy is capable of launching standoff attacks against the airbase, let's refer to it as the *standoff zone*, or SZ.[35]

Now let's attempt to quantify it. *The size of the standoff zone is entirely a function of the enemy's standoff capability.* For example, until 1966 in Vietnam, the longest range

indirect fire weapon employed by the VietCong/ North Vietnamese Army against air bases was the 120-mm mortar, which had a range of 5,700 meters. The area of the standoff zone is the area of a donut, or the area of the outer concentric circle minus the area of the airbase. Unfortunately for the defender, the radius of the donut is the standoff range, plus the radius of the airbase.[36] *This is the size of the area that must be successfully secured to deny the enemy the ability to execute standoff attacks on this particular air base.* Let us assume for just a moment that this size area can be successfully secured by an infantry battalion.[37]

Continuing the example, in 1966 the Soviets and Chinese began to supply the VC/NVA with 122-mm rockets capable of ranging to 11,000 meters, nearly doubling their standoff radius, but requiring the commitment of an infantry brigade (three battalions) to secure![38] The above examples, taken from Vietnam, assume that the enemy lacks the capability to employ vehicle-mounted indirect fire pieces against this air base. Will this always be the case? What if we take over operations in an area formerly controlled by the enemy, who has hidden artillery pieces in barns or warehouses? The standard range of a 155-mm howitzer is 20 kilometers; the improved howitzers of many nations fire enhanced precision-guided munitions with a range of 30 kilometers. The standoff zones in these two cases encompass 1017 and 2462 sq. km. respectively, requiring the commitment of 6 and 14 infantry battalions, respectively, to secure them! (Weapons with these ranges proliferate the Bosnian peace-enforcement area of operations).

**As technology continues to advance it will have the following two trends on ABGD: the internal area will become increasingly**

more secure, sufficing for reactive techniques to safeguard it; and the external area will become increasingly less secure, requiring increasingly proactive techniques to secure it.

The above truism is not meant to cause our military planners to resign themselves to the fact that some day it will become impossible for us to secure our airfields against level II standoff attacks. Rather, it is to make the point that it is ludicrous to expect this mission to be accomplished by combat support (military police) units; instead it argues that our force structure must realistically plan for accomplishing this mission.

**The consequences of ignoring the ABGD mission:** Is it possible that one or repeated enemy successes against US forward-deployed air bases using small unit, lightly equipped forces could so humiliate our country that the national will would be galvanized against further US military involvement? There are those who feel that we have entered into an era in which the American people have a low tolerance for engaging in prolonged military operations with ever-mounting US casualties. There is discussion that the national will can be easily dissuaded from engagement in the face of steady casualties, or in the event of a major catastrophic event.[39] It is likely that a single devastating attack on a US air base, resulting in the loss of a dozen or more airframes and concomitant loss of American lives, could have a chilling effect on the national will to continue military involvement in support of a poorly articulated national objective. This is particularly so if the public has been told that the military's involvement is in an operation short of combat, and then the public perceives the rules have changed.[40]

Even if such an act had the opposite effect, the loss of

significant air resources could limit our military options. For example, the loss of one AWACS, a JSTARS platform, or a squadron of C-17 supertransports could immediately degrade our capability to continue combat operations at the prior operational tempo. And if the parking ramp happened to be accommodating the premier aircraft epitomizing our high-technology military superiority and preeminence as a world power, such as B-1 or B-2 bombers or F-117A stealth fighter-bombers, the shockwaves would be heard around the world. Loss of even a few airframes such as the C-17 with a replacement cost of about a quarter of a billion dollars apiece would place quite a dent in our national treasury. Finally, the loss of a personnel-laden transport could compel a revision of the employment plan, greatly increasing transport requirements and elongating the time required to complete the buildup phase.

> As opposed to strictly military reasons for attacking airfields, hoped-for political gains can also be a motivation. Such tactics...are a surrogate for air power that the rebels lack. Usually of small military significance themselves, a campaign of repeated raids on the symbols of government power or foreign presence can have substantial impact.[41]

Enemy operations against our air bases need not involve significant (and highly detectable) resources to be successful. With our sophisticated intelligence systems in place, we could undoubtedly detect, and defeat while still inbound, battalion-sized airborne or air assault units targeting a forward base. But what about a 2-man SA-7 team on a hilltop 5 kilometers away from the final runway approach, or a heavy machine gun team 2 kilometers away on a promontory overlooking the flight line? What about a 3-man mortar crew 6 kilometers away in a burned-out city lot, or an artillery piece hidden in a barn 20 kilometers away? Pursuing any

of these actions would be extremely low-risk to the enemy; involve minimal support, command and control; be easily deniable or exploitable; and have the potential for devastating results.

In the aftermath of 1 or 2 successful attacks such as the above, the theater commander would be compelled to reallocate maneuver forces to protect air bases, ammunition depots, and other easily targetable facilities. Depending on the number of vulnerable bases or clusters in our rear area, significant bleedoff of better-utilized maneuver forces would be required to be committed to rear area defense. This siphoning off of combat power from the front lines could blunt our main action, deplete our local reserves, and delay or prolong our military involvement.

**About rear operations:** Army Field Manual 100-5 made the "Airland Battle" the centerpiece of our land warfare doctrine. The Airland Battlefield is defined by "close operations: operations along the line of contact;" "deep operations: actions directed against enemy forces not yet in close contact;" and "rear operations: rearward of elements in contact designed to assure freedom of maneuver and continuity of operations, including continuity of sustainment and command and control."[42]

There appears to be an aura of mystique whereby testosterone is associated with combat operations which are deep (e.g., conducted by Air Force pilots and Special Forces soldiers) and close (e.g., those conducted by tactical air support and ground maneuver forces). However, when rear operations are discussed, there appears to be some sort of anathema associated with them. Perhaps it is because it is here where the "REMFs"[43] are located: the logisticians, the administrators, the docs, and the females.

But it is precisely here where combat power is both generated and sustained. Our doctrine already commits the proper forces to the deep and close battles; but it fails to allocate the proper combat forces to the rear area, possibly because despite our Airland doctrine, too many of our leaders cannot think beyond the linear battlefield. Our doctrine must commit the proper forces to conducting the tactical defensive in the rear area, so that the tactical and operational offensives can be pursued elsewhere.

**What force should be assigned the ABGD mission?** Instead of crossing our fingers and hoping that there aren't three or four highly motivated enemy soldiers or sympathizers willing to die for their cause, it would be much preferable to proactively assign the ABGD external mission to the forces best suited to accomplish it. If it is within their means, our doctrine assigns this mission to the host nation, if one exists.[44]

**If not host nation forces, then who?** Such a mission is ideally suited for accomplishment by selected Army National Guard brigades, some of which would be earmarked for early deployment to accomplish the ABGD mission. Units identified for this mission would not train for the entire panoply of maneuver METL tasks (the jack of all trades, master of none mentality), but rather those imbedded in the rear area defense. With a smaller plate, they could train to the required level of proficiency absent competition from other missions to dilute training standards and available time. During a callup, fully-resourced ABGD-designated units would require minimal time to hone skills prior to deployment.

It makes sense to earmark National Guard brigades for the rear area defense mission. Aligning them with specific theaters

allows for an orientation on the terrain, climate, and culture of locales they would likely be called upon to secure in the event of a military commitment. It would hone interoperability with the local host nation forces. Units could periodically conduct their annual training in country, on the terrain they might be required to secure. At other times they could train to high levels of proficiency by working jointly with Air Force security police at CONUS military bases. This would develop familiarization with base defense scenarios, clarify service-peculiar procedures, facilitate interoperability, create relationships of mutual understanding and trust, and take advantage of realistic terrain, i.e., that surrounding the Air Force base.

By coming to grips with the rear area defense in general and the ABGD mission specifically, the theater commander would, in essence, be economizing his maneuver forces. He would avoid being forced during a major regional conflict into having to reallocate more specialized and already committed maneuver units from the front lines to defend critical bases and supply lines. National Guard battalions not specifically assigned the mission of defending key terrain would accomplish the joint rear area defense mission.

**The politics of using National Guard units:** Using National Guard units for the external air base ground defense mission assures the Air Force that when security forces are needed, they will be there, and not be diverted later to accomplish some offensive action. It is ironic that the first US commitment of ground forces in Vietnam, the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade at Da Nang on 7 March 1965, was to secure US port and air base facilities. The 3 May 1965 commitment of the 173d Airborne Brigade

was to secure Bien Hoa Air Base. The first 44 maneuver battalions committed to Vietnam were to perform rear area security missions, mainly air base ground defense.[45,46].

In 1965, Secretary of Defense McNamara approved a concept calling for the commitment of 3 battalions to secure each major air base in Vietnam, and 1 battalion to secure each minor one.[47] Once these battalions were on the ground in country, however, General Westmoreland requested and received authority for them to be used in offensive roles. It was at this point that the ABGD external mission was transferred to host nation and allied units.[48] Within the Air Force even today, there is the perception that when other missions come up, Army units deployed to secure air bases will be reallocated, with the Air Force left holding the bag. Kreis notes:

> ...Westmoreland's abrupt decision to use for maneuver warfare in South Vietnam Army battalions originally justified for base defense in that country created bitterness in some parts of the Air Force that lasted for years.[49]

In 1965 when the Army battalions were pulled away from the base security missions, the Air Force was unprepared to assume this mission, and the South Vietnamese military was incapable of doing so. There are those who feel that

> ...the Army abdicated its responsibility to secure air bases without any willingness to reach a compensating understanding with the Air Force...to this day, there are many Air Force people who have an ax to grind over the way the Army handled this situation.[50]

Beyond the common-sense reasons for assigning the ABGD mission to National Guard units, there is the effect that mobilizing the reserves has on marrying the national will with the military action. In On Strategy II: A Critical Analysis of the

Gulf War, COL Summers states:

> The conviction that war is a shared responsibility of the people, the government, and the military is as old as the nation itself.[51]

He argues that without the general population having a stake in a military outcome, there is no motivation of the national will to ensure that the sacrifices incurred are validated by the eventual outcome. He believes that General Abrams, the commander of MACV during the US drawdown,

> saw clearly the critical role played by the reserves. Although in most American wars their reinforcing capabilities had been critical, more important was their function as a bridge between the wartime military and the American public. Thus the reserves were the ideal instrument to revitalize the "remarkable trinity" by stiffening the congressional backbone and ensuring Congress's active support for wartime operations.[52]

Speaking of the Total Force, Summers quotes Lewis Sorley:

> Abrams built into the 16-division structure a reliance on reserves such that the force could not function without them, and hence could not be deployed without calling them up...There can be little doubt that the steps taken were meant deliberately to ensure that the reserves would be available in any future conflict of significant dimensions.[53]

Mobilizing forces does not ipso facto ensure that the national will can be coerced to support US military involvement. The Guard is only an enabling mechanism; it is critical for the President to galvanize the public opinion through effective leadership in convincing the American people that military involvement is the right thing to do.[54]

**What force structure package should be assigned the ABGD mission?** The theater CINC must allocate the proper force for conducting the joint rear area defense mission. As the Soviets found out in Afghanistan, the ABGD mission is pivotal to the

operations in a theater without front lines. It is a grave mistake to expect heavily tasked military police to be able to accomplish a mission that can only be done by maneuver forces. The Army miscued when it reasoned that since the internal mission is accomplished by Air Force security police, the external mission can be accomplished by Army military police: this reasoning is non sequitur. The missions are totally different, and besides, the Air Force has no other forces upon which it can rely. The Army needs to identify maneuver units focused on this mission, skilled in counter-insurgency operations, which can conduct ambushes, raids and other small unit combat operations necessary to secure the external area specifically and the joint rear area in general. None of these missions are suitable for military police alone.

**Let's get specific:** As for any operation, shaping the appropriate force is METT-T (mission, enemy forces, terrain, troops available, time) dependent. Securing a piece of terrain, in this case the standoff zone, requires units light enough to move quickly and quietly throughout the zone so that they can detect the enemy without themselves becoming targets. Yet they require sufficient firepower to overwhelmingly defeat any enemy threat. Further, an extremely mobile rapid reaction force should be on immediate call to reinforce the units occupying the ground. Threat forces operating in the standoff zone will be limited in size to the minimum required to transport, set up and operate standoff weapons which can target the base or its lines of communication (i.e., flight corridors and convoy routes). The typical threat will be team, squad and platoon sized--anything larger risks detection.

The above analysis defines that friendly operations will be

squad, platoon and (rarely) company sized, capable of being reinforced by a company of air assault forces. Typically, the US has not had the luxury to go into a theater of operations and build from scratch air bases where it makes military sense to do so: we have had to operate out of existing military or civil air bases. These facilities require civilians to construct and operate. Typical air bases are located within heavily built-up areas, requiring a combination of heavy and light units to secure them.

Air base defense operations are centrally planned and locally executed. Required direct support includes detection via military intelligence targeting/aerial reconnaissance, coordinating air assault and close air support responses, and artillery engagement/ counterbattery fires. On the digitized battlefield this support can be coordinated at battalion and brigade level. Rear area operations are not characterized by the need for expanded staffs to plan branches and sequels to an extended campaign--the rear area defense mission can be accomplished with a streamlined division headquarters. Brigades would be added to the task organization as required. In addition to units specifically assigned to secure rear area key terrain, at least a brigade should be in reserve per theater to deal with level III threats. For a 2 MRC (major regional conflict) scenario, this analysis argues for the identification of 2 divisional headquarters and a yet to be determined number of brigades in our National Guard structure for joint rear area defense.

The ideal force structure will have a combination of heavy, light, and air assault units. Existing "pure" brigades would be task-organized into "medium" brigades comprised of one each or more

of a light infantry battalion, a heavy (combinatiom of mechanized and armor) battalion, and an air assault battalion. These units would be able to accomplish the small unit patrolling required in the external area; they would own the heavy weapons to meet and beat anything the enemy has; and they would have in pocket the air assault units to provide air cap for convoy escort and to rapidly respond to enemy activity.[55,56]

After surveying the air base defense experience of the past half century, John Kreis has concluded that unless the appropriate forces are allocated to accomplish the ABGD mission, there remains a gaping hole in any nation's power projection capability.[57]

**An historic agreement:** In 1984 the chiefs of staff of the Air Force (GEN Gabriel) and Army (Gen Wickham) signed an unprecedented agreement committing both services to an era of cooperation in coming to closure on myriad aspects of joint force development. Setting aside historic service rivalries, it was predicated on the principle of improving US battlefield effectiveness.[58] This agreement spawned a total of 31 initiatives between the Army and Air Force to further joint operations, resulting in a closer synchronization and integration of battlefield operations. Two of the initiatives, Joint Service Agreements 8 and 9, pertained to the ABGD mission.

**The need for continued Army involvement in the ABGD training mission:** In 1974 Air Force Chief of Staff Gen David C. Jones referred to ABGD as "the most important training problem in the Air Force today."[59] It was exactly to correct this chronic situation that ten years later, then CSAF GEN Gabriel signed Joint Service

Agreement #9.[60] This agreement, Air Base Ground Defense Flight Training, committed the Army to training Air Force security police in ground combat skills.[61,62] However, in an era of dwindling resources, the Army has unilaterally abrogated this agreement. In the words of LTG Tilelli, Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, to Air Force counterpart LTG Glosson on 27 July 1993:

> Unfortunately, we have reached the point where we can no longer afford to commit the resources, both in manpower and dollars, required to support ABGD. We will not be able to conduct ABGD training after its scheduled closure date at Fort Dix in September 1995.[63]

By withdrawing from this training initiative, the Army has placed its own power projection capability in great jeopardy.[64] If the active Army has too much on its plate to take this mission, there is no reason why it could not be well performed by a cadre of National Guard soldiers on AGR (Active Guard & Reserve) status.

**The need for a renewed Air Force commitment:** For its part, the Air Force must recognize that it cannot maintain ABGD proficiency on the cheap. In 1985 the ground combat skills level I (airman) course was 7 weeks in duration, taught 6 days a week in a realistic field environment. Subsequently, training has devolved to 21 days. Many skills have been compressed to a cursory check-the-block overview with little opportunity to gain proficiency; others have been deleted entirely. In its zeal to protect quality of life for its airmen, AETC has confused realistic training with substandard living conditions.[65] Airmen learning ground combat skills must be totally immersed in the training, instead of training from 9 to 4 daily. The present training site with workarounds can meet all of the training objectives. The airmen

need to be billeted on site for the duration of this training so they can learn to operate in conditions closely resembling the real thing. Otherwise, we are doomed to relive the conditions existing during our involvement in Vietnam:

> Through most of the war in South Vietnam, the limited ability of the U.S. Air Force to carry ground defense beyond its own base fences became a cause of longstanding frustration and conflict with the Army which could not invest men and equipment in static defense positions.[66]

It was a joke during Vietnam among Army units outside the air base that as soon as a level II attack began, they should first fire into the air base to silence the weapons of the Air Force cops, who with minimal weapons and tactics training were more a danger than a credible security force.[67] With minimum weapons proficiency training currently in the course, many airmen lack confidence in their weapons and their ability to use them.[68]

**Back to the future:** Joint Service Agreement #8 defined terminology and established that the Air Force would be responsible for the internal mission while the Army would take the external mission.[69] JSA #8 authorizes the Army to coordinate host nation support for the external mission, but **holds the Army ultimately responsible for the external mission.** It also directs the Army to provide multi-service intelligence on enemy ground forces as it applies to ABGD. The agreement also created a Joint Air Base Ground Defense Working Group (JABGDWG) to monitor and coordinate "actions necessary to ensure the implementation of policies and preparation of forces for ABGD."[70,71] It is time for the military services to step back up to the plate and recognize that their ability to project and sustain power in a theater of operations is

contingent upon the continuous operations of the forward air bases providing airlift, air support, and resupply. Enemy standoff attacks employing only a handful of soldiers and weapons systems have the potential to bring air operations to a standstill, and to dissuade public opinion from further military involvement. It would only take a few minutes for an undetected level II threat to initiate a successful standoff attack and in so doing, to profoundly influence the outcome of continued US involvement vastly beyond the proportion of enemy resources committed in the attack.

> ...Power projection is vital if the United States is truly to take the lead in maintaining world peace and security. Rhetoric alone will not suffice. The United States must be demonstrably capable of getting to the scene of potential conflicts with sufficient force to make a difference.[72]

**Conclusion:** Air base defense is not an Air Force, but a joint mission. Relying on technology alone will not patch the holes. We must firmly grasp the rear area defense mission and jointly commit the requisite resources to develop and maintain a credible security posture. The requirement to adequately resource this mission has existed all along; however, to date we have failed to recognize the force structure required to do so, instead playing a shell game when identifying the forces to accomplish it. In a 2 MRC scenario, with all available active component maneuver units committed to force projection, National Guard "medium" brigades are the units best available to accomplish this mission.

The US must take a key vulnerability, ABGD, and turn it into a seamless capability, so that future adversaries are unable to slip through our high-technology armor to cut our very sinews while we are still admiring the digitized battlefield.

## ENDNOTES

1. GEN John M. Shalikashvili, "National Military Strategy of the United States of America: A Strategy of Flexible and Selective Engagement" (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1995).

2. Alvin and Heidi Toffler, The Third Wave (New York: Monrow Publications, 1980).

3. COL Harry B. Summers Jr., On Strategy II: A Critical Analysis of the Gulf War (New York: Doubleday Dell, 1992), 263-4.

4. Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "Where to Cut Defense," The Washington Post, 17 November 1995, A25.

5. Sir Julian S. Corbett, The Successors of Drake, quoted by Robert Debs Heinl, Jr. in Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations (Annapolis: US Naval Institute, 1966), 289. The author actually used the term 'sea power,' not 'air power' in his writing, which was published in 1900, before military air power existed. I have taken writer's license in updating his statement to the present, the rationale being that Corbett was referring to the dependence of the Army on power projection, which only had the naval, and not the air component when he made his statement.

6. It should be noted that Joint doctrine has recently de-emphasized the term ABGD in favor of the term air base defense (ABD) to portray the total threat picture against air bases. However, for purposes of this paper only the ground threat will be discussed.

7. Historically, level III attacks have had the objective of capturing airfields and converting them to that force's use within the context of a major offensive campaign. Level I and II attacks generally have had more limited purposes, including: to destroy aircraft; to degrade the capability to generate air missions; and to harass the airfield operating forces.

8. The Joint Staff (Director for Operational Plans & Interoperability, J-7) is the doctrinal proponent for air base defense. The current *doctrinal foundation* for air base ground defense is imbedded in JP 3-10 (Doctrine for Joint Rear Area Defense) and JP 3-10.1 (Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (JTTP) for Base Ground Defense). From the broad brushstrokes embodied in these documents, only a cursory overview of the JTTP involved in the ground defense of air bases can be discerned. It is only by reviewing the next layer of doctrine, Joint Operational Concept for Air Base Ground Defense (DA PAM 525-14/AFP 206-4), Military Police Support for the Airland Battle (Army Field Manual 19-1) and Military Police Battlefield Circulation Control, Area Security, and Enemy Prisoner of War Operations (Army Field Manual 19-4) that the flaws in our doctrine emerge.

9. Department of the Army, Joint Operational Concept for Air Base Ground Defense, Department of the Army Pamphlet 525-14/Air Force Pamphlet 206-4 (Washington: US Department of the Army, 15 July 1986), para. 6.c.

10. Despite this tasking, FM 19-1 devotes just one paragraph (83 words) to detail how this complex tasking will be effected. FM 19-4 gives more specific planning guidance, but some of the principles contradict Air Force and Joint doctrine. (Department of the Army, Military Police Support for the Airland Battle, Department of the Army Field Manual 19-1 (Washington: US Department of the Army, May 1988), "Air Base Ground Defense Operations," 3-8.)

11. The joint pamphlet states that the Air Force is responsible "for exercising command and control over those forces committed to the external defense." (Department of the Army, Joint Operational Concept for Air Base Ground Defense.)

12. The MP assigned the external ABGD mission in the main defense area (MDA) will come under the operational control of or be attached to the air base commander. (Ibid., para. 8.a (External Defense).)

13. Department of the Army, Military Police Support for the Airland Battle, Department of the Army Field Manual 19-1 (Washington: US Department of the Army, May 1988), "Air Base Ground Defense Operations," 3-8. (There is a major disconnect between this manual and Army Field Manual 19-1, which states no such thing. And when a tactical combat force (TCF) is active, Army Field Manual 19-4 specifically places operational control for all base and response forces, regardless of service and whether they are performing the internal or external muission, under the TCF commander.)

The joint pamphlet identifies that "The primary ground threat to air bases is posed by level II forces." (DA PAm 525-14, paragraph 5.b (Threat).) Having said that, it envisions that nothing short of a level III threat will require commitment of a TCF:

> Friendly force response to the level III threat involves the commitment of the requisite Tactical Combat Forces (TCFs) to destroy the threat.

14. In WW II, there were no such devices as thermal or image-intensifying night vision goggles; no magnetic or seismic intrusion devices; no ground defense radars. Mines were not nearly as varied and difficult to detect as they are today. These high-technology advances, incorporated with more mundane canine patrols, lighting, fencing, enhanced close-in weapons systems and communications, have all combined to make it increasingly unlikely that penetrating attacks will enjoy success on future battlefields, or that their perpetrators would escape to fight another day.

15. Alan Vick, Snakes in the Eagle's Nest: A History of Ground Attacks on Air Bases (RAND Corporation, 1993). This study, which analyzes ground attacks on air bases from 1940-1992, was

commissioned as part of Project AIR FORCE and was sponsored by the Director of Plans, Headquarters, United States Air Force (AF/XOX).

16. It was the responsibility of the Italians to provide base defense. John F. Kreis, a long-time student of base defense, has observed:

> Rommel and the German air commanders in North Africa had distant and at times difficult relations. This horrible German command structure contributed to base defense difficulty, and the conflicts with the Italians made it worse. (John F. Kreis, Air Base Ground Defense, draft manuscript, 1995, cited with permission of the author. Mr. Kreis has written and spoken extensively on this subject. He is a retired Air Force officer, now an operations analyst with the Institute for Defense Analyses.)

17. In July 1942 at Bagush, half of the satchel charges set by the SAS failed to detonate. Spontaneously, the patrol leaders made the decision to drive their machine-gun-mounted jeeps down the runway, firing at the parked aircraft. The results were 22 aircraft destroyed by satchel charge and 15 by mobile machine gun. This same technique was repeated on 26 July 1942 at Sidi Haneish with a force of 50 British and French commandos mounted in 18 jeeps, which destroyed 40 aircraft. In August 1942, commandos again returned to Bagush (not much had changed), this time destroying 15 Messerschmitt 109s using the vehicle mounted machine guns.

On 12 September 1942, two 4-man commando teams from the British Special Boat Squadron were inserted by submarine onto Rhodes Island. The teams then separated to attack different airfields, Maritza and Calato. Each patrol penetrated the airfields undetected, and had great success destroying aircraft, fuel and ammunition dumps, operations conducted totally on foot. On an even bolder operation conducted the next day, a jeep-mounted patrol conducted a mounted assault against Barce Airfield, storming the front gate and destroying 32 aircraft, as well as numerous hangars and fuel trucks.(Vick, 47-54.)

18. John Kreis has noted the well planned nature of these operations:

> ...although the SAS is usually depicted as a hell for leather outfit oblivious to its risks, in acutality, David Stirling and leaders of similar units actually studied the risks very carefully before acting. Many times, they avoided an attack because it appeared too dangerous. Ibid., 55-56.

19. Rand researcher Alan Vick calculates that during the month of June 1942 alone, the Allied commando raids which destroyed 63 aircraft, eliminated 8 percent of the Axis aircraft in North Africa. (Vick, 56-65.)

20. Roger P. Fox, Air Base Defense in the Republic of Vietnam 1961-1973 (Washington: Office of Air Force History, United States Air Force, 1979), 27.

21. Ibid., 41.

22. According to Fox in his work Air Base Defense in the Republic of Vietnam: 1961-1973, there were a total of 475 documented ground attacks against the MOBs in South Vietnam. Of these, 447 were standoff, 8 were a combination of both standoff and penetrating, and 16 were penetrating (sappers placing satchel charges). These 475 attacks resulted in the destruction of 75 US and 25 RVN aircraft, damage to 898 US and 305 RVN aircraft, and casualties to US servicemen of 155 KIAs/1702 WIAs (killed in action/wounded in action); and 154 RVN KIAs/504 WIAs. Confirmed VC/NVA losses during these attacks were 385 KIAs; and the Allies took 45 POWs (prisoners of war). (Ibid., 204. See also Vick, page 68.)

23. Gennady Bocharov, Afghanistan Through Russian Eyes, trans. Alyona Kojevnikov (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), 136.

24. Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, The Lessons of Modern War Volume III: The Afghan and Falklands Conflicts (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1980), 177.

25. David Isby, "Soviet Surface-to-Air Missile Countermeasures: Lessons from Afghanistan," Jane's Soviet Intelligence Review, Vol. 1, Number 1, January 1989, 42.

26. Cordesman, 177.

27. Isby, 44.

28. The Soviet military made it a priority effort to obtain Stingers to be shipped back to Moscow for analysis which would be useful in the development of SAM countermeasures. All of these countermeasures had to do with defeating the heat-seeking characteristics of the missile. Although the British Blowpipe was considered to be less accurate, the fact that it was command-guided meant that these technical countermeasures were totally useless against it:

> The Blowpipe's manual command guidance system gave them a strong psychological impact. Although the Soviet and Afghan aircrews say it was less accurate and effective than the Stinger, they also knew that all of their countermeasures, intended to defend against heat-seeking missiles, were ineffective against the Blowpipe. This was tremendously demoralizing. In 1987, a new Soviet helicopter crew, stopping over at Kabul International, asked a veteran Afghan pilot what the best countermeasure was against the Blowpipe. He replied: "Read the Koran". (Ibid.)

29. Galeotti in his book Afghanistan: The Soviet Union's Last War, points out that the alternative to aerial resupply was large convoys of 100-300 vehicles, a third of them dedicated to convoy defense operations. The Mujahideen's control of key airports significantly increased wear and tear on resupply vehicles, increased the military requirement for fuel and delayed the delivery of critical spare parts. (Mark Galeotti, Afghanistan, The Soviet Union's Last War (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 197.)

30. Scott McMichael cites an AN-22 Cock transport being hit by an SA-7 missile in October 1984, resulting in the deaths of about 200 Soviet troops who were arriving in theater. McMichael concludes that although the Soviet engineers were able to come up with effective infrared countermeasures, they were never able to defeat the Stinger's ultraviolet lock-on technology. (Scott R. McMichael, Stumbling Bear: Soviet Military Performance in Afghanistan (London, Brassey's, 1991), 89-90.)

31. The US discovered the difficulty in attempting to defend against this type of threat at Beirut International Airport in 1983, when 241 Marines lost their lives after a zealot drove an explosive-laden vehicle through the perimeter gates.

32. Kreis, correspondence with the author.

33. For example, man-portable, wire-linked/optic-guided antitank missiles have ranges approaching 4 kilometers, with virtually 100% probability of target hit. Mortar ranges have increased. With the advent of precision guided munitions it is no longer necessary to have an extended barrage (inviting a counter-battery response) to increase the probability of damaging aircraft and destroying surface fuel and ordnance sites: each shell can be precisely guided onto a target. Shoulder-fired SAMs can engage and destroy aircraft when they are most vulnerable, during take-off and final approach, at ranges of five kilometers and greater.

34. Summers, 210-11. According to COL Harry Summers, during the course of the Gulf War CRAF aircraft moved 60 percent of the passengers and 27 percent of the airlifted cargo.

35. Vick, 68. Vick recognizes the importance of this area, which he refers to as the "standoff footprint."

36. The surface area of a circle is pi x $r^2$. Assuming as an example that the radius of the air base is 2 km, then its area is (3.14) x $(2)^2$ or 12.5 sq. km. Therefore, the area of the standoff zone is (3.14) x $(2+5.7)^2$ -12.5 sq. km., or 186.2 -12.5=173.7 sq. km.

37. In Vietnam, Air Force units were not allowed to defend any portion of the external area.

38. Applying the formula, (3.14) x $(2+11 \text{ km})^2$ - 12.5 sq. km.= 530.7 - 12.5=518.2 sq. km.

39. For example, the bombing of the Marine compound in Beirut in 1983 and the resultant deaths of 241 Americans was a signal event which caused Americans to reevaluate our involvement in that operation. The deaths of the 18 Rangers during one firefight in Somalia resulted in public demands for us to redefine our efforts there.

40. Clausewitz pointed out that force destruction is not limited to military hardware, but to intangible resources also. "When we speak of destroying the enemy's forces we must emphasize that nothing obliges us to limit this idea to physical forces; the moral element must also be considered." (Carl von Clausewitz, On War, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), 97.)

41. Kreis, Air Base Ground Defense.

42. Department of the Army, Operations, Army Field Manual 100-5 (Washington: US Department of the Army, 14 June 1993), 21.

43. The acronym "REMF" is a term of derision used by maneuver forces to categorize all units and personnel not engaged in close combat with the enemy. It stands for "rear echelon mother f....." (The author included this pejorative only to illustrate the point.)

44. **The role of host nation forces:** Our doctrine states that whenever feasible, the rear area protection mission (to include ABGD) will be accomplished by host nation forces. (Department of the Army/Department of the Air Force, Joint Operational Concept for Air Base Ground Defense, Department of the Army Pamphlet 205-14/Air Force Pamphlet 206-4 (Washington: U.S. Department of the Army, 15 July 1986) para. 11.) However, this is not always possible. The host nation may have a very unstable government. Its military forces may be poorly armed, trained and equipped, and lack the motivation to accomplish the mission.

In the Republic of Vietnam, for example, ARVN had responsibility for the external mission. However, politics being what it is, and in an environment rife with corruption and shifting alliances, there was a great deal of dissension between ARVN and VNAF commanders, resulting in tremendous gaps in the external mission. The external mission was frequently further assigned to allied (Republic of Korea and Australian) units. With different languages, cultures, and loyalties, security in the external area varied. It became the policy of MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) to not give the external mission to US units, because it was inherent in the Vietnamization process that the Vietnamese do this mission themselves.

As the US becomes involved in more nontraditional operations other than war, it may commit military forces in ostensibly noncombat roles. Such was the case in Somalia during Operation Provide Relief. Keeping the Mogadishu airport open to receive supplies was critical to the outcome of this mission. The local geography is such that the airport was a population magnet, virtually surrounded by human activity. Various warlords competed to expand their influence in the area. Further, rival militias had

the means, ranging from anti-aircraft guns to mortars, rockets, and antitank guns, to jeopardize our airfield operations. In this situation, there was no host nation available to provide rear area security.

In Afghanistan, the Soviets tried to give the Karmal government forces responsibility for closing with the insurgents, while they garrisoned the rear area defense. However, as the conflict dragged on, the insurgents became increasingly effective in thwarting efforts to contain them, and once the US began supplying them with Stinger missiles, Soviet aircraft losses went up dramatically. Ultimately, numerous Soviet battalions had to be committed to external security of their key operational bases, including 40 airfields; even so, standoff rocket and missile attacks were commonplace. As the government forces became increasingly ineffective, the Soviets had to create counterinsurgency forces in their attempts to bring the battle to the Mujahideen.

45. Fox, 20-22.

46. "The initial mission of these forces is to secure the base and its internal LOC's through a combination of static defense and vigorous patrolling." (Fox, 22. Fox extracted this quote from the official briefing book used for the Visit of Hon Robert S. McNamara, Sec of Defense & Party to Saigon, Jul 16-20 1965 (Item 2, Tab B, in JCS Files, 22 Jul 65).)

47. Fox, 22-25.

48. Ibid.

49. Kreis, Air Base Ground Defense.

50. Ibid.

51. Summers, 22.

52. Ibid., 72.

53. Ibid., 73.

54. GEN Abrams crafted changes to the Guard and Reserve's use in the Army's force structure precisely to insure that any administration's future warmaking had to include wide support or else there could be no war since the active Army could not go alone. A very crafty approach...Abrams seems to have intended using the Guard and Reserve to force support of the civilian leadership and the Congress, or else no deployment. In other words, there could be no half measures or waffling followed by a denial of responsibility...this would shield the Army from anti-war criticism...by placing the blame where it belongs: on the civilian leadership. (Kreis, Air Base Ground Defense.)

55. Three existing National Guard divisions are currently able, through cross-attachment of their assigned combat battalions, to accomplish the ABGD mission specifically, and the joint rear area defense mission in general. These divisions are comprised of both light and heavy brigades: 2 divisions are comprised of 1 armor, 1 mechanized, and one air assault brigade each; and 1 has 2 mechanized and 1 air assault brigade. (MAJ Daniel McMillen, Readiness Reports Action Officer, Readiness Division, Operations Directorate, Army National Guard Bureau, telephone interviews by author, November-December 1995.)

56. **Is there another option?** Is there another force that could accept the ABGD mission? The answer is an unqualified "yes." The Air Force could be restructured to include its own potent external ABGD force. This is exactly what the British did in WWII after the fall of Crete, when Churchill directed the formation of an Air Force infantry contingent, the Royal Air Force Regiment. This force still has the mission of securing British Air Force facilities worldwide. The troops assigned to it are elite and highly trained; a significant number of them have successfully graduated from the British Commando Course. Outright ownership of the force gives Royal Air Force commanders the assurance that when they are needed, the forces required to secure their air bases will be there, and not shifted to another mission. The term "regiment" is a misnomer in this case: the RAFR is approximately 20,000 strong.

While it was still the Army Air Forces, the US Air Force owned its own external security forces. When the Air Force stood up as a separate service in 1947, manpower constraints compelled the deletion of these units from its force structure. Regaining these forces has long been a goal of some in the senior Air Force leadership. The Key West Conference of 1948, which convened to clarify Air Force roles and missions, resolved which force element would be responsible for air base defense:

> Since the Army Air Force had lost its air base defense capablity at the end of World War II, the new Air Force was left entirely without units which could be tasked, even notionally, with base defense. The Air Police law enforcement contingent had neither the manpower nor the equipment...Colonel Jim Luper, head of Strategic Air Command security, attended the Key West Conference with Air Provost Marshal, General J.V. Dillon, and fought hard for assignment of the air base defense role to the Air Police...he was a West Point graduate trained in Army infantry tactics. He had visions of the Air Police becoming the Marine Corps of the Air Force. Gen. LeMay fully supported his position. Both men realized the impact of the absence of successful air base defense when the future outcome of war could depend on the successful employment of airpower. (CPT Marie C. Shadden, A History of USAF Security Police 1947-1980, (Washington: Office of the United States Air Force Provost Marshal, 6 June 1984), 13-14.)

> In 1979, speaking with the hindsight from lessons learned in

Vietnam, GEN (Ret) Curtis LeMay, CSAF from 1961-5, was adamant that the Air Force should be force structured with its own independent security force, not unlike the British model:

> The Security Police is the only Air Force organization which has the capability to be directly tasked for response to acts of violence which include airborne raids, commando raids, terrorist attacks and other lawless activity which challenges our free way of life and free form of government. Security Police should establish an elite force, trained in commando fashion, specially trained in antiterrorist capabilities. You will need the entire spectrum of talent and capability from helicopter assault to scuba diving, and more important than (anything) else, you must train each and every day! If most of the foreign countries can do this, there is no reason in the world that we can't if our commanders at all levels recognize and understand their responsibilities and obligations to the nation. (Shadden, 163-4.)

In fact, the British Royal Air Force Regiment is extremely well-trained, equipped, and highly responsive to the needs of British air base commanders worldwide. The major drawback with the British solution is the high cost of maintaining such a large force structure in the active inventory. However, if the US Army fails to assure the Air Force that it is totally committed to the ABGD mission, then perhaps the next best answer is for the reallocation of a force structure of 20,000 active Army spaces to the Air Force. The prospect of losing force structure of this magnitude might motivate the Army to commit fully to a more palatable solution, the National Guard rear area defense concept.

57. Kreis has observed:

> Initiative Number Eight agreed to between the Chiefs called for a joint service agreement having the Army designate units to provide air base ground defense outside of the base perimenters...The agreement, however, enshrined a practice which has, at times, had a somewhat dubious military history. The central problem hampering application of such arrangements has been the proclivity of army commanders to take army forces for use in combat just as Westmoreland did. This natural tendency is not one that has been easily overcome in the historical context of joint warfare, nor should it be. The effectiveness of the current U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force base defense strategy thus remains untested by stress in high intensity war or, more importantly, in a lesser but potentially very destructive conflict that is the most likely situation to be encountered in the near future. (Kreis, Air Base Ground Defense.)

58. "In focusing upon battlefield operations--and particularly the extended battlefield--rather than doctrinal abstractions, the Army and Air Force were taking hard critical looks at concepts and doctrines of most-likely theater war and reevaluating them in the light of fighting to win." (Robert Frank Futrell, Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force 1961-1984, vol. II, 742-42, as quoted by Summers, 110.)

59. Shadden, 21.

60. Richard G. Davis, The 31 Initiatives: A Study in Air Force - Army Cooperation (Washington: Office of Air Force History), 132-136. This citing is Joint Service Agreement #9, JSA USA-USAF "Agreement for the Initial and Sustainment Training of Air Force Ground Defense Forces in Combat Skills."

61. Ibid.

62. From 1987 through 1995 the Army trained Air Force airmen in ground combat skills at Fort Dix, New Jersey, exceeding 5,500 airman, noncommissioned, and officer security police annually. Although this initiative has never been officially rescinded, the Army returned its ground combat skills school to the Air Force over its objections, effective 1 October 1995, the stated reason being that resource constraints (i.e., force structure) precluded continued Army partnership (Army force structure commitment to this mission was 15 officers and 125 NCOs).

63. LTG John H. Tilelli, Jr., Department of the Army Letter to Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, United States Air Force, Subject: Air Base Ground Defense Training, 27 July 1993.

64. The school, now conducted by Air Education and Training Command at Camp Bullis adjacent to San Antonio, Texas, trains every Air Force security police man and woman (active, Guard or Reserve) during a four-week program of instruction. NCOs and officers attend six- and eight-week courses, respectively. In light of the facts that the Air Force deleted basic combat training from its recruit training program over a decade ago; and since, unlike their Army and Marine counterparts, Air Force NCOs spend only a fraction of their training year in the field on tactical field exercises; without assistance from the Army, Air Force instructors by themselves lack the basis to train ground combat skills at this school to the degree of competency formerly realized by the partnership of both Army and Air Force trainers, an arrangement which worked incredibly well.

At the minimum, the Army must reestablish liaison with the Air Force ground combat skills training program at Camp Bullis and provide training advisors to ensure that the capability to maintain interoperability is continued. It must allocate ground combat skills course slots, including Ranger School and air assault training, to Air Force instructors teaching at this school. And it must ensure that the facilities at Camp Bullis are optimized to provide challenging, realistic training for ABGD students. Credible Army participation in an era of constrained budgets could

be as small as a team of 20 instructor/advisors to augment the Air Force trainers at Camp Bullis.

65. Camp Bullis has the capability to billet and feed airmen receiving ground combat skills training in realistic field conditions. However, since the school has been relocated to Camp Bullis, the students are transported between Lackland and Bullis daily, greatly reducing training time, increasing transportation costs, and most important of all, depriving the airmen of the realistic environment from which they will be expected to operate in time of conflict. Because the airmen train outdoors during the day, but are returned to air-conditioned dorms at night, they never acclimate, and only a miniscule amount of training is conducted during limited visibility conditions. Meanwhile, the tarpaper shack village which was used a decade earlier remains unused.

66. Kreis, Air Base Ground Defense.

67. Bobby J. Sturdivant, conversations with the subject matter expert in his capacity as the training manager for the Ground Combat Skills Course, Lackland Air Force Base, November 1995.

68. At a recent readiness exercise in Korea, ground combat skills instructors in their capacity as observers noted that although an air base armory contained sixty M60 and several M2 caliber 50 machine guns, not a single machine gun was on the air base perimeter, because neither the airmen nor their leaders had confidence in using them. Confidence in weapons is only gained by firing them, disassembling and assembling them, carrying them around, and integrating their use into all aspects of training.

69. Davis, 125-31. This citing is Joint Service Agreement #8, "JSA USA-USAF Agreement for the Ground Defense of Air Force Bases and Installations." Article IV (Responsibilities), para. 3.

70. Ibid., para. 4.

71. Although not a signatory to the original 31 initiatives, the Marine Corps began participating in the JABGDWG for a few years as well, since several OPLANS task Marine units to secure air bases. Subsequently, a general lack of interest by all services has caused this coordinating group to wither on the vine; the JABGDWG has not convened since 1992, when the J-7 received proponency for this mission. As a result, this second mechanism designed to enhance joint warfighting capability rusts in the toolbox, and there is no longer a regular review process to ensure that initiatives are developed or resolved. The J-7 needs to exercise the leadership required to orchestrate initiatives which will ensure that our base defenses can withstand the enemy challenge to them. All services must commit general officer participation to this council, so that issues can be properly elevated and resolved.

> The Army, and the Marine Corps as well, are joint services whether they like it or not, for both depend on the Navy and Air Force to get them to the scene of the action, and to

protect and support them once they arrive on the field of battle. (Summers, 72.)

72. Ibid., 263.

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