

Strategy Research Project

Fixing the Mobility Air Forces New Way

by

Lieutenant Colonel David S. Argyle
United States Air Force Reserve



United States Army War College
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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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Lieutenant Colonel David S. Argyle
United States Air Force Reserve

Colonel James A. Crutchfield
Department of Command, Leadership, and Management
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Abstract

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Facing increased Combatant Commander (CCDR) demand for tanker support and dwindling post-war funding, Air Mobility Command (AMC) requested a solution. It received deployment credit approval for active duty aircrews flying three particular must-do missions. Normally these missions do not count as deployments. Resultantly, active duty workload measurement, deployment-to-dwell (D2D), increased reserve requirements. Reserve forces did not concur with AMC's original request. Now they face increased mobilization needs without receiving credit for flying those same missions. This inequity undercuts USAF readiness for three reasons. DoD budget officials warn of no post-war peace dividend. The need for cost-effective reserve forces has risen. Retaining quality citizen airmen suffers from an uneven active-reserve set of rules. AMC's volunteer incentives are diluted by its one-size-fits-all aspect. A part of the reserves never reach the incentives' mobility reduction. Leaders should repair the workload inequity and inaccurate measurements. Only improving adopted fighter D2D methods for KC-135s will meet CCDR requirements.

Fixing the Mobility Air Forces New Way

Utilization rules are implemented to govern frequency and duration of activations. Since expectation management is critical to the success of the management of the Reserve Components (RCs) as an operational force, these rules enhance predictability and judicious and prudent use of the RCs.

—Robert Gates¹
U.S. Secretary of Defense

So enduring is former Secretary of Defense Gates' directive, "Managing the Reserve Component (RC) as an Operational Force" that it is cited in the current Joint Mobilization Planning publication 4-05.² This Strategy Research Project (SRP) analyzes a critical issue in the management of the United States Air Force (USAF) RC.

As the U.S. withdraws its forces from Afghanistan by 2014, the number of flying missions the Mobility Air Forces (MAF) performs will continue to increase in order to bring U.S. personnel home. After 2014, MAF demands will further increase as U.S. forces rebalance toward the Pacific. Regardless of regional strategies, U.S. forces will comply with the President's January 2012 strategic guidance contained in "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense." This guidance cites Ten Primary Missions of the Armed Forces for the Protection of U.S. National Interests, among which is "Provide a Stabilizing Presence." The guidance also refers to our current fiscal environment by informing the military leaders that they will be required to develop innovative and creative solutions to maintain U.S. support for allied and partner interoperability and building partner capacity.³ This strategic guidance concludes that "with reduced resources, thoughtful choices will need to be made regarding the location and frequency of these operations (author's emphasis)." Six months prior to the President's guidance, Air Mobility Command (AMC) was granted USAF-level

mobilization credit for the Active Component (AC) of the MAF that many in the Air Reserve Component (ARC) see as less than thoughtful.

This SRP argues that the current AMC tasking calculations undercut ARC readiness, which could have negative strategic implications for USAF operations because they understate Air Force Reserve (AFR) and Air National Guard (ANG) strategic roles. The following analysis elaborates on three main points, focusing on management of KC-135 aircrews. It begins with discussion of AMC's 19-month-old policy, referred to as AMC's new way throughout this paper. Under this policy, the AC and ARC are not given equal credit for mission completion. Next, this SRP shows how this inequity and a lack of transparency in aircrew management policy may jeopardize ARC readiness. Finally, it explains why MAF managers need a greater understanding of strategic mobilization issues, which may become more damaging to the nation's security.

The MAF will face even more U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) mission requirements and challenges as the nation strategically rebalances to the Pacific, as it receives greater authority for mobilization, and as defense budgets dwindle. This SRP concludes with a brief synthesis of its three main points and with recommended solutions to the issues analyzed. It is increasingly important to strengthen the AC and ARC relationship and achieve Total Force Integration (TFI). The USAF, under the TFI construct, has a substantial part of its forces in the ARC, which consists of the AFR and the ANG.⁴ A subset of the USAF's TFI, the MAF consists of air and service components assigned to air mobility forces. Management of MAF routinely

exercises command authority over these operations.⁵ The AC and ARC KC-135 aircrews, which have deployed since 2009, exemplify current MAF operations.⁶

Tasking Policy and Mission Credit

The KC-135 AC and ARC aircrews receive missions to be accomplished from a detailed process. An excerpt from AMC's Commander, Air Force Forces⁷ Apportionment and Allocation Process (CAAP) Concept of Operations (CONOPS) describes this process:

Because of the close association between AC units and their TFI ARC partners, all AMC allocations have the potential to impact the ARC...Close coordination and continued effort to develop a common operating picture amongst the entire MAF are essential to ensuring that limited assets are used most effectively and adverse effects are avoided for our MAF partners.⁸

This CAAP mandate leads to my first point: explaining the tasking policy and award of credit. The steady state rotational requirements that periodically select the TFI KC-135 aircrews to deploy overseas come from a Joint Staff Global Force Management Allocation Plan (GFMAP).⁹ For primary flying billets, AC KC-135 aircrews deploy for three months to points all over the globe. Staff billets may be extended up to six months. However, many ARC members reside several states away from their units. They need the predictability cited by Secretary Gates.¹⁰ Most ARC KC-135 deployments are for two months. But a two-month rotational deployment may require as many as 90 days of administrative actions, pre-deployment training, and travel prior to the ARC member's deployment.¹¹ The GFMAP selects both AC and ARC aircrews.

The Secretary of Defense (SecDef) planning guidance for a 1:2 deployment to dwell (D2D) ratio applies to all AC KC-135 aircrews.¹² The D2D measures the deployment period (the first number) beginning when the aircrew member rotates into

an operational area and ending when he or she rotates out of an operational area to return to home station.¹³ The second number in a D2D ratio is the period of dwell time, between deployments. In the case of a mobilized ARC aircrew, the dwell time begins with the aircrew member's release from involuntary active duty and ends with the reporting date for a subsequent tour of active duty, pursuant to Title 10 U.S.C. 12302.¹⁴ Because an ARC aircrew needs approximately 90 days of pre-deployment administrative actions, the ARC normally has a 1:5 Mobilization to Dwell (M2D).

In order to understand what this new way changed and why it is important, it is necessary to know how KC-135 deployments and their associated workloads are measured. The AC has a ratio of 1:2 for the D2D value and the ARC has a ratio of 1:5 M2D. In measurements of AC and ARC workloads, a trend of decreasing ratios means the aircrew workload is increasing. When the AC ratio decreases below 1:1.9 it triggers mobilization of reserve forces. Air Force Instruction (AFI) 10-402 requires consideration of multiple planning factors in order to properly convert the ARC 1:5 M2D to an accurate D2D ratio in order to use a common measure of workloads.¹⁵ According to the Air Force Reserve Command's (AFRC) lead civilian for all MAF mobilizations, the ARC's 1:5 M2D converts to a 1:8 D2D.¹⁶

GFMAP Generates Orders to Deploy

A Functional Area Manager (FAM) has many responsibilities. The FAM's two greatest responsibilities are protecting the regenerative capabilities (e.g., leave, qualification training, and professional development) of the force and managing the workload.¹⁷ For the AC, the FAM measures workload to sustain a 1:2 D2D ratio. For the ARC, the FAM tries to sustain the predictable and prudent use of a 1:8 D2D ratio.¹⁸

Before July 2011, AC and ARC KC-135 units received deployment credit only through the GFMAP.¹⁹

Written guidance cites two mobilization staffing processes: rotational or emergent.²⁰ The more thorough rotational process transmits its mobilization message to the force provider 210 days out with the GFMAP.²¹ As its name indicates, the emergent process transmits mobilization orders thirty days out, but does not include the GFMAP.²² The date the Headquarters USAF Plans and Requirements Section (HAF/A5XW) transmits the message is important because it provides certain scheduling rights to ARC members and to potential replacement aircrew members.²³ Some in the KC-135 community view only the rotationally processed deployments as true deployments because they include the GFMAP. This is valid because AC aircrews are immediately available to rotate in and out during an established rotational cycle.²⁴ Moreover, this interpretation is held by some ARC FAMs who are seeking to provide the ARC force with predictability and advance notification as required by AFI 10-402. Nonetheless, the GFMAP is the primary guidance for the U.S. Transportation USTRANSCOM requirements and to manage the force via the Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) rotational process.²⁵

The GFMAP directs the Joint Force Provider (JFP) to publish a GFMAP Annex Schedule, which serves as the deployment order (DEPORD).²⁶ AMC then assumes responsibility for mobilization as the USAF Component of the JFP.²⁷ The DEPORD is a planning directive from the SecDef, issued by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It authorizes and directs the transfer of forces between Combatant Commands by

reassignment or attachment.²⁸ This transfer between Combatant Commanders (CCDRs) is a change of operational control of forces as part of the GFMAP process.²⁹

Justification for the New Way

After AMC implemented the new way in July 2011, three additional types of missions were credited as deployments in the AC D2D ratio. However, the ARC does not receive deployment credit for these three additional types of missions. The three recently added AC missions are: KC-135 air refueling alert support to Operation NOBLE EAGLE (enhanced air defense of the U.S.);³⁰ air refueling alert support to the air component of the nuclear TRIAD, and any priority 1 or 2 level USTRANSCOM missions.³¹ These changes were initiated because AMC determined these missions are a workload drain on the KC-135 community. AMC's justification described these missions as higher headquarters "must-do" missions. They are not processed through the GFMAP; they do not require an actual deployment; and they are not rotational. The GFMAP facilitates timely and precise scheduling of missions.³² AC and ARC planners use GFMAP to accurately estimate workloads and to sustain steady-state D2D and M2D ratios.

When AMC began employing the new way, neither the ANG nor the AFR concurred because USTRANSCOM missions are non-rotational and are already accomplished by aircrew members during their respective dwell periods.³³ Furthermore, these USTRANSCOM missions would then be scheduled against the entire non-deployed AC putting them in a "virtual dwell." With one exception, all of the ARC aircrews in their 1:5 M2D (eligible to deploy "bucket") would be ineligible because these missions are non-contingency and lack mobilization authority, so they cannot count toward dwell.³⁴

Nonetheless, the HAF/A5XW approved implementation of the new way. ARC FAMs are now engaged in ongoing discussions with AMC over this issue because they see such an increase in the ARC workload that the AFRC/A3 “Lead civilian for all MAF mobilizations” refers to it as the “ARC March to Mobilization.”³⁵ The new way has resulted in a significant increase in the number of TFI aircrews required. In response to this impact, AMC has included volunteerism incentives to reduce mobilization requirements.³⁶ Unfortunately, only the ANG has been able to attract enough volunteers to remain effective.

The Math Behind the New Way

Since 2009, AMC has produced a total of 207 available AC KC-135 aircrews.³⁷ The number of aircrews available per rotation is determined by dividing 207 by three. On average 69 active duty KC-135 aircrews per rotation support a 1:2 D2D ratio. While one-third of the total AC aircrews are deployed, the other two-thirds are in dwell or training. Between surge (summer) and non-surge (winter) months, the GFMAP and USTRANSCOM mission requirements average out to 87 GFMAP (rotational or deployment) and 57 USTRANSCOM (non-rotational) required missions.³⁸

In the KC-135 ARC force, the AFR has been, on average, able to provide up to 11 aircrews per rotation, and the ANG has provided 35 aircrews.³⁹ In total, the ARC has provided an average of 46 available aircrews. Before the new way, the AC provided 69 aircrews toward the GFMAP-only requirement of 87 aircrews. The remaining requirement of 18 aircrews would be met or exceeded with at least 5 AFR and 16 ANG aircrews for a total of 21 aircrews. The AFR also supplied three additional ARC aircrews as a “shock absorber” for the AC. Also, it managed some of its own aircrews’

expectations by keeping the ARC's mobilization requirements at a relatively constant level.

When AMC began its new way of counting the issue emerged in the details of how the forces are to be counted. Examination of the AC to ARC agreements highlights two points that impact total force capability. First, the new way does not raise the number of aircrews required by 57. Rather these 57 aircrews were required before the new way. The issue for the ARC is how the missions now count toward the AC deployment time. As the AC receives more deployment credit, they decrease their D2D toward a ratio of less than 1:2. That increased workload indicator shifts more demand onto the ARC for either more volunteerism or for a mobilization. Second, there are 8 GFMAP rotational ANG KC-135 aircrews at Guam whose Air Staff designation prevents them from being mobilized. However, their flying of USTRANSCOM missions gives them deployment credit.⁴⁰

In order to fully understand the impact of dwell, I consider monthly historical data from the TFI KC-135 aircrews. The average number of monthly aircrews required is 144: 87 GFMAP aircrews and 57 USTRANSCOM aircrews. Sixty-nine of the total aircrews required are provided by the AC. Of the remaining 75, 57 are filled by the ANG and 18 by the AFR. AMC fills ANG and AFR requirements by first requesting volunteers. On average, they receive 35 volunteer aircrews. To provide the remaining 40 aircrews, AMC directs a mobilization. The AC receives deployment credit for providing both GFMAP and USTRANSCOM aircrews. The ANG and AFR receive deployment credit only for the GFMAP aircrews required, not the USTRANSCOM aircrews required. Accordingly, the current AMC tasking policy calculations undercut ARC readiness.

Incentives

AMC has also developed incentive agreements with the ARC. These agreements can generate available aircrews where AMC provides the ARC with a target number of volunteer aircrews. AMC gives the ARC the 1:5 D2D ratio to be met by volunteers. That target again amounts to 57 ANG and 18 AFR aircrews. If the ARC can exceed these numbers by flying the USTRANSCOM missions, then the mobilization requirement is reduced by that amount in the next round of GFMAP and USTRANSCOM mission assignments. A more specific example further explains these incentives.

For the AFR, the 1:5 D2D target generates a need for 18 total aircrews: 11 would be mobilized and seven would be assigned to fly USTRANSCOM missions for a set period of time.⁴¹ If the AFR is able to mobilize 11 aircrews and 10 USTRANSCOM volunteer aircrews, the following month's requirements would thus be decreased by 3 aircrews.⁴² So, the next month's AFR requirement would be 8 mobilized aircrews and 10 USTRANSCOM aircrews. This adjustment is referred to as a "mobility reduction."

Outcomes of Implementing the New Way

The previous method, the old way, resulted in mobilization of five AFR aircrews that were deployed on AEF rotations for Operation Enduring Freedom. One or two aircrews remained on alert in dwell and flying USTRANSCOM missions. The new way would have 11 AFR aircrews mobilized and deployed, the same number of dwell aircrews on alert, and one to two aircrews flying the USTRANSCOM missions. This is double the number of AFR aircrews mobilized and deployed; in the meantime, AC aircrews are receiving deployment credit in accord with their 1:2 D2D mobilization planning factors for flying the USTRANSCOM non-deployment missions because these missions have been declared deployments on paper. However, the ARC executing the

same missions will not receive credit within their 1:5 M2D planning factor.⁴³ This inequity is a result of the AMC tasking policy. It undercuts ARC readiness because, despite completing the same missions, the ARC M2D planning factor is not reflecting the ARC's actual workload.

These are first- and second-order effects to the new way. Because of the deployment credit for USTRANSCOM missions allotted to the 69 AC aircrews D2D and because the ARC is providing more mobilized crews under the incentives, the M2D ratio for the ARC aircrews also grows. This then drives the ARC closer to the mobilization trigger. The second-order effect is an issue of equity. As the ARC attempts to take advantage of the incentives, it is flying more USTRANSCOM missions. However, it is not getting deployment credit for these. Therefore its actual workload is not being taken into account as measured by the M2D ratio. Many ARC members believe that this has made the field upon which the TFI plays disruptively uneven.

Potential Harm from the New Way

On a strategic level, the USAF is responding to a recent culmination of AC-ARC differences of opinion relevant to the impact of dwell on the total force capability of the MAF. After a year of bitter public disagreements over the service's missions and budgets, USAF leaders have created the Total Force Task Force to strengthen AC-ARC relations and mitigate the equity issues.⁴⁴ Three two-star generals, one from each component, along with their respective full-time staffs will work under the Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Plans and Programs to consider AC-ARC roles and to review its TFI requirements.⁴⁵ This task force has three main duties.⁴⁶ First it must review studies of the combined AF in order to establish a baseline for force-wide integration efforts.⁴⁷ Next, it will identify questions about the force, such as defining the relationship between

the ARC and AC.⁴⁸ Finally; it will develop options to balance the total force.⁴⁹ The Total Force Task Force objectives serve as a lens through which to analyze the AMC D2D tasking policy, to determine its usefulness to the force.

If AMC continues to deny equal deployment credit to the ARC M2D ratio as it does for the AC, this could have a long term negative effect for the nation's security. This impact may come in the form of an internal manifestation, such as a unit's substandard mission capability rating. Or it could culminate with a different Total Force Task Force after a future bitter disagreement over deployment credit.

Internally a unit's mission-capable rate could quickly plummet if many disgruntled ARC members leave at once. A perceived unfair deployment credit accounting could drive a significantly ill-timed exodus from a unit. ARC units survive in part, on their ability to attract and retain quality professionals who choose to continue their service and fill available unit positions. As with any U.S. citizen, a person's employment choices, like leaving the AC to join an ARC, can be dictated by what the full-time civilian job market offers. In the current market, ARC leadership has limited control to attract and retain members. The degree of harm a rapid exodus has on a unit may not be realized until it has already occurred. And, with little notice, ARC leadership's hiring options for replacement personnel can be limited.

Likewise, if AC counterparts "just across the street" choose to remain on active duty because of a bleak civilian job market, the ARC's quick-fix hiring of someone already qualified to fill a vacancy has vanished. For ARC tanker units, it takes at least two years to train a citizen off the street to serve as a qualified aircrew member. Thus, an equity-based change to the current AMC tasking policy calculations that credit ARC

deployment time may help retain airmen facing issues like those mentioned. Retention of ARC aircrew improves readiness.

Boundaries for Volunteerism

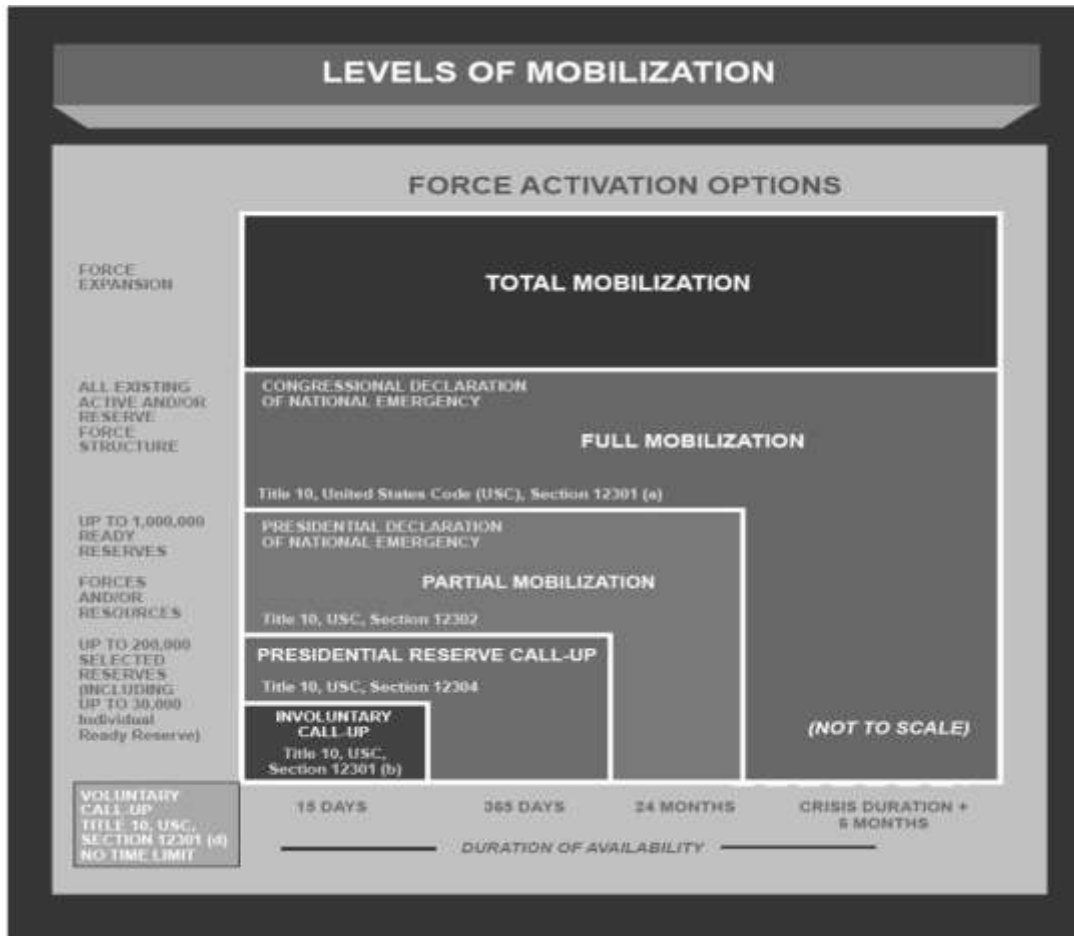


Figure 1. Levels of Mobilization⁵⁰

It is Department of Defense (DoD) policy that the predictability of the RC forces is maximized through use of defined operational cycles and the use of force generation plans to provide advanced notification through execution of the train-mobilize-deploy model.⁵¹ Strong cooperation and communication between the AC and the ARC has provided significant volunteers to sustain MAF missions. This cooperation has provided the U.S. with the ability to remain in that lower-left portion shown in Figure 1. A large

portion of the ARC supplying KC-135 aircrews is provided by volunteerism authorized by Title 10 U.S.C. Section 12301(d) in the lower left of Figure 1. The U.S. plans to withdraw the majority of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) forces from Afghanistan by 2014. By that time, the current mobilization authority may also end. U.S. strategy will likely further the Building Partnership Program and add more USTRANSCOM non-rotational mission requirements.

Joint Publication 4-05 encourages RC voluntary duty authorized under Title 10 U.S.C. 12301(d) to meet mission requirements.⁵² However, there are limitations to reliance on this type of duty. The USAF must count ARC members against active duty end-strength when they are on active duty under Title 10 U.S.C. 12301(d) and performing operational support exceeding 1,095 days (three years) out of the previous 1,460 days (four years).⁵³ In this paper, Title 10 U.S.C. 12301(d) authorizes the majority of the ARC's KC-135 participation.

A subset of the Presidential Reserve Call-Up (PRC) in Figure 1 above is the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2012 as codified in Title 10 U.S.C. 12304(b).⁵⁴ This involuntary activation option provides personnel for a "preplanned mission in support of a combatant command" in which the costs of the activations and a description of the mission are included in the individual Service's budget materials.⁵⁵ The activation authority rests with the Service Secretaries, who may involuntarily activate up to a total of 60,000 National Guard and Reserves for up to one year.⁵⁶ This new authority also has other limits:

Is not designed for use for emergent operational or humanitarian missions, but rather to enhance the use of reserve component units that organize, train, and plan to

support operational mission requirements to the same standards as active component units under service force generation plans in a cyclic, periodic, and predictable manner.⁵⁷

Used properly, this recent provision could help the MAF meet mission requirements, but not for emergent issues. As of March 2013, Title 10 U.S.C. 12304(b) has not been implemented in the USAF, nor has the Air Staff issued rules of engagement to implement this Title 10 option, according to officials at AFRC.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, it is law and thereby an option for the CCDR to trigger the mobilization process.

In peacetime and during steady-state portions of a contingency operation, AMC will first use its AC and a pool of ARC airmen who have volunteered to serve in an activated status for limited periods of time. When AMC determines requirements cannot be met with AC forces and ARC volunteer forces (Title 10 U.S.C. Section 12301(d)), the ARC Utilization Plan is activated.⁵⁹ This Plan identifies specific ARC units for involuntary activation; their mobilization will be synchronized in accord with ARC force availability and readiness.⁶⁰ For clarification, as demonstrated in Figure 1, the issue of authorities is addressed in the PRC block on the middle-left of the chart.

Ultimately, AMC assumes the MAF mobilization responsibilities; as such it answers when a PRC is executed. The USAF supports USTRANSCOM requirements through the GFMAP and manages the force by means of the AEF process.⁶¹ Reserve forces have become more operational in the past 11 years. So the need to find a balance between cost, predictability, and sustainability is more important than ever. That balance must be achieved in the context of the current fiscal constraints as more

citizen airmen who are transitioning from a full-time, MPA-funded status back to their traditional part-time roles. Hence, sustainability of the ARC, which occurs when the Reserves continue to attract quality personnel to serve in the traditional citizen-airmen role, must be attained without mobilization status. Reaching that balance will provide an inherent strength within the U.S. military, provided by the ARC's cost effectiveness combined with its ability to surge. The current inequity in the AMC tasking policy calculations complicates efforts to attract quality personnel. Without a steady supply of quality citizen airmen, the readiness of ARC units will suffer — as will the USAF's ability to accomplish its mission.

A wise adversary of the U.S. will plan to engage the entire force, including mobilized reserve forces. The ARC system is certainly cost-effective in a steady state. For example, the AFR “provides nearly seventeen percent of the USAF's capability for about four percent of the USAF's budget.”⁶² Less obvious is the advantage it gives to leaders through the variably sized mobility air force choices it brings to the fight. As Carl von Clausewitz informs us, “All military action is permeated by intelligent forces and their effects.”⁶³ As former Commander, AMC, General Raymond Johns stated in the 2012 Air Mobility Master Plan (AMMP), “Across the air mobility spectrum...the men and women of the MAF are defending our Nation's freedom and answering the call of others so they may prevail—providing unrivaled Global Reach for America.” Such proclamations suggest that there are no adversaries capable of matching the currently fielded U.S. MAF or its surge capability.⁶⁴ However, emerging fiscal constraints may reduce this unmatched capability. MAF leaders must find ways to mitigate the risks imposed by these fiscal constraints.

Recommended Way Ahead

Current U.S. strategic guidance contains the visionary phrase, “Toward the Joint Force of 2020.”⁶⁵ It acknowledges an inability to predict with certainty how the strategic environment will evolve.⁶⁶ This SRP posits that the Afghanistan withdrawal and the rebalance to the Pacific will generate even more requirements for the MAF and demand more of the KC-135 TFI. These requirements and demands will not have Overseas Contingency Operations authorities nor the funding associated with OEF. Despite the inequity in the current tasking policy, the way ahead must assume the force’s ability to regenerate capabilities and retain the lessons learned over the past eleven years, despite a reduced size.⁶⁷

This nation’s current fiscal challenges are unique. Historically the U.S. has enjoyed some form of a peace dividend after major conflicts. Having defeated its adversary, the nation redeploys its troops home, downsizes its military and beats swords into plowshares, and reaps the economic benefits of no longer funding a war.⁶⁸ While many governmental financial experts believe the current DoD funding reductions are comparable to those in previous postwar drawdowns, the difference this time is that there is no fiscal peace dividend because of the increase in mandatory funding versus discretionary funding. Similarly, there is no peace dividend because terrorist organizations like al Qaeda will continue to threaten national security: The War on Terror continues. The strategic concern arising from the D2D disparity between AC and ARC involves readiness and affects the ability of the USAF to contribute to our national security.

The challenges ahead will require continuing employment of National Guard and Reserve forces.⁶⁹ The ARC’s ability to support future mobilization requirements can be

strengthened by the efficient use of resources, such as reducing the number of unnecessary mobilization days.⁷⁰ Furthermore, fiscal constraints limit the number of personnel and available mobilization days. It is critical to make a concerted effort to properly measure the workload and effectively manage the MAF's ARC.

The KC-135 mission contributes to so many AF and Joint missions; it is worthy of the best TFI aircrew support the USAF can supply. The ARC contribution is more critical in times of fiscal austerity. In order to maximize ARC potential during the rebalance and fiscal constraints, those who lead or coordinate with the ARC should be well-informed about the ARC's role. ARC force predictability is maximized through the use of defined operational cycles and force generation plans that provide advanced notification.⁷¹ AMC's CAAP CONOPS, specifies the need for better integration with the ARC by addressing interrelated AMC and ARC processes for allocating assets.⁷²

AMC relies on a five-step cycle for allocation and addressing shortfalls with an Allocation Development Team (ADT) that includes AFRC and ANG members.⁷³ The CONOPS also states that, through the ADT, ARC volunteerism can best be quantified and integrated to develop a MAF shortfall solution.⁷⁴ However, since December 2005 the AFRC Lead for Mobilization Operations Impact on the MAF has never been invited to an ADT meeting. The AFRC Lead's participation has been limited to his inclusion on the MAF Integrated Planning Team (IPT). But the IPT has not met in person or via secure video teleconference (SVTC) in over two years.⁷⁵ According to the AFRC Lead, the only interaction has devolved into AMC sending out mobilization packages every four months for the FAMs to review and modify before sending the final product to the units.⁷⁶ Clearly there is room for more collaboration between the AC and ARC. Only

through better collaboration can the cost-effective issue of the AFR described below be realized.

As former Chief of the Air Force Reserve Lieutenant General Charles Stenner explains, “Our units and people make outstanding contributions to the national defense. Every day, we leverage a portion of the strategic reserve to support today’s operations with a careful eye not to deplete the strategic reserve’s surge capability until absolutely needed.”⁷⁷ Whether the members called in are AC, ANG or AFR, it is the role of strategic leaders to keep that “careful eye” focused. Sustaining that capability requires knowledge of its variable scale. AC and ARC leaders can provide CCDRs with the correct forces at the right time only with a working knowledge of those forces’ steady-state and surge capabilities. Today, the U.S. military is expected to respond to conflicts and humanitarian operations at the same rate. For that reason, this SRP warns of the potential shortage of citizen airmen resulting from the new way of accounting methodology used to calculate the ARC’s contribution to the military’s global reach.⁷⁸

The cost effectiveness that General Stenner refers to is only one of at least three factors that must be in balance to sustain the nation’s global reach. His reference to “Air Force Reserves 2012” best describes the two other factors:

- Air Force Reserves 2012 is our vision to enhance the predictability and sustainability of our Reserve force. We are revising our management structures and practices to make it easier for our reservists to volunteer, mobilize and deploy. As our Air Force prepares for the future, streamlining how we bring highly capable and cost-effective reservists on to active duty is vital to our nation’s defense.⁷⁹

- Prior changes to reservist mobilization programs have been inefficient; they are laborious and generally unproductive. Strategic leaders must be keenly aware of the war-fighting potential of the entire strategic reserve and of the reserve's contributions to current operations, as well as its probable future role.

Closing Summary

This exploration of the new AMC tasking policy, including its potential harm if left intact, explains why the current tasking policy calculations are, in fact, undercutting ARC readiness by creating an equity issue that could negatively impact readiness. It is time to forge a better way.

The new way is an AMC initiative to better meet KC-135 air refueling requirements with a TFI. In order to meet those needs, AMC initiated a different way to use the D2D formula as a measure of workload. But the ARC did not concur with this new way. Accordingly, assessing the ARC's efficiency against its preferred steady-state and predictable deployments is still a work in progress. When requirements increase, AMC prefers to rely on volunteers rather than trigger an involuntary mobilization. AMC incentives do provide a "mobility reduction" but 20 months of new way results indicate greater ANG contributions to AMC missions. The smaller AFR pool has yet to reduce its mobilization side of the contribution. This disparity warrants further examination by those who are coordinating, innovating and managing this transition.

The possible harm the new way could do to ARC personnel, without proper deployment credit to the ARC for flying the USTRANSCOM missions is less mathematically demonstrable. After a year of some very public disputes, USAF leaders are funding a large fully staffed Total Force Task Force to mend some fences and improve AC-ARC collaboration by addressing perceived inequities of specific resources.

Much less quantifiable is the difficulty that exists in attracting and retaining quality citizen airmen with the few intangibles ARC units rely upon to retain its aircrews. The perception of an unnecessarily uneven playing field will have some effects on morale and retention. Although hiring and retention trends can be responsively monitored, a mass exodus is acknowledged only when the unit's mission-capable rate becomes substandard.

When perceptions of an uneven playing field have a significant impact on the unit's ability to accomplish the mission, leaders will have to respond to the issue. ARC members attempt to live near the unit where they serve. However, the ARC construct is designed mostly around cost effectiveness, and 80% of the AFR are serving "one weekend a month and two weeks per year." Many AFR members choose to commute considerable distances to their working unit.⁸⁰ For example, if the young MPA-funded full-time ARC KC-135 Boom Operators who demobilize from Afghanistan in 2014 cannot find a job near their ARC unit, they will move to an employment site. After these Boom Operators relocate, if they choose to continue to serve with their original unit, they will encounter the "hassle factor" of a long commute. If then they become aware of inequities in ARC deployment credit, they may simply resign from the ARC. Prospects of 15 to 20 years of a difficult commute to qualify for a 20-year retirement will eliminate many citizen airmen from the ranks. A lack of ARC deployment credit for completing the same missions as the AC will factor into volunteerism and career decisions.

Another potential adverse impact that may manifest itself is the limitations of the different types of Title 10 orders. Rebalancing to the Pacific will disclose how much this region's strategic leaders value exercises and engagements to build partnership

capacity. With the rebalance, some funding may support these exercises. Volunteer ARC members are subject to the “1095 limitation” of Section 12301(d) orders.

Redeploying ARC KC-135 aircrews may have served for significant periods in OEF. So there is a considerable likelihood that these personnel are unable to serve more than 1,095 days in a 1,460 days look back period. Because ARC personnel are not to be added to the active duty end strength, they are limited to 1,095 days service in a period of 1,460 days.

The recently signed Combatant Command Support Activation authorization presents an opportunity for greater ARC participation. All that is missing are the USAF rules of engagement in order to use this authority. At this time, this authorization has not been used by the USAF, however, without a peace dividend following the Afghanistan operation implementation of the Combatant Command Support Activation seems wise. Its provisions place more fiscal and chronological constraints on the USAF, and so it fosters collaborative efforts between the AC and the ARC.

Conclusion

On February 5, 2013, the Air Force announced it would be increasing from 2.5 to 3.5 aircrews assigned per KC-46 tanker.⁸¹ USAF leaders based these decisions on evaluations of previous usage estimates based on KC-135 averages and its surge requirements.⁸² This decision also included a basing strategy with an increased focus on total force considerations. So the AC and the ARC would share aircraft to increase KC-46 utilization rates.⁸³ These changes better realized the KC-46’s potential. They added 60 total aircrews to the fleet.⁸⁴ The extensive and successful history of KC-135 mission accomplishment and management has validated the wisdom of these decisions.

Communicating the impact of dwell on the MAF's total force capabilities would not be easy even if it were done in a vacuum. Strategic leaders do not operate in a vacuum. They must lead in a fiscally constrained and dynamic environment. In this uncertain and volatile environment, they must decide whether a change to the method of workload measurement is still required. This SRP recommends that AMC should seek approval for the ARC to receive deployment credit for flying these USTRANSCOM missions for three reasons.

First, the lack of peace dividend and nation's fiscal constraints require extensive collaboration to accomplish TFI. When Admiral Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, stated his belief that our national debt is the greatest threat to our national security, those Americans who had not understood national security in terms of the elements of national power became more well-informed.⁸⁵ This nation's fiscal constraints require a tremendous amount of fiscal restraint, especially from our military. Only through efforts to find unheard-of-efficiencies with constant innovation will effective downsizing be achieved while retaining the capability to respond to a global enemy in terrorism.

Second, the incentives AMC provides for volunteers are innovative, but they need to be better. They are mostly effective in generating the volunteers needed to meet the current requirements. However, this is not enough for the AFR in particular to realize any benefit because it is the smaller of the two ARC components. This shortfall is exacerbated by the first- and second-order effects of a somewhat superficial workload increase resulting from the AC credit and the certain workload increase in mobilizations of the AFR. Approval of ARC credit for USTRANSCOM missions will level the uneven

field described in this SRP. It will eliminate the perception a departing ARC aircrew member might be inclined to have.

Thirdly, the examination of the new way requires looking beyond the narrow issue of whether or not the ARC should get deployment credit for their part in accomplishing the mission to a consideration of whether D2D as the measurement of level of effort for a unit is worthy of the weight placed upon it.⁸⁶ The answer will be found only through further research. USAF leaders should identify an appropriate method for measuring aircrew workload for the purposes of mobilization and well-being of the unit. Although deployment-to-dwell ratios may be more applicable to the deployed fighter unit than to a force enabler operating all over the globe, research to find a more accurate metric for measuring the health of the tanker aircrew force should not be delayed until the KC-46 is brought on line in 2017.⁸⁷

Few issues cannot be resolved through clear, steady and transparent communications. The fact that an ADT has not met in two years is unacceptable, but also an opportunity. Leveraging the cost effectiveness of SVTC technology, ADTs will meet the intent of the CONOPS, open lines of communication, and identify the best innovative uses of the limited resources available.

Greater reliance on ARC is really not the problem. The real problem is the failure to accurately credit it with deployment time for USTRANSCOM missions flown. Lack of deployment credit also prevents accurate measurement of its workload. Left unaddressed, the perception of an uneven playing field can reduce morale and jeopardize mission accomplishment. ARC career decisions of the quality members that these units hope to retain are not made in a vacuum. When the forces withdraw from

Afghanistan next year, MPA funding will also disappear. So our leaders need to communicate clearly the way forward to handle these challenges. We must communicate persuasively to capture and retain that quality force that will leave operations in Afghanistan and possibly the Air Force. If current AMC tasking policy calculations are not addressed properly, ARC readiness will be undercut because of a shortage of personnel. The USAF cannot afford to misalign its means to achieve the strategic tasks it has been assigned.

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