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**“BLUE IN LIEU OF GREEN”:  
IS AIR FORCE FILLING ARMY POSITIONS  
A WORTHWHILE ENDEAVOR OR A SLIPPERY SLOPE?**

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**A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Air Force.**

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**13 February 2006**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines whether or not the Air Force's (AF) current policy of filling Army requirements is worthwhile, and, more importantly, if it should continue. The paper's thesis is that the "in lieu of the Army" policy is worthwhile and of benefit to the effectiveness of the joint force. Furthermore, the policy should continue, but be carefully watched to ensure the AF maintains its distinctive combat capability at the same time it is contributing to the joint fight.

In addition to highlighting the major AF contributions in the Global War on Terrorism and in support of the Army, this paper outlines the advantages and disadvantages of the policy. The advantages include easing the burden on the strained Army; combat experience for AF personnel; increased credibility in the joint force; and the fact it is the right thing for the AF to do. The disadvantages include costs associated with training and equipping AF personnel to fill Army positions; filling billets that are outside the core competencies of the AF; the policy's potential negative impact on AF recruiting and retention; and finally, the potential adverse impact on AF combat readiness and effectiveness.

When each disadvantage is put in perspective and coupled with the many benefits, there is precedent and rationale for the change. The AF needs to continue meeting the Army's shortfalls as able, but, while doing so, the AF must stay within its competencies as much as possible and closely monitor key data points such as recruitment, reenlistment, retention, and combat readiness and effectiveness. Lastly, the AF should conduct a public relations campaign to educate its own people on the value of the policy.

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## INTRODUCTION

*“The campaign ahead will be long and arduous. In this different kind of war, we cannot expect an easy or definitive end to the conflict.”<sup>1</sup>*

The Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), a different kind of war, has consumed the United States and its military since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. All branches of the armed forces have been actively engaged in one fashion or another, but arguably the United States Army and Marines have played more visible roles in the United States’ current global engagements, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> This has placed the United States Air Force (AF) in a less familiar, *supporting* role--much different than what it has grown accustomed to over the past 15 years, such as in Operation DESERT STORM; enforcement of no-fly zones in Operations NORTHERN and SOUTHERN WATCH; and in Operation ALLIED FORCE, the air war over Kosovo.

The AF’s *supporting* role has taken many forms in the GWOT, particularly in Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM (OIF/OEF). Some of those forms include: an increased emphasis on close air support for coalition troops, infrastructure and reconstruction activities; projection and delivery of forces; gathering and dissemination of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR);<sup>3</sup> search and rescue operations; aeromedical evacuations; and last but not least, Airmen filling Army requirements. This paper will focus on the last contribution; specifically, whether or not the AF’s policy of filling Army requirements is worthwhile, and, more importantly, if it should continue.

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<sup>1</sup> National Strategy for Combatting Terrorism, Washington, DC: February 2003.

<sup>2</sup> “Fewest U.S. troops in Iraq since summer,” The Associated Press, 25 January 2006. <<http://aimpoints.hq.af.mil/display.cfm?id=9011>> [25 January 2006].

<sup>3</sup> “CENTAF Daily Airpower Summary.” Air Force Print News, 21 January 2006. <<http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123014579>> [21 January 2006].

This paper's purpose is to prove that the AF's policy of filling Army billets *is* worthwhile and of benefit to the effectiveness of the joint force. Furthermore, this trend should continue, but the AF must carefully monitor the effects to ensure it maintains its distinctive combat capability at the same time it is contributing to the joint fight. To prove this thesis, the AF's major OIF/OEF contributions will be outlined to highlight its increased role, particularly in support of the Army. Secondly, this paper will enumerate the advantages and disadvantages of the "in lieu of the Army" policy, both from an AF and a joint perspective. Finally, it will make recommendations on ways the AF's support of the Army should be monitored in order to maintain the combat readiness and effectiveness of the AF in its distinctive capabilities.<sup>4</sup>

## USAF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GWOT

*"During our 13 month tour in Iraq we had three separate Air Force tactical air control party (TACP) teams attached to the Squadron...the professionalism, technical expertise, and courage of all three exceeded expectations. Regardless of rank, each Airman knew his business, and delivered what we needed. I do not recall one time that we needed air support and did not receive it."*

*- Army Lieutenant Colonel James Chevallier, Commander, 1st Squadron, 4th US Cavalry<sup>5</sup>*

As far as *quality* of support, the quote above implies AF airpower is admirably supporting its sister services in the GWOT. This is echoed by other commanding officers, such as the former Multinational Corps Iraq commander, Army Lieutenant General Thomas F. Metz, who "highlighted the contributions of Airmen from all services to counterinsurgency operations," noting in particular "the prompt and sustained air support our

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<sup>4</sup> These distinctive capabilities, previously known as core competencies, are: Air and Space Superiority, Global Attack, Rapid Global Mobility, Precision Engagement, Information Superiority and Agile Combat Support.

<sup>5</sup> James H. Chevallier, <james.chevallier@nwc.navy.mil> "Draft quote." [E-mail to Julie Boit <julie.boit@nwc.navy.mil>] 31 January 2006; LTC Chevallier was commander of a 1,200-man air-ground Cavalry Task Force whose area of operations spanned the northern third of the Sunni Triangle.

land forces have received.”<sup>6</sup> As far as *quantity* in support of GWOT, as of January 2006, over 34,000 AF active duty, guard, and reserve personnel are deployed worldwide. Of those, 82 percent, or nearly 28,000, are deployed in the Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility (AOR).<sup>7</sup>

However, these deployment numbers do not paint the entire picture. There are also AF personnel that support the war effort from the continental United States--such as Airmen in Nevada controlling remotely-piloted aircraft (critical to persistent ISR and strike missions); the invaluable mobility aircraft crews such as C-130s and C-17s that rotate through the AOR to deliver critical supplies; the AF space professionals keeping vigil over the global battlespace; and the well over 37,000 fighter, aerial refueling, and airborne warning sorties that have been flown in defense of the United States in Operation NOBLE EAGLE since 9/11.<sup>8</sup> In actuality, of the Total Force of 540,000 Airmen (360,000 Active Duty and 180,000 Guard and Reserve), on any given day, almost half of the Air Force is performing duties directly in support of Combatant Commander (COCOM) operations. In addition, almost three quarters of the force is either “on-line” or qualified and current for short-notice deployments to support COCOM requirements.<sup>9</sup> In summary, AF personnel do not have to be *deployed* to be *employed* in the GWOT.

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<sup>6</sup> Letter from Lieutenant General Metz to Lieutenant General Walter E. Buchanan III, Combined Forces Air Component Commander, 9 February 2005, who in turn provided it to members of 3rd Expeditionary Air Support Operations Group (3 EASOG); letter was quoted in unpublished paper entitled “Counterinsurgency Airpower—The View from Baghdad,” by Colonel Howard D. Belote, USAF, who served as commander, 3 EASOG in Iraq.

<sup>7</sup> Major Timothy McIsaac, <timothy.mcisaac@pentagon.af.mil>, “Help!” [Email to Julie Boit <julie.boit@nwc.navy.mil>] 25 January 2006; Major McIsaac is assigned to the Pentagon as Chief, Current Operations, Headquarters AF Directorate of Personnel.

<sup>8</sup> Honorable Peter B. Teets, Acting AF Secretary, “Fiscal 2006 Appropriations: Defense.” U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, 17 March 2005.

<sup>9</sup> “Air and Space Expeditionary Forces” PowerPoint briefing, Headquarters Air Force Air and Space Expeditionary Forces (AEF) Matters Division, 6 January 2006.



## **“Blue In Lieu of Green”**

*“[N]ot only are Airmen directly overhead in Iraq and Afghanistan, but they are also serving on the ground. Due to the continuing high operations tempo, the Air Force is filling over 2,500 positions in 16 different combat support skills for the U.S. Army in deployed locations – one of those skills is combat convoy operations.”*

*--General T. Michael Moseley, then Vice Chief of Staff of the USAF, March 2005<sup>10</sup>*

With the broader AF contribution to the GWOT as background, General Moseley’s March 2005 quote above highlights the main focus of this paper--the AF’s support for the Army’s Combat Support and Combat Service Support (CS/CSS) shortfalls in CENTCOM. As the Army’s reserve component has been increasingly exhausted and the Army’s active duty force has been increasingly strained, the corresponding number of requirements filled using joint “in lieu of” (ILO) solutions has also increased.<sup>11</sup> Hence, the AF community has received multiple ILO taskings to fill in the gaps, such as convoy driver, prison guard, security, and interrogator duties. Indeed, nearly every AF functional area is represented in the ILO effort, with the greatest contributions by security forces (SF), civil engineers (CE), logistics (IL), intelligence (IN), communications-computers (SC), and medical (SG) personnel.<sup>12</sup> The chart below shows the overall AF ILO contribution through September 2005:

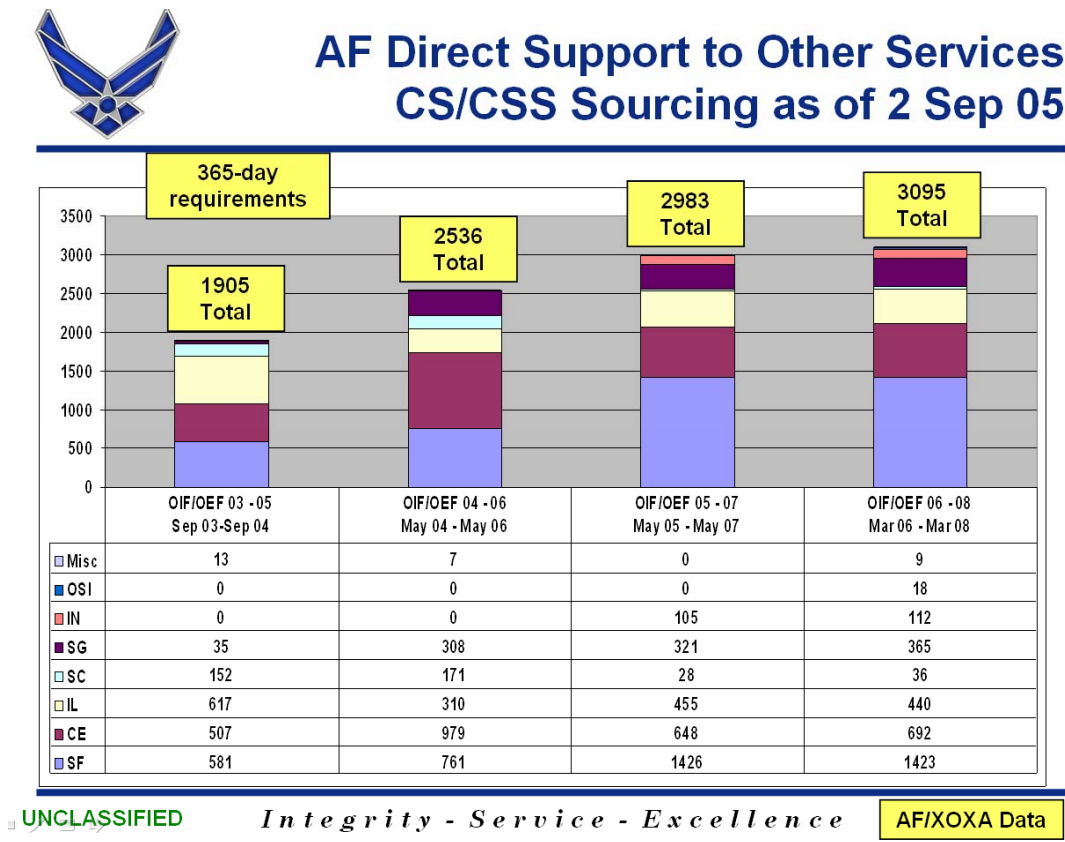
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<sup>10</sup> General T. Michael Moseley, “Fiscal Year 2006 Air Force Readiness,” U.S. Congress, House, House Armed Services Committee, 3 March 2005, 3.

<sup>11</sup> Major David Smith, <davidl.smith@pentagon.af.mil> “Last request.” [Email to Julie Boit <julie.boit@nwc.navy.mil>] 7 February 2006; Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), as the primary Joint Force Provider for conventional forces under Global Force Management, is tasked to provide the Joint Staff with recommended sourcing solutions that provide best military advice for Combatant Commander force requirements. The enduring pace of operations in CENTCOM and current policy and business practice regarding access to the reserve components have strained the land services’ abilities to sustain CS/CSS requirements for OIF/OEF. JFCOM conducts Sourcing Conferences for each rotational cycle to recommend the best possible In-Lieu-Of or Joint solutions for the generated shortfalls. Although CENTCOM’s CS/CSS requirements have remained relatively constant, the AF’s equity in filling these shortfalls has continued to grow as the other services’ ability to fill these requirements has decreased.

<sup>12</sup> Major David Smith, “Bullet Background Paper on AF Support in Non-Traditional Roles,” 9 November 2005.

Figure 1. AF Direct Support to Other Services.<sup>13</sup>



However, there are other important items not articulated on the chart. First, AF direct support numbers for OIF/OEF 05-07 and 06-08 are increasing as CENTCOM requests additional forces;<sup>14</sup> in fact, as of January 2006, there are now *over 3,800* AF personnel filling Army billets in CENTCOM.<sup>15</sup> This updated number equates to 15 percent of the AF's total number deployed,<sup>16</sup> signifying the AF's ILO support has *already nearly doubled* from the 1,905 billets when the policy first started during OIF/OEF 03-05.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, the Pentagon's Joint Staff is in the process of completing "Elaborate Crossbow V," a joint wargame to

<sup>13</sup> "Air and Space Expeditionary Forces" PowerPoint briefing.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> MsIsaac.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid; Smith, Bullet Background Paper, and "Air and Space Expeditionary Forces" briefing.

determine the potential problem areas for CS/CSS sourcing in OIF 07-09. While it is not complete, “initial indications are that the number of shortfalls requiring joint solutions may dramatically increase, potentially as much as *three times* what was done for OIF/OEF 06-08.”<sup>18</sup> In addition to this predicted increase, the AF has recently taken on taskings for six Provisional Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan, adding at least another 214 year-long taskings for 2006 alone.<sup>19</sup> In summary, the AF’s contribution to the GWOT for the foreseeable future, particularly in ILO solutions, is a *growth industry*.

## **ADVANTAGES OF THE “IN LIEU OF” POLICY**

### **Benefit to the Army and the Joint Force**

The most direct benefit of the AF filling Army positions is the benefit to the U.S. Army. For every position the AF fills, it is one *less* position filled by the Army’s already-strained soldiers. As of January 2006, this relief equated to 3,802 ILO billets<sup>20</sup>—approximately a brigade-sized unit—which is a significant aggregate amount. It is important to note this “over and above normal AF deployments” contribution could translate into less frequent rotations by the Army, a decrease in Army operations tempo (OPTEMPO), and a corresponding increase in Army unit readiness. This relief is particularly beneficial considering that the more the Army’s active component (AC) is used, “the less time AC units have at home for recovery and training, and the fewer ready units will be available for other missions.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, the effects of the Army’s large scale of operations in Iraq and

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<sup>18</sup> “Air and Space Expeditionary Forces” PowerPoint briefing, [Emphasis added].

<sup>19</sup> Colonel Marcia Rossi, <marcia.rossi@sheppard.af.mil> “AFPC WAR.” (AF Personnel Center Weekly Activity Report) [Email to <julie.boit@nwc.navy.mil>] 5 December 2005.

<sup>20</sup> McIsaac.

<sup>21</sup> Lynn E. Davis, J. Michael Polich, William M. Hix, Michael D. Greenberg, Stephen D. Brady, Ronald E. Sortor, Stretched Thin: Army Forces for Sustained Operations, MG-362, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2005), 3.

Afghanistan “reverberate throughout [its] force”<sup>22</sup> and *any* relief in those operational taskings can have a positive impact.

Additionally, the Army’s reserve component is nearly exhausted and many of the skills most needed in the GWOT are found within the Army National Guard and Reserve. Consequently, service in the Guard has lost some of its allure as repeated deployments have made it more like the active duty force. As one Army guardsman proclaimed, “People in the Guard never thought they’d make up 40 percent of the force [in Iraq] and have six months of training and a year of boots-on-the-ground overseas...it’s become a serious commitment that’s going to disrupt...civilian life indefinitely.”<sup>23</sup> Not surprisingly, in early 2004, the “[Army] National Guard saw its enlistments fall 30 percent short of its goal for October and November, while the Army Reserve came up 10 percent shy of its mark for that period.”<sup>24</sup> It was primarily *because* of the Army’s strained situation that the Air Force first began filling significant numbers of Army billets in OIF/OEF 03-05.<sup>25</sup> Fortunately, Army retention and recruiting numbers improved in fiscal year 2005.<sup>26</sup> While this positive trend is most likely due to the Army’s increased monetary incentives, the intervening ILO policy has arguably had some positive impact on Army retention and recruiting as well.

But perhaps more important than benefits to the Army is that the ILO policy provides a manpower capability that might not otherwise be available to the operational joint force commander. The Army’s shortfalls are in critical areas—if someone did not fill in the gaps, serious mission degradation would occur, or at a minimum, the mission would be

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Mark Thompson, “Where are the New Recruits?” *Time* 165, no. 3 (17 Jan 2005): 36-38, 41.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, Bullet Background Paper.

<sup>26</sup> “Army Retention and Recruiting: Numbers for Fiscal Year 2005.”  
<<http://www.army.mil/recruitingandretention/>> [19 January 2006].

adversely affected. When American and allied lives are at stake, this is a price the United States and its armed forces are simply not willing to pay.

### **Combat Experience**

Another significant aspect which lends support to the ILO policy is the valuable combat and joint experience gained by Airmen deployed to the CENTCOM AOR. When deployed in a joint combat environment, Airmen receive first-hand knowledge of the area and have the unique opportunity to experience the more intangible factors required to succeed in war. Such intangible factors include: “unit cohesion, integrity, physical and moral courage, dedication, commitment, and leadership.” These factors are “equally vital because they make up the ‘warrior ethos’” critical to winning wars.<sup>27</sup> AF senior leadership agrees:

*We have renewed our focus on joint operations and the importance of integration with ground forces. And we have demonstrated to the world the professionalism, competence, and incredible skill of airmen -- men and women steeped in the warrior ethos and prepared to sacrifice their lives in the service of a cause greater than themselves.*<sup>28</sup>

The quote above frames a new AF focus on joint integration and a “warrior ethos” for Airmen. Recent changes to enlisted Basic Military Training (BMT) at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, also fall in line with this emphasis. Adjustments to BMT include a revamped combat arms training/maintenance class, an initial manual of arms, and issuing each trainee their own M-16 for the duration of BMT (versus the previous one-day qualification training). Each change results in better trained and more focused Airmen; in fact, “from day one, trainees have a warrior mindset, preparing them for the air expeditionary force deployment

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<sup>27</sup> Salvatore F. Cambria, Edward M. Reeder, and James E. Kraft. “Warrior Ethos: The Key to Winning Special Warfare.” Special Warfare 13, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 2.

<sup>28</sup> Dr. James G. Roche, Secretary of the Air Force, “Meeting the Challenge -- The Airmen of the World's Greatest Air Force,” Air Force Policy Letter Digest, September 2003. [Emphasis added].

cycle and success.”<sup>29</sup> A “warrior first” mentality not only promises to benefit the Air Force as a whole, but also the joint force. This is particularly true considering “the new training is designed to mirror the air expeditionary force cycle of pre-deployment, deployment and reconstitution” in an effort instill the “warrior ethos” in Airmen.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, two and a half weeks will be added to BMT,<sup>31</sup> an important step given AF BMT is the shortest basic training of the armed services. Clearly, these recent changes, and the opportunity to deploy in a joint environment in lieu of Army missions, gives valuable experience to AF members which is directly in line with AF leadership’s vision.

### **Credibility in the Joint Force**

*“It’s the same thing everywhere we go...soldiers always ask: ‘What are you [Air Force people] doing here?’” - Technical Sergeant Bill Bellmore, convoy commander in Iraq*<sup>32</sup>

An exceedingly visible example of AF support of Army operations includes the 712 transportation specialists currently performing convoy duty in the CENTCOM area of operations.<sup>33</sup> Although over 50 percent of the entire AF vehicle operations career field has deployed in support of an Army activity,<sup>34</sup> as the quote above implies, rarely a day goes by without a surprised soldier discovering that the AF does more than just fly cargo. However, once realization sets in, “almost every time, the surprise came with a look of newfound respect.”<sup>35</sup> After all, convoy duty, regardless of service, is often deadly due to challenges such as improvised explosive devices and hostile fire.

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<sup>29</sup> Airman 1st Class Candace Romano, “Trainees learn attention to detail through ‘warrior’ mindset.” Air Force Print News, 17 January 2006, <<http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123014301>> [22 January 2006].

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Staff Sergeant Julie Weckerlein, “BMT extended, NCOs to learn new languages.” Air Force Print News, 3 February 2006, <<http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123016059>> [4 February 2006].

<sup>32</sup> Staff Sergeant Scott Campbell, “Long convoy duty is no easy task.” Air Force Print News, 6 January 2006. <<http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123013929>> [7 January 2006].

<sup>33</sup> McIsaac.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Staff Sergeant Scott Campbell, “Long convoy duty is no easy task.” Air Force Print News, 6 January 2006. <<http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123013929>> [7 January 2006]. [Emphasis added].

AF leadership wants this newfound respect and credibility to permeate the rest of AF as well. For example, AF Secretary Michael W. Wynne said, he “wants Airmen to do more” and “instead of waiting to be joint,” he wants the AF to be “aggressively pursuing joint.”<sup>36</sup> He also wants a more proactive approach, by “looking to take missions instead of waiting to be asked.”<sup>37</sup> Finally, a question on the forefront of the Secretary’s mind is “whether the Air Force should encroach more on unfamiliar territory and begin to ask ‘can we do that job?’”<sup>38</sup> From an AF perspective, this vision not only lends solid support to the worthiness of fulfilling Army roles, but also doing so in a *proactive* way.

In fact, a proactive approach and a “can-do” attitude is exactly what is needed by *all* armed services to successfully execute the current war. Flexibility, and a focus on what matters, is key to achieving what experts say the United States must do in the GWOT. As Dr. Hoffmann concluded in his testimony to the House of Representatives, “The U.S. must ensure the new Iraq succeeds” and the United States must “retain focus and maintain vigilance and keep up pressure on terrorists by *adapting and adjusting* ourselves—rapidly and efficiently—to the changes unfolding with respect to terrorism.”<sup>39</sup> In summary, the AF must continue to adapt and adjust to the needs of the operational commander—even if that means filling positions traditionally filled by the Army.

### **The Right Thing To Do**

With or without a growing interdependence among the armed forces, it’s simply the right thing to support a fellow service in need. After all, each service is on the same

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<sup>36</sup> Michael W. Wynne, “Air Force needs more joint role.” Air Force Policy Letter Digest, December 2005. <[http://www.af.mil/library/policy/letters/pl2005\\_12.html](http://www.af.mil/library/policy/letters/pl2005_12.html)> [23 January 2006].

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Dr. Bruce Hoffman, “Does our Counter-Terrorism Strategy Match the Threat?” U.S. Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation, 29 September 2005, 17. [Emphasis added].

Department of Defense team. It is also not the first time one branch has helped out another—in fact, not long ago, “the shoe was on the other foot”—then, the *Air Force* needed help and the Army National Guard (ARNG) was there to assist. In 2003, nearly 9,000 ARNG personnel deployed to 163 AF bases worldwide to provide force protection and work alongside AF personnel in protecting AF personnel, property and assets.<sup>40</sup> The Department of Defense directed this two-year temporary augmentation while the AF phased-in plans to increase its own security forces. Though most ARNG personnel “jumped at the chance to work at an AF base,”<sup>41</sup> the real benefit was to the AF. The AF was able to meet the increased force protection and deployment requirements in response to 9/11, and at the same time, gave a much-needed break to its own Air National Guard and AF Reserve security forces members after two years of mobilization.<sup>42</sup>

Lastly, even if the AF does not seek out and fill non-traditional positions, as envisioned by the AF secretary above, the AF might be directed to fill them, anyway. In fact, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld did direct the AF to fill the six PRTs in Afghanistan (including six command positions) in 2006.<sup>43</sup> In summary, the AF would be better served if it *seeks out* opportunities to help—if nothing else, it can then proactively choose to fill positions its best suited for instead of being given what is left over from the other services.

## **DISADVANTAGES OF THE ILO POLICY**

### **Costs**

While there are several advantages to the ILO policy, it *does* have many opponents—and it certainly comes with a price. For instance, AF members tasked to implement the ILO

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<sup>40</sup> Austin Carter, “Relieving the blues.” *National Guard* 57, no. 3 (April 2003): 88-89.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Rossi.



policy believe the AF is on a “slippery slope;” these individuals are specifically concerned with the high costs associated with filling Army positions. To illustrate, for a sample 186 contingency deployments in fiscal year 2005, the estimated cost to the AF budget was 2.3 million dollars.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, many ILO positions require additional position-specific training before the AF member departs. For example, the AF’s cost of sending 50 personnel through the six-month Army Interrogator training at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, was estimated at 860,000 dollars.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, the AF member’s home unit funds the training and is required to provide supplemental equipment and uniforms to support the tasking.<sup>46</sup>

While these *are* unanticipated costs to the AF and do require some units to provide funds upfront, GWOT-fund reimbursement can be requested and is usually approved. In the end, such monetary costs of filling Army positions with AF people are greatly outweighed by the direct benefit to the operational commander and the war effort. This is particularly true when these costs are put in perspective by the AF Chief of Staff, General Moseley, “The Air Force’s first and most important task is to maintain a razor sharp focus on our primary mission – to defeat the enemies of the United States.”<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, with this year’s Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), the costs of filling Army requirements may seem immaterial in the long run. The current draft is “intended to sharpen the military’s focus on the war against terrorism,”<sup>48</sup> and the AF’s ILO policy demonstrates relevancy and contribution to this joint fight. This fact also makes it more likely the AF will maintain its funding vice seeing a significant shift to other services. For example,

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<sup>44</sup> Kerry J. Proulx, <kerry.proulx@randolph.af.mil> “Question.” [Email to Julie Boit <[julie.boit@nwc.navy.mil](mailto:julie.boit@nwc.navy.mil)>] 20 January 2006; Major Proulx is Chief, Joint Assignment & 365 Day TDY Programs at the AF Personnel Center.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> “Air and Space Expeditionary Forces” PowerPoint briefing.

<sup>48</sup> Defense News Staff, “Exclusive: What’s in the QDR.” Defense News. 23 January 2006. <<http://aimpoints.hq.af.mil/display.cfm?id=8940>> [23 January 2006].

one of the QDR's eight new execution roadmaps is "Irregular warfare," which will "examine opportunities to implement the Defense Department's December directive on stability, security, transition and reconstruction operations as well as ways to improve the military's ability to counter a long-term guerilla war."<sup>49</sup> Many of the non-traditional roles AF personnel are filling under the ILO policy fall directly in line with this roadmap.

### **Outside AF Core Competencies**

Added to the costs, those tasked with implementing the ILO policy are also concerned that many of the Army positions fall outside the realm of the AF's core competencies. For example, the 880 AF security forces members selected for prison guard duty in Iraq spent one month in prisoner/detainee operations training at an Army Power Projection Platform, followed by a 179-day deployment.<sup>50</sup> However, upon their return, there are no existing AF positions which would effectively utilize the training or expertise gained—the AF does not typically man or maintain prisons. And, while in training and deployed, the enlisted member could be considered "outside their AF specialty," perhaps necessitating additional re-qualification training upon rejoining their AF unit, or placing the Airman at a potential disadvantage for promotion since AF enlisted members take a test on their AF specialty knowledge.

As a counterpoint to this argument, it is important to note most ILO taskings *are* within AF core competencies.<sup>51</sup> There are inevitable differences in procedure and the environment, but most civil engineers, logisticians, intelligence members, legal experts, communications-computers professionals, and medical personnel are basically performing tasks they are trained in and likely to perform again upon return. Furthermore, although interrogator ILO taskings

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<sup>49</sup>Jason Sherman, "England Orders Eight QDR Spin-Off Reviews," [InsideDefense.com](http://insidedefense.com), 10 January 2006. <<http://insidedefense.com/secure/insider.asp>> [11 January 2006].

<sup>50</sup> Smith, "Bullet Background Paper on AF Support in Non-Traditional Roles."

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

are considered outside AF competencies, 11 of the 57 positions are filled with Office of Special Investigations (OSI) personnel.<sup>52</sup> Not only is less training required for OSI members (only five weeks versus six months),<sup>53</sup> it is also very likely these they *will* use the skills gained in training and on deployment in their OSI career field.

Additionally, in reference to the prison guard issue, Army guards at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, were recently replaced with AF personnel. It is now considered an *AF mission*—not an ILO tasking—even though the mission was historically accomplished by the Army.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, AF personnel performing CENTCOM AOR guard duty in lieu of the Army will provide a much-needed resource pool for the *new* AF mission in Cuba. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the Pentagon has relabeled the GWOT as “The Long War”<sup>55</sup>—a war perhaps as long as the Cold War. Given that fact, it is quite possible Airmen who served “outside their core competency” may deploy again in support of the Army, which equates to a resource pool for *both* services and a long-term benefit for the operational commander.

Still, all arguments considered, the AF *does* need to stay within its core competencies to the maximum extent possible. When sourcing Army requirements, the AF must make every effort to fill shortfalls in positions that translate to AF specialties. This will provide fully trained, competent, and more confident AF members to the operational commander, while at the same time, help minimize adverse impact to AF personnel, combat readiness, and retention.

### **Potential Impact on AF Retention/Recruitment**

AF members tasked with implementing the ILO policy are also particularly uneasy with the increased number of deployments in support of the Army, the associated tour lengths, and

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid; the AF is filling 57 interrogator positions in fiscal year 2006.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> McIsaac, 10 February 2006; Guantanamo Bay guards are therefore not included in the cited AF ILO totals.

<sup>55</sup> Defense News Staff, “Exclusive: What’s in the QDR.”

the potential negative impact on AF retention and enlistment rates. This is a valid concern—after all, if an enlistee wanted to join the Army, he or she would have stopped by a different recruiter’s office. Additionally, most Army taskings are for six months to a year (plus the length of pre-departure training)—obviously much longer than the AF’s current four-month deployment rotation policy. Plus, AF personnel have actually been lost performing Army missions—two Airmen were recently killed conducting convoy duty in Iraq.<sup>56</sup>

AF retention, reenlistment, and enlistment rates have not been an issue historically—in fact, both the active and reserve components met their recruiting goals in fiscal year 2005<sup>57</sup> and are on track to meet them in 2006.<sup>58</sup> However, the AF must carefully watch these metrics as the policy matures to ensure the AF’s long-term viability is not adversely affected. Also, in a proactive approach, commanders at all levels should explain the policy to their Airmen, so they understand *why* the AF is filling Army requirements and comprehend the positive impact the AF is making to the war effort. With that perspective, it should give the policy more meaning and overall acceptance within the AF, perhaps mitigating any negative impact on retention or reenlistment indicators.

### **Potential Impact on AF Combat Readiness**

*“Like our sister services, our primary focus is on securing a peaceful Iraq and meeting Central Command’s requirements.” General T. Michael Moseley<sup>59</sup>*

Lastly, the ILO policy has the potential to degrade the combat readiness and effectiveness of the AF in its primary mission. After all, the AF has its existing shortages,

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<sup>56</sup> Air Force Print News, “Air Force casualties identified,” 24 January 2006.  
<<http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123014707>> [24 January 2006].

<sup>57</sup> American Forces Press Service, “Recruiting and Retention Statistics,” 13 October 2005.  
<<http://usmilitary.about.com/od/joiningthemilitary/a/recruitgoals.htm>> [8 February 2006].

<sup>58</sup> “FY07 AF Budget” PowerPoint briefing, Secretary of the AF Financial Management,  
<https://www.saffm.hq.af.mil/FMB/pb/2007/FY07%20AF%20Budget%20Rollout.pdf> [8 February 2006].

<sup>59</sup> Moseley, “Fiscal Year 2006 Air Force Readiness,” 1.

too. For example, General Moseley stated, "I don't believe we have enough intel players" and "we can do better in regional skills, operations and languages,"<sup>60</sup> which is why the AF will soon require senior AF students to take one of four languages while in-residence at their professional military education program.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, it was recently announced that the AF must cut nearly 12,000 military personnel in fiscal year 2007,<sup>62</sup> creating additional strain on existing AF manpower. Moreover, future conflicts may be much more challenging than those in the past: "Recent adversaries have relied on 1960s-era, Soviet-designed air defense systems... 'slow softballs down the middle of the plate' for the Air Force" but "...the Chinese, for example, have been working hard to upgrade and modernize their air defense capabilities."<sup>63</sup>

The potential impact on combat readiness is a valid issue and the AF must watch this closely as well. Fortunately, there is a system in place for AF senior leadership to monitor its combat and personnel readiness, such as monthly Status of Resources and Training (SORTS) reporting. Also, early indications reflect that the ILO policy has not adversely affected readiness; in fact, nearly 18 months into the program, General Moseley reported to Congress that the AF "is currently able to meet the demands of each of the Combatant Commanders" and the "AF can meet the needs of today's joint forces."<sup>64</sup> In reference to the shortages outlined by General Moseley above, the increased ILO opportunities for AF personnel in the AOR are actually *directly in line* with the type of regional skills and operations experience the AF needs. In summary, AF combat readiness and effectiveness is a legitimate issue—the

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<sup>60</sup> General T. Michael Moseley, quoted in Stew Magnuson, "AIR FORCE IN TRANSITION: Service Pondering Future Roles." National Defense 90, no. 625 (December 2005): 67.

<sup>61</sup> Weckerlein, 1.

<sup>62</sup> "FY07 AF Budget" PowerPoint briefing.

<sup>63</sup> Frederick Kagan and David Ochmanek, quoted in Stew Magnuson, "AIR FORCE IN TRANSITION: Service Pondering Future Roles." National Defense 90, no. 625 (December 2005): 64-65.

<sup>64</sup> Moseley, "Fiscal Year 2006 Air Force Readiness," 1, 8.

AF must carefully balance Army shortfall demands with its own primary mission to ensure excessive diversions of manpower do not occur.

## CONCLUSION

*"History will never accept difficulties as an excuse." -- John Fitzgerald Kennedy<sup>65</sup>*

Policy changes are not easy. All of the disadvantages outlined thus far support that fact. However, when each one is put in perspective and coupled with the many benefits, there is precedent and rationale for the change. Filling Army positions with Airmen is clearly worthwhile and of significant benefit to the Army and the operational commander and, as the AF looks to the future, it should continue to meet its sister service shortfalls as much as possible.

But, while doing so, the AF needs to be smart about how it is done. The AF must stay within its core competencies to the maximum extent possible, concentrating on what the AF does best. The AF must also closely monitor key data points such as recruitment, reenlistment, and retention, as well as combat readiness and effectiveness. These are key indicators of the “pulse” of the force and must be watched to ensure course corrections are made *before* these metrics decline. Lastly, the AF should also conduct a public relations campaign to educate its own people on the value and the contribution of the policy—so AF people can understand and accept the possibility (or inevitability) of supporting the Army in this manner. Each of these caveats are critical because, as General Moseley said, “...no matter how long the road, we must never lose our focus on winning this fight.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Quoteland, <[http://www.quoteland.com/author.asp?AUTHOR\\_ID=34](http://www.quoteland.com/author.asp?AUTHOR_ID=34)> [31 January 2006].

<sup>66</sup> General T. Michael Moseley, “Letter to Airmen: A Nation at War.” 2 September 2005. <<http://www.af.mil/library/viewpoints/csaf.asp?id=186>> [21 January 2006].

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