STRATEGIC AGILITY:

USING THE EXPEDITIONARY AEROSPACE FORCE AS A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSURING STRATEGIC RELEVANCY IN THE USAF

BY

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A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF

THE SCHOOL OF ADVANCED AIR AND SPACE STUDIES

FOR COMPLETION OF GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED AIR AND SPACE STUDIES

AIR UNIVERSITY

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

JUNE 2014

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED
JUN 2014		**00-00-2014 to 00-00-2014**

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
Strategic Agility: Using The Expeditionary Aerospace Force as A Framework For Assuring Strategic Relevancy In The USAF	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **School of Advanced Air And Space Studies,,Air University,,Maxwell Air Force Base,,AL**	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

As Operation ENDURING FREEDOM draws to a close, the USAF faces an uncertain future. Sequestration, sexual assault, uneasiness in the nuclear enterprise, a former Secretary of Defense questioning USAF contributions to the Global War on Terror, a force structure that is the oldest and smallest in the history of the USAF, a rising China, and a blustery Russia are just some of the many exogenous forces that continue to cloud the strategic narrative of what the USAF does for the nation. Often, issues like these detract from an iterative organizational process that ponders how the USAF should organize itself to maximize combat power. This study attempts to reinvigorate a discussion on the topic and draws from a historical examination of expeditionary air power in the USAF as a framework for analysis. Starting with the Composite Air Strike Force of the 1950s and concluding with General Welsh???s modern ???AEF Teaming??? construct, this study uses the historical record, two cases studies, and interviews from four retired General Officers to discern if the USAF???s history of expeditionary air power can offer any guidance as to how the USAF should present forces in the future.

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT **unclassified**	b. ABSTRACT **unclassified**	c. THIS PAGE **unclassified**	**Same as Report (SAR)**	**131**	

APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets master's-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.

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Major Michael T. Lynch commissioned through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at the University of Iowa in 2000. Following a casual status assignment to the University of Notre Dame, he graduated from Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training at Laughlin AFB, Texas as a Distinguished Graduate in 2002. He completed F-15C training at Tyndall AFB, Florida as a Top Gun Award winner in 2003. He is also a Top Third Graduate of Squadron Officer School. In December 2007, he graduated from the United States Air Force Weapons School at Nellis AFB, Nevada. His flying assignments in the F-15C include Eglin AFB, Florida, Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, and Nellis AFB, Nevada. While at Nellis AFB, Major Lynch served as the F-15C Division Commander in the 422d Test and Evaluation Squadron. Major Lynch has flown homeland defense missions in support of Operation *Noble Eagle* and deployed to Iraq in support of Operation *New Dawn*. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from the University of Iowa, a Master of Aeronautical Science degree in Aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, a Master of Science degree in Strategic Intelligence from the National Intelligence University at the Defense Intelligence Agency, and a Master of Philosophy in Military Strategy from the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama. Upon graduation from SAASS, Major Lynch will be assigned as Director of Operations of the Operational Flight Program Combined Test Force at Eglin AFB, Florida.

Acknowledgments

My sincerest thanks and appreciation goes to Dr. Richard Muller. His efforts during this study and while teaching Airpower I were instrumental in bringing coherence to this project and, more importantly, sharpening my views on the importance of combat air power to the nation. Dr. Stephen Wright also deserves my thanks for the guidance he gave me early on in this project when random pages of notes turned into some semblance of a structured project due solely to a meeting in which we discussed his work on the EAF in the 1990s. His direction saved me countless hours of busy work and led me to invaluable research material on the EAF. Lastly, it would be an injustice to the "cave of justice" if I did not thank Dr. James Forsyth. The dedication, logic, and passion he and Dr. Muller brought to discussions on the strategic value of combat air power became a source of motivation for me during the many sleepless nights this project consumed.

Generals Jumper, Looney, Deptula, and Przybyslawski also deserve my many thanks. The hours they either spent with me on the phone or in their own homes were critical to filling in gaps in the historical record. While these men no longer wear the uniform, they serve their country each day; their leadership, integrity, candor, and dedication serves as an exemplar to the current corps of USAF officers.

Most importantly, this year would have been a disastrous failure if not for the unequivocal support of my beautiful wife. She seamlessly manages every new USAF adventure for our family, her career, and the daily curveballs of a wife and mother. Thank you for everything you do for our family. To my children, you two are my inspiration! Thank you for being a constant source of joy in our family and for your patience this year.

Finally, to Class XXIII and the entire SAASS faculty: thank you for making the SAASS journey worthwhile. Although many aided, any inaccuracies contained herein are entirely my own.

Abstract

As Operation ENDURING FREEDOM draws to a close, the USAF faces an uncertain future. Sequestration, sexual assault, uneasiness in the nuclear enterprise, a former Secretary of Defense questioning USAF contributions to the Global War on Terror, a force structure that is the oldest and smallest in the history of the USAF, a rising China, and a blustery Russia are just some of the many exogenous forces that continue to cloud the strategic narrative of what the USAF does for the nation. Often, issues like these detract from an iterative organizational process that ponders how the USAF should organize itself to maximize combat power. This study attempts to reinvigorate a discussion on the topic and draws from a historical examination of expeditionary air power in the USAF as a framework for analysis. Starting with the Composite Air Strike Force of the 1950s and concluding with General Welsh's modern "AEF Teaming" construct, this study uses the historical record, two cases studies, and interviews from four retired General Officers to discern if the USAF's history of expeditionary air power can offer any guidance as to how the USAF should present forces in the future.

This study aims to synthesize the historical record with the thoughts of retired USAF General Officers who were instrumental in the development and execution of the EAF concept. The author developed questions to support a qualitative research interview process. Using this methodology, the study then analyzes what strategic themes sprouted from the EAF concept and if those themes should endure as transformational models that influence how the USAF should present forces. Insight gained from this examination may aid the USAF in the development of a coherent force structure articulation strategy that uses a strategy-to-task approach to explain how the efficiency of combat air power can be used to further U.S. strategic interests. At a minimum, this study will provide a point of departure for how the EAF concept can be strategically used to advance the USAF.

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Introduction

> *The very flexibility of air forces makes true cooperation essential. Air forces, at short notice, can be switched from one sort of target to another and, within limits, from one type of operation to a quite different type. There is, therefore, a constant temptation to use them piecemeal to meet an immediate requirement, rather than to use them on a long-term joint plan.*
>
> *J. C. Slessor*

The United States Air Force (USAF) is at a crossroads. Despite ongoing fiscal constraints, the USAF must find a way to continue to execute status quo operations while also equipping and training a force prepared to wage and prevail in future conflicts that threaten U.S. national security interests. The challenge is a formidable one; gone are the days of endless fiscal resources limited only by the imagination of American policy makers, military strategists, and defense industry technologists. Central to the discussion of how the USAF should fight America's current wars and prepare for the next is the debate on how the USAF should present forces for air combat to the combatant commander (CCDR). How the USAF presents its forces to the CCDR is important not only for the specific, operational level of war the Combatant Commands (COCOMs) execute, but also for the strategic narrative that shapes what the USAF does for U.S. national security and how the USAF articulates its contributions to the National Military Strategy (NMS). A strategic understanding of how the USAF presents forces for air combat is vital as the force adjusts to a shrinking budget and its effects on force structure. To this end, this thesis seeks to answer the following research question: how might the USAF organize itself to maximize combat power?

Scope

A study on how the USAF might organize itself to maximize combat power can take many forms. This study explores and analyzes how the USAF might organize itself to maximize combat power through the lens of the Air & Space Expeditionary Force (AEF). Per Air Force Planning Document (AFPD) 10-4 *Operations Planning: Air & Space Expeditionary Force (AEF)*, "the AEF force generation construct manages the

battle rhythm of the force in order to meet CCDR requirements while maintaining the highest possible level of overall readiness."[1] In short, the AEF is intended to be the mechanism that provides CCDRs with a packaged set of rapidly deployable and reliable air power capabilities. The current AEF construct came into being during the 1990s in an attempt to transform a garrison force with many bases spread across the globe into a smaller, more integrated force that effectively utilized resources to meet the needs of the CCDR. However, in the aftermath of 9/11, an argument can be made that the AEF has morphed into an organizational concept focused on deploying people instead of a mechanism that deploys combat air power. An exploration of this purported transformation is vital to understanding a larger issue: how the USAF can present forces for combat and how its force structure contributes to the larger national military strategy.

Methodology

This study will trace the roots of the AEF concept from its genesis in the Composite Air Strike Force (CASF) of the 1950s through the modern-day notions of the AEF. This thesis will use archival research, research interviews, and two case studies to present a qualitative analysis of how the USAF should present forces to the CCDR through the lens of the AEF construct. Archival research will help provide a comparison of past AEF constructs with the current one and help draw together evidence from different time periods to provide a bigger picture of how the USAF should present forces. Research interviews will also provide comparisons between past and present but will highlight the attitudes of USAF leadership towards AEF assumptions, goals, and trends to determine if there exists a better way for the USAF to present forces in light of modern-day constraints and challenges. A case study of Operation ALLIED FORCE will explore the modern concept of the AEF as a "proof of concept." An analysis of selected U.S. military engagements in the post-9/11 era will explore if the modern concept of the AEF is analogous to what it was in the pre-9/11 era.

The insight gained from an examination of the AEF may help inform USAF force structure requirements and determine whether the AEF can be used as a more effective

[1] Air Force Planning Document (AFPD) 10-4, *Operations Planning: Air & Space Expeditionary Force (AEF)*, 30 April 2009, 5.

means of articulating how the USAF serves strategic national interests. Key questions that shape this study includes: What is the historical background of the AEF? What was the original intent of the AEF? How did it perform? How does that compare with today? How do we explain the differences? How might we reconcile them? How might the AEF adapt to modern-day challenges? At a minimum, this thesis will provide a launching point for how the USAF should present forces for the future.

Structure

The structure of this study is a chronological presentation of the USAF's evolution in the employment of expeditionary air power. Chapter 1 details the beginnings of the USAF's expeditionary air power experience with the CASF and closes with Operation DESERT STORM. The chapter traces U.S. strategy development from massive retaliation to flexible response and details how the USAF struggled to organizationally adapt to changes in the strategic environment; the USAF was tactically proficient but often operationally and strategically confused. Chapter 2 features the Clinton Administration's strategic response to the end of the Cold War, the USAF's organizational response with the development of the AEF, and how the AEF helped the USAF discover combat air power can be strategically effective yet organizationally efficient. Chapter 3 explains how the AEF matured into an Expeditionary Aerospace Force (EAF) concept that projected combat air power but also brought predictability to Airmen. The dual nature of the EAF brought forth changes to USAF organizational culture, thoughts on force structure, and provided a framework for evaluation of Operation ALLIED FORCE and its future effects on the USAF. Chapter 4 clarifies how the EAF concept, in addition to serving as a capability and predictability tool, can be used as a strategy-to-task methodology that explains the strategic implications of combat air power. This chapter also highlights how the USAF in the post-9/11 era became uncomfortable with the EAF as a strategy articulation instrument and instead transitioned to the "combat wing equivalent." Chapter 5 details "AEF Next" and highlights how the USAF's EAF journey is at present static. Currently, the USAF uses a subset of the EAF concept to focus inward on solving the conditions under which Airmen deploy; the full

potential of the EAF has yet to be realized. "Conclusions" offers final thoughts, topics for future study, and recommendations.

Chapter 1

From CASF to Air Legion: The Origins of the AEF Concept

The speed with which you respond is really as important as the force with which you respond.

Neil H. McElroy
6th U.S. Secretary of Defense

The roots of expeditionary air power in the USAF began shortly after the service came into being by authority of the National Security Act of 1947. Molded by the USAF's slow reaction to the Korean War, the service responded with a Composite Air Strike Force that eventually learned from expeditionary air power opportunities in Asia and the Middle East. Although a mechanism for expeditionary air power formed with the birth of the CASF, the USAF struggled with how this expeditionary air power apparatus complemented larger U.S. national security interests. While the advent of nuclear weapons brought into question the utility of conventional military instruments of war, the persistence of limited wars validated U.S. military force structures that possessed a capability to rapidly deploy with global reach to take the fight to the enemy. As the American strategic experience adapted from its experiences in Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War, the USAF slowly formed its organizational and cultural identity through a significant, yet subtle, theme: expeditionary air power.

Composite Air Strike Force

An analysis of the CASF formed in the 1950s is warranted in a study that explores how the USAF should present forces to the CCDR because it represents the USAF's first foray into expeditionary air power. The American experience in the Korean War provided the backdrop for the USAF to explore how it fit into a global strategic environment more characteristic of limited war. Though U.S. military strategy in the 1950s was dominated by plans for nuclear attack and defense, in the words of one of its senior commanders of the era, "the Korean War kind of proved that maybe some tactical

air forces were sort of necessary."[1] Commander of the Far East Air Forces (FEAF) for much of the Korean War, General O.P. Weyland's comment is indicative of how at least some in the USAF leadership recognized a need for a non-nuclear, tactical air force that could deploy and respond "in a hell of a hurry."[2] General Weyland explains his rationale: "I was convinced we would have more Koreas, but not someplace where we had air power and ground forces readily available."[3] The offspring of General Weyland's ideas for a rapidly deployable, packaged set of air power capabilities came to fruition with the creation of the CASF.

Much of the genesis behind General Weyland's reflective thoughts on air power traces back to his time working at Plans and Operations when the USAF became its own service in 1947. Though Weyland contributed to planning efforts that birthed Strategic Air Command (SAC), he was a staunch advocate of maintaining a "viable nucleus" of tactical air power capabilities.[4] Despite Weyland's advocacy, the USAF through much of the Cold War had an unbalanced force structure that heavily favored SAC to the detriment of tactical air power. Although the USAF maintained the minimum level of tactical air power required for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) commitments in Europe, Weyland warned that the USAF lacked a capacity to reinforce NATO, if required, or to execute a "small war."[5] Moreover, the tendency of some USAF leaders during the Korean War to advocate for the use of atomic weapons left Weyland with the impression that the USAF was not in tune with the "political implications" of atomic advocacy.[6] After the Korean War, Weyland returned to the United States and took command of Tactical Air Command (TAC) as he wrestled with ways to resolve the disparity between the USAF's strategic and tactical forces.

Under the direction and purview of TAC, the CASF became "a small tactical air force composed of a command element and of fighter, reconnaissance, tanker, troop

[1] General O.P. Weyland, interview by Dr. James C. Hasdorff and Brigadier General Noel F. Parrish, 19 November 1974, transcript, 101, San Antonio, TX.
[2] Weyland, interview, 19 November 1974, 101.
[3] Weyland, interview, 19 November 1974, 101.
[4] Weyland, interview, 19 November 1974, 100.
[5] Weyland, interview, 19 November 1974, 100.
[6] Weyland, interview, 19 November 1974, 103.

carrier, and communications support units."[7] The command element of the CASF, Nineteenth Air Force, formed on 8 July 1955 at Foster Air Force Base (AFB), Texas as part of a strategy that afforded the USAF a way to articulate how it would "face an era of periphery or brushfire wars that would have to be deterred or won with tactical air forces."[8] Moreover, since the design of the CASF did not designate permanently assigned units, the CASF was able to preserve an identity that allowed units to be selected based on their capabilities for war in a specific part of the world.[9] Dominated by the nuclear narrative surrounding SAC, Nineteenth Air Force gave the CASF, code name BLUE BLADE, an organizational backbone that helped the USAF grapple with nuclear and non-nuclear deterrence strategies. BLUE BLADE's purpose was "the organization and training of a highly mobile, atomic-capable, tactical force which could cope with local wars in certain areas of the world for periods up to 30 days."[10] In this sense, Weyland's initial design of the CASF as an operational expeditionary tool grew into a part of a larger strategic design that provided complementary tactical capabilities for the USAF's SAC-dominated force structure.

The CASF presented a number of enduring characteristics to the USAF. First, it represented the first time the USAF provided an organizational response to limited war. Prior to the Korean War, the USAF's main level of effort focused on organizing around SAC and its offensive and defensive nuclear capabilities.[11] Second, the CASF effort broadened and expanded the USAF's global expeditionary capabilities. The American experience from the World Wars (WW) and the Korean War took note of the time required to build up large logistics footprints commensurate with the amount of forces in theater. Learning from this experience, the USAF hoped to minimize the time it took to project combat air power in theater through coordination with Air Materiel Command (AMC). This coordination between TAC and AMC established pre-stocked "flyaway kits" meant to provide maintenance and logistics support for 30-days to a CASF that

[7] Richard G. Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force* (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2003), 4.
[8] Robert F. Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force 1907-1960* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1989), 450.
[9] History, Ninth Air Force, 1 January – 30 June 1957, Volume II, Air Force Historical Research Agency, IRIS number 1049656, 51.
[10] History, Ninth Air Force, 92.
[11] History, Ninth Air Force, 49.

could deploy to six regions around the world – Formosa, Korea, Indo-China, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and the Caribbean.[12] In addition to a streamlined maintenance and logistics package, the USAF also had to make sure its combat aircraft could get to theater quickly. By expanding aerial refueling operations from SAC to TAC, the USAF provided the CASF with a means of getting fighter and light bomber aircraft to deploy within 24 hours of orders with arrival in one of the aforementioned theaters within 96 hours.[13] Lastly, the planning efforts associated with BLUE BLADE planted the seed for future joint air power operations. Although subsequent CASF organization was structured strictly around USAF capacity, CASF planning efforts did acknowledge the potential benefits of leveraging joint capabilities. Specifically, CASF planners took note of the synergistic effects that a quick strike air power force could enable when combined with other U.S. Army and Navy forces.[14] The USAF first put these operational CASF capabilities to test with CASF-Bravo during Operation BLUE BAT in response to a crisis in Lebanon in 1958.

The political background to CASF-Bravo's involvement in Lebanon formed in 1957 when Lebanon's Christian president, Camille Chamoun, began to lose political power to a growing Muslim majority. In a calculated response to gain American support, Chamoun "pledged adherence to the so-called Eisenhower Doctrine, according to which the United States, if invited, would intervene to protect any Middle Eastern state whose independence or territory were threatened by international communism."[15] This decision, along with Chamoun's quest to have the Lebanese constitution changed to accommodate his seeking a second six-year term, divided the country's religious sects and culminated in strikes, riots, and irregular warfare operations throughout the country.[16] Losing legitimacy over his command of the Lebanese Army and fearful of subversion by the United Arab Republic, President Chamoun requested help from the United Nations (U.N.) to help preserve his power. Moreover, American and Soviet interests pitted capitalism against communism and made Lebanon a potential proxy battleground. As the

[12] History, Ninth Air Force, 51.
[13] History, Ninth Air Force, 51.
[14] Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine 1907-1960*, 451.
[15] Bernard C. Nalty, *The Air Force Role in Five Crises 1958-1965: Lebanon, Taiwan, Congo, Cuba, and Dominican Republic* (Washington, DC: USAF Historical Division Liaison Office, June 1968), 1-2.
[16] Nalty, *The Air Force Role in Five Crises 1958-1965*, 2.

United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) calculated their next moves, a 14 July 1958 coup d'état occurred in Iraq that killed King Feisal and other members of the Iraqi government. This event was interpreted by the United States as another step towards the expansion of the Soviet-backed United Arab Republic in the Middle East and provided the United States with justification to intervene in Lebanon.[17] Less than 24 hours later, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) directed the deployment of CASF-Bravo to Incirlik Air Base (AB), Turkey.[18]

Commanded by Major General Henry Viccellio, CASF-Bravo mobilized two fighter, one bomber, and one reconnaissance squadron from disparate locations across the United States and Europe. Within 50 hours of receipt of its Operation BLUE BAT orders, CASF-Bravo had 24 F-100s, 12 B-57s, 8 RF-101s, 7 RB-66s, and 3 WB-66Ds on the ground at Incirlik AB.[19] Accompanying CASF-Bravo was a mixture of tanker and mobility aircraft that provided organic aerial refueling capabilities to Operation BLUE BAT and fortified the logistics footprint at Incirlik AB with 3,963 troops and 5,280 tons of equipment.[20] CASF-Bravo, along with the peak build-up of 6,000 U.S. Marines and 8,000 U.S. Army soldiers in Lebanon in August 1958, was the proof of concept that validated the USAF's desire to grow a packaged set of rapidly deployable air power capabilities while working in concert with other joint forces. Moreover, Major General Viccellio, along with his other joint partners, was able to experiment with command relationships within this fledgling expeditionary force that would pay dividends in future joint endeavors. For instance, though Admiral James Holloway, Jr. was Commander in Chief, Specified Command, Middle East (CINCSPECOMME) and overall joint force commander during the crisis in Lebanon, Major General Viccellio and his naval counterpart took turns rotating command authority over tactical and transport operations; thoughts on command over joint air power would take decades to doctrinally resolve.[21] Though a peaceful election of a new Lebanese president precluded the use of kinetic

[17] Nalty, *The Air Force Role in Five Crises 1958-1965*, 4.
[18] Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine 1907-1960*, 611-12.
[19] Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine 1907-1960*, 612 and Nalty, *The Air Force Role in Five Crises 1958-1965*, 7-9.
[20] Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine 1907-1960*, 612.
[21] Nalty, *The Air Force Role in Five Crises 1958-1965*, 13.

operations by American forces in 1958, Operation BLUE BAT provided the USAF with a number of lessons learned to consider for future expeditionary operations.

The crux of the lessons learned from the deployment of CASF-Bravo to Lebanon had to do with deficiencies in deliberate planning. First, there was a lack of fidelity regarding the on-call status and associated expectations of units that were scheduled to deploy. For example, two squadrons of F-100s from Myrtle Beach AFB, SC were given seven hours of notification to prepare for their flight to Incirlik AB since the two F-100 squadrons originally scheduled to deploy were hampered by a runway closure at Cannon AFB, NM.[22] Second, a lack of training on how to get the CASF's air power components to theater was pervasive throughout the force. The fighter pilots of CASF-Bravo were inexperienced in aerial refueling and ocean-crossing operations while the mobility crews had to deal with inadequate load plans.[23] Lastly, USAF support agencies were overwhelmed by the surge in deployment operations over a short period of time. Bases supporting CASF-Bravo faced heavy congestion challenges because of an inability to manage a schedule with many aircraft and failed to meet administrative tasks such as diplomatic over-flight clearances that were not properly filed.[24] These internal USAF challenges, however, did not deter U.S. policymakers and senior military leaders from finding value in expeditionary air power. In fact, CASF experiences like those in Lebanon, and later Taiwan, helped reshape American thoughts on expeditionary air power as well as the utility of limited war.

A number of strategically significant narratives emerged from the capabilities that the CASF presented to senior American decision makers. With tensions mounting from the outbreak of the Cold War, the CASF found its strategic utility in deterring "Communist aggression…beyond the reach of American forces already stationed overseas."[25] Due to the rapidity with which the United States was able to respond with the CASF, policymakers such as Secretary of Defense Neil McElroy argued that the credibility established by rapidly deployable, expeditionary American forces was vital in

[22] Nalty, *The Air Force Role in Five Crises 1958-1965*, 14.
[23] Nalty, *The Air Force Role in Five Crises 1958-1965*, 14-15.
[24] Nalty, *The Air Force Role in Five Crises 1958-1965*, 15-16.
[25] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 4.

deterring the outbreak of violence in Lebanon and crucial to minimizing the impact of the conflict in Taiwan.[26] Others, like USAF General Nathan Twining in his role as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), cautioned against lumping the Korean War and the crises in Lebanon and Taiwan into the same all-inclusive strategic context of limited war. Underpinning General Twining's argument was recognition of how the character of limited war was scalable and a single expeditionary strategy would need to adapt to the specified requirements of each limited war experience. Not surprisingly, Chief of Staff of the USAF (CSAF) General Thomas White was an advocate of the CASF and charged that "American long-range air power" was the primary tool that contained Soviet interests in Lebanon and Taiwan – more so, in fact, than U.S. Army battalions and U.S. Navy warships.[27] General Thomas Power, commander of SAC, inferred that the success of the CASF had everything to do with the fact that some of its forces could switch from conventional munitions to nuclear ones in a few hours.[28] These different viewpoints culminated in a debate not only on striking the right balance of "forward- and U.S.-based forces" but also in one that questioned how nuclear weapons could be used in limited war.[29]

Though the debate on the use of nuclear weapons in a limited war existed prior to the formation of the CASF concept, this debate was critical to the CASF's organizational vision and capabilities. Although U.S. Secretary of State John Dulles, during a 1954 speech, introduced the concept of massive retaliation as a strategy of the Eisenhower administration, Secretary Dulles' later thoughts left room for the use of nuclear weapons in a limited war and surmised that this type of use may not escalate into general nuclear war.[30] Some military leaders such as Vice Admiral Charles Brown, commander of the U.S. Sixth Fleet, were not so sure and articulated a lack of "faith in the so-called controlled use of atomic weapons."[31] The debate on how and when nuclear weapons should be used in limited war is a major reason why General Weyland continued to

[26] Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine 1907-1960*, 613.
[27] Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine 1907-1960*, 614.
[28] Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine 1907-1960*, 614.
[29] Eduard M. Mark, *Defending the West: The United States Air Force and European Security* (Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1999), 38.
[30] Michael W. Cannon, "The Development of the American Theory of Limited War, 1945-63" (Master's thesis, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1989), 15-19.
[31] Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine 1907-1960*, 616.

advocate the retention of conventional capabilities of TAC fighters and bombers. An obsession with nuclear weapons permeated not only SAC but TAC as well and fueled General Weyland's concerns about the future of conventional capabilities. One TAC officer during Operation BLUE BAT expressed doubt in CASF-Bravo's ability to execute the mission in Lebanon due to a lack of realistic training and stated, "few of the F-100 pilots had strafed, [and] none had shot rockets or delivered conventional bombs."[32] These traces of tactical, operational, and strategic inconsistencies are representative of the struggle American policy makers and senior military leaders dealt with as they questioned the efficacy of massive retaliation in an evolving global strategic environment.

Strategic Context

The strategic context in which the CASF developed is just as important as the construct itself. "Local defenses must be reinforced by the further deterrent of massive retaliatory power," declared Secretary Dulles. The introduction of massive retaliation into the strategic lexicon of the United States initiated an analytical frenzy that sought to come to terms with the strategy of nuclear deterrence.[33] Thomas Schelling puts it best: "The introduction of nuclear weapons raises two issues here. One is the actual danger of general war; the other is the role of this danger in our strategy."[34] Schelling's second point is of particular interest due to the U.S. military's response to the strategic demands of the Eisenhower administration. U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General Matthew Ridgway, worried that U.S. strategic guidance was being tailored to fit the nuclear weapon as an independent instrument of war instead of as an instrument subordinate to U.S. grand strategy.[35] To some extent, the development and execution of the CASF suffered from this wrangling in strategic guidance; some senior USAF leaders viewed the CASF as an expeditionary nuclear strike force where others viewed its role as a primarily conventional force. Though the specifics of its doctrinal mission varied in interpretation,

[32] Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine 1907-1960*, 616-17.
[33] Secretary John Foster Dulles, "The Evolution of Foreign Policy" (lecture, Council of Foreign Relations, New York, NY, 12 January 1954).
[34] Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 109.
[35] R. Michael Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals: The Problem of Air Force Leadership 1945-1982* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1998), 74.

the fact remained that the CASF was organizationally subordinate to TAC. To this end, much like other components of TAC, the CASF was inadequately trained, "underfunded and poorly supported."[36] However, the viability of an expeditionary construct much like the CASF grew over time, particularly as U.S. strategic guidance transformed from massive retaliation to flexible response.

A shift in U.S. strategic narrative from massive retaliation to flexible response occurred as the national command authority (NCA) changed hands from the Eisenhower administration to the Kennedy administration. Although the Kennedy administration did not single-handedly coin the term "flexible response" through one article of doctrine or significant speech, the crux of the administration's challenge to massive retaliation rested on the perception that it provided two options: "holocaust or humiliation."[37] This viewpoint argued that strategic options in a confrontation with the U.S.S.R., directly or via proxy war, left the NCA with two bad choices: an Armageddon-like offensive nuclear strike option or concessions that hurt American interests but avoided war. Though the strategies of massive retaliation and flexible response both sought to contain and deter the enemy, they differed with respect to the efficacy of defense if containment and deterrence failed.[38] In effect, this strategic shift introduced a viewpoint that war could be viewed across a spectrum that had multiple cognitive intricacies and rejected the binary terms of massive retaliation. With this strategic shift, the Kennedy administration believed it could more effectively control all the national instruments of power (IOPs) to produce "effective political signals, preserve maximum political options, and retain initiative at all levels of warfare."[39] The implications of any strategic shift are vast and far-reaching; for the Department of Defense (DoD), these changes may alter spending, force structure, and warrant reflection on organizational doctrine. The USAF found this to be the case in the early 1960s.

Ironically, some voices in the USAF were calling for an introspective look at how it presented air power for combat prior to the Kennedy administration's shift towards

[36] Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 77.
[37] Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 110.
[38] Peter F. Witteried, "A Strategy of Flexible Response," *Parameters* 2, no. 1 (1972): 6.
[39] Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 110.

flexible response. While General Weyland looked to enhance the USAF's expeditionary and conventional capabilities in TAC, organizations like Air University's Research Studies Institute also studied how pervasive nuclear air power theory was throughout USAF strategic doctrine. The Research Studies Institute's conclusions on the state of the USAF in the late 1950s were alarming and organizationally critical; the USAF viewed nuclear weapons as a strategic panacea, believed conventional capabilities to be wasteful, and stymied proposals for organizational and strategic alternatives. Later, the USAF's resistance to organizational change collided with Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's call for a reassessment of how the DoD could best meet the strategic needs of the nation. Although Secretary McNamara's methods were often controversial, the fact remained the USAF was stubbornly stuck in the status quo. In spite of these difficulties, the CASF and, more importantly, its organizational lead, Nineteenth Air Force, continued on its quest to refine expeditionary air power capabilities.

An Expeditionary Ending?

The CASF participated in two major events in the 1960s. During the first, the Cuban missile crisis, the Nineteenth Air Force initiated a build-up of over 1,000 aircraft and 7,000 U.S. military personnel in the southeast United States while the second concerned the escalatory measures after the Gulf of Tonkin crisis.[40] Other CASF events in the 1960s focused on exercises with foreign countries in hopes of building partnership capacity and training events with other U.S. Army and Naval personnel. However, although the CASF matured in age, it's tactical, operational, and strategic maturation left much to be desired. Instead of the credible, regionally tailored, nuclear and conventional capable, packaged set of expeditionary air power capabilities originally envisioned by General Weyland, the CASF became a microcosm of the shortfalls in air power development highlighted years earlier by the Research Studies Institute. One instance of this stagnation can be found in a training manual for the primary CASF fighter aircraft, the F-100: "Nuclear training will in every instance take precedence over nonnuclear familiarization and qualification. It is emphasized that conventional training will not be

[40] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 7.

accomplished at the expense of higher priority nuclear training."[41] This fascination with nuclear capabilities, and strategic bombing, seeped into operational and strategic planning efforts at the highest levels of the U.S. government. While reflecting on an American capability to win the Vietnam War with strategic bombing, General Curtis LeMay famously replied, "In any two-week period you want to mention."[42] Arguably, the largest factor that stunted the CASF's ability to evolve to meet the challenges of a changing global strategic environment was the Vietnam War itself.

The Vietnam War limited the CASF's growth and advancement for two major reasons. First, the CASF was never designed to enable a persistent, sustainable air power force for anything longer than 30 days. From its inception, the CASF was meant to be an emergency force that could quickly deploy to deter adversary governments with a measured response that signaled American commitment. Second, as the United States escalated its commitment to South Vietnam, the CASF model never fit the character of the war. Introspective thoughts on how the CASF could change its model to accommodate a multi-year war were at odds with senior USAF leadership who felt constrained by political limits. In short, because senior USAF leadership believed the Johnson administration was a roadblock on the road to victory in Vietnam, the USAF never questioned its "solution" to the war. Although the flexible response strategy teamed with the CASF concept to initiate new studies on the Rapid Deployment of Forces (RDF) by a JCS Special Studies Group, studies like these quickly faded into the background as the Vietnam War drained fiscal resources and political resolve.[43] The thrust of the CASF's organizational resolve ended when the Nineteenth Air Force was shut down in July 1973.[44] The end of the Vietnam War, the associated U.S. military force structure drawdown that came with it, and the DoD's transition to an all-volunteer force compelled the USAF to prioritize other core interests above the fledgling CASF

[41] Pacific Air Forces Manual (PACAFM) 51-6, *Aircrew Training Manual for F-100D/F, Volume I*, 1 March 1961 as quoted in Benjamin S. Lambeth, "Pitfalls in Force Planning: Structuring America's Tactical Air Arm," *International Security* 10, no. 2 (Fall, 1985): 105.
[42] Mark Clodfelter, *The Limits of Air Power: The American Bombing of North Vietnam* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 206.
[43] Robert F. Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force 1961-1984* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1989), 624.
[44] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 7.

concept.[45] The further development of what USAF expeditionary air power should look like, as a tool of national military strategy, would have to wait until the 1980s tackled the intricacies of the RDF.

Rapid Deployment Force

The 1980s was a significant decade for the development of expeditionary air power within the USAF. With a new decade, a new president, an economic rebirth, and what was thought to be a formidable Soviet threat, the United States looked to recapture its military prestige through the credibility of a large, highly capable nuclear and conventional force. Viewed through this lens, the linkages in military strategy from the Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Carter, and Reagan administrations share a common theme: the U.S. military possesses a capability to be anywhere at any time across the world. This theme matured within the DoD and grew to become a part of U.S. military lexicon known as RDF. Organized as U.S. Strike Command in 1961, U.S. Readiness Command in 1971, and later the RDF in 1980, their names changed but missions were intrinsically the same – a jointly organized, rapidly deployable, credible military force that could respond "on a scale less than all-out nuclear war."[46] These organizational changes culminated in yearly Return of Forces to Germany (REFORGER) exercises that practiced how U.S. Army and USAF forces could quickly deploy in support of NATO's adoption of "flexible response."[47] Though the organizational concept of the RDF seemed simple enough, the strategy that surrounded it was less clear.

International politics theorist Kenneth Waltz gave a scholarly voice to strategic critics of the RDF with an article published in *International Security* just after President Reagan took office. This prescient piece questioned the strategic intent behind the RDF, took issue with a perceived lack of clarity over to what end the RDF served U.S. national strategic interests, and cautioned against "design dictat[ing] strategy."[48] Using the oil crises of the 1970s as a springboard for his framework, Waltz articulated how a survey of

[45] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 8.
[46] David Isenberg, "The Rapid Deployment Force: The Few, the Futile, the Expendable," CATO Policy Analysis No. 44 (November 8, 1984), http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa044.html.
[47] Mark, *Defending the West*, 40.
[48] Kenneth N. Waltz, "A Strategy for the Rapid Deployment Force," *International Security* 5, no. 4 (Spring, 1981): 49.

American vital interests should occur prior to the establishment of the force structure of the RDF. Specifically, Waltz tackled how best the United States could protect its energy interests in the Middle East should the U.S.S.R. invade, destabilize, or threaten the region with armed force. He argued how the defensive design of the RDF was encumbered by its inadequate force structure and slow mobilization capacity; the Soviets would secure the Middle East before American forces arrived in theater.[49] "Thickening the Force," Waltz continued, "for the sake of our psychological comfort is less important than keeping the Force lean to aid its speedy deployment."[50] Of primary importance, however, is a strategy that first establishes limited, yet clear, political aims and *then* presents an RDF that deters through presence and dissuades through credible force.[51] Without an analytic framework that matched the instrument with the strategy, Waltz cautioned of a moral hazard where the United States would risk military involvement in areas not vital to its interests. Worse, the possibility could exist where these types of non-vital military actions would preclude involvement at such a time when vital interests were at stake.[52]

The DoD did, in fact, respond to some of Waltz's critiques through minor organizational change. In response to the growing crisis that became the Iran-Iraq War, official U.S. policy provided extra focus on the Middle East by divorcing the RDF from U.S. Readiness Command in order to create the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF). Aware that Joint Task Forces (JTFs) are doctrinally temporary in scope and duration, and wanting to show an enduring commitment to the Middle East, the Reagan administration transformed RDJTF into a permanent COCOM known as U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) on 1 January 1983.[53] Described earlier by Waltz, what was left of U.S. Readiness Command fell victim to the lack of strategic design. Commander of TAC and the air component of U.S. Readiness Command, General W.L. Creech, could articulate "where we will bed down the RDF," but encountered other obstacles and failed

[49] Waltz, "A Strategy for the Rapid Deployment Force," 58-60.
[50] Waltz, "A Strategy for the Rapid Deployment Force," 67.
[51] Waltz, "A Strategy for the Rapid Deployment Force," 59, 60, 64.
[52] Waltz, "A Strategy for the Rapid Deployment Force," 72.
[53] United States Central Command, "U.S. Central Command History," http://www.centcom.mil/en/about-centcom/our-history/.

to give the RDF strategic coherence.[54] For example, commander of Military Airlift Command (MAC), General Robert Huyser, testified to Congress, "the R in Rapid…has not been given proper attention or proper priority."[55] Moreover, though SAC participated in RDFs with its Strategic Projection Force, commander of SAC, General Richard Ellis, testified to Congress that the Strategic Projection Force could not "fully support" the conventional mission of the RDF due to nuclear readiness requirements.[56] Combined with perceived U.S. military expeditionary failures in Iran, Grenada, and Beirut, Congress responded with the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 to force robust joint military planning and a streamlined military command structure.[57] U.S. Readiness Command, along with its mission, was shut down in 1987.

Air Legion

Despite a lack of coherent U.S. strategy on how best the RDF should be used to further American interests and what form it should take, the 1980s produced a corps of USAF Airmen who believed the USAF was tactically proficient but lacking in operational and strategic expertise. Later a CSAF, General Michael Dugan, as deputy chief of staff for plans and operations at Headquarters Air Force (HAF), believed the unhealthy competition of the "SAC or TAC" mentality within the USAF had left it devoid of an identity and prevented the USAF reaching its full strategic potential.[58] Others in the USAF were of the same opinion.

Colonel John Warden's contribution to the theoretical development of expeditionary air power can be traced to his time at the HAF's Directorate of Plans in the late 1970s. Here, Warden provided some input into the composition of tactical air power in what became the RDF.[59] Warden's thoughts on planning further reinforced Waltz's critique of the early RDF: "The commander who tries to use a strategy or war plan

[54] Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine 1961-1984*, 667.
[55] Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine 1961-1984*, 667.
[56] Richard K. Betts, *Military Readiness: Concepts, Choices, Consequences* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 1995), 267.
[57] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 8.
[58] John Andreas Olsen, *John Warden and the Renaissance of American Air Power* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2007), 105.
[59] Olsen, *John Warden*, 36.

designed to be executed with more force than he has is courting disaster."[60] Later in the late 1980s when Warden's book, *The Air Campaign*, found its way to General Dugan, General Dugan's admiration for the work propelled Warden on a career that fostered introspective study on a theory and practice of air power that would culminate in the 1991 U.S.-led air campaign against Iraq.[61] Though the intricacies of Warden's air power theory are beyond the scope of this study, two major themes emerge that furthered the development of expeditionary air power.

First, in an essay that further developed his thoughts in *Air Campaign*, Warden's "Global Strategy Outline" provided a framework by which the USAF could evaluate its organization and force structure.[62] Aligned with General Dugan's thoughts on the divisiveness of the SAC-TAC split, Warden championed a transformation to a more mobile USAF that would enable an air power identity, exploit air maneuver capacity previously constrained by AirLand battle doctrine, and provide a rapid response to regional crises that required the presence of armed force.[63] Organizationally, this development also catalyzed a foundation that would free Airmen from the SAC-TAC mindset in order to approach air power from an unconstrained, holistic viewpoint; Airmen could broaden their thinking from their airplanes to air power.

Second, and arguably the heart of modern-day expeditionary air power, Warden proposed the concept of the Air Legion. Originally named the Air Battle Force, the Air Legion was developed from an interest in using operational concepts, not just tactics, to deploy USAF squadrons that could work effectively together.[64] A mash-up of air power capabilities that would base, train, and deploy together, Warden's Air Legion concept was fortified with composite wings. Considered a "smaller scale Air Battle Force," composite wings would possess fighter, bomber, reconnaissance, airlift, and aerial refueling operational, maintenance, and logistics capabilities; when deployed, these

[60] Olsen, *John Warden*, 45.
[61] Olsen, *John Warden*, 105-108.
[62] Olsen, *John Warden*, 111.
[63] John A. Warden, *The Air Campaign: Planning for Combat* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1988), 6-7 and Olsen, *John Warden*, 65, 111.
[64] David A. Deptula, interview by the author, 7 February 2014.

wings rivaled the entire air force capabilities of most nations.[65] This experiment in teaming, Warden argued, would bolster the effectiveness of each individual squadron through increased familiarity and streamline the planning involved in getting air power capabilities to theater as rapidly as possible. Warden and his understudy, Major David Deptula, shepherded the Air Legion concept through the HAF and to the CSAF. Although General Larry Welch believed the Air Legion concept needed further refinement, once General Dugan became the CSAF, he cleared the path for composite wing development at Mountain Home AFB, ID and Pope AFB, NC.[66]

The enduring marks Warden and Deptula left on expeditionary air power in the early 1990s are profound. Although Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM delayed the implementation of the composite wing concept, their capacity to view air power through a different strategic lens signified that changes were afoot on how the future USAF would present forces for air combat. Moreover, the timeliness of their thoughts provided the USAF with a starting point on how the service should bridge the gap between the end of the Cold War and the undefined threat of the future. While the composite wing concept lasted for a mere decade, the expeditionary undertones put forth in Warden's Air Legion paved the way for how the USAF would adapt to substantial DoD changes in the 1990s.

Conclusion

The beginnings of expeditionary air power in the USAF left a number of enduring themes that are salient for the modern day USAF. Though it took decades to change due to USAF organizational proclivities toward SAC, Weyland's CASF was the first concept to make an expeditionary air power imprint on USAF organization and culture. While other USAF leaders at the time were only fascinated with nuclear deterrence capabilities, Weyland's CASF reintroduced the notion that air power could be a credible nuclear *and* conventional deterrent. Later, during the transition from massive retaliation to flexible response, the USAF was slow to adopt force structure changes that met national strategic

[65] Deptula, interview.
[66] James W. Canan, "McPeak's Plan," *Air Force Magazine*, February 1991, 13 and Olsen, *John Warden*, 129-130.

guidance and suffered from this strategic dismissal during the Vietnam War. The lessons learned the USAF captured from the Vietnam War cultivated tactical proficiency in the force but left its operational and strategic capabilities wanting. As U.S. defense dollars increased in the 1980s, Waltz cautioned the U.S. military against crafting force structure without deference to U.S. grand strategy. For the USAF, this meant that the seeds of expeditionary air power would need to grow to produce Airmen that prioritized the strategic use of combat air power over the tactical capabilities of the airplane.

Chapter 2

Cold War No More

There's opportunity because you have to change.

Lieutenant General David E. Deptula, USAF (Ret.)

The end of the Cold War, the conclusion of Operation DESERT STORM, and the arrival of the Clinton Administration at the White House presented the USAF with a new set of challenges that influenced how it should organize itself to maximize combat power. Faced with a lack of a near-peer threat and a shrinking defense budget, the United States, and the USAF along with it, shifted away from a Cold War containment strategy to one of multilateral engagement. The Clinton Administration's first National Security Strategy (NSS), published in July 1994, signaled a change in the lens through which the United States viewed the global strategic environment. The 1994 NSS described under what conditions the military IOP should be used in a section entitled "Deciding When and How to Employ U.S. Forces." This section outlined how the United States would use its military despite scarce resources for its sustainment and acknowledged how global demand for American military capabilities would likely outpace supply. Specifically, the 1994 NSS laid down four principles that guided how military force would be used:

> First, and foremost, our national interests will dictate the pace and extent of our engagement. Second, as much as possible, we will seek the help of our allies or of relevant multilateral institutions. But especially on those matters touching directly the interests of our allies, there should be a proportional commitment from them. Third, in every case, we will consider several critical questions before committing military force. Fourth, our engagement must meet reasonable cost and feasibility thresholds.[1]

These principles provided a framework that guided USAF organization as the service came to terms with a 20 percent decrease in its budget from fiscal year (FY) 1991 to FY 1997.[2] This fiscal decrease, the pending drawdown in force structure and personnel associated with it, and the rise in small-scale contingency deployments in the 1990s

[1] White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: White House, 1994), http://history.defense.gov/resources/nss1994.pdf, 10.
[2] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 12-13.

forced the USAF to transition from a permanently forward-stationed Cold War force to a rapidly deployable expeditionary one: the AEF was born.

The Development of the Composite Wing

In the fall of 1990, then CSAF General Merrill McPeak published an article in *Airpower Journal* articulating how the USAF could use composite wings to better organize air power for combat. General McPeak's perspective was unique as the article was penned from his perspective as Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Forces (CINCPACAF) and prior to his nomination as CSAF. General McPeak's central argument for the composite wing stems from perceived shortfalls in a command and control structure that "gives rise to the requirement for detailed, centralized direction. There are a lot of reasons to doubt that we can in fact provide effective, detailed, central direction under stressful conditions."[3] General McPeak's concerns reflect a desire to package air power assets in a manner that synchronized their respective capabilities prior to actual combat. Moreover, this type of composite wing organization would allow CINCs to deliver centralized "mission type" orders to the composite wing commander (e.g., strike X targets over a Y time period) for decentralized execution.[4] Benefits of this type of organization include streamlined logistics networks during peacetime and wartime, the development of commanders with experience on how to command disparate air power assets prior to actual conflict, and the ability to maximize air power capacity and capability in resource-constrained environments.[5] General McPeak's article signaled the beginnings of a period of flux in USAF organization, which had significant effects on combat air power in the 1990s.

In early 1991, Mountain Home AFB, ID began its transition towards hosting a composite wing. Although it was not the USAF's first composite wing, it was its most robust. Re-designated the 366th Wing, the composite wing reorganization at Mountain Home AFB evolved over the next four years, ultimately bedding down fighter, bomber, aerial refueling, and ground control intercept squadrons. This mix of F-15C, F-15E, F-

[3] General Merrill A. McPeak, "For the Composite Wing," *Airpower Journal* 4, no. 3 (Fall 2003): http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/apj/apj90/fal90/1fal90.htm.
[4] McPeak, "For the Composite Wing."
[5] McPeak, "For the Composite Wing."

16, B-1, and KC-135 aircraft culminated in what would become known as the USAF's first air expeditionary wing. Of more organizational importance to the greater goals of the USAF, the 366th Wing became an operational test-bed charged with finding "the most efficient procedures for moving an airpower expeditionary force to pre-selected locations around the world."[6] In this sense, the composite wing at Mountain Home AFB was "a valuable practical, theoretical, and continuing underpinning for the AEF concept."[7]

The composite wing housed at Mountain Home AFB was not the only composite wing planned under General McPeak's organizational vision. Officially the USAF's first composite wing, the 4th Wing at Seymour Johnson AFB, NC embraced "a new period of an expeditionary air force, with an emphasis on rapid reaction by U.S.-based forces."[8] Like Mountain Home AFB, Seymour Johnson AFB became a composite wing in early 1991 with a fleet of F-15E fighter and KC-10 tanker aircraft. General McPeak pointed to Mountain Home, Seymour Johnson, and other bases such as Andrews AFB, MD, Spangdahlem AB, Germany, and Pope AFB, NC as future composite wings that would exemplify how the USAF would organize for combat air power but also how it would organize, train, and equip in the post-Cold War strategic environment. Conceptually, General McPeak and then Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) Donald Rice used five main points to guide their reorganization efforts.

General McPeak's and Secretary Rice's reorganization efforts centered around a "back-to-basics approach…built around five themes."[9] Decentralization, the ability to strengthen commands, a streamlined and flattened organizational structure, consolidation, and the clarification of functional responsibilities shaped how McPeak and Rice would usher the USAF through its organizational change.[10] Interestingly, many of these

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[6] History, Mountain Home Air Force Base, 1943-2007, http://www.mountainhome.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=4316 (accessed 22 February 2014).
[7] Richard G. Davis, *Immediate Reach, Immediate Power: The Air Expeditionary Force and American Power Projection in the Post Cold War Era* (Washington, DC: Air Force History Support Office, 1998), 21.
[8] General Merrill A. McPeak, USAF, chief of staff, address to the Air Force Association Tactical Air Warfare Symposium, Orlando, FL, 31 January 1991, quoted in Merrill A. McPeak, *Selected Works 1990-1994* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, August 1995), 12.
[9] General Merrill A. McPeak, USAF, chief of staff, address to the Air Force Association National Convention, Washington, DC, 18 September 1991, quoted in Merrill A. McPeak, *Selected Works 1990-1994* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, August 1995), 53.
[10] McPeak, *Selected Works 1990-1994*, 53.

concepts echo what General McPeak detailed in his advocacy for the composite wing while he was CINCPACAF. Moreover, these fives themes reflected a desire to reshape the USAF to value "mission type" orders, an efficient, flat chain of command, and economies of scale. General McPeak's composite wing, therefore, became not just a way to package air power capabilities, but also a microcosm of the organizational principles that the USAF was moving towards. Though the composite wing left its mark on the USAF to a certain extent, it lacked organizational persistence much beyond General McPeak's tenure as CSAF.

Two major issues dogged the composite wing. First, the organization could not be tailored to a specific tasking. USAF leaders found that deploying a composite wing was an "all or nothing" prospect. For instance, unless a specific tasking required air superiority, precision-guided munitions (PGM), suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD), and aerial refueling capabilities, the 366th Wing at Mountain Home AFB rarely deployed.[11] Since the logistics and support functions of the 366th Wing were organized to organically support the *entire* wing either at home or abroad, splitting the wing up to deploy as separate squadrons would require support from outside agencies to make the wing operate effectively from two or more disparate locations. Second, the cost of a composite wing proved greater than that of a wing that hosted a single type of aircraft. The lack of interchangeability in the manpower, parts, and tools for the aircraft assigned to a composite wing meant the economies of scale the composite wing realized in combat lethality failed to translate into greater financial savings.[12] Despite some of these shortfalls with the composite wing, the USAF continued its reorganization efforts. However, in 1994, during the middle of the USAF's composite wing build-up, the massing of Iraqi military forces near the Kuwait border precipitated execution of Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR. This operation, led in part by then Lieutenant General John P. Jumper, 9th Air Force commander and Commander, Central Command Air Force Component (CENTAF), helped refine the concepts and capabilities of General McPeak's composite wing vision. Regarded by some as the "father of the AEF," General

[11] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 25.
[12] G. Larry Thompson, "The Quick Response Air Force: Decisive Expeditionary Airpower for the Future?" (Master's thesis, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, 1996), 20.

Jumper helped shape and restructure how the USAF should support global crisis response actions.[13]

Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR

Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR provided the USAF with another opportunity to refine its expeditionary air power skills. In a matter of days, the United States reinforced forward-based units supporting Operation SOUTHERN WATCH with a carrier strike group led by the U.S.S. *George Washington*, a squadron each of F-15, F-16, and A-10 fighter aircraft, two U.S. Army brigades, and a U.S. Marine Corps expeditionary unit (MEU).[14] Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR was a coercive success for the United States for a number of reasons. Strategically, VIGILANT WARRIOR concluded with Saddam Hussein's withdrawal of Iraqi military forces near the shared border between Iraq and Kuwait.[15] Operationally, the United States proved that it could rapidly deploy a potent deterrent force to a remote region of the world and "validated the importance and criticality of the enhancements to our forward-presence posture and the increase in pre-positioned equipment in the gulf region."[16] However, the USAF faced a number of challenges that led then Brigadier General William R. Looney III, commandant of the Armed Forces Staff College, to conclude that VIGILANT WARRIOR was "not as crisp as it should have been…It didn't go as well as we wanted."[17]

In retrospect, now retired General Looney believes a number of issues contributed to the challenges VIGILANT WARRIOR posed to the USAF. These challenges stemmed from the fact that the USAF was trying to figure out how to transition away from a garrison force, an artifact of the Cold War, to one that could meet the challenges of a changing strategic environment. The USAF tried to determine "how should we really organize ourselves to present the forces, as required, to different events throughout

[13] Major General Anthony F. Przybyslawski, interview by the author, 31 January 2014.
[14] Daniel L. Byman and Matthew C. Waxman, *Confronting Iraq: U.S. Policy and the Use of Force Since the Gulf War* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2000), 55.
[15] Byman and Waxman, *Confronting Iraq*, 55-57.
[16] General J.H. Binford Peay III, "Meeting the Challenge in the Central Command" (prepared statement, Senate Armed Services Committee, Washington, DC, 14 February 1995).
[17] John A. Tirpak, "The Expeditionary Air Force Takes Shape," *Air Force Magazine*, June 1997, 30.

the world. For the longest time, we knew that we were either going to Europe or we were going to Korea and that was pretty much what we planned for – and, the next thing you know, now we could go anywhere, global."[18] Others, like retired Lieutenant General Deptula, further maintained that the way air power was being utilized in the post-Cold War era was not sustainable; "constant rotations, deployments, were kind of placed on a handful of units."[19] As Generals Looney and Deptula suggest, the largest organizational change the USAF had to make at the end of the Cold War involved organizing, training, and equipping itself to respond quickly to crises that did not fit into the Cold War playbook.

General Jumper also noted that VIGILANT WARRIOR did not go as smoothly as it should have given the familiarity DESERT STORM gave U.S. forces with operations in the Middle East.

> I went over there to become the JFACC [Joint Force Air Component Commander]. It struck me that in 1994, we were no better organized to rapidly deploy or put a TPFDD [Time Phase Force Deployment Data] together or get the right assets in place quickly then we were during all the confusion of DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM back in 1990. We went right back to old habits and we were neither rapid nor were we agile. As a result of that, I said, "we've got to be able to do better than this." At the CORONA FALL in 1995, I briefed the AEF concept to the CORONA four-stars.[20]

Much like CASF-Bravo had to learn how to operate from a relatively austere Middle East location at Incirlik AB, Turkey in the 1950s, the post-Cold War USAF had to recapture how to conduct operations with little infrastructure and basic "access to water and fuel."[21] General Jumper expounded on this comparison during a 1998 interview:

> The Air Expeditionary Force idea was born of a need to be able to react quickly. It was to get us back to the rapid part of deployment. It is

[18] General William R. Looney, interview by the author, 6 February 2014.
[19] Deptula, interview.
[20] General John P. Jumper, interview by the author, 4 April 2014. For a history on the origins of the CORONA conference, see Phil Tucker, "Brief History of the Corona (Commanders) Conferences," Air Force Historical Studies Office, September 2005, http://www.afhso.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-110815-030.pdf (accessed 8 March 2014).
[21] Tirpak, "The Expeditionary Air Force Takes Shape," 31.

> something we actually did very well, back in the mid-1950s. In the mid-1950s, [the job of 19th Air Force]...was to pick up and rapidly deploy anywhere in the world. They did so to Turkey, Lebanon, and other crises around the world. We were very much into the business of light, lean, lethal, rapid deployment. The [development of the] AEF was about getting back to that sort of discipline. It put a force on the ground that was a deterrent force that could transition to a fighting force that was small enough to be lethal but not so large that it took away a CINC's...ability to make a further decision.[22]

Armed with lessons learned from VIGILANT WARRIOR, General Jumper and his 9th Air Force staff pondered the structure and organization of what would become the AEF concept. General Looney, then commander of the 1st Fighter Wing (FW) at Langley AFB, VA, notes that the AEF concept did not trickle down to operational USAF wings until later in 1995. "It was around that timeframe that we got really serious about 'let's come up with this concept of an AEF' and how it would be organized, operated, and then actually go out and do one."[23] Within a year, General Looney commanded an AEF deployed to the Middle East. Before General Looney took command of what would become AEF II, AEF I generated to show a commitment to long-term stability in the Middle East but also served as a proof of concept for General Jumper's fledgling AEF.

AEF I: Bahrain

General Jumper explains how the concept behind AEF I "was based very simply on the fact that in the particular scenario [VIGILANT WARRIOR] that I had dealt with, using that as a baseline, we could, with 18 airplanes flying out of Bahrain, generate almost twice the consistent combat power as an aircraft carrier could."[24] AEF I called for a 12-ship of F-16C fighter aircraft from Moody AFB, GA and a 6-ship of F-16CJs from Shaw AFB, SC to deploy to Bahrain's Shaikh Isa AB from 28 October to 18 December 1995.[25] Though AEF I did place combat capability in the Middle East for approximately two months, it more closely resembled a deliberate planning effort instead of a short-notice tasking mechanism that could deploy combat air power in a matter of days. As

[22] General John P. Jumper, "Operating Abroad," *Air Force Magazine*, December 1998, 29.
[23] Looney, interview.
[24] Jumper, interview.
[25] William L. Dowdy, *Testing the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Concept: An Analysis of AEFs I-IV (1995-97) and the Way Ahead* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Airpower Research Institute, Air University, 2000), 5.

Looney recalls, "it was an initial foray into this [AEF] concept that hadn't been really fleshed out yet."[26] A number of factors led AEF I to be interpreted more as a partnership-building exercise with Bahrain, rather than a deployed deterrent intended to bring stability to the region.

One of the major reasons AEF I was more of a deliberate planning effort than a rapid response air power package was due to the fact that the United States and Bahrain took weeks to sort out the composition of AEF I. Original American planning efforts envisioned a 30-ship deployment of fighter aircraft, but were rebuffed by a Bahraini invitation that allowed for a maximum of 18 aircraft.[27] Moreover, once the F-16s arrived at Shaikh Isa AB, combat operations in support of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH were hampered due to insufficient planning efforts that failed to account for the proper consideration of "munitions storage and disposal, environmental problems, and aircraft parking requirements."[28] General Looney likens AEF I to something akin to "putting their toe in the water, but it was not taking a plunge – it was not doing the true [concept] to see if this thing really works."[29] In response to these shortfalls, what followed was a "commander's conference at 9th Air Force, led by General Jumper, that essentially, spent two or three days…fleshing out these concepts of the AEF."[30] At this conference, General Jumper further defined the AEF concept to provide explicit expectations of how the concept was envisioned to work. "From there, there was the idea that we were going to do AEF II – and this time it's going to be a full blown execution idea of a short-noticed tasking to pick up your force and you send it overseas on a long deployment, they arrive, and within 24 hours of being deployed, we were flying combat sorties. And that 24 hours included the launch from home-station – that's when the clock started."[31]

AEF I was by no means a failure; the F-16s deployed to Shaikh Isa AB executed their assigned SOUTHERN WATCH missions without incident. However, AEF I did highlight to senior USAF leaders that the expeditionary air power concepts first

[26] Looney, interview.
[27] Dowdy, *Testing the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Concept*, 5.
[28] Dowdy, *Testing the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Concept*, 5.
[29] Looney, interview.
[30] Looney, interview.
[31] Looney, interview.

articulated by General Weyland, and thought to be a mainstay in the spectrum of USAF capabilities, should not be taken for granted. Rather, the major lesson of AEF I suggests that expeditionary air power is a perishable air power competency that can atrophy if not properly nurtured and practiced. AEF II provided General Jumper's concept a more fitting test to highlight the true capabilities of the AEF concept.

AEF II: Jordan

AEF II arrived at Shaheed Mwaffag AB, Jordan on 12 April 1996 and departed on 28 June 1996.[32] It was composed of a 12-ship of F-15Cs from Langley AFB, VA, a 12-ship of F-16CGs from Moody AFB, GA, and a 6-ship of F-16CJs from Mountain Home AFB, ID.[33] In addition to the fighter aircraft, a 4-ship of KC-135 tanker aircraft was assigned to AEF II and bed down at nearby Prince Hassan AB, Jordan.[34] The gap in dates between AEF I and AEF II was driven by a lack of a Middle East air power requirement from DoD planners. DoD planners looked to the AEF as a means to cover a month-long period from 14 May 1996 to 24 June 1996 when the Persian Gulf lacked coverage from a U.S. Navy carrier strike group.[35] The consideration of when a carrier strike group would not be in the Persian Gulf started a trend within the DoD, lasting until the start of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, directing that there be continuous air power coverage in the Middle East in the form of a carrier strike group or an AEF. AEF II helped show how the AEF concept could become a persistent, sustainable model for the future of expeditionary air power.

Though it was the USAF's second foray into the AEF, AEF II bore witness to a number of firsts for modern notions of expeditionary air power. In contrast to the deliberate planning efforts that took place from the Pentagon down to each affected wing in AEF I, the wings in AEF II received just 24 hours' notice to generate aircraft and deploy. Once the fighter aircraft landed, they were uploaded with air-to-air missiles and launched on combat air patrol (CAP) sorties over southern Iraq in support of SOUTHERN WATCH – a mere five hours after the F-15s, F-16s, and KC-135s arrived in

[32] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 33.
[33] Dowdy, *Testing the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Concept*, 6.
[34] Dowdy, *Testing the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Concept*, 6.
[35] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 33.

Jordan.[36] This launch "proved that we could get the tasking, we can launch, and within 24 hours of launching we can begin to generate combat sorties."[37] Moreover, Shaheed Mwaffag AB proved to be a "perfect base" for AEF operations not due to its luxuriousness, but because it was a "bare-base" where the USAF could only use the "runway, a parking area for the airplanes, and two buildings, that was it; one for the headquarters and one for operations."[38] With limited support assets at AEF II's disposal, the operation at Shaheed Mwaffag AB gave the USAF experience in something more than just the SOUTHERN WATCH mission. AEF II had to generate its own electricity, provide its own food, create an adequate plumbing design for the 1,238 deployed Americans, and construct its own tents; "the Jordanians were great hosts but we required very little from them to operate the bare base."[39] General Looney further opines AEF II "to be the first true test of will this concept work, can you actually pick-up a bunch of air power units and launch them and then within 24 hours of launch, generate a combat sortie, and then sustain that air power. Initially, the idea was to be there 45 days, we were there for about 3.5 months."[40] AEF II also left General Looney with a number of enduring lessons learned for the USAF.

General Looney considers AEF II to be a resounding success for the USAF; "it had been a long time since the USAF had put themselves in a position where they were operating out of a bare base and providing all of their own capability…and truly being out in the field. The lesson was 'hey, we can do this' – we don't need a swimming pool, an officer's club, and hard billets to operate in this manner."[41] Another lesson from AEF II was the importance of how to build a team with members from disparate locations brought together to perform one mission. This lesson was exemplified by AEF II's "dual-base, one wing concept of operation" with the USAF's fighter operations at Shaheed Mwaffag AB and tanker operations at Prince Hassan AB.[42]

Though organizationally AEF II created synergy in operations by fusing the

[36] Dowdy, *Testing the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Concept*, 7.
[37] Looney, interview.
[38] Looney, interview.
[39] Looney, interview.
[40] Looney, interview.
[41] Looney, interview.
[42] Dowdy, *Testing the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Concept*, 7.

capabilities of each air base, logistically, this set-up created some inefficiency. For instance, the KC-135s based at Prince Hassan AB were supported and operated by personnel billeted at Shaheed Mwaffag AB. The 60-mile distance between each base complicated logistics and communications support for these personnel. Moreover, the rationale to deploy the KC-135s in the same AEF package as the fighters was done more to show it could be done and not because AEF II-assigned KC-135s were vital to the SOUTHERN WATCH missions. AEF II's KC-135 squadron commander argues "the use of existing theater tanker assets should be considered before integrating KC-135s in future AEF operations."[43] This comment suggests how the intricacies of matching specific air power capabilities into a rapidly deployable, expeditionary air power package is about more than just getting air power capabilities into theater. Rather, while the AEF must be able to project combat air power in a timely manner, it must also demonstrate the efficient use of air power. AEFs I and II "were just sort of demonstrations of what we would be able to do [with] focused attention on being able to deploy – and from that the larger [AEF] concept began to evolve."[44] The conclusion of AEF II highlighted to General Joseph W. Ralston, then commander of Air Combat Commander (ACC), that future AEFs should be "economical, practical…embrac[ing] any mix of aircraft."[45] AEF III would seek to build on this concept of efficiency.

AEF III: Qatar

The evolution of the AEF continued with the deployment of AEF III to Doha, Qatar from 2 July to 20 August 1996. AEF III was comprised of a mix of 34 F-15E, F-16C, and F-16CJ fighter aircraft in addition to three B-1 and three B-52 bomber aircraft.[46] While the mission of AEF III focused on reassuring the Middle East of the United States' commitment to the region along with the execution of SOUTHERN WATCH sorties, the terrorist attack on U.S. forces at Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia on 25 June 1996 changed the nature and focus of AEF III operations.

Although AEF III's concentration on the mission shifted away from merging

[43] Dowdy, *Testing the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Concept*, 8.
[44] Jumper, interview.
[45] Davis, *Immediate Reach, Immediate Power*, 22.
[46] Dowdy, *Testing the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Concept*, 9.

different air power capabilities, the Khobar Towers tragedy helped highlight another consideration for expeditionary air power: force protection. In response to the Khobar Towers incident, force protection measures such as earthen berms, extended fencing, and increased security patrols were initiated to decrease risk to American manpower and equipment.[47] In spite of a refocused force protection effort on the ground, the AEF concept continued to evolve in the air with AEF III. For example, AEF III introduced "global power" to the concept of expeditionary air power through the inclusion of strategic bomber assets, and laid the groundwork for access to yet another Middle Eastern country. AEF IV returned to Qatar the following year and built on the groundwork left behind from AEF III.

AEF IV: Qatar

Much of AEF IV was similar to AEF III. Brigadier General Lance Smith, commander of the 4th FW at Seymour Johnson AFB, NC, commanded AEF III and IV, the composition of aircraft for AEF IV mimicked AEF III, and many of the same personnel deployed in support of both AEFs. Deployed from 9 February to 21 June 1997, many of the lessons learned from AEF IV stemmed from how to capture the best practices from prior AEFs and how to manage logistics in support of AEF operations. One noted problem with how lessons learned were captured prior to AEF IV was the level of organization responsible for noting these lessons within the USAF. Prior to AEF IV, many of the lessons learned on AEF operations were captured and stored at the wing-level (e.g., the 1 FW for AEF II, the 4th FW for AEF III and IV).

One of AEF IV's most enduring contributions was a recommendation to CENTAF explaining how the successes from one AEF to another had to do with wings handing to the next data on what went right and what went wrong; AEF learning became a grassroots effort. Instead, the wings argued, CENTAF and the air staff should solicit lessons learned from each AEF wing, centrally manage these lessons, and then disseminate the lessons to AEF wings as well as planners across the component

[47] Dowdy, *Testing the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Concept*, 9.

commands and Joint staff.[48]

In response to the lack of a formalized way to capture lessons learned, the USAF created the AEF Battlelab at Mountain Home AFB during the summer of 1997. The AEF Battlelab was tasked with discovering ways to "prove expeditionary operations and logistics concepts; to drive revisions in service doctrine, training, requirements, and acquisitions; and to identify initiatives and innovative ideas that reduced expeditionary footprints and response time or that increased capability and effectiveness."[49] Another major lesson concerned the TPFDD used for the AEF.

According to Air Force Instruction (AFI) 10-401, the TPFDD is "is the database used to coordinate the movement of forces into their operational locations. The TPFDD includes forces from all Services and their movement requirements. These forces compete for the limited available lift to have their assets in-place first."[50] At the conclusion of AEF IV, a Joint Uniform Lessons Learned System (JULLS) report noted that too many USAF stakeholders had access to the TPFDD. The report argued, "the TPFDD is being done by far too many activities, i.e., lead unit, CENTAF, ACC functional managers…and these activities do not always correspond with each other's desires. This leads to confusion by the Logistics Plans Office as to what the valid taskings are."[51]

Interestingly, the tension noted by this JULLS report may not be that surprising based on how the AEF came into existence. Drawing from the "mission type" orders General McPeak articulated for the composite wing, the AEF began with an implicit assumption that, right or wrong, AEF commanders would be empowered to execute as they saw fit to accomplish the mission. However, in a hierarchical organization like the USAF, it is easy to see how the confusion over something like the TPFDD could take place. On the one hand, AEF IV personnel would want control over the TPFDD because they can see what their exact requirements are for the mission.

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[48] Dowdy, *Testing the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Concept*, 11-12.
[49] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 37.
[50] Air Force Instruction (AFI) 10-401, *Operations: Air Force Operations Planning and Execution*, 7 December 2006, 61.
[51] Dowdy, *Testing the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Concept*, 12.

On the other hand, operational planners at CENTAF would want control over the TPFDD because they have access to a picture of the larger operational environment and the competition for finite logistics resources. In sum, AEF IV continued the USAF's expeditionary air power journey and retaught the USAF that expeditionary air power was about more than launching jets from an airfield in a far-off land. How Airmen thought about expeditionary air power would continue to be refined based on the experiences of AEF I to IV.

Implications of AEF I – IV

At the end of 1996, General Looney published an article in *Air & Space Power Journal* that built on the immediate lessons learned from AEFs I through IV as each AEF was completed. This article was important for the USAF for two main reasons. First, it was an attempt to provide strategic messaging to the force on exactly what the AEF was, how it could best be used, and what the AEF meant for the future of the USAF. Second, the article acknowledged that the USAF was wrestling with the strategic environment that emerged after the Cold War. In this sense, the USAF sought to use the AEF as a political and military tool that could help shape the strategic environment.

The main audience for General Looney's article was the Airmen of the USAF. Like any successful organization, explaining how the AEF could be used by the USAF to achieve U.S. strategic goals was important for those that composed each AEF. If the USAF could not effectively articulate how it accomplished its missions to those inside its organization, it stood little chance of making sense to those outside the organization. General Looney identified three themes to help explain how the AEF was the best mechanism the USAF could use to discern how best it should organize for combat air power now, and in the future.

A deterrent, additive, and filler force were the three roles the AEF would fill in the future.[52] By shifting away from a garrison force model to an expeditionary one, the USAF would need to be flexible enough to execute short notice orders to deploy

[52] Brig. Gen. William R. Looney III, "The Air Expeditionary Force: Taking the Air Force into the Twenty-first Century," *Air and Space Power Journal* (Winter 1996): 6.

anywhere on the globe. This capability would become the backbone that made the AEF a capable and credible deterrent force. As an additive, or surge, force the AEF would "plus-up" forces already deployed in theater. An additive force would deploy "in time of crisis or heightened tensions…[to] significantly enhance a CINC's [COCOM's] combat capability."[53]

Lastly, as AEF II deployed to Jordan during a time when a carrier strike group was not present in the Persian Gulf, the AEF could be a filler force. This filler force concept is interesting due to the fact that it is one of the first times the USAF explicitly compared a capability it could provide to one that a carrier strike group could provide. To be clear, General Looney did not claim that an AEF and carrier strike group provided the exact same capabilities. However, "there are enough similarities (excluding support assets) to offer at least a reasonable substitute combat capability."[54] Subtly, the implication of General Looney's comparison may suggest that 1996 marked the first time the USAF considered the AEF as a force structure tool. The AEF, General Looney argued, would also contribute to how the United States built partnership capacity, as articulated by the guidance in the Clinton Administration's NSS.

In 1996, the AEF was also viewed as a way the USAF, and United States writ large, could engage with the greater strategic environment. AEFs provided a means to gain access and build partnership capacity in areas of strategic interest to the United States. In fact, the USAF argued that a "land-based deployment" might in fact be preferable to a sea-based one due to "the opportunity to develop and enhance working relationships in the host country."[55] Regional access that permitted "land-based attack aircraft," the USAF argued, would be an essential element of American power in the post-Cold War era.[56]

In the case of AEF II, Jordan emerged as a desirable host for a number of reasons. Not only was Jordan's geographical position appropriate for SOUTHERN WATCH

[53] Looney, "The Air Expeditionary Force," 6.
[54] Looney, "The Air Expeditionary Force," 6.
[55] Looney, "The Air Expeditionary Force," 6.
[56] Benjamin S. Lambeth, "Air Power, Space Power, and Geography," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22, no. 2-3 (1999): 79.

missions, but AEF deployments also provided an opportunity to re-engage with Jordan in spite of their support of Iraq in the Persian Gulf War.[57] Not coincidentally, the United States agreed to lease Jordan 16 F-16s less than a month after the re-deployment of AEF II.[58] This example suggests how the AEF became a mechanism whose purpose was spread across the spectrum of organization, capability, and articulation of air power.

In its fledgling form, the AEF was a successful test of expeditionary air power operations and ushered in a new framework of how Airmen could think of air power as "a more systematic and inclusive approach to solving the problems confronting it in the twenty-first century."[59] With the realization of this AEF success, General Ronald R. Fogelman, then CSAF, directed the United States Air Force Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) to "conduct an intensive examination of Air Expeditionary Force operations and to recommend to the Air Force opportunities and options for enabling the Air Force to fulfill the training, deployment, sustainment, and employment performances it requires to conduct air expeditionary operations."[60] A major restructuring effort was afoot that would forever change how the USAF would organize itself for combat air power.

Fielding Recommendations

The Air Force SAB study on the AEF is probably the most comprehensive analysis of how the AEF could be utilized throughout the USAF since its inception. Led by four retired USAF general officers, a number of post-doctorate scholars, scientists, and specialists, and General Jumper, the Board conducted an 8-month study on the broader implications for the service of AEF implementation throughout the USAF. Aside from the operational implications of the AEF, the Board also researched what technology investments should be made, how it would affect logistics and maintenance efforts, what it meant for force protection, security, and command and control, and what financial costs

[57] Looney, interview.
[58] Associated Press, "U.S. Agrees to Lease Jordan F-16 Fighter Jets," *New York Times*, 30 July 1996, http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/25/politics/25MCCA.html (accessed 4 March 2014).
[59] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 35.
[60] United States Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, *United States Air Force Expeditionary Forces*, Volume I: Summary SAB-TR-97-01 (Washington, DC: November 1997), vii.

the USAF would incur with AEF implementation.[61]

One deficiency of the report is the lack of strategic guidance used to formulate the Board's findings. While the report does describe the character of the strategic environment and "the need for a spectrum of capabilities, joint operations, coalitions operations, and force protection," it does not specifically draw from the NSS or National Military Strategy (NMS) to articulate how the AEF is in step with broader U.S. strategic guidance.[62] In effect, the report articulated the Board's view of the strategic environment and how the AEF fits into it. The report does, however, provide a compelling argument on the effects AEF implementation would have on the organizational makeup of the USAF.

At the termination of the SAB's AEF study, the Board came to two conclusions that had larger organizational implications to the USAF. With respect to the AEF, the board concluded

> that an AEF can [1] respond in less than half the time currently needed, with less than half the airlift, with less than one-third the people forward, to unprepared locations throughout the world [and, 2] operate about an order-of-magnitude more effectively, consistent with other commander-in-chief (CINC) requirements, and with relatively small marginal cost to the current Air Force program and in the near future.[63]

These two conclusions set the stage for a larger look at how expeditionary operations would affect future USAF organizational culture. The USAF, the Board surmised, would need to change to become a culture whose traits include rapidity, awareness, precision, security, lightness (the ability to minimize a deployed logistics footprint), and the ability to evolve in order for the AEF to be successful in the USAF.[64] Figure 1 shows the graph depiction the Board used to define and convey how the characteristics outlined above would bring about a change in USAF culture.

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[61] United States Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, *United States Air Force Expeditionary Forces*, Volume 1, A-2-A-3.
[62] United States Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, *United States Air Force Expeditionary Forces*, Volume 2: Appendices E-H SAB-TR-97-01 (Washington, DC: February 1998), E-11.
[63] United States Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, *United States Air Force Expeditionary Forces*, Volume 1, vii.
[64] United States Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, *United States Air Force Expeditionary Forces*, Volume 1, 1-9.

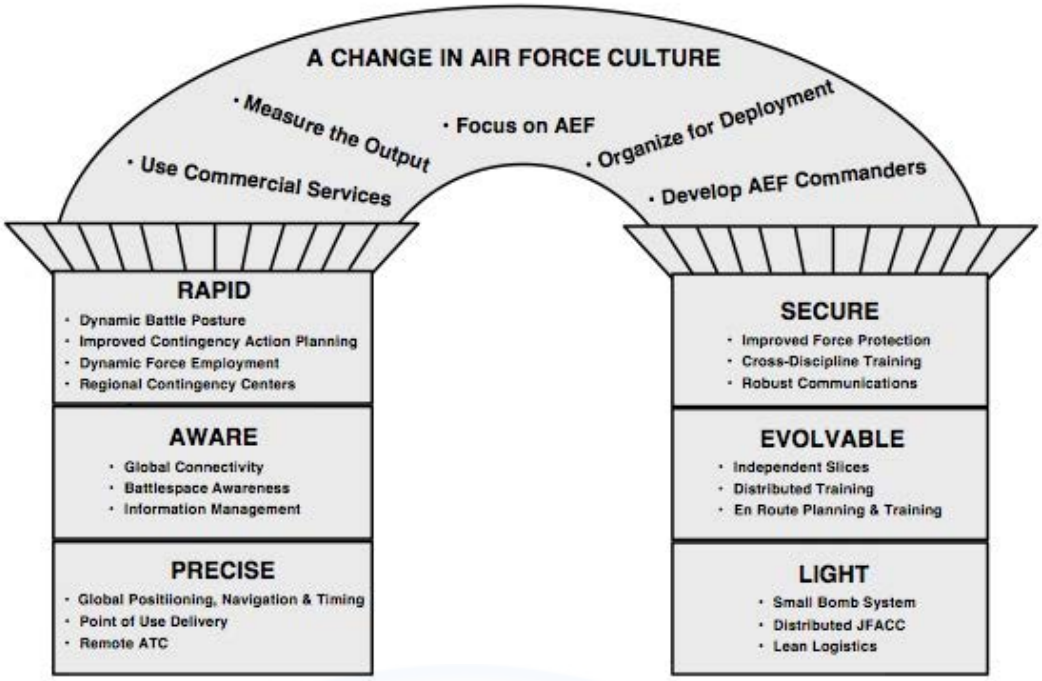

Figure 1. Characteristics for USAF Culture Change
Source: United States Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, United States Air Force Expeditionary Forces, Volume 1, 2.

These characteristics, the Board argued, would allow the AEF to flourish within the USAF, enabling it to accomplish the mission whether during a Major Theater War (MTW) or Small Scale Contingency (SSC) operation. How the Board came to project what USAF organizational culture changes were needed for AEF success was distilled from the experiences of AEFs I through IV. Although the Board's two conclusions showed how AEFs could operate more efficiently, the Board's more enduring contribution to the USAF was the articulation of how the culture of the USAF would need to adapt to work in concert with changes to its organization. Specifically, the USAF would require a culture change so that it could "develop understanding and appreciation of diverse systems if they are to mold these elements into a cohesive unit."[65] Unbeknownst to the Board, pockets of the USAF had been calling for this change for a number of years.

Lieutenant General Deptula recalls that this change in organization and culture is

[65] United States Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, *United States Air Force Expeditionary Forces*, Volume 1, 3.

exactly what he, Colonel Warden, and then Major John Piazza conceived in the USAF's Warfighting Concepts Development Office (HAF/XOXW) from 1987 to 1989.[66] General Deptula further elaborated,

> we came up with this notion, talking about organizational structure, and the fact that we organize by individual MDS' [mission design series] because it's easy, it's convenient, but that's not how we fight – then we come together in Red Flags. Well why not take this a step further and organize the notion of an Air Battle Force, originally called an Air Legion; let's put together sufficient numbers of forces under a commander that you could actually deploy a unit that could work together. And it had an air dominance and a ground dominance piece and the enablers that went along with it.[67]

Ironically, the source of resistance to this attempt at organizational and cultural change came from within the USAF. In 1990, the Air Battle Force (ABF) idea was gaining traction and was to be briefed to then CSAF General Larry Welch until Lieutenant Colonel Deptula briefed General Robert Russ, TAC commander. "He didn't like the idea at all because it was different than the way we had done business," General Deptula recalls.[68] Later, HAF/XOXW tried to reinvigorate the effort when General Michael Dugan became CSAF in 1990. After a trip to Maxwell AFB, where he was asked about details of the ABF, Lieutenant General Jimmie Adams, Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans and Operations, summoned Colonel Warden and Lieutenant Colonels Deptula and Piazza to his office at the Pentagon. A mentor of General Russ', General Adams declared, "You all are completely off-base on this [ABF]. You all need to help me drive a stake through the heart of this idea."[69] General Deptula recalls his displeasure with the decree at the time:

> I'm thinking to myself, here we are, the collapse of the Berlin Wall – we need to be thinking about new ideas. I don't care if you like the idea or not, but we shouldn't be driving stakes through the hearts of any ideas, even if they're not good ones. But this had gotten support along the way. To make a long story short, it kind of died there because Adams didn't want it to go anywhere. He talked about no redeeming value to this idea –

[66] Deptula, interview.
[67] Deptula, interview.
[68] Deptula, interview.
[69] Deptula, interview.

killed it.[70]

Deptula's remarks are not only important as a historical account of the ABF, but also to understand the tension that existed among Airmen about how to think about air power in the early 1990s. Deptula's experience as an air war planner for the Persian Gulf War had an enduring effect on how air power should be used toward policy goals. Retired USAF Major General Charles Link, a former commandant of the Air War College, reflected on the Gulf War's analytical impact on Airmen:

> The Gulf War gave some airmen a reason to think about an air campaign. An air campaign, by definition, would be the use of airpower directly to pursue strategic objectives or policy goals, as opposed to the way we were doing it, [which] was to translate the policy goal into a land war and then organize land, air, and sea capabilities around the land war. In raising our airmen, we never asked them to relate what they did directly to a policy goal, particularly on the tactical [nonnuclear] side. Sure enough, after the Gulf War, airmen began thinking about how to relate airpower directly to policy goals.[71]

Though it took over a decade for the concepts behind the Air Legion, ABF, composite wing, and AEF to take shape, the SAB study gave expeditionary air power a face that senior leadership in the USAF could recognize and relate to. This evolution also shows how difficult change can be for an air power organization that "understood tactics superbly, but very few thought in terms of a comprehensive and unitary campaign plan that could achieve strategic results."[72] The fruits of this struggle became known at a DoD Press Briefing on August 4, 1998 by CSAF General Michael Ryan and F. Whitten Peters, the Acting SECAF.

Conclusion

The termination of the Cold War and Operation DESERT STORM initiated changes in the Clinton Administration's NSS that brought forth a change in how the United States viewed the global strategic environment. Organizationally, the effects this change had on the USAF was shaped by smaller defense budgets and a requirement that

[70] Deptula, interview.
[71] Major General Charles Link quoted in Michael Barzelay and Colin Campbell, *Preparing for the Future: Strategic Planning in the U.S. Air Force* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2003), 31.
[72] Olsen, *John Warden*, 105.

called for flexible military response options that were appropriate across the spectrum of conflict. To meet the needs of the changing strategic environment, this meant the USAF had to transform from a garrison force to an expeditionary one, and then discern how to organize, train, and equip based on this change.

In response, the USAF created the AEF as a model for how to project persistent, sustainable expeditionary air power. AEFs I through IV highlighted how even though leaders in the 1990's USAF remembered the expeditionary history of the CASF, expeditionary air power is a perishable competency that requires practice and refined skillsets. The AEF, through its efficient use of air power, taught the USAF how expeditionary air power is about more than the tactical launch of aircraft in a faraway land. Rather, expeditionary air power is an exemplar of how strategic access can provide operational and strategic effects that execute the strategic aims laid out in the NMS and NSS. Organizationally, the AEF provided USAF leaders with a framework to strategically message to the force how Airmen contribute to U.S. national objectives and introduced the AEF as a force structure tool. Lastly, the AEF highlighted to USAF leaders how traits associated with expeditionary air power – speed, rapidity, flexibility, precision, and efficiency – were traits that were beneficial not just in combat air power, but also within the organizational culture of the USAF.

Chapter 3

The Makings of a Modern AEF: 1998-1999

This expeditionary aerospace force must meet the national needs, ensure it has joint effectiveness – that it presents to the CINCs that kind of capability that they require – and leverages the Air Force strengths.

General Michael E. Ryan
16th Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force

The AEF "rollout" brief Ryan and Peters gave as the summer of 1998 concluded proved to be a turning point in the USAF's creation of a modern AEF. The brief signaled the beginnings of a generalized belief that combat air power is about more than airborne capabilities; indeed, combat air power is the culmination of the man, the machine, and the support network established to enable the most efficient use of air power. The complex interactions between these three components helped illuminate how expeditionary air power was evolving into something more than what was represented in AEFs I through IV.

This evolution brought to the fore the notion that the "AEF" meant something different depending upon who in the USAF was defining it. Was the AEF a 1990s version of the CASF? Was the AEF strictly a deployable air power package like the one commanded by General Looney in AEF II? Alternatively, was the AEF a concept, a "state of mind" born from innovative Airmen laboring in the USAF's Warfighting Concepts Development Office? On the other hand, perhaps the AEF was nothing more than an air power equivalent of a carrier strike group. In fact, the AEF in 1998 was many things: a deployable air power package, a concept, and a force presentation and force-sizing tool, albeit not thoroughly articulated or defined. This tension helped mature the AEF into a conceptual framework known as the Expeditionary Aerospace Force (EAF).

The Little Red Book

The roots of Ryan and Peters' AEF rollout brief predated Ryan's appointment as CSAF. While AEF seeds were planted with AEFs I through IV and also sown with the SAB study on the AEF, another effort was happening in parallel with the SAB study that

would influence the AEF's place in the USAF. During General Ronald Fogleman's shortened tenure as CSAF from 1994 to 1997, he tasked the Air Force Doctrine Center at Maxwell AFB in 1997 to incorporate the AEF concept into official USAF doctrine.[1] What became Air Force Doctrine Document 2 (AFDD 2), "Organization and Employment of Aerospace Power," published during Ryan's CSAF tenure on 28 September 1998, was known as "the Little Red Book" one year prior.[2]

The unsanctioned comparison of Fogleman's undertaking to Mao Tse-Tung's revolutionary manual suggests that a struggle existed between status quo USAF culture and the "insurgent" culture epitomized by the implementation of the AEF concept. Indeed, this was the case. The crux of the resistance to Fogleman's Little Red Book, the first draft known as "A Presentation of USAF Forces," stemmed from objections voiced by the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) and Air Mobility Command (AMC). Jumper maintains that the "asset managers [AFPC]" resisted changes to how USAF personnel would deploy under the AEF concept pushed by Fogleman; "there were just some traditional stovepipe type issues when we tried to organize a PERSCO [Personnel Support for Contingency Operations] that would go in an agile manner to go support the personnel requirements in a deployed configuration."[3] AMC was resistant to how AEF changes would affect an already established capability to deploy contingency response forces, and, "AMC argued that they already had that capability. Well, they had some of that capability but they didn't have it all and it certainly wasn't very agile, so we had some issues there."[4] Another AMC concern involved command and control of airlift asset management within the theater of operations.[5]

AMC's apprehension regarding how AEF implementation across the entire USAF would affect mobility forces was not easily dismissed. How aerial refueling tankers were used during AEF II is a good example of the tension between Air Combat Command (ACC) and AMC regarding the AEF. On the one hand, ACC viewed AEF II's tankers as part of the flexibility required for successful expeditionary operations. On the other

[1] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 39.
[2] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 39.
[3] Jumper, interview.
[4] Jumper, interview.
[5] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 39.

hand, AMC viewed aerial refueling as a finite resource within its mobility forces that should be centrally managed by U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM). This tension arose due to an unsettled disposition of the command relationships that would govern AEFs. The working framework of AEFs I through IV delegated command authority of each AEF to the geographic CINC.[6] If geographic CINCs had complete command authority over mobility forces in theater, TRANSCOM and AMC would effectively lose functional command over mobility forces; this implication was unacceptable to AMC.[7] A year in the making, AMC's objections to Fogleman's Little Red Book were debated amongst the MAJCOM staffs and Air Staff and finally resolved in AFDD 2:

> Because of the global nature of air mobility, special attention must be given to balance these resources with national requirements and priorities. At the same time, the air mobility systems performing intratheater and intertheater missions must function in close coordination with one another to provide seamless mobility to the supported combatant commander with responsive and integrated aerial movement. Command relationships must allow an interlocking arrangement to manage intratheater and intertheater air mobility operations. Normally, intratheater air mobility forces will be attached to the JFC [Joint Force Commander] with OPCON [operational control] or TACON [tactical control] delegated to the COMAFFOR [Commander, Air Force Forces]/JFACC.[8]

Interestingly, the tension regarding which COCOM commands air mobility forces in theater persists as a germane and unresolved topic in modern-day Joint doctrine. Joint Publication 3-17, *Air Mobility Operations*, sums it up best:

> Effective and efficient employment of air mobility forces requires a clear understanding of the associated command relationships and control processes affecting the application of these forces. Because they may operate simultaneously across three environments: intertheater, intratheater, and within a JTF's [Joint Task Force] JOA [Joint Operations Area], C2 [command and control] of air mobility forces can be a particularly complex task. Normally, USTRANSCOM forces remain under OPCON of CDRUSTRANSCOM [Commander, USTRANSCOM]

[6] In Joint doctrine, COCOM is the modern-day term for CINC.
[7] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 39-42.
[8] Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2, *Organization and Employment of Aerospace Power*, 28 September 1998, 57-58.

when supporting missions in theater.[9]

Instead of letting debates between ACC, AMC, AFPC, and the Air Staff stifle Fogleman's vision for the AEF, these constructive disagreements helped foster a discourse about how the USAF would deal with the primary existential threat to its organization: "a world in which we're all going to have less resources."[10] After Fogleman stepped down as CSAF in 1997, Ryan made clear the transformation of the AEF into the EAF would be his first priority as CSAF.

Building an Expeditionary Aerospace Force

Ryan's speech to the Air Force Association's Air Warfare Symposium in Orlando, FL on 27 February 1998 was the first indication that the mark he would leave on the USAF as CSAF would be through the EAF. The vision laid out in Ryan's speech had four major components. First, Ryan argued how the USAF was cognizant that a shift had occurred in the global strategic environment and the USAF needed to adapt to those changes. Ryan opined, "We have been stuck in a cold war basing paradigm that had, as its basis, that if we need to fight a theater war we would deploy the forces and support, win the conflict, and return victorious… But the security demands of the world we live in are not cooperating with the paradigm and will not in the foreseeable future."[11]

Second, Ryan recognized political and resource constraints that presented the USAF with a challenge to do more with less. Ryan articulated, "The Air Force has faced many challenges during the past eight year period of downsizing the force…Despite an active duty force which has decreased 36 percent since the end of the cold war, our deployments have increased fourfold."[12]

Third, Ryan laid out what the EAF meant to the USAF and how it should be defined:

Our Air Force is naturally suited for the expeditionary role. As John

[9] Joint Publication 3-17, *Air Mobility Operations*, 30 September 2013, II-1-II-2.
[10] General Ronald Fogleman quoted in John A. Tirpak, "First Force," *Air Force Magazine*, September 1996, 40.
[11] General Michael E. Ryan, chief of staff, U.S. Air Force (address, Air Force Association Air Warfare Symposium, Orlando, FL, 27 February 1998).
[12] Ryan, address, 27 February 1998.

> Jumper showed [as 9th Air Force Commander and JFACC], we have a strong expeditionary heritage…It means having a force that is fully capable of utilizing the unique aspects of air and space power – range, speed, flexibility, and precision to their fullest capability. Not where we live, but where we are needed. Not when we can, but when we must [emphases in original].[13]

Lastly, and most important, Ryan introduced to the USAF how a change in organizational culture served the strategic direction laid out in the NSS. In Ryan's eyes, transforming the USAF into an EAF was not change for change's sake; rather it represented a way to articulate how the USAF understood the changing character of the strategic environment and its implications for the future of the USAF. Ryan concluded,

> It means having a force which is light, lean, and lethal…Most importantly, being expeditionary means having a force which is mentally prepared, procedurally sound, technologically advanced, appropriately organized, adequately supported and competently led…As we move into the 21st century it will take leadership and cooperation at all levels of government and industry to mold our air force for the national security demands of the future…I challenge each of you in this room to help us move toward that vision. A unified expeditionary aerospace power.[14]

Other forces were in play that also drove the USAF to reconsider how it was organized for combat air power. Jumper recalled how the AEF evolved into the larger EAF concept Ryan laid out at the Air Warfare Symposium:

> The larger concept began to evolve – especially Mike Ryan wanted to take that idea [of the AEF] and make it sort of the baseline for the Air Force. My discussions with him at the time were about the fact that the Navy based their whole presence strategy on the existence of 11 or 12 carrier battle groups. We really had no substantive way to defend our force structure. We asserted that we needed 20 fighter wings but we do a whole lot more than fighters in the Air Force. It was not a good baseline, not very convincing and we were always vulnerable to arguments from the Congress about flying hours and the Navy never got their flying hours cut, and we always did because we couldn't defend it very well.[15]

Jumper was also quick to point out that this discussion was not merely an inter-service budget battle between the USAF and the U.S. Navy with hurt feelings over flying

[13] Ryan, address, 27 February 1998.
[14] Ryan, address, 27 February 1998.
[15] Jumper, interview.

hour cuts. The USAF did not have a well-reasoned argument that justified its force structure and failed to identify organizational changes needed to maintain its strategic utility. Jumper continued, "So the AEF construct became a way to talk about, not only base-lining the force structure, but at the time we were talking about how to do this for the whole Air Force. This is where Mike Ryan's support was so helpful." Ryan further elaborated in a 2011 interview, "There was no rhythm to how we were deploying. I was terribly interested in getting our Air Force into a rhythm, a flow. We would also define what our Air Force was with ten AEFs. I wanted to make the whole Air Force an AEF."[16]

Another issue that pushed Ryan to explore EAF implementation across the USAF was the lasting impact that numerous deployments were having on Airmen and their families. In 1998, the USAF identified downward retention trends in two critical demographic groups that make up the majority of experience in the USAF: pilots and second-term enlisted Airmen. USAF leaders attributed "increased operations tempo [as] the culprit that many departing airmen cite as the push that shoved them out the door."[17] Deptula recalled his experience with deployment stresses on the USAF:

> Right after we started the no-fly zone excursions, you ended up with a lot of similar units, in particular Langley and Eglin, rotating all the time. I can remember in '92 when I went to [the 33rd Fighter Wing at] Eglin, there were some folks that had been on four rotations already; and then Langley was the same way. They'd alternate C-models over to the desert between Langley and Eglin and so, it was pretty obvious, hey…how come Eglin and Langley were the ones getting these rotations all the time. What about Elmendorf? What about Kadena? What about Mountain Home? It took a while to sink in that we need to spread this across the entire Air Force…Then [the AEF] grew into…a way to present forces.[18]

Deptula's characterization of how the no-fly zones executed during Operations NORTHERN and SOUTHERN WATCH affected retention is not anecdotal. Figure 2 shows how the USAF had a difficult time retaining E-4 and E-5 second-term Airmen assigned to F-15 and F-16 airframes in the mid-to-late 1990s.

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[16] General Michael E. Ryan quoted in Adam R.M. Smith, "Shaping an Air Force: A Chief's Perspective" (master's thesis, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, 2011), 29-30.
[17] Peter Grier, "The Retention Problem Spreads," *Air Force Magazine*, October 1998, 61.
[18] Deptula, interview.

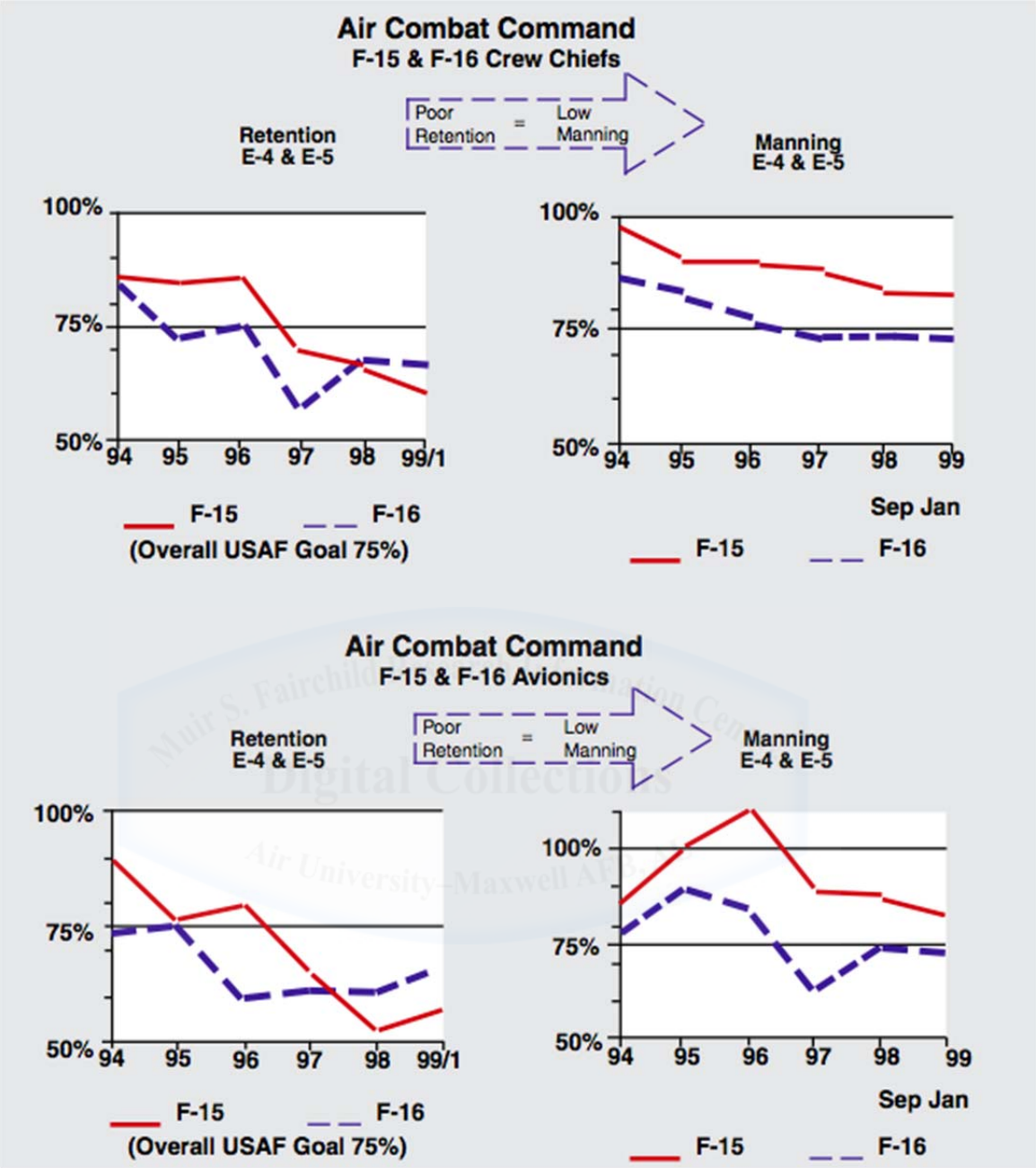

Figure 2. F-15 and F-16 E-4/5 Retention Trends (1994-1999)
Source: Otto Kreisher, "Hawley's Warning," Air Force Magazine, July 1999, 55.

The confluence of events that resulted in the USAF's inability to articulate its strategic importance, understand its own force structure, and cope with its growing retention problem led Ryan to focus on the EAF as a substantial solution to its organizational issues. As one political appointee assessed, "It's hard to find fault with Ryan's emphasis [on] EAF because the Air Force is going to fall apart if he doesn't find a different way to

manage these crises that arrive on such short notice."[19]

Unbeknownst to the Air Warfare Symposium crowd, EAF implementation was the major issue discussed at the CORONA SOUTH conference, also in Orlando, FL, that was taking place in parallel with the Symposium. Ryan's visionary introductory speech on the EAF was not lacking in planning details. The CORONA SOUTH conference concluded with nine tasks handed out to the Air and MAJCOM staffs to give concrete form to the promises laid out in Ryan's speech. The first four tasks included (1) developing a strategy, (2) educating, (3) training, and (4) equipping an EAF.[20] The remaining five tasks were to (5) enhance support for AEFs and operationalize command and control initiatives, (6) develop AEF deployment concepts of operations (CONOPs), (7) develop agile combat support CONOPs for AEFs, (8) develop AEF contingency employment CONOPs, and (9) develop CONOPs for AEF integration into operational plans.[21] As Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Programs (AF/XP), Lieutenant General Lawrence Farrell, Jr. was tasked with oversight of the process of EAF implementation.

In the months between the Air Warfare Symposium and Ryan's official DoD Press Briefing on 4 August 1998, Farrell spent his time vetting an EAF implementation plan with the Air Staff, MAJCOM staffs, and other USAF stakeholders. Farrell and others from AF/XP, including then Brigadier Generals Charles Wald and Joseph Wehrle, Jr., discovered through the research of an integrated process team (IPT) that the ad hoc deployment scheduling the USAF employed was detrimental to expeditionary air power operations; the USAF could not "continue to do things like this on a consistent basis without driving the force into the ground."[22]

Farrell also discovered that the high operations tempo of deployed Airmen had effects throughout the USAF. Farrell charged, "We expected the optempo of the people we were deploying to be high, what we didn't realize was that we were also increasing

[19] Barzelay and Campbell, *Preparing for the Future*, 83.
[20] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 43-44.
[21] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 44.
[22] Bruce D. Callander, "The New Expeditionary Force," *Air Force Magazine*, September 1998, 55.

the optempo of the bases we left behind in the States."[23] Although the deployment model for the EAF needed work, other characteristics of the EAF had already begun to take hold in the USAF.

Farrell's staff discovered some of the traits Ryan ascribed to the EAF were already pervasive in other parts of the USAF even though the concept had yet to be implemented. Ryan and Peters' "Air Force Posture Statement 1998," presented to Congress early that year, provided evidence that the USAF was already integrating expeditionary air power concepts into the force by "emphasizing the fundamentals of expeditionary warfare in our exercises and training."[24] Later, in September 1998, the USAF conducted Expeditionary Forces Experiment 98 (EFX 98) to use "live-fly exercises, modeling and simulation, and advanced technology" to explore how AEF operations affect command and control operations.[25] This exercise focused on methods commanders could use "to perform distributed operations from multiple locations" and laid the operational groundwork for the ascendancy of modern-day air operations centers (AOC).[26] EFX 98 also suggested that operational-level exercises were used to help AF/XP develop CONOPs for how the EAF framework would integrate into operations for theater CINCs. Strategic concepts to support EAF implementation had also been underway for some time in the USAF.

Secretary Donald Rice's white paper, "The Air Force and U.S. National Security: Global Reach-Global Power" is likely the document that had the most strategic effect on the development of the EAF. Published in the summer of 1990, Rice's concise 15-page paper articulates strategic characteristics deemed necessary for the future of the USAF. The 1997 NMS and "Joint Vision 2010" are two of the most prominent strategy documents Farrell and his AF/XP staff used to ensure EAF implementation fit the strategic guidance laid out by the NCA.[27] Ironically, the similarity between Rice's white paper, the 1997 NMS, and "Joint Vision 2010" minimized the effort required to make the

[23] Lieutenant General Lawrence Farrell, Jr. quoted in Bruce D. Callander, "The New Expeditionary Force," *Air Force Magazine*, September 1998, 55.
[24] Air Force Posture Statement, 1998, 12, http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015078452060;view=1up;seq=12 (accessed 15 March 2014).
[25] Air Force Posture Statement, 1998, 36, http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015078452060;view=1up;seq=12 (accessed 15 March 2014).
[26] Michael W. Kometer, *Command in Air War: Centralized versus Decentralized Control of Combat Airpower* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2007), 96.
[27] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 46.

EAF "fit" into the strategy documents of the late 1990s. Strategic concepts such as power projection, flexibility, building partnership capacity, complementary joint applications, and the dominant application of force as a force multiplier are detailed in the three strategy documents.[28]

On the surface, these similarities can be viewed in one of two ways: first, Rice's characterizations were strategically predictive or, second, the strategy documents of the late 1990s were mired in the past. A third view is potentially the most accurate. The similarity in these documents may suggest that a strategic coherence often articulated but rarely found in the American strategic experience may have been present in the 1990s. Was it not, Farrell and his AF/XP staff would have had a much harder time articulating what the EAF did instead of determining how it should be composed.

Assumptions on the Composition of the Expeditionary Aerospace Force

How the EAF was designed and composed by the Air Staff, the EAF IPT, and the MAJCOM leads is an important topic that requires special attention. Understanding how many AEFs should make up the force structure for the entire USAF under the EAF construct is vital, as the topic relates directly to the larger concepts put forth in the NSS and NMS. The background on how this discussion occurred in 1998 is the benchmark for when the AEF evolved from a geographic CINC's power projection tool to a force-sizing mechanism for the entire USAF. During his tenure, from 1998 to 2000, as Commander, Combined Task Force (CTF) for Operation NORTHERN WATCH and, later, Director for EAF Implementation, Deptula argued how the USAF should use the NSS to discern the number of air power assets the USAF requires to execute the NSS' strategic end-state.[29] This analysis starts with two assumptions about how the United States employs its military IOP:

> Fundamentally, regardless of administration, there are two tenets of our national security strategy that have maintained consistency. One is that we will engage around the world during peacetime to shape the environment to encourage peace and stability. The second fundamental

[28] Donald B. Rice, *The Air Force and U.S. National Security: Global Reach-Global Power*, USAF White Paper (Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force, June 1990), 6-15.
[29] Deptula, interview.

> tenet is if we have to fight, we'll do so in an expeditionary fashion away from the continental United States and U.S. territories.[30]

These two tenets drive USAF strategists to ponder what type of force structure is required to realize these tenets. Deptula continued:

> From an Air Force perspective, in order to engage around the world simultaneously in order to support that first tenet of the national security strategy, we need sufficient number of forces to maintain a rotational base to be engaged around the world so that we don't drive our people into the dirt – so that we don't exhaust the force…So, after a long study…the number of forces to be able to do that are ten aerospace expeditionary forces.[31]

This statement brings into question how many AEFs are required to fight a war and, with it, another assumption that drives the NSS. Often a hot-button issue for policymakers, military professionals, and strategists, how many simultaneous major theater wars (MTWs), or major regional contingencies (MRCs), the United States should plan on fighting is also a key driver of force structure. Though this issue percolated prior to the release of the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), a U.S. statute defines this planning factor.[32] Title 10 U.S. Code § 691 states, "The end strengths specified in subsection (b) are the minimum strengths necessary to enable the armed forces to fulfill a national defense strategy calling for the United States to be able to successfully conduct two nearly simultaneous major regional contingencies."[33] Then Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta appeared to walk back some of the MTW controversy caused by the 2010 QDR during a speech in 2012: "Our strategy review concluded that the United States must have the capability to fight several conflicts at the same time."[34] Deptula argued that a two MTW strategy is a

> fundamental force-sizing tenet if you want to be able to have a national security strategy that subscribes to the first tenet as well as the second. You really need to be able to conduct two MTWs…but you can't have a declaratory policy of just one. Because if you just do one, then what you

[30] Deptula, interview.
[31] Deptula, interview.
[32] Colin Clark, "Two War Strategy Dead: Cartwright" *DoD Buzz*, 15 July 2009, http://www.dodbuzz.com/2009/07/15/two-war-strategy-dead-cartwright/ (accessed 15 March 2014).
[33] *Title 10 U.S. Code, sec. 691* (2014), http://uscode.house.gov/ (accessed 15 March 2014).
[34] Leon E. Panetta, "Defense Strategic Guidance" (prepared statement, Department of Defense, Washington, DC, 5 January 2012).

do is encourage – it's destabilizing and you encourage adventurism.[35]

Given a strategic planning factor that takes into account a U.S. capability to fight two nearly simultaneous MTWs, the question remains regarding how many AEFs are required for an MTW. Deptula answered: "If you go back over our history, what you find out is we nominally employ about five AEFs worth of force structure per MTW. So the ten [AEFs] fits both the engage around the world piece as well as the major warfighting piece."[36] Force structure for ten AEFs, therefore, was the amount the USAF settled on to articulate its requirements. An Air Staff brief presented to AF/XP in 1998 highlighted additional risk from SSCs; historically, the USAF deployed 210 aircraft annually to support these types of operations.[37] Two "on-call" AEFs would minimize this risk presented from SSCs. Further analysis details the particulars of an individual AEF.

Within each AEF, it is possible to break down AEF capabilities into mission areas, specific capabilities, and even individual aircraft. For instance, air superiority, a fundamental USAF mission area, must be contained within each AEF. Figure 3 provides a visual depiction of F-22 force-sizing options as an example to show how force structure for an individual aircraft can be determined through proper application of the strategic assumptions germane to the EAF concept. This 2001 example is based on the premise

[35] Deptula, interview.
[36] Deptula, interview.
[37] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 46.

F-22 Force Sizing Options

	Numbers of F-22s					
Squadrons Per AEF	**0.4**	**0.6**	**0.9**	**1.4**	**2.0**	**2.5**
Combat Coded (CC)	95	150	214	339	480	600
Training (TF) (25% of CC)	24	38	53	85	120	150
Test (CB) (5% of CC+TF)	6	9	13	21	30	38
Backup Inventory (BAI) (10% of CC+TF+CB)	12	20	28	44	63	79
Attrition Reserve (AR) (10% of CC+TF+CB+BAI)	14	22	31	49	69	87
Total Aircraft Inventory (TAI)	**150**	**238**	**339**	**538**	**762**	**953**

- **Total buy of 150 would make F-22 another LD/HD problem, procuring less than 2 wings of aircraft**
- **Current buy of 339 provides less than 1 squadron per AEF**
- **339 combat-coded F-22s would provide 1.4 squadrons per AEF**
- **2 squadrons per AEF requires total buy of 762**
- **2.5 squadrons per AEF could be achieved with combination buy of basic F-22s and an enhanced strike version**

Pre-decisional Working Papers

Figure 3. F-22 Force Sizing Options
Source: Lieutenant General David Deptula, pre-decisional working papers, 2 May 2001, personal library of David Deptula.

that the F-22 was the air superiority replacement for the aging F-15C and thus responsible for air superiority in each AEF. Deptula opined that the USAF needs

> a minimum of one squadron of F-22s…per each AEF. We have ten AEFs. Ten times 24 [aircraft per squadron] is 240. You have…training…backup aircraft inventory…attrition reserve…test – do the numbers, you come up with 381. Now I've gone from national security strategy all the way down to force structure for a particular MDS [mission design series]. You can make that argument for every aircraft type. It's not just an arbitrary number...if you don't want to do engagement around the world simultaneously to shape the environment – great, tell me what you want to do and I'll give you a force-sizing model that is able to do that.[38]

The strategic assumptions behind the EAF concept are necessary to understand the environment Ryan and the Air Staff faced when formulating its implementation plan.

[38] Deptula, interview.

Another key component requiring resolution for successful EAF implementation was how the concept would affect the USAF's most vital resource: its people. Without a plan that helped alleviate the perceptions of the negative effects of the USAF's high operations tempo on its Airmen, organizational change that embraced the EAF could prove to be elusive.

Modeling the Expeditionary Aerospace Force for Airmen

Though aircraft inventory comprises a large part of force structure, another critical constitutive element of force structure is the Airmen of the USAF. In many respects, the easiest part of EAF construction is figuring out how many of a certain type of aircraft is needed at a given place and time to execute a CINC-directed operational plan. In 1997, the operations tempo of the USAF made the life of an Airman anything but stable. The stability that Airmen can depend on with a scheduling tool like an AEF is where the true value of the EAF concept lies.[39]

In fact, the logic behind how important stability is for Airmen has more to do with organizational goals for the USAF instead of individual desires for the Airman. A widespread, enduring belief amongst Air Staff personnel holds that predictability increases quality of life, which, in turn, leads to better retention metrics; better retention metrics translate into higher experience levels, which foster elevated readiness indicators.[40] With this assumption in mind, AF/XP presented two options regarding how many days Airmen assigned to an AEF would be vulnerable to deploy.

In April 1998, AF/XP presented Ryan with a ten AEF model that contained two different tour lengths for an AEF – 90 days for some AEFs, 120 days for others.[41] The lack of uniformity in duration from one AEF to another was a result of a NORTHERN and SOUTHERN WATCH planning factor that required a 120-day and a 90-day AEF, respectively.[42] In retrospect, this proposition is paradoxical because it violated guidance laid out by Ryan during his Air Warfare Symposium speech less than two months prior.

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[39] Przybyslawski, interview.
[40] Lieutenant General David Deptula, pre-decisional working papers, 22 April 2001, personal library of David Deptula.
[41] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 46.
[42] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 46.

In it, Ryan expressed an intent to meld all arms of the USAF "into a unified whole" to create standardization across the force in order to minimize perceptions that one MAJCOM, MDS, wing, and base was doing more than others; the EAF would foster a model for teaming.[43]

The 90 and 120-day AEF prototype also seemed to ignore Ryan's intent for the EAF to be a model applicable across the spectrum of operations that would further the USAF's "strong expeditionary heritage," not merely the operational status quo in NORTHERN and SOUTHERN WATCH.[44] Once presented with AF/XP's AEF prototype, Ryan disapproved the plan for two reasons, all stemming from how he believed the 90 and 120-day splits would be perceived across the USAF. First, he believed that the split would create the perception of "first-string and second-string teams" and an unfair division of labor.[45] Second, he believed that it ran counter to his belief that the EAF would increase the quality of life for Airmen, particularly two-parent military families assigned to different AEFs.[46] Cognizant of an already high operations tempo, Ryan settled on 90 days as the duration for an AEF.

How many days military members deploy when ordered to respond to contingency operations has been a contentious topic among policy makers since the United States transitioned to an all-volunteer force. For the USAF, a number of reasons went into settling on 90 days as the template for the duration of AEFs. Since the EAF was a total force initiative that required buy-in from the active-duty, USAF Reserve (USAFR), and Air National Guard (ANG), 90 day AEFs required concurrence from all three components. Secretary Peters also believed that a total force initiative should take into account feedback from employers that employ USAFR and ANG citizen Airmen: "When we designed AEF[s] we said the rotation period was 90 days…we did that in part because we were told by employers, primarily the airlines, but many other employers as well, that to lose somebody for 90 days every 19 months was a sustainable thing that the employers

[43] Ryan, address, 27 February 1998.
[44] Ryan, address, 27 February 1998.
[45] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 48.
[46] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 48.

could live with."[47]

AEF duration can also be too short for citizen Airmen. For example, credit for early retirements in the USAFR is earned in 90-day chunks; anything short of that result in non-credit.[48] The duration of AEFs also has implications for the capabilities of the force that is deployed. Since the USAF requires unique capabilities such as airspace, weapons ranges, and threat training systems to maintain proficiency, AEF capabilities often atrophy, depending on the type of deployment, the longer they are deployed.

Then commander of the 57th Wing at Nellis AFB, NV and, later, CSAF, General T. Michael Moseley testified before Congress in 1997 that SSCs like NORTHERN and SOUTHERN WATCH "are not enhancing basic aviator combat skills."[49] Unlike some of the other services that have the capacity to train while deployed, Deptula argued it is often impossible to "maintain your [training and proficiency] requirements while you're on some of these deployments simply because the nature of the job at the time…That's why we shouldn't be deployed for six months, that's why the rotation should be…[a] maximum of 90 days."[50] For Airmen and their families, knowing how long they should expect to be deployed is but one part of the equation, knowing how often is the other.[51]

As Ryan and his AF/XP staff continued the debate in April 1998 on how many AEFs should be constructed and how long they should be vulnerable to deploy, dwell time quickly entered the conversation. AFPD 10-4 defines "deploy-to-dwell" as the "time in theater to support CCDR requirement versus total time back from deployment. Dwell includes training deployments to combat training centers."[52] Often measured as a ratio of time deployed versus time in garrison (e.g., 1:3), dwell ratios have significant effects on military retention. Peters conveyed his experience with dwell: "When I was

[47] Minutes of the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, 4 June 2013, 68, http://afcommission.whs.mil/index.php/activities/june-04-2013 (accessed 16 March 2014).
[48] Minutes of the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, 4 June 2013, 71, http://afcommission.whs.mil/index.php/activities/june-04-2013 (accessed 16 March 2014).
[49] General T. Michael Moseley quoted in Peter Grier, "Readiness at the Edge," *Air Force Magazine*, June 1997, BF.
[50] Deptula, interview.
[51] This requirement became the driver for time. What would change over the years, would be the development of training ranges in forward areas that would allow aircrews to stay proficient across a range of mission areas.
[52] AFPD 10-4, *Operations Planning: Air & Space Expeditionary Force (AEF)*, 12.

the Secretary…people who were dwelling 1:2 would be leaving the service because there was an active and robust economy and they wouldn't stick around."[53] Ryan's decision on AEF dwell was also driven by a desire to achieve the highest quality of life for Airmen. Ryan settled on a 1:4 AEF dwell ratio to ensure Airmen were not away from home-station for more than 120 days per year, to afford each AEF the ability to not be deployed on a consistent basis during Thanksgiving and Christmas, and so Airmen could use the predictability of the AEF schedule to plan major life events.[54] With a defined EAF concept composed of 10 AEFs deployed for 90-day increments on a 1:4 dwell/15-month cycle, Ryan possessed a plan vetted through the Air Staff and MAJCOMs. By the summer of 1998, Ryan's EAF became a viable plan that was almost ready for execution.[55]

The Politics of Expeditionary Aerospace Force Release

With all USAF stakeholders behind Ryan's EAF plan, the last remaining hurdle for EAF implementation to occur was for Ryan to articulate why the EAF should be accepted by Secretary of Defense William Cohen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Army General Hugh Shelton and his Joint Staff, and the geographic and functional CINCs. When Ryan briefed these stakeholders in July 1998, their reception of the EAF was so positive that Ryan considered pushing up an original 1 October 1998 implementation date.[56] Ryan had another reason to implement the EAF sooner. After reflecting on the how the careers of two of his three predecessors were shortened as CSAF, Ryan's strong belief in the EAF pushed him to not let EAF implementation hang in the balance on the off-chance he was not appointed to a second term.[57] For Ryan, 4 August 1998 could not come soon enough.

Rollout

[53] Minutes of the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, 4 June 2013, 68, http://afcommission.whs.mil/index.php/activities/june-04-2013 (accessed 16 March 2014).
[54] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 49-50.
[55] Ryan's EAF plan was implemented across the USAF in different phases. ACC wings in the continental U.S. were ready for the EAF plan by the end of the summer of 1998 while AMC and overseas ACC wings were ready by the end of the fall of 1998.
[56] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 56.
[57] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 56.

The press briefing given by Ryan and Peters on 4 August presented the robust EAF implementation plan the Air Staff had been working on since Ryan's Air Warfare Symposium speech earlier that winter. Peters led off the brief and focused on capability and acknowledgment of the USAF's high operations tempo. He argued the EAF, as a total force construct, could handle contingency operations around the world and would be tailored to support warfighting CINCs through efficiencies in the framework of the EAF.[58] In response to the top complaint by Airmen at the time that "are deploying…too often on too little notice and are working…too hard when they're at home filling in for others who have deployed," Peters put forth that relief would come through the EAF.[59] Ryan finished the brief with a slideshow to explain the substantive portions of the EAF.

Ryan began the brief by intimating how a changing strategic environment has led the USAF to conclude that the 21st century will require an expeditionary approach to air power. Figure 4 is the slide Ryan used to detail the metamorphosis in U.S. operations since the since the end of the Cold War and how the USAF witnessed a four-fold increase in operations tempo since DESERT STORM. Ryan used this strategic context as a

[58] F. Whitten Peters, "Air Expeditionary Forces" (prepared statement, Department of Defense, Washington, DC, 4 August 1998).
[59] Peters, "Air Expeditionary Forces."

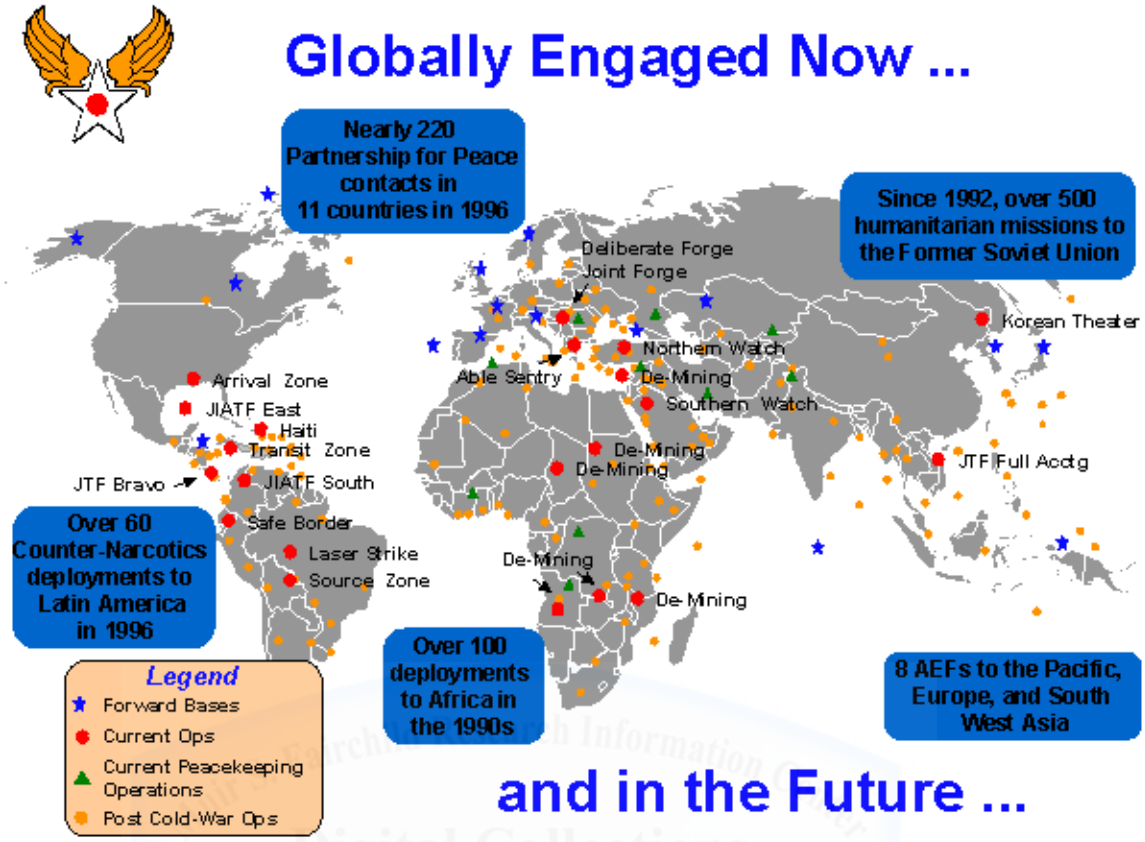

Figure 4. Operations Tempo in the 1990s
Source: General Michael E. Ryan, Briefing, Pentagon, Subject: Expeditionary Aerospace Force: A Better Use of Aerospace Power for the 21st Century, 4 August 1998, http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/usaf/unit/docs/eafpa4_0/sld003.htm (accessed 13 November 2013).

springboard into a discussion that provided more detail on what the EAF is, and is not, than what he offered earlier in the year at the Air Warfare Symposium. Ryan's description of the EAF was in line with his description at the Air Warfare Symposium but his description of what the EAF is not suggests Ryan was cognizant not only of the global strategic environment, but also the American political one as well. Ryan was quick to point out in his brief that the EAF was not a plan for the USAF to move towards a tiered readiness model.[60] A popular topic in Congress at the time,

> Tiered readiness is a proposed method for reducing the near-term cost of operating U.S. military forces: certain forces could be categorized in terms of how early they arrive in a theater in preparation for combat operations.

[60] Ryan, "Air Expeditionary Forces."

> Earlier arriving forces would maintain higher readiness levels than later-arriving forces. Cost-savings could accrue because not all forces would be maintained at their highest states of readiness.[61]

Ryan's clear declaration that the EAF should not be viewed or described as a tiered readiness action probably came in response to growing congressional voices who argued that the USAF move 80 percent of its force structure into the USAFR and mothball at least half of its bomber force.[62] Nor was the EAF, Ryan explained, a substitute for the upcoming base realignment and closure (BRAC) rounds brought forth in an April 1998 DoD report. Here, Ryan showed that he understood the political forces at work inside the Beltway, but presented the EAF as a holistic approach to meet the nation's air power demands. Another development occurred in this brief that was of utmost importance for geographic CINCs.

Speaking to the geographic CINCs, Ryan offered assurances that the EAF did not put geographic CINC operational plans at risk. He did, however, concede that building the EAF was a work in progress that would take time to develop before it was ready to handle two MTWs; still, the EAF could assuredly handle SSC operations.[63] Ryan charged, "If we default to a major theater war, that is a different construct than AEF. We will want to migrate, as we work on this concept and flesh it out, the ability to use it as an upfront response to the major theater wars."[64] CINCs would also enjoy AEFs specifically trained to handle the specifics within their theaters of interest. Figure 5 is the slide Ryan used to depict how the EAF would change USAF organizational structure to better meet the needs of geographic CINCs. Instead of using the status quo system where

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[61] Michael A. Longoria and Michael C. Ryan, *Military Readiness: Background to Congressional Debate over Tiered Readiness*, Congressional Research Report no. 97-866 (Washington, DC: Library of Congress Congressional Research Service, 31 August 1998), CRS-1-CRS-2.
[62] James L. George, *Is Readiness Overrated? Implications for a Tiered Readiness Force Structure*, Policy Analysis no. 342 (Washington, DC: CATO Institute, 29 April 1999), 18, http://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa342.pdf (accessed, 23 March 2014).
[63] Ryan, "Air Expeditionary Forces."
[64] Ryan, "Air Expeditionary Forces."

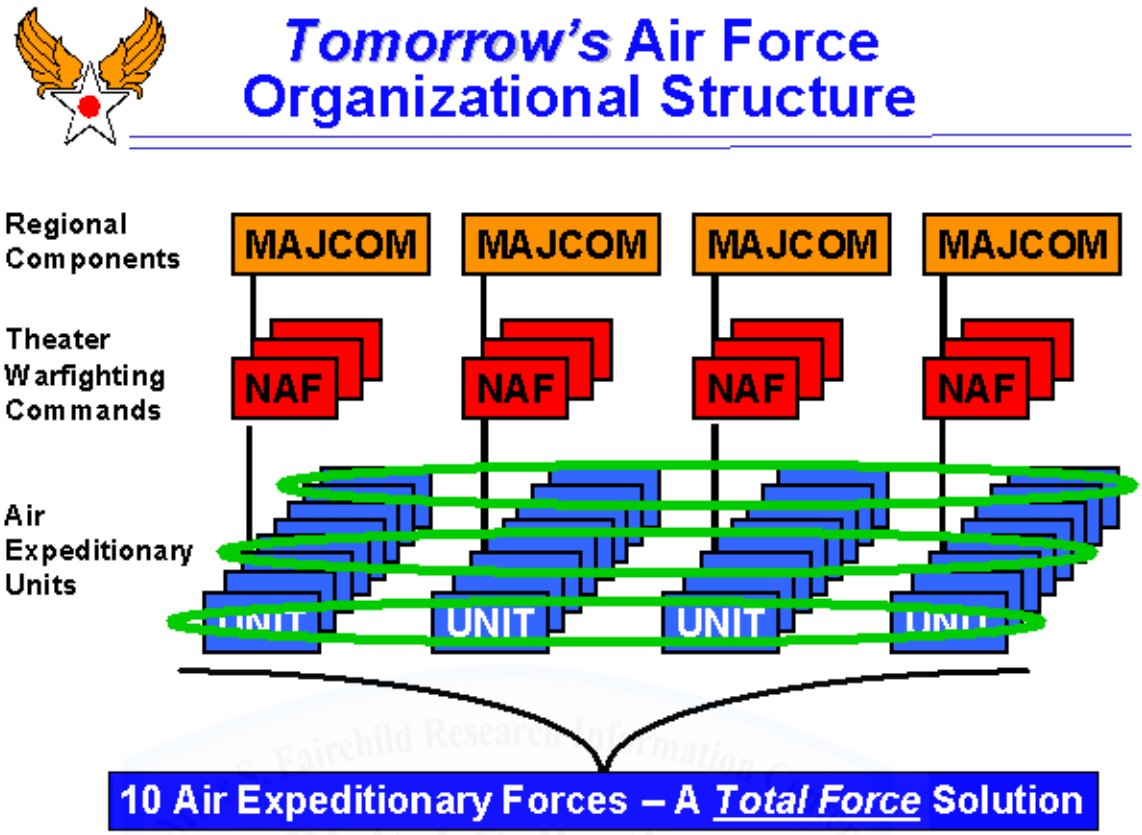

Figure 5. EAF Organizational Structure
Source: Ryan, Briefing.

individual units, depicted in the blue blocks, would report to the theater warfighting commands, the EAF would bind units together, depicted with the green line, to promote teaming and a streamlined chain of command that would report to the geographic CINC as one fighting force.[65] One drawback for geographic CINCs had to do with the level of logistics integration work that would still need to be done by the USAF.[66] Ryan acknowledged that while the AEF would give the geographic CINCs "full spectrum capability we think that will fit nicely into op plans…, we haven't taken that next step to integrate them into the time-phased force deployment list for major theater wars, but

[65] Ryan, "Air Expeditionary Forces."
[66] Conversations with current School of Advanced Air and Space Studies professor, Dr. Stephen Wright, who worked AEF staff actions at ACC during this time period, highlighted how in the end, it was the clarity of logistics integration that sold the CINCs. USAF airplanes were easy for CINCs to see; however, all the accompanied logistics support was not. Prior to the EAF, the USAF was routinely drawing from USAF assets apportioned to other CINCs to fill manpower requirements to another CINC. The EAF gave the CINCs accountability over USAF assets that they did not know they had lost.

that's the next step we need to look at."[67] After laying out the operational impact to the geographic CINCs, Ryan explained the specifics of how AEFs would deploy.

In the fledgling stages of the EAF, it became apparent to the Air Staff that one AEF was not sufficient to meet the operational demands of the environment. AF/XP realized that status quo operational requirements could be met with the forces that made up two AEFs. In order to achieve a 1:4 dwell, however, two AEFs could not deploy at the same time and would require a staggered deployment timeline.[68] Figure 6 provides a visual depiction of how AEFs would stagger to adhere to the 15-month life cycle of an AEF depicted in Figure 7. A staggered pairing of AEFs also provided the flexibility to cover a number of SSC operations and, if required, the ability to split up portions of an AEF if one SSC's requirements differed from another's.

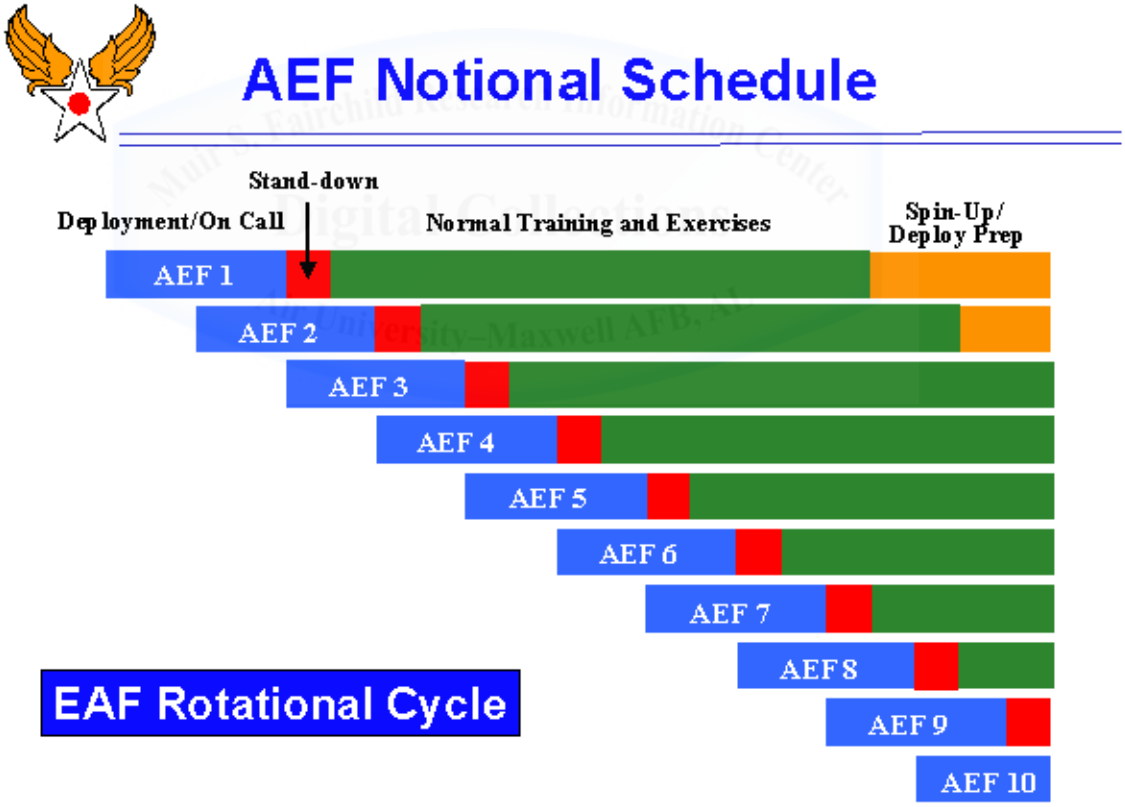

Figure 6. Staggered AEF Schedule
Source: Ryan, Briefing.

[67] Ryan, "Air Expeditionary Forces."
[68] Later, the USAF figured out how to deploy more than one AEF at a time.

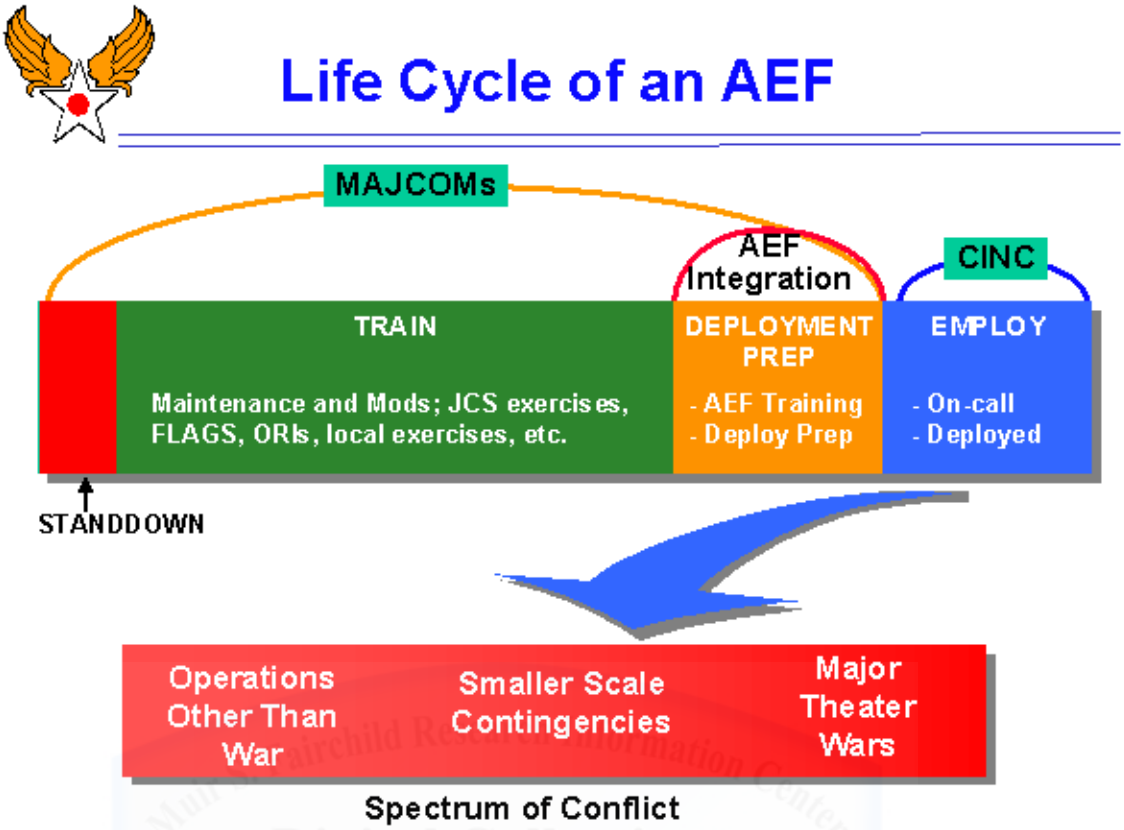

Figure 7. 15-Month AEF Life Cycle
Source: Ryan, Briefing.

The AEF was designed to be capable but also efficient; Figure 8 highlights the flexibility enabled through the pairing of two staggered AEFs. Another key component of Ryan's brief

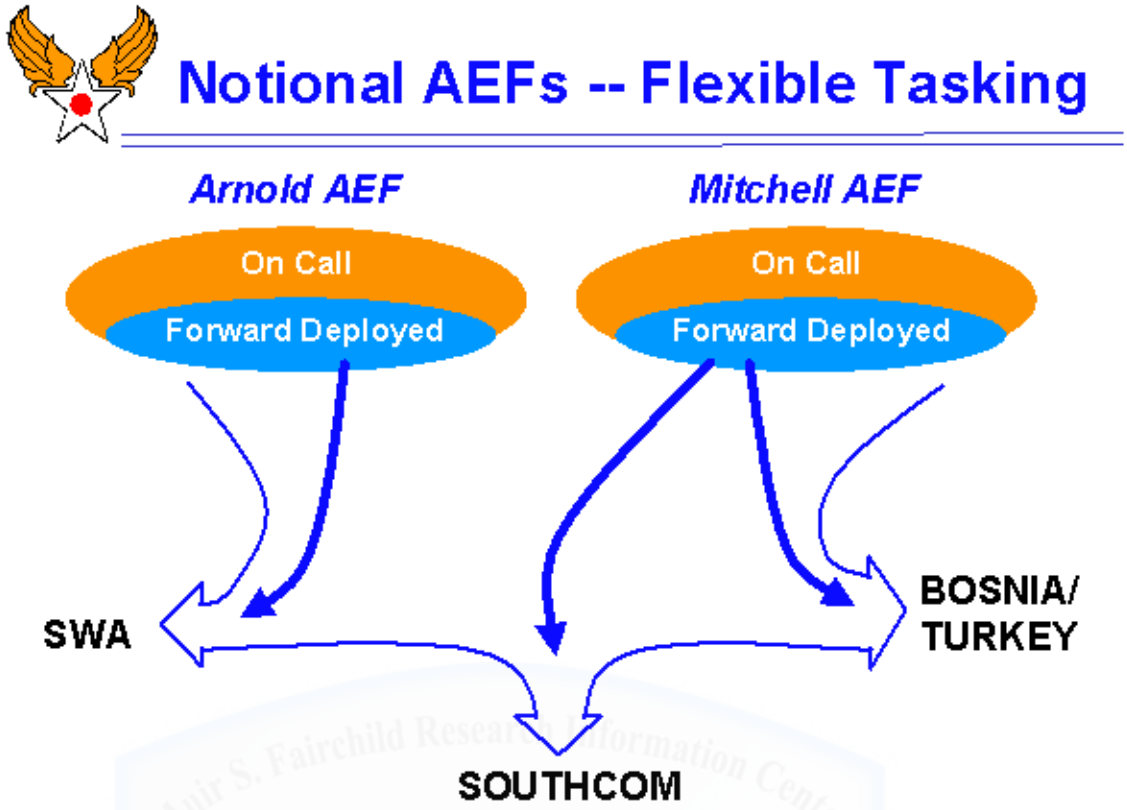

Figure 8. Flexibility and Efficiency in AEF Pairings
Source: Ryan, Briefing.

dealt with how the EAF affected support forces and how they would integrate into an AEF.

Behind every airplane the USAF commands is a robust support network of Airmen that enable the effectiveness of these air power instruments. Much like fighter aircraft element leads depend on their wingmen during operational missions, Ryan felt many AEF support personnel needed the same type of cohesion to perform their mission effectively.[69] First responders and engineers are examples of some of the career fields that require higher levels of teaming. Others, such as transportation and logistics career fields may not require the same levels of teamwork to be mission effective. By recognizing these differences, Ryan explained how the USAF would use the EAF model to change sourcing for support personnel by outsourcing some home-station support

[69] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 53.

capabilities and by making resource managers accountable for their actions in terms of capabilities and force presentation.[70] This method would identify key support personnel required for operational support and decrease "some of the support force capabilities that don't require a military…and [transition] those to either contract or outsourced or privatized."[71] Jumper offered further details:

> [The EAF] gave us the agility to right-size our force…When you looked at the necessary deployable elements, the necessary people that you really had to have in uniform, it was a lot smaller than anyone wanted to admit at the time. We could have a much more efficient, much more combat ready, much more highly trained, smaller force than we had then.[72]

When queried if the USAF became as lean as it could have through the EAF, Jumper responded:

> We did not. We never got to the efficiency level we could have if we'd looked at the AEF that way but we never really did. We kept having to combat these other issues of "A76"…it was a program they had at the time where…you had to prove your uniformed people or your government people could do a job cheaper than it could be outsourced and if it lost that competition, it went to outsourcing. That's how we lost large portions of transportation and supply.[73]

As Jumper alludes, using the AEF as a tool to deploy support personnel creates a tension between efficiency and operations tempo. The most efficient model would see uniformed Airmen constantly deployed while outsourced personnel maintained in-garrison support requests. A model such as this may work in the short term but would have deleterious effects on long-term retention. Ryan's vision was to use the EAF model as a way to promote efficiencies in air power with measured amounts of operations tempo; an effective balance would sustain the model. Ryan concluded his remarks regarding personnel support for an AEF with a cryptic statement on the importance of balance:

> I think we thought that sometime in the future that this kind of activity [with high operations tempos] would go away. We'd go to DESERT STORM and we'd come home, or we'd go to Bosnia and we'd come home.

[70] Ryan, "Air Expeditionary Forces."
[71] Ryan, "Air Expeditionary Forces."
[72] Jumper, interview.
[73] Jumper, interview. For a more detailed discussion on A76, see Linda M. Thomas, "Unintended Consequences of A76 and Downsizing of the Military" (master's thesis, Air War College, 2002).

> The realities of the world say that we'll probably stay for a while. When we do that, we need to make sure that we resource what we have put forward, and this is our attempt to do that, take care of our folks.[74]

Although the makings of the EAF had been in place for some time, Peters and Ryan's EAF rollout brief formalized the USAF's transition. Ryan's briefing distilled two important themes: efficiency in air power, supported with deployable air power packages to the geographic CINCs, and predictability, to ease the effects of a high operations tempo felt by the USAF's newly minted "expeditionary" Airmen. Characteristic of many large organizational changes, Peters and Ryan's brief acknowledged the USAF would require a transition time to implement the EAF across the force; 1 January 2000 was the date set for full implementation. This date provided the USAF a year and a half to work through the intricacies of full EAF implementation but failed to account for how an unsettled Europe would affect this timeline. One of the first tests for the EAF came in the form of Operation ALLIED FORCE.

Operation ALLIED FORCE

Operation ALLIED FORCE, under authority from United Nations Security Council Resolution 1199, began on 24 March 1999 as a coercive air campaign designed to "degrade and damage the military and security structure that President Milosevic (Serbian President) has used to depopulate and destroy the Albanian majority in Kosovo."[75] Having ruled out a ground campaign from the beginning of the planning efforts, NATO used a gradual escalation strategy in hopes of attaining a Milosevic surrender that would facilitate the withdrawal of forces from Kosovo.[76] While the motivations for Milosevic's eventual surrender and the political controls levied on NATO's campaign are outside the scope of this study, an examination of ALLIED FORCE highlights how the EAF matured during the 78-day air campaign.

Discerning how the EAF was used in ALLIED FORCE is a trickier question than one may initially think. The available literature on the subject is rich with comments

[74] Ryan, "Air Expeditionary Forces."
[75] Department of Defense, "Operation Allied Force," http://www.defense.gov/specials/kosovo/ (accessed 16 March 2014). "Allied Force" was the NATO name; "Noble Anvil" was the U.S. operation.
[76] Christian F. Anrig, *The Quest for Relevant Air Power: Continental European Responses to the Air Power Challenges of the Post-Cold War Era* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2011), 35.

such as, "the USAF's air expeditionary force (AEF) concept was first successfully exercised in a full-up combat setting" in ALLIED FORCE.[77] The USAF Historical Studies Office asserts, "the…AEF concept was successfully used for the first time during ALLIED FORCE as units rotated into Aviano Air Base, Italy, under the AEF construct."[78]

However, details behind the aforementioned claims require further context since terms such as "AEF" and "Air Expeditionary Wing" (AEW) were used before and after Ryan's articulated EAF concept. Indeed, just because AEF and AEW labels were used during ALLIED FORCE does not necessarily mean that these air power packages embodied the EAF concept. For example, Jumper claimed the USAF "was able to use the AEF fairly effectively in the Kosovo crisis – it wasn't perfect but it worked out pretty darn well," whereas Deptula stressed how the EAF was too fledgling to have had any noticeable impacts on ALLIED FORCE.[79] Paradoxically, both viewpoints have merit.

Deptula's assessment is reflective of a response Ryan gave to a question posed during his 4 August 1998 briefing. When asked if Airmen will wait in garrison when not deployed with their assigned AEF, Ryan responded, "Unless we have to default to a major theater war, in which case then all bets are off."[80] In an analysis of USAF contributions to ALLIED FORCE, the level of commitment the USAF put forth for the 78-day campaign was equivalent to the force structure DoD planners considered necessary for a MTW. Secretary Cohen noted during ALLIED FORCE, "What we have now in Kosovo is roughly a Major Theater War under way" comprised of 540 aircraft, 38,000 sorties, and have "exceeded the percentage of effort it devoted to the Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars."[81] A USAF study conducted in 2002 concluded ALLIED FORCE required the equivalent of over five AEFs-worth of force structure and cautioned how the

[77] Benjamin S. Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2001), 88-89.
[78] Air Force Historical Studies Office, "Factsheets: Operation ALLIED FORCE," http://www.afhso.af.mil/topics/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=18652 (accessed 16 March 2014).
[79] Jumper, interview and Deptula, interview.
[80] Ryan, Briefing.
[81] Kreisher, "Hawley's Warning," 56, and Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 79.

USAF "stripped its stateside units to cover the operation."[82] Of greater importance to the long-term viability of the AEF, what solidified its utility in the aftermath of ALLIED FORCE was how the USAF could use the AEF construct to drive the planned recovery of combat air power assets returning from theater.[83] Although ALLIED FORCE ended 30 days sooner than planners projected, the coherency the AEF brought to recovery operations made sure combat air power assets were ready for the next AEF rotation that began on 1 October 1999.[84] Furthermore, from a command and control perspective, ALLIED FORCE was not the exemplar of streamlined command and control operations

[82] Air Force Association Report, *Strategy, Requirements, and Forces: The Rising Imperative of Air and Space Power* (Washington, DC: Air Force Association, February 2003), 34.
[83] Conversation with current School of Advanced Air and Space Studies professor, Dr. Stephen Wright, who worked AEF staff actions at ACC during this time period.
[84] Conversation with current School of Advanced Air and Space Studies professor, Dr. Stephen Wright, who worked AEF staff actions at ACC during this time period.

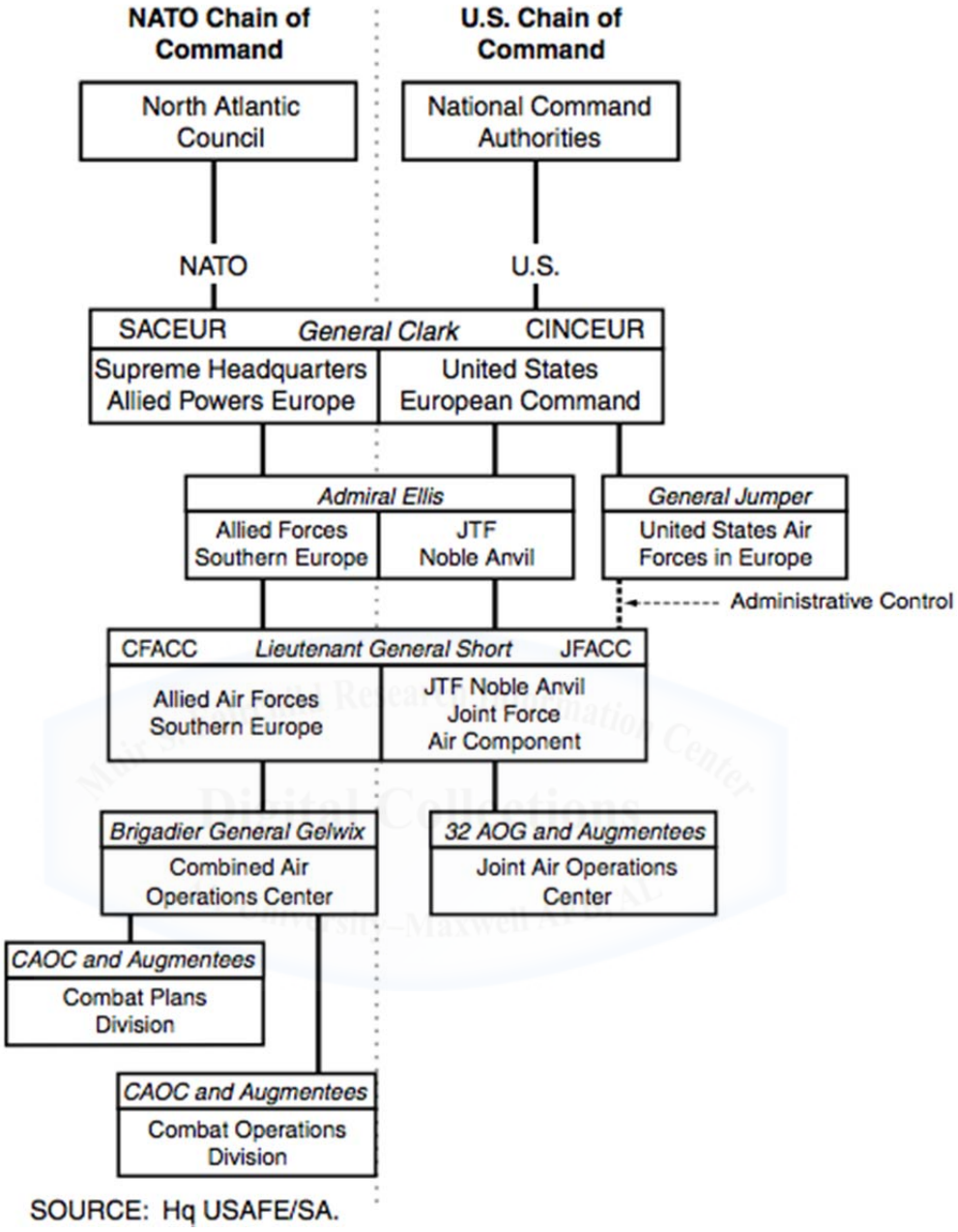

Figure 9. ALLIED FORCE Command and Control
Source: Lambeth, NATO's Air War for Kosovo, 208.

that Ryan promised to the geographic CINCs. Figure 9 details the chains of command used in ALLIED FORCE. Lieutenant General Michael Short, the JFACC during ALLIED FORCE, later commented that the command and control during the war was "about as murky a command relationship as you could possibly get."[85] Though the

[85] Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo*, 207.

chains of command used in ALLIED FORCE were impacted by a number of political factors, the point remains that the EAF did not bring to NATO a prescription for command and control that exercises such as EFX 98 had hoped to bring to fruition. From a force presentation, predictability, and command and control perspective, Deptula's assessment of the EAF's contributions to ALLIED FORCE may not be hyperbole. Jumper's assessment was more telling of the expeditionary nature in which particular support personnel deployed.

As United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) commander, Jumper created the 86th Contingency Response Group (CRG) in the days leading up to ALLIED FORCE as an EAF test for Ryan.[86] Specifically, this effort was a teaming test for support personnel. This group was an amalgam of Airmen from disparate career fields such as security forces, civil engineering, communications, and airfield management charged with providing "the first on-scene Air Force forces trained to command, assess, and prepare a base for expeditionary aerospace forces."[87] The 86th CRG reached initial operational capability (IOC) just four days prior to the start of the air campaign. Later, after a refugee crisis flooded Macedonia and Albania, humanitarian crisis response planning efforts called upon the group to deploy to an airfield in Tirana, Albania to prepare the airfield as a command and control hub for humanitarian relief efforts.[88] Although the particulars of the Tirana operation are impressive, Jumper claimed that this effort represented a microcosm of the organizational culture change the EAF was bringing about in the USAF. Jumper concluded:

> I think it had a profound impact. I think there was great pride especially in the contingency response groups. During Kosovo, for instance, if you went into the airfield in Albania where we set-up, our contingency response group had gone in there, set us up a tent city…put down gravel…and on the other side of the runway there was the United States Army who was deploying a Corps headquarters in there. They were knee-deep in mud waiting for the contract to be let…arguing and bickering over the contract before they had any place to even live. To me, that was the most visual contrast of what a deployment ready operation looks like. We

[86] General John P. Jumper, "Rapidly Deploying Aerospace Power: Lessons from Allied Force," *Aerospace Power Journal* 13, no. 4 Winter 1999, 5.
[87] Jumper, "Rapidly Deploying Aerospace Power: Lessons from Allied Force," 5.
[88] Jumper, "Rapidly Deploying Aerospace Power: Lessons from Allied Force," 7.

> were in there up and running – everybody who went in there was proud to see it the way we did that.[89]

Jumper also detailed how the EAF in ALLIED FORCE enabled positive changes to the logistics processes that governed how the USAF deploys air power. Jumper furthered, "We had really been able to streamline our packaging. Up until that point, our TPFDDs were done in wing sizes. We were able to get them down into six airplane packages that you could deploy rapidly without having to deploy a wing's worth of support."[90] The efficiency Jumper notes with which the EAF deployed air power is what led to Aviano Air Base (AB) to host a record number of 175 combat aircraft from disparate USAF wings under the auspices of the 31st AEW.[91]

Jumper and Deptula were both correct in their assessments of the EAF's impact on ALLIED FORCE. The EAF, as a sustainable, predictable, and enduring framework for how the USAF brought combat air power to the fight, still needed work. The EAF, however, as a harbinger for expeditionary organizational culture change within the USAF made substantial gains. Though the effects the EAF had on ALLIED FORCE can be debated through different levels of analysis, arguably the most enduring lessons to be garnered are not from the impact the EAF had on ALLIED FORCE, but from the impact ALLIED FORCE had on the EAF.

ALLIED FORCE left three major imprints on the EAF. First, it overwhelmed the system by creating such a demand for air power that the USAF had to break from its status quo operational rhythms to source the requests coming from Europe. Commander of ACC at the time, General Richard Hawley, assessed that ACC ran low on spare aircraft parts and experienced Airmen for U.S.-based wings due to ALLIED FORCE.[92] The drain on the USAF was so pervasive that "stop-loss" procedures were instituted on 15 June 1999 that prohibited Airmen from retiring or separating so that the USAF could keep its "training base intact, so that we will be able to reconstitute our forces quickly

[89] Jumper, interview.
[90] Jumper, interview.
[91] Lambeth, *NATO's Air War for Kosovo*, 89.
[92] Kreisher, "Hawley's Warning," 54.

when Kosovo operations cease."[93]

Second, ALLIED FORCE brought into question the reality of the first AEF deployment under the EAF deploying on 1 October 1999. With the Air Staff supporting ALLIED FORCE, NORTHERN WATCH, and SOUTHERN WATCH little extra capacity was left to tend to EAF implementation. A determined Ryan responded by ensuring the "resources already allocated and sourced" to the 10 AEFs that composed the EAF be left untouched; the scheduled 1 October 1999 date for the first AEF deployment would remain intact.[94] The "protection" of the October 1999 AEF resulted from the recovery plan coming out of ALLIED FORCE, because some forces committed to the October 1999 AEF were participating in the war. The USAF redeployed those units back to home station first and prioritized their recovery and reconstitution operations above those units not assigned to the October 1999 AEF.

Lastly, a topic that eluded AF/XP during the EAF's initial planning stages came to fore; how should the USAF recover and reconstitute after a MTW? With help from the MAJCOMs, Colonel Robert Allardice of the Division of Expeditionary Aerospace Force Implementation (AF/XOPE) was given this task and authored an ingenious solution with other members of his staff.[95] Allardice defined the spectrum of the EAF as four components: SSC, transition, MTW, and reconstitution.[96] Ryan's original EAF proposal was descriptive of the first three components but lacking of the fourth. Allardice discovered how in the aftermath of all previous MTWs since WWI, with the exception of Korea, the USAF was subjected to substantial force reductions.[97] This trend represented a major threat to the EAF since AF/XP's original EAF plan assumed the input of forces at the beginning of any operation, be it humanitarian assistance, SSC, or MTW, would match the output of forces at the end of operations. Allardice highlighted the fault in this assumption and provided the USAF with a way to plan for impending shortfalls. This work gave Ryan and Peters a second reason to enact "stop-loss" procedures.

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[93] F. Whitten Peters, "Air Force Begins 'Stop Loss'" (prepared statement, Department of Defense, Washington, DC, 26 May 1999) http://www.defense.gov/Releases/Release.aspx?ReleaseID=2112 (accessed on 5 April 2014).
[94] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 80.
[95] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 60, 80.
[96] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 80.
[97] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 84.

The friction that ALLIED FORCE injected into the EAF framework for operations had both positive and negative effects. In the short term, the EAF had to struggle with the demands that ALLIED FORCE put on combat air power. Secretary Peters commented how "four AEFs worth of assets were already deployed for the Kosovo operation and that the concept would have to be re-examined."[98] However, the long-term impact on the EAF appeared bright; EAF shortcomings during ALLIED FORCE provided USAF senior leaders, strategists, and planners with an opportunity to refine the EAF into a useful tool. Moreover, the success of the AEF construct laid in the recovery methodology the USAF used coming out of ALLIED FORCE; this success institutionalized the concept. On 1 October 1999, the 4th Fighter Wing from Seymour Johnson AFB, NC started a 90-day deployment as the lead wing for the first pair of AEFs under the EAF framework. Ryan's vision became reality.

Conclusion

The maturation of the AEF to the EAF left a number of lasting trademarks on the strategic makeup of the USAF. Though Ryan's EAF concept brief centered around expeditionary combat capability and predictability for Airmen, the EAF grew into a framework the USAF seized to show how the AEF can be used as a force structure tool that articulates the strategic significance of combat air power for the nation. More importantly, the concept provided a model to explain how the USAF used the guidance held within U.S. national strategy documents to shape the force's organization and culture.

The expeditionary organization and culture embraced by the USAF would serve the force well in the decades to come, but the EAF also highlighted how capable expeditionary air power must be sustainable and efficient. USAF operations in ALLIED FORCE showed how organizational change was afoot in the USAF but exposed how the EAF concept needed to mature to accept surges in combat air power demands without breaking the force. Lastly, the EAF provided a framework for how the USAF could organize, train, and equip itself to absorb the impacts of historical trends that point to substantial force reductions following a MTW. Whether or not the USAF

[98] John T. Correll, "Assumptions Fall in Kosovo," *Air Force Magazine*, June 1999, 4.

organizationally accepted these strategic lessons would be determined in the post-9/11 era.

Chapter 4

A Modern AEF? 2001-2012

> *The aim of a military organization is not to make do with the smallest number of supporting troops but to produce the greatest possible fighting power.*
>
> *Martin van Creveld*

Though the EAF was ensconced in the doctrinal and organizational framework the USAF would use to guide its operational capacity, ALLIED FORCE proved that much work remained to be done in the development of this fledgling air power instrument. Ryan had two EAF options open to him at the conclusion of ALLIED FORCE; he could either discard the EAF as a failed framework that did not take into account the correct assumptions in its design, or he could dig in and refine the concept to give it greater utility. Ryan's choice of the latter showed how ALLIED FORCE made the EAF organizationally "sticky" and kick-started an iterative process that implemented, reflected upon, and assessed the EAF.

No actions were more illustrative of this point than the transformation of the Directorate of EAF Implementation (AF/XOP) and later, the creation of the AEF Center at Langley AFB, VA. These initiatives put the EAF on a vector that built upon the efficiency and predictability of the concept and expanded it in an effort to rationalize USAF force structure. However, the al-Qaeda led terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 and the associated American responses in Afghanistan and Iraq had a major effect on many DoD organizational concepts, including the EAF. The ground-centric strategies pervasive in Afghanistan and Iraq exerted forces on the EAF that brought into question its utility in the post-9/11 world. The USAF response calls into question whether or not the deployment of AEFs under the EAF construct adhered to Ryan's call "to set a process in place that would make the use of Aerospace Expeditionary Forces better every time."[1]

Directorate of EAF Implementation

[1] Majors John J. Tomick and Robert A. Morris, *EAF Transition Workshop: After Action Report, Lessons Learned and Recommendations*, Air Force Studies and Analyses Agency report (Washington, DC: Department of the Air Force, 23 April 1999), 4.

Handpicked by Ryan to lead AF/XOP in September 1998 was then-Major General Donald Cook.[2] A review of Cook's biography up until that point makes it easy to understand why Ryan selected Cook. A bomber pilot by trade, Cook had experience in SAC, Air Education and Training Command (AETC), Air Force Space Command (AFSPC), had Air Staff and congressional liaison experience, and had commanded through the wing level of organization.[3] Though the major accomplishments of AF/XOPE during and immediately following ALLIED FORCE, particularly those of Colonel Allardice, are detailed in the previous chapter, Cook's team made other contributions that refined the EAF.

Cook sought to build a sustainable EAF by drawing upon the USAF's expeditionary roots, blending them with status quo strategic guidance, and nurturing a flexible capability for the future. At the February 1999 Air Warfare Symposium in Orlando, FL, Cook leveraged strategic thoughts from Rice's "Global Reach-Global Power," and Fogleman and SECAF Sheila Widnall's "Global Engagement" to create a path for an EAF future.[4] Cook drew upon themes from both of these documents to distill five phases of Global Engagement Operations (GEO): shape, deter, halt, win, and reshape.[5] Cook then linked how each phase of GEO serves its strategic masters, the NSS and NMS, and how GEO "can be used as an air centric strategy to explain our contribution to full spectrum dominance."[6]

Later, Cook argued how the EAF took the strategic direction of the five phases of the GEO and shaped them into an executable operational framework for the USAF. The strategy-to-task methodology Cook used appears to be one of the first EAF speeches or

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[2] Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 58. Stood up in August 1998, the first USAF-wide AEF implementation meeting was in September 1998 at Langley AFB, VA.
[3] United States Air Force Biography of General Donald G. Cook, http://www.af.mil/AboutUs/Biographies/Display/tabid/225/Article/104813/general-donald-g-cook.aspx.
[4] Major General Donald Cook, U.S. Air Force (address, Air Force Association Air Warfare Symposium, Orlando, FL, 4 February 1999). For a complete "Global Engagement" narrative, see General Ronald E. Fogleman and Sheila E. Widnall, "Global Engagement: A Vision of the 21st Century Air Force," http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/global/global.pdf.
[5] Cook, address, 4 February 1999.
[6] Cook, address, 4 February 1999. "Full spectrum dominance" became pervasive in the strategic lexicon of the U.S. military in 2000 with the release of *Joint Vision 2020*. The term characterizes the ability of U.S. military forces, in operations with or without allies, to defeat any enemy across the spectrum of military operations. *Joint Vision 2020* can be located at http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/genesis_and_evolution/source_materials/joint_vision_2020.pdf.

briefings that highlighted how proper service-level strategic development is subservient to the hierarchy emerging from the ordering of national objectives, military objectives, and military tasks. Cook's approach was a good one; the more the USAF could use the EAF in a logic-tree framework that articulated air power values towards a national strategic end-state, the longer the EAF would endure and not fall prey to budget programming drills that frowned upon "pet projects." In an uncertain global strategic environment, EAF capabilities were strategy driven; a competency, Cook concluded, "that the average Airman has not done well in articulating."[7]

In the Winter 2000 issue of *Aerospace Power Journal*, now Lieutenant General Cook and two of his former AF/XOP staffers, Allardice and Colonel Raymond Michael, Jr., penned a work entitled "Strategic Implications of the Expeditionary Aerospace Force." The fact that all three had moved on to other command positions, notably Cook as ACC's Vice Commander, speaks volumes for the group's conviction regarding the EAF. Noting that the EAF "is a journey, not a destination," the article argues how the EAF captured the lessons learned from ALLIED FORCE and has since expanded to accommodate the spectrum of SSC to MTW operations.[8] The piece also helped categorize how the future USAF should be mindful of operations that look like a relatively minor SSC in planning phases (i.e., ALLIED FORCE), but turn into a MTW due not only to the escalation of the SSC, but because of the combination of all other USAF commitments at the time.[9]

This proclamation does not necessarily mean that the EAF is a predictive model for future conflict, though it does suggest that it can be used as a strategic readiness indicator to highlight status quo force-level commitments that can be used to qualify varying levels of risk should future operations be undertaken. Figure 10 is a visual depiction of the slide Allardice created to help explain how the EAF can be used as a force management tool across the spectrum of conflict. The dashed white lines

[7] Cook, address, 4 February 1999.
[8] Lieutenant General Donald G. Cook, Colonel Robert Allardice, and Colonel Raymond D. Michael, Jr., "Strategic Implications of the Expeditionary Aerospace Force," *Aerospace Power Journal*, Winter 2000, 10.
[9] Cook, Allardice, and Michael, "Strategic Implications of the Expeditionary Aerospace Force," 11.

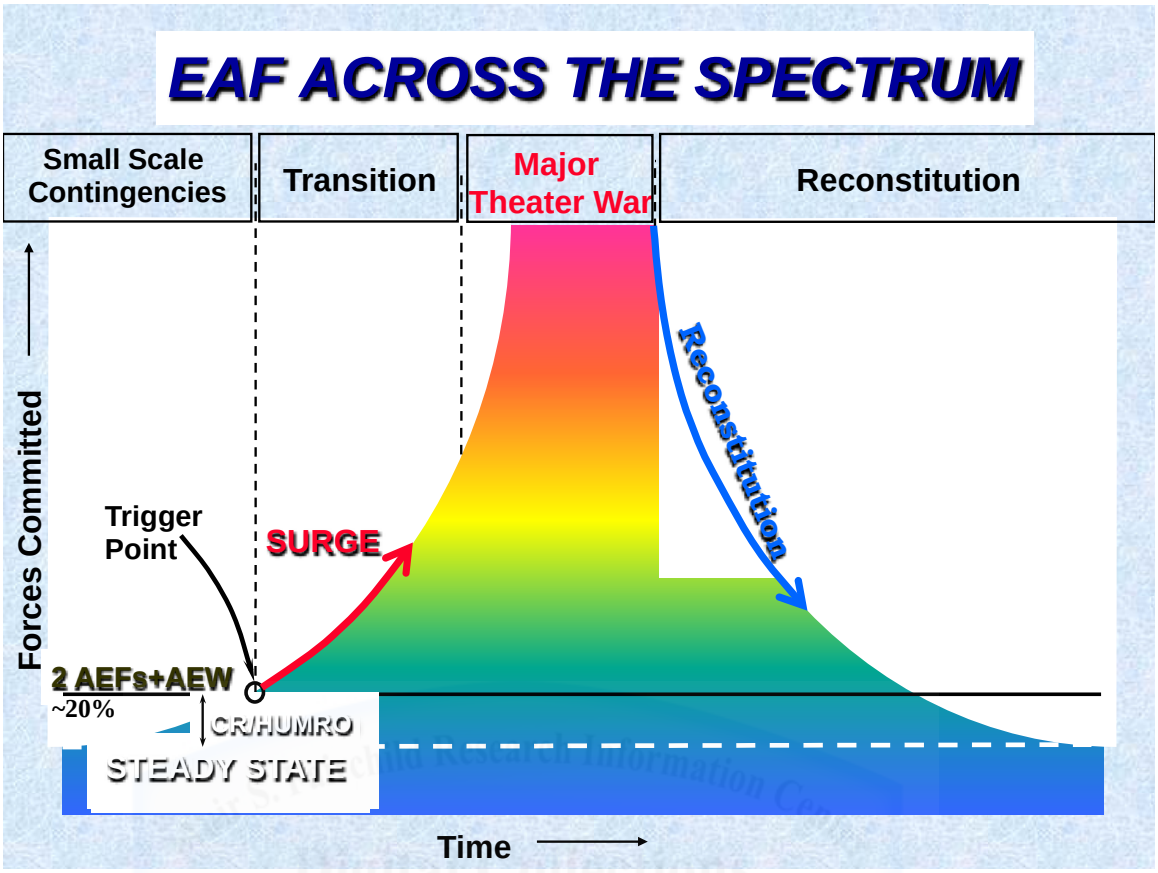

Figure 10. Allardice's EAF Across the Spectrum
Source: Brigadier General David Deptula, "Expeditionary Aerospace Force" briefing given to AETC, 28 January 2000, personal library of David Deptula.

depict the demands levied on the USAF for steady state engagements (e.g., no-fly zones in Operations NORTHERN and SOUTHERN WATCH). When an event demands more forces than supplied during steady state postures, a "trigger point" is reached that catapults the USAF into surge operations. As operations increase, potentially all the way towards a MTW, and finally ceases, reconstitution occurs as discussed in Chapter 3. Allardice's slide was strategically significant and cultivated the EAF due in part because it provided a means to quantify to the NCA what the strategic implications were of surpassing the "trigger point." These implications included additional costs in readiness, training, and munitions and underscored how reconstitution planning should begin upon realization of the "trigger point."[10]

[10] Deptula, briefing, 28 January 2000.

Finally, one of the most pertinent issues the article raised was how the EAF framework provided USAF senior leaders and planning staffs with a cognitive process that raised other strategic questions. Some of these questions included: "Do the Air Force and the Department of Defense have the planning systems today that can adapt to changes required in an accelerated world pace? Are we adequately resourced to work across the spectrum? Does our investment strategy match the demands we will have to meet?"[11] The EAF was changing how the USAF thought about the strategic implications of air power. AF/XOP's next director continued this trend and in turn addressed some of the questions posed in Cook, Allardice, and Michael's article.

Deptula took over AF/XOP shortly after Cook departed to become the Vice Commander of AFSPC in the fall of 1999. Ironically, Deptula's AF/XOP placement was merely a placeholder before he became Director for the USAF QDR, the primary job he was brought to the Pentagon to do.[12] The discussions contained in the "Assumptions on the Composition of the Expeditionary Aerospace Force" section in Chapter 3 are critical to understanding Deptula's contributions to the EAF. That section provides an understanding of how the USAF decided on 10 AEFs. Before Deptula led AF/XOP, the USAF used the EAF to answer the question of how many AEFs does the USAF need to meet its two MTW planning assumptions? Once in AF/XOP, Deptula looked at the question through a different lens and questioned how much force structure the USAF needed to meet the two MTW planning assumptions. From a macro-level perspective the questions look nearly the same; from a micro-level perspective the subtleties are more evident. Implicit in the first question is an assumption that the USAF had the appropriate amount of force structure to field 10 AEFs. Deptula questioned this assumption.

Deptula worked to understand the recapitalization challenges the USAF had at the time and, in doing so, prepared the logic required to support the USAF's requirements requests for the upcoming 2001 QDR. Deptula believed that the rationale behind the AEF structure "was a perfect way to tie strategy to resourcing;" force structure laid at the heart of the QDR resourcing debate.[13] In fact, Cook's 1999 Air Warfare Symposium

[11] Cook, Allardice, and Michael, "Strategic Implications of the Expeditionary Aerospace Force," 13-14.
[12] Lieutenant General David Deptula, email message to the author, 13 April 2014.
[13] Deptula, email, 13 April 2014.

speech suggests that force structure was not a during his EAF implementation tenure. When asked if the USAF has the correct force structure to support the 10 AEF organizational vision, Cook responded, "We need to move toward capability, and not really talk about platform structures. Each AEF ought to have near equal capability."[14]

Cook's response is illuminating for two reasons. First, it concedes that the capabilities of each AEF in 1999 were not the same. For example, AEF 1 may have possessed F-15Cs with an active electronically scanned array (AESA) radar whereas AEF 5 may have possessed less capable F-15Cs with a mechanically scanned array (MSA) radar. Second, the logic in Cook's statement falls short since platform structures are a significant source of an AEF's capabilities; during the planning process, capabilities need to be tied back to platform structures. Nevertheless, Cook and Deptula's viewpoints on the EAF are more similar than they are different; both men believed each AEF should possess equivalent capabilities. However, Deptula would use his remaining time in AF/XOP, and as Director of the USAF QDR, to further develop the EAF's potential to become the premier force structure model for the USAF.

In a brief given to AETC leaders at Randolph AFB, TX on 28 January 2000, Deptula began advocating how the USAF should use the EAF to rationalize force structure. In notes from the brief that detailed future challenges for the EAF, Deptula offered how the USAF should expand its EAF concept to include a capabilities-based approach. This change would allow USAF senior leaders to better articulate how those capabilities fit the strategic guidance laid out by the DoD for defense planning, force structure, and funding processes.[15] Moreover, this change would allow the USAF to reflect on its own force structure to determine if its requirements were in-line with DoD guidance and, if necessary, adjust its requirements. Deptula concluded:

> We've got to incorporate our Air Force vision into fundamental DoD planning, programming, and budgeting processes. If we can get DOD to think in terms of capability possessed to achieve desired effects we'll begin to see more informed trade analysis...and the value of aerospace power will become evident relative to legacy systems that are competing for scarce defense dollars. Finally, we must continue to educate not just

[14] Cook, address, 4 February 1999.
[15] Deptula, briefing, 28 January 2000.

> our Air Force, but Nation-wide to insure the Nation's decision-makers and the American people understand what their Air Force is, and what it can do.[16]

Convinced the EAF "could be an extremely good basis for rationalizing Air Force force structure," Deptula continued to think about how the USAF could best use the EAF to meet the strategic demands of the United States when he led the USAF's QDR efforts.[17] In a pre-decisional internal USAF working document entitled "Transforming the Air Force Vision Into Reality: Building A Fully Capable Expeditionary Aerospace Force [FEAF]," Deptula proposed a transformation from the EAF to the FEAF.

The FEAF was a concept that further refined the EAF into four categories: 1) AEF Prime, 2) the 10 legacy AEFs, 3) EAF Mobility, and EAF Foundation.[18] AEF Prime was comprised of the operational capabilities not organically assigned to each AEF such as command and control, intelligence, space-based, and nuclear capabilities.[19] The 10 legacy AEFs formed the core of the USAF's expeditionary air power capabilities and its associated predictability. EAF Mobility made it possible to deploy and sustain the legacy AEFs with strategic and tactical airlift capabilities that also included combat search and rescue (CSAR) capabilities.[20] Finally, EAF Foundation represented the support capabilities not organically supplied to legacy AEFs such as acquisitions, health care, and professional military education (PME).[21] The culmination of Deptula's FEAF brief highlighted how the basis for the USAF's force structure is driven by strategy, is sized to meet the nation's demands and geographic CINC's requirements, and is capability-based to support the vision of ten equally combat capable AEFs.[22] Figure 11 is the slide Deptula used to depict how his FEAF encompassed a strategy-to-task methodology

[16] Deptula, briefing, 28 January 2000.
[17] Deptula, interview.
[18] Brigadier General David Deptula, "Transforming the Air Force Vision Into Reality: Building A Fully Capable Expeditionary Aerospace Force" briefing, 14 August 2001, personal library of David Deptula.
[19] Deptula, briefing, 14 August 2001.
[20] Deptula, briefing, 14 August 2001.
[21] Deptula, briefing, 14 August 2001.
[22] Deptula, briefing, 14 August 2001.

Figure 11. Deptula's Strategy-to-Task Methodology
Source: Deptula, briefing, 14 August 2001.

that alleviated the downward trend in readiness indicators along with the costs associated with operating and maintaining legacy systems at the expense of future modernization.

Deptula's FEAF never gained traction with the Air Staff. Although the terrorist attacks on 9/11 were one month away and would dramatically alter the DoD's strategic course, Deptula claims the FEAF never gained traction because it was too radical a change in organizational structure.[23] Ironically, resistance to the FEAF was much greater inside the organization of the USAF than it was from other DoD stakeholders.[24] Ryan's EAF concept was still relatively new to a USAF organization whose organizational culture was deliberate, risk averse, and slow to change; the FEAF was dead on arrival. Deptula carried his experiences with the EAF the rest of his career and would often revisit its concepts, particularly when he served as ACC's Director of Plans and Programs

[23] Deptula, email, 13 April 2014.
[24] Deptula, interview.

from 2001 to 2003.

Cook and Deptula, in their roles as AF/XOP directors, left strategic imprints on the EAF that proved to be enduring. Both men used a strategy-to-task methodology that built on the expeditionary capability and predictability of Ryan's EAF vision, and highlighted a shortcoming in USAF organizational culture: the lack of skill in the strategic articulation of air power. Cook's emphasis on the spectrum of the EAF highlighted to the NCA the implications of surge operations and its effects on reconstitution. Deptula harnessed the ability to take the underpinnings of the EAF and transform them into a strategic tool that could articulate the EAF as a force-sizing construct. Deptula's departure formally divested AF/XOP from the Air Staff. Stood up in 1999, the AEF Center at Langley AFB filled the vacuum left by AF/XOP's closure and took the lead on AEF matters. The center's first major challenge sprang from the terrorist attacks on 9/11.

9/11 and the Expeditionary Aerospace Force

In retrospect, using Allardice's slide that tracks the EAF in phases across operations, 9/11 can be viewed as a "trigger point." While assessing the logic behind U.S.-led operations that followed this "trigger point" is outside the scope of this study, 9/11 proved to have substantial effects on the EAF. In less than a year after 9/11, one of Cook and Deptula's main points on how the EAF needed to be improved came to light; each AEF was not equally capable. Then-SECAF James Roche commented in 2002 how the demands on the USAF levied by Operations NOBLE EAGLE and ENDURING FREEDOM were being met by reaching "into future AEFs to source enough people to meet the requirement."[25] Already taxed by operations in the United States and Afghanistan, the EAF realized further stress when Operation IRAQI FREEDOM began in 2003. Using the same tactic Roche described above, Jumper noted in February 2003 that more than 23,000 Airmen were sourced from future AEFs to meet the tasking of the AEF pair in the "bucket."[26] Furthermore, in the aftermath of 9/11, USAF leaders took a page from the ALLIED FORCE playbook and instituted two "stop-loss" initiatives to shore up

[25] James G. Roche quoted in John T. Correll, "The EAF in Peace and War," *Air Force Magazine*, July 2002, 26.
[26] Adam J. Hebert, "Expeditionary Air Warriors," *Air Force Magazine*, June 2003, 24.

manpower from the security forces, intelligence, civil engineer, and enlisted aircrew career fields.[27] Commander of the AEF Center from 2002 to 2004, Major General Anthony Przybyslawski recalled,

> At that time when we were building up for Iraq, and how we were going to present the forces for General Moseley [as JFACC] and the ground support [efforts], we were going deeper and deeper into those AEFs – all of them. We were using every AEF at that time to deploy them. Folks that just got back, we were putting in the hopper to go right back. We were basically destroying this whole battle rhythm concept but we were assuming that we could escalate to [leverage] the total force if we have to. I'll never forget, as that war progressed and it was winding down – [I thought,] how do we put it back together again? A problem at this time, if you recall, is it wasn't necessarily about combat air power. It was about the requirements to support the Army on the ground – our cops, our civil engineers…all those other UTCs [unit type codes] that we had…were in support of the Army.[28]

An adage in the USAF maintains that flexibility is the key to air power. The situation that Przybyslawski described in characterizing the effects of ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM suggests that the AEF structure may have become so flexible that it was destroying the doctrinal basis of the EAF concept. Other issues dogged the EAF as the Global War on Terror (GWOT) escalated.

As NOBLE EAGLE, ENDURING FREEDOM, and IRAQI FREEDOM continued, comments made by USAF leaders in key EAF leadership positions at the time hint at the beginnings of the EAF evolving into something it was never intended to become. Major General Timothy Peppe served as Special Assistant for Air and Space Expeditionary Force at the HAF from 2002 until he retired in 2004. In that role, his office was charged to be the "focal point to review, clarify, and publish AEF policy and guidance relative to the evolving requirements and changing environment."[29] In an article published on the official USAF website in 2003, Peppe argued how the "AEF system is bending…and it's that ability to bend – or flex – that makes our Air Force and our airmen the best in the

[27] Hebert, "Expeditionary Air Warriors," 26.
[28] Przybyslawski, interview.
[29] United States Air Force Biography of Major General Timothy A. Peppe, http://www.af.mil/AboutUs/Biographies/Display/tabid/225/Article/105939/major-general-timothy-a-peppe.aspx.

world."[30] Peppe implied how the design of the EAF was flawed since the USAF in 2003 operated "at a much higher tempo than when AEFs were first devised."[31] Peppe's remarks suggest two points. First, since DESERT STORM and ALLIED FORCE shaped Ryan's vision, the intent behind the EAF was to handle the operations tempos of contingencies like those. As a point of reference, sorties per day in DESERT STORM, ALLIED FORCE, and ENDURING FREEDOM averaged, from a 2003 study, 2,800, 2,000, and 200, respectively.[32] Second, while Peppe attributes AEF stresses to its conceptual design, the evidence he uses to support his claim all detail unequal capabilities across AEFs, particularly in special operations, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. This judgment suggests that it may not have been the design of the EAF that was lacking but rather the problem lay with the capabilities and capacities being unevenly spread across the USAF's 10 AEFs. A further examination of the AEF Center at the time suggests that Airmen were being used to support more than the USAF's 10 AEFs.

Though the kinetic air campaigns in ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM wound down, Airmen continued to be sourced to support the U.S. Army's ground campaigns. Przybyslawski noted,

> For the most part, it was an easy battle rhythm for the aircrew but it was the ground support that was really stretched thin. And the sad thing is, what we were finding out… the Army needed support in a lawyer, and I'm just using that as an example, and once they'd get that person, they would not necessarily be [used as] a lawyer. That person could be moved over to the security forces or base protection. Once the Army had their hands on our Air Force people, they were put wherever they were needed at that time. And then, also, they had no concept of our duration. Initially it was 90 days, then we moved it to 120. Well the Army said, "no, no, no, we can't be afforded that kind of a rotation when are people are here for a year." It kept changing to meet the Army's requirements.[33]

When asked if there was any discussion regarding whether the USAF and its Airmen

[30] Major General Timothy A. Peppe, "AEF: Bending, but not broken," *www.af.mil*, 28 February 2003, http://www.af.mil/News/Commentaries/Display/tabid/271/Article/142440/aef-bending-but-not-broken.aspx (accessed 30 March 2014).
[31] Peppe, "AEF: Bending, but not broken," 28 February 2003.
[32] Air Force Association Report, *Strategy, Requirements, and Forces*, 14.
[33] Przybyslawski, interview.

were adequately resourced and trained to support U.S. Army taskings, Przybyslawski responded:

> Every time we found out about it, we'd run it up the flagpole and it would get to Moseley [then CSAF] and Moseley was doing the balance between the Air Force and his fellow warriors. He didn't want to whine about it. We had to do whatever we had to do. It was on the backs of Airmen who never thought they would be out there...It was quite a bit of shock…putting up with the tribal confrontations between the Army and the Air Force. It didn't do a lot for the morale of the Air Force at that time for these folks.[34]

Despite these setbacks, Przybyslawski concluded, "It was the right decision. It would have been a disaster for the Air Force to say, 'Oh no, we don't do that'…It was the right decision to do but the adverse effect on it was to a detriment of the Air Force way of life…That decision had an adverse effect on the *existing* force but we lived through it."[35] Przybyslawski's comments convey how a substantial portion of the AEFs used during ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM were modified to accommodate support for the U.S. Army. These changes bring to the fore questions of whether the long-term character of the EAF changed as a result of the flexibility Przybyslawski describes. Other insights from USAF senior leaders at the time shed light on the long-term impacts of the GWOT on the EAF.

As the USAF's lead Airman from 2001 to 2005, Jumper's tenure as CSAF captured much of the time period that Peppe and Przybyslawski addressed in their previously cited comments. Jumper's reflection on what long-term effects NOBLE EAGLE, ENDURING FREEDOM, and IRAQI FREEDOM had on the EAF are telling and represent an evolution in EAF thought from when Jumper first help lead AEFs I through IV as CENTAF commander in the mid-1990s. When asked, in light of the GWOT, if the EAF is the force construct model the USAF should use in the future, Jumper replied:

> I think it is our peacetime construct with a view toward how we go to war all the time. Our warfighting preparation, our warfighting readiness, our warfighting training, should be at the forefront of what we do every single day. And we should be organized around that concept, which is the

[34] Przybyslawski, interview.
[35] Przybyslawski, interview.

> expeditionary air force using AEF packages as the mechanism. We should size ourselves that way, we should present ourselves that way; once an operation gets underway, than you have other decisions to make but we should be training and configuring ourselves based on what's going on in the world. So, for instance, if I were the Chief today and I'm looking around at the world, I would have an AEF package that was optimized for some contingency operation. Or, at least, part of each AEF bucket would have something that we could rapidly deploy for a counter-insurgency sort of a thing. So you'd have a slug of UAVs in there, you'd have a slug of appropriate assets to respond to a low-intensity conflict situation, as well as your conventional forces. And you'd blend those into each AEF bucket.[36]

Jumper also noted how the expeditionary force structure of the USAF that requires every Airman be assigned to an AEF, as compared to the non-deployable support structure the U.S. Navy uses with the shore establishment and the U.S. Army uses with its Generating Force, also affected the effectiveness of the AEF. Jumper remarked how this organizational structure

> kept imposing itself on our ability to follow through on the promise of the AEF. You have to remember in our AEF concept you deployed active units, active wings, active squadrons, active packages, pieces of wings, that were doing the Air Force's business everyday as opposed to the Navy where their deployable force structure is separate from their support structure. So when they deploy aircraft carriers out of Norfolk, it doesn't do any damage to the support force that runs Norfolk naval base, that's a separate outfit. When you deploy two squadrons out of Langley, you're taking most of the leadership and most of the support equipment and everything that that unit uses to train at home base every single day. It's a completely different way of looking at it and much more efficient than our navy counterparts.[37]

The implication of Jumper's remarks when combined with those of Peppe and Przybyslawski suggests that, in order to support GWOT operations, the USAF not only sourced Airmen at the expense of future AEFs, but also did so to the detriment of in-garrison USAF support structures charged with readying and training the force. A 2002

[36] Jumper, interview.

[37] Jumper, interview. The U.S. Navy's shore establishment provides support to the operating forces in the form of: facilities for the repair of machinery and electronics; communications centers; training areas and simulators; ship and aircraft repair; intelligence and meteorological support; storage areas for repair parts, fuel, and munitions; medical and dental facilities; and air bases. The U.S. Army's Generating Force consists of those Army organizations whose primary mission is to generate and sustain the operational Army's capabilities for employment by Joint Force commanders.

RAND study argued that this trend

> has been exacerbated by the fact that manpower requirements may not be properly set and that personnel are made unavailable because of out-of-hide positions that must be filled. Then, when OPTEMPO rises…OJT [on-the-job training] becomes a bill payer. Yet time for conducting OJT is critical to improving the long-term health of the…inventory.[38]

Through this lens of analysis, the USAF during this time period was taxed when at home and abroad, the very condition the EAF was in part created to avoid. With capability and capacity across the USAF's 10 AEFs waning, another tenet of the EAF came under attack in the form of the 2006 QDR.

2006 QDR, 86 Combat Wings, and AEF Next

While Jumper and those close to the AEF Center helped characterize the effects of the GWOT on AEF capabilities and capacities, others inside the USAF were using the EAF as a means of articulation force structure requirements. Concerned about the strategic future of the USAF while he was at ACC in 2003, Deptula worked on a combat air forces (CAF) brief that submitted posturing options for how the USAF could meet the country's air power demands through 2025. In a survey of the historical record, Deptula used Figure 12 to characterize how the USAF needed to make a number of force structure decisions no later than the 2006 Program Objective Memorandum (POM) to ensure resources were

[38] David E. Thaler and Carl J. Dahlman, *Assessing Unit Readiness: Case Study of an Air Force Mobility Wing* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2002), 54.

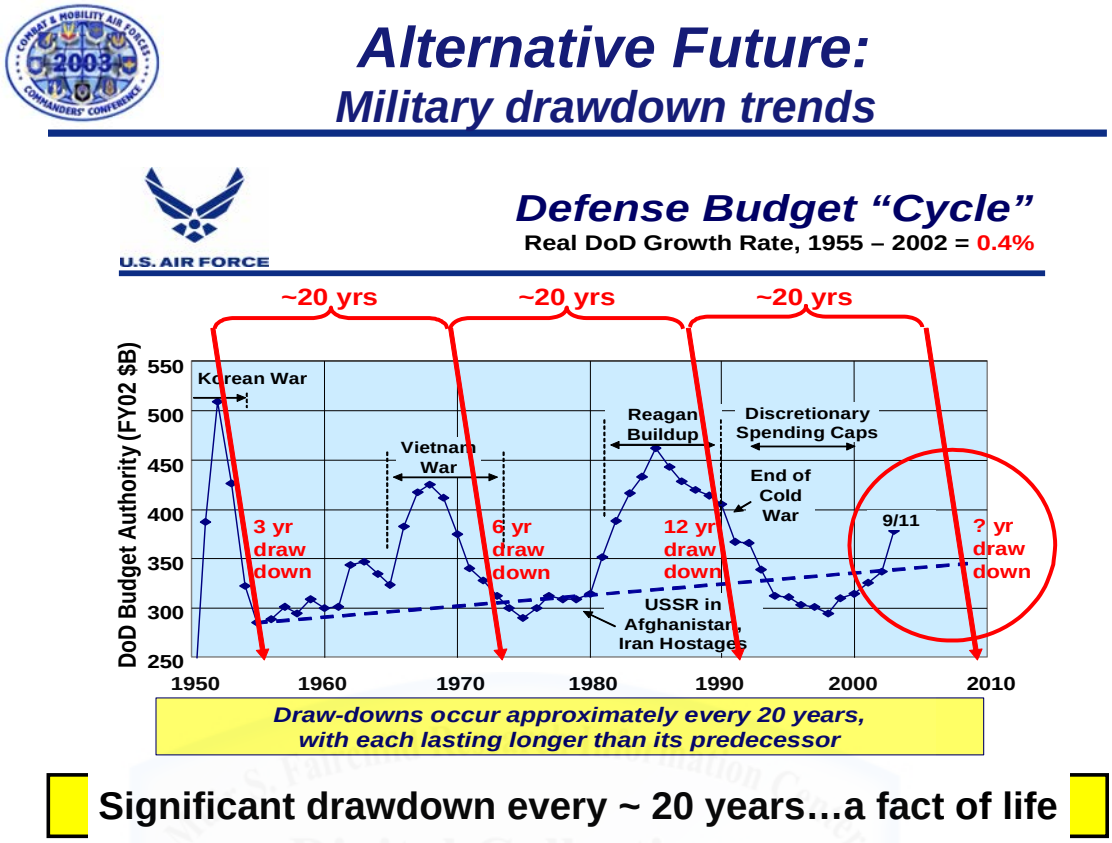

Figure 12. Historical Military Drawdown Trends
Source: Major General David Deptula, "Proposed CAF Flight Plan Options to 2025" briefing given to CAF/MAF Commander's Conference, 16 October 2003, personal library of David Deptula.

available prior to a future budgetary drawdown sometime after 2010.[39] Based on capability and capacity trends noted above by Jumper and Przybyslawski, Deptula modeled his force structure options to fill 10 equally capable AEFs. Though the three options Deptula presented in the brief were never executed, 2002 to 2003 represents the time period in which the EAF as a tool to articulate force structure started to take hold.[40] Although conceptually not much different than the FEAF Deptula unsuccessfully

[39] A Program Objective Memorandum (POM) is a recommendation from the services and defense agencies to the Secretary of Defense concerning how they plan to allocate resources for a program(s) to meet the Service Program Guidance (SPG) and Defense Planning Guidance (DPG). The POM covers the 5-year Future Year Defense Program (FYDP) and presents the services and defense agencies proposal on how they will balance their allocation of available resources. The POM is submitted each August and includes an analysis of missions, objectives, alternative methods to accomplish objectives, and allocation of resources.
[40] Correll, "The EAF in Peace and War," 27, Davis, *Anatomy of a Reform*, 86, Deptula, interview, and Hebert, "Expeditionary Air Warriors," 27.

presented two years earlier, this time his thoughts on how to use the EAF as rationale for USAF force structure options resonated all the way up to the commander of ACC, General Hal Hornburg. The lack of resistance Deptula received in this iteration of the brief was primarily because fewer stakeholders were impacted; linking the EAF to force structure was more palatable for those in the CAF. Deptula noted the trend of using the EAF as rationale for force structure continued until 2005.[41]

In 2005, Moseley became CSAF and inherited a complex environment both inside and outside of the Beltway. Though Moseley referred to an F-22 force structure example in terms of an "AEF template" during an interview in May 2011, Deptula credits Moseley with using an "86 combat wing" structure to articulate force structure during his CSAF tenure.[42] Deptula further stated, "I think he's one of the best Chiefs we've had, [but] when Moseley came on board…he shifted away from using AEF as a force structure justification…tool and then embarked on this 86 wing structure."[43] The beginnings of the 86 combat wing structure can be traced to the 2006 QDR.

The 2006 QDR makes one mention of the 86 combat wing structure but provides little detail:

> To achieve the future joint force characteristics and build on progress to date, the Department plans to…Organize the Air Force around 86 combat wings (e.g., fighter, bomber, ISR/Battle Management/Command and Control, mobility, Air Operations Centers, Battlefield Airmen, other missions and Space/Missile) with emphasis on leveraging reachback to minimize forward footprints and expedite force deployments, while reducing Air Force end strength by approximately 40,000 full-time equivalent personnel with balanced cuts across the Total Force.[44]

This new method of force structure articulation introduced the term "combat wing equivalent" in hopes of capturing all USAF combat capabilities into three types of forces: strike, mobility, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR).[45] USAF officials argued at the time that presenting force structure in terms of combat wing

[41] Deptula, interview.
[42] Smith, "Shaping an Air Force," 59.
[43] Deptula, interview.
[44] Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 6 February 2006), 46-47.
[45] Adam J. Hebert, "Eighty-Six Combat Wings," *Air Force Magazine*, December 2006, 25.

equivalents would "more realistically determine the proper size of its force, identify strengths and weaknesses, and help regional commanders grasp the kinds of capabilities provided by Air Force units."[46] One interesting point is that the USAF in 2006 had 81 wings in its force, so the net effect would be an additional 5 wings despite the fact that the 2006 FYDP was inadequately resourced for the USAF to maintain the 81-wing force level in the status quo.[47]

An analysis of the 86 combat wing structure brings to light a number of concerns. First, Joint doctrine is capabilities based. For instance, if a COCOM wants localized air superiority over a geographic area, say, the Arabian Peninsula, he or she requests the capability they desire, not the platform, be it from an F-15C, F-22, AEGIS cruiser, etc. Moreover, because the USAF does not necessarily deploy an entire wing for every contingency, using a combat wing to describe capabilities makes little sense when often squadrons within wings are separately apportioned depending on the type of contingency. For instance, though the 44th and 67th Fighter Squadrons belong to the 18th Wing at Kadena AB, Japan, one squadron may be apportioned to a Theater Security Package (TSP) in the Middle East while the other deploys to Australia as part of a coalition exercise. Second, the 86 combat wing construct never defined the composition of a single combat wing. Furthermore, because this structure described combat wings in three separate categories, it proved impossible to define specific capabilities down to a single combat wing; they all had different organizational structures. Lastly, an explanation was never given for what made the 86 combat wing force structure model preferable over the strategy-to-task methodology used in the EAF.

Deptula continued, "My point, and I'm talking to [Lieutenant General] Ray Johns who's the XP at the time, [was] why 86, why not 76, why not 96, so immediately you begin to question numbers." A 2009 Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments study punctuated the lack of success of the 86 combat wing structure with the following observation:

> Although the 2006 QDR outlined a strong construct for thinking about the

[46] Hebert, "Eighty-Six Combat Wings," 26.
[47] Hebert, "Eighty-Six Combat Wings," 28.

> future, it further confused Air Force planning by suggesting an "86 combat wing" concept for characterizing its force structure. Unfortunately, the combat wing concept merely substituted one artificial construct for another. Thus, the Air Force today finds itself lacking adequate means of articulating its force structure in a bureaucratically useful, operationally-relevant, aggregated way. The Air Force should abandon the combat wing concept and adopt the AEF construct as the core of its future force planning methodology.[48]

With Moseley's abrupt departure as CSAF in June 2008, General Norton Schwartz took the USAF reins and led a force described by then Secretary of Defense Robert Gates as "one of my biggest headaches."[49] Gates brought in Schwartz because he believed the USAF "needed a change of leadership to bring a new perspective and especially to underscore the importance of accountability."[50] Schwartz laid out his five priorities as CSAF, two of which were loosely linked to the EAF concept: caring for families and modernization. Deptula gave a more pointed explanation when asked about Schwartz's effects on the EAF:

> General Schwartz comes in and what he does is try to adapt the AEF construct to better fit the Army's rotational scheme, which, I tell you, is an enormous mistake because there are fundamental differences between what you do in the Air Force…and the Army. General Schwartz eventually adjusted [AEF durations] so it was six months…There was no force structure rationale associated with AEF structure at that time.[51]

Though Schwartz's tenure as CSAF never linked force structure justification back to the EAF concept, he did initiate work towards a new construct known as "AEF Next."

One of the most common complaints Schwartz heard from Airmen was how there was more of a tendency to deploy alone instead of with the team they had trained with in garrison. This tendency meant that when deployed, the best Airmen could hope for was "'serendipitous' unit cohesion."[52] Schwartz continued, "my sense is that we need to recycle a bit back toward the more unit-based deployments that we had before the surge

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[48] Thomas P. Ehrhard, *An Air Force Strategy for the Long Haul* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2009), 56.
[49] Robert M. Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 239.
[50] Robert M. Gates as quoted in the Washington Post, "Gen. Norton Schwartz: Air Force Chief of Staff (since 2008)," http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/gen-norton-schwartz/gIQAPyWlMP_topic.html (accessed 12 April 2014).
[51] Deptula, interview.
[52] Amy McCullough, "What's Next for the AEF," *Air Force Magazine*, September 2012, 58-59.

period in Iraq and Afghanistan, where commanders and chiefs…deploy with their people and fight with them."

Bradley Higginbotham, Chief of the Plans Division in the AEF directorate at AFPC argued in 2012 that the AEF structure in place during the 2000s assumed the "Air Force's superior airpower would allow the service to go in, kill the enemy, and then come home as the Army and Marines took over the mission on the ground."[53] When that assumption never came to fruition, the continuous pull from future AEFs in addition to the "in-lieu-of" (ILO) taskings that sourced Airmen as replacements for individual Army manning shortfalls, the model became unsustainable. Major General Charles Lyon noted the potential for long-term impacts to the culture of the USAF due to ILO taskings:

> I can tell you that one of the things that I've worried about ever since I came back from Afghanistan is that when we send out airmen individually, or a couple at a time, and they see horrific things take place. They come back to an Air Force base, nobody there understands what they experienced, is aware of it, or can deal with it. I worry about that being a part of our identity and our culture…I saw in Afghanistan, that our airmen lost some of their culture while they're there. It's difficult to get it back. It takes time to get it back.[54]

In an attempt to address Lyon's concerns, AEF Next's sole purpose was to "focus on teaming, at the unit/installation level, and increase combat capability and unit cohesiveness."[55] Although Schwartz signed off on AEF Next in November 2011, a CORONA summit in June 2012 pushed back its implementation due to fears in adjusting deployment mechanisms during wartime.[56]

When Schwartz retired in August 2012, little substantive change had been made to what became of the EAF during Jumper's tenure as CSAF. Moseley's 86 combat wing proposal became a 72-75 combat wing proposal in the 2010 QDR, and was more

[53] McCullough, "What's Next for the AEF," 60.
[54] Major General Charles W. Lyon, interview by Dr. Niklaas A. Waller, 29 May 2013, transcript, 21, Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, VA.
[55] Mitch Gettle, "Air Force refines force presentation, generation," *Air Force Public Affairs Agency*, 16 November 2011, http://www.afpc.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123280247.
[56] McCullough, "What's Next for the AEF," 61.

representative of a budget than a strategy.[57] Although Schwartz recognized the value in returning predictability and teaming to modern-day AEF constructs, solutions never materialized. With respect to force structure, Schwartz oversaw a steady decline in USAF combat air power assets but never subscribed to a force structure model that articulated how the USAF achieved its numbers; it was as if the mismatch between force structure and requirements became accepted as "business as usual."

Conclusion

Much like it did the United States, the post-9/11 era put much operational and organizational stress on the USAF. Ryan's introduction of the EAF concept was not a panacea for combat air power. However, leaders such as Jumper, Cook, and Deptula, introduced how the concept could be used to articulate a strategy-to-task methodology in the USAF. In this form, USAF strategists could overlay the EAF concept onto national strategic guidance to discern the USAF's strategic outlook, its operational risks, and its tactical requirements. This transformation fostered the growth of the EAF concept as a strategic readiness indicator, a force-sizing methodology, a combat air power capability, and as a predictor for an Airman's deployment schedule.

In short, the EAF changed how the USAF thought about the strategic implications of air power. This change afforded the USAF an opportunity to educate inside and outside the organization of the USAF about how the service contributes to national security objectives and, more importantly, risks to national security objectives should USAF combat air power capabilities wane. Abandoned in 2005 in favor of "combat wing equivalents" and ad hoc deployment scheduling, the USAF became so adaptable that it lost its ability to articulate its force structure requirements and sacrificed the organizational identity of large parts of its Airmen.

[57] Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, February 2010), xvii.

Chapter 5

The Future of the AEF: 2013 and Beyond

> *I've long believed that air power, space power, and now aerospace power, are more about thinking and about ideas than they are about technology or hardware or systems or platforms or programs. Aerospace power is a state of mind.*
>
> *General Michael J. Dugan*
> *13th Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force*

As Operation NEW DAWN in Iraq drew to a close, the United States shifted its strategic weight of effort to ENDURING FREEDOM's operations in Afghanistan. Faced with longer individual and small team deployments, budget uncertainty, and the hurried force structure changes associated with it, the USAF struggled to conduct proactive strategic thought in a tactically reactive environment. General Mark Welsh III, the USAF CSAF, speaks of the need for "strategic agility; it's everything from a decision making process, to resourcing processes, to the acquisition process, to the ability to respond to a crisis, to how you deliver weapons on a battlefield."[1] The heart of Welsh's "strategic ability" lies in how the USAF is organized and presented. Like Schwartz, Welsh recognized how IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM had widespread consequences for how the USAF presents forces. Welsh claims his "intent now is, as we get back to, hopefully, a more stable rotational pattern and demand signal, [is to] go back to some of the precepts of that initial AEF construct."[2] A greater understanding of Welsh's version of the AEF illuminates whether the USAF has the framework in place to pursue "strategic agility."

Predictability for the Future

In a 2013 interview, Welsh noted that the intent behind Ryan's original EAF concept was "nothing more than a way to provide predictability and consistency" to

[1] General Mark A. Welsh III, chief of staff, U.S. Air Force (address, Center for Strategic & International Studies, Washington, DC, 27 March 2014), http://csis.org/event/military-strategy-forum-general-mark-a-welsh-III (accessed 28 March 2014).
[2] General Mark A. Welsh III as quoted in John A. Tirpak, "Washington Watch," *Air Force Magazine*, August 2013, 10.

Airmen who were deployed to "known contingency" operations.[3] While this comment seems to ignore the other component in Ryan's EAF concept, air power's combat capabilities, Welsh later acknowledged this piece of the EAF puzzle: "There are lots of other combatant commands that want the things that [the USAF] offer[s] who haven't gotten them for a while." Welsh also argued that when Operation ENDURING FREEDOM comes to an end, the demand for USAF capabilities would still be high. Though other COCOMs outside of CENTCOM have reduced their requests for air power in order to support the war effort, these requests will increase as operations in Afghanistan wind down. Welsh contended how the demand for air power "is not going to go away, it's just going to shift. There was a reason we had an AEF process before the big war started."[4]

Though Welsh cites the intent behind Ryan's EAF concept, both generals' policies regarding the concept are not identical. Thus far, Welsh's AEF policies seem to stress the predictability part of Ryan's EAF concept; Welsh is using the AEF to bring more stability to the life of Airmen. However, policy changes that reinvigorate the AEF as packaged set of air power capabilities as well as a strategic tool to articulate force structure are lacking. Colonel Steven Hart, Chief of War Planning and Policy Division (AF/A5XW) on the Air Staff, provided specifics on Welsh's AEF policy in an email in April 2014:

> AEF Next (which is now just the AEF) was approved by the CSAF in April of 2013. However, I want to make sure you understand what AEF Next was focused on and that it was designed to address the deficiencies with the Tempo Band system supporting Agile Combat Support (ACS) forces. There are four mission areas with supporting processes that essentially posture and schedule forces (CAF, MAF, SOF [special operations forces] and ACS). The CAF, MAF and SOF processes didn't change under this revision...primarily because each community has deeply rooted ways of doing business that are successful for them.[5]

Welsh's changes affect those Airmen that constitute the ACS forces. Per AFDD 1, "Agile Combat Support (ACS) is the ability to field, protect, and sustain Air Force

[3] Welsh III as quoted in Tirpak, "Washington Watch," 10.
[4] Welsh III as quoted in Tirpak, "Washington Watch," 10.
[5] Colonel Steven Hart, AF/A5XW, email message to the author, 1 April 2014.

forces across the ROMO [range of military options] to achieve joint effects."[6] ACS's sub-functions include preparing the battlespace, positioning, protecting, sustaining, and recovering the Total Force, and employing the combat support forces.[7] In short, these forces buttress USAF operations by providing health care, installation and infrastructure maintenance, acquisitions, financial, and logistics support, among other activities. AFI 10-401 details how ACS forces support the AEF:

> Agile Combat Support (ACS) underpins the ability of the AEF to provide force capabilities that can rapidly respond by creating, sustaining, and protecting all air and space power capabilities to accomplish mission objectives. ACS produces the combat support capabilities critical to decisive air and space power. By focusing on the expeditionary capabilities of ACS, expeditionary combat support (ECS) concepts assure AEFs are supported and are able to operate with a small support footprint and streamlined infrastructure requirements.[8]

ACS forces provide a most functionally diverse set of Airmen to support a spectrum of military operations from training to combat; the USAF could not operate without their support. In Operations NOBLE EAGLE, IRAQI FREEDOM, and ENDURING FREEDOM, since these Airmen were so functionally diverse, their skills were needed across the Joint environment. Moreover, because the capabilities of these Airmen are so diverse, it made them hard to "team" together (e.g., firefighters possess very different skills than chaplains) and thus made them vulnerable to deploy as individuals.

Compounding this situation is how the USAF sources and generates forces compared to its Joint partners. For flexibility, the USAF uses a to deploy forces vice deploying at the unit-level like the rest of the Joint force. AFI 10-401 states: "A UTC is a potential capability focused upon accomplishment of a specific mission that the military Service provides. It can consist of manpower force element (MFE) only, equipment (LOGDET) only, or both manpower and equipment."[9] So, for example, when a shortfall for a two-man K-9 dog team existed in a U.S. Army battalion deploying in support of

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[6] Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine, Organization, and Command*, 14 October 2011, 52.
[7] AFDD 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine, Organization, and Command*, 52-53.
[8] AFI 10-401, *Operations: Air Force Operations Planning and Execution*, 34.
[9] AFI 10-401, *Operations: Air Force Operations Planning and Execution*, 78.

ENDURING FREEDOM, the USAF had a mechanism in place to fill that requirement. Cognizant of the pitfalls in deploying individual or small teams of Airmen, AFI 10-401 states: "Generally, one and two person UTCs are discouraged unless they represent a stand-alone capability essential to support the warfighter."[10] In short, the functional diversity of ACS Airmen, the flexibility of the USAF deployment system, and the demand for specific capabilities to support the ground-centric strategies of IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM, created an environment that taxed the USAF's ACS forces. In 2009, General Schwartz divided these Airmen into various "tempo bands" determined by their career field. This action sought to provide some predictability for these habitually deployed personnel. In contrast to the 90-day, 1:4 dwell Ryan articulated in his concept of the EAF, Figure 13 shows how ACS Airmen since 2009 have deployed for 4 to 6-month durations on 1:1 to 1:5 dwells.

[10] AFI 10-401, *Operations: Air Force Operations Planning and Execution*, 78.

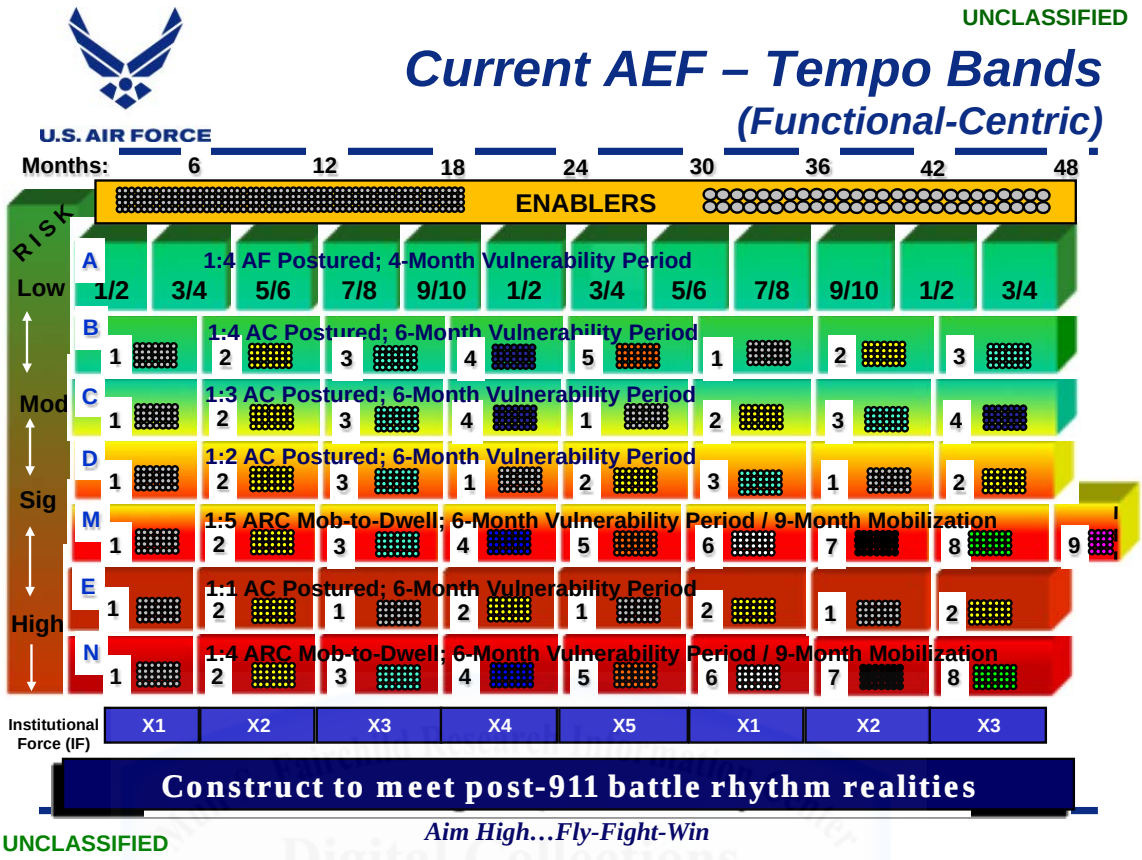

Figure 13. ACS Tempo Bands
Source: Brigadier General Timothy M. Ray, Director, Operational Planning, Policy, and Strategy, AF/A5X Briefing, Subject: Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) Next, Pentagon, 13 February 2013.

Jumper's words regarding the expeditionary organization of the USAF from Chapter 4 are important to recall here and highlight how the flexibility gained in categorizing every Airman in an AEF had second and third order effects. Recall from Chapter 4 that the U.S. Army is comprised of an Operational Army and a Generating Force; the Generating Force provides "reachback" capabilities to support the U.S. Army's combat arm, the Operational Army. As a percentage of force structure, the Generating Force makes up 25% of U.S. Army force structure and is largely unavailable for operational deployment.[11] As an expeditionary force, the USAF's "generating" and "operational" forces are the same; functionally, every Airman is doctrinally capable of deploying. Therefore, the longer IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM

[11] Colonel W. Benjamin Prescott, "Reorganizing the Generating Force" (Master's thesis, U.S. Army War College, 2010), 7, 14.

continued, the more the USAF was sacrificing in-garrison training and services that the ACS supported. It is also important to note that the USAF is the service that provides the preponderance of "committed in place" combat capabilities (e.g., processing, exploitation, and dissemination [PED] of ISR, GPS maintenance and management, remotely-piloted aircraft [RPA] operations, etc.) while in-garrison.[12] The strategic effect of the large amount of deployments the Air Staff and MAJCOM staffs were subjected to meant that the USAF was steadily losing its ability to advocate and articulate these and other issues that affected the long-term strategic management of air power.

Schwartz's AEF Next and Welsh's "AEF" or "AEF Teaming" represent organizational acknowledgement by the USAF that the flexibility espoused by the ACS forces' flexibility in "tempo banding" was more conducive to functional identity than organizational identity; "tempo banding" seemed to forget that Airmen were Airmen first, and their job function second.[13] The Air Staff concluded that the "USAF has exercised flexibility to efficiently provide exquisite airpower [but that] there is not a universal battle rhythm that meets the requirements of our entire Air Force."[14] Ironically, the difference in how ACS forces deploy and how the operations side of the USAF deploys was acknowledged prior to IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM. Although the rationale was not as thorough as the Air Staff's conclusions on AEF Teaming in 2013, Deptula's FEAF briefing in 2001 recognized inherent differences in support versus operations deployments:

> EAF Foundation consists of *support* capabilities not directly assigned to AEFs. This includes acquisition, logistics, health care, education and training. Due to the expeditionary nature of the Air Force, individuals normally assigned to an EAF Foundation organization can still be assigned to an AEF and deploy to a contingency operations during their three-month eligibility period.[15]

Much as Ryan brought predictability to NORTHERN WATCH and SOUTHERN WATCH for USAF operators, Schwartz and Welsh's AEF Teaming appears to be doing

[12] Colonel Walter H. Ward, Director, LeMay Center/Wargaming, interview by the author, 27 February 2014.
[13] Ward, interview, and Charles Dodd, Chief, AEF Plans & Policy Branch, email message to the author, 2 April 2014.
[14] Ray, briefing, 13 February 2013.
[15] Deptula, briefing, 14 August 2001.

the same for ACS forces. While the USAF is seeking to recover from some of the negative effects of "tempo bands," other positive effects can be noted from the USAF's AEF experience in the post-9/11 era.

Organizational Identity and Culture

As noted in Chapter 3, one of the drivers behind Ryan's EAF was to spark a change in USAF organizational identity and culture. Ryan wanted to "unify" the USAF through a framework for expeditionary operations that bonded functionally different Airmen into a team that executed *the* mission: providing combat air power. When asked to assess the AEF's impact on the USAF's organizational identity and culture since 9/11, Looney concluded:

> It's had a significant impact on our Air Force and a very positive impact…First off, every single person in the Air Force now considers themselves a warrior. They really do – I don't care if you're a cook, I don't care if you're a finance guy, if you're a contracting guy, personnelist, whatever – you now consider yourself a warfighter…And they are in the warfighting business. And the reason they do that is because they now are in the midst of it. When we were in this garrison mentality working out of forward-operating bases in Europe and the Pacific…it was an entirely different mindset. Now, we all go, we find ourselves in the middle of nowhere, we're surrounded by hostiles, and they don't really care if you're a pilot or a cook – you're an American and you're a target…It created a culture of warfighting in our Air Force…and everyone was able to identify that…And we are identified, maybe grudgingly so, by the other services as an expeditionary force.[16]

Przybyslawski offered a similar response:

> I think it's made us leaner and more responsive. It has created the mindset that it's not about the Combined Federal Campaign, it's about combat forces and supporting the war effort. It put the warrior mentality into the Air Force. I just read something; they were re-engineering the AEF construct and it was…back to the future. It was going to be what it always is, trying to create the understanding that there's a schedule and there's a process and this is where you fit in it. I think it's all been very good for the Air Force. We supported the Army and did what we had to do. We didn't put up barriers and did it the way it was supposed to be done.[17]

[16] Looney, interview.
[17] Przybyslawski, interview.

When compared with the pre-9/11 vision for how the AEF was to affect USAF organizational culture and identity, Jumper's words in 1998 are quite similar to Looney and Przybyslawski's:

> In this culture, you have to get back to some basic institutional values. Every airman is a warrior. Every airman is a sensor. These basic institutional values say we will be qualified on a weapon. We will be able to keep up and maintain mobility bags. We will understand force protection, right down to the task level. We will have in our wallets the card showing the specific things that are expected of each of us in peace and in a crisis. And we will provide the continuity and training that makes each and every airman understand the basics of air and space planning and employment.[18]

Clearly, the AEF has changed the organizational identity and culture of the USAF. Though the AEF is but one of many forces that shape organizational identity and culture in the USAF, it is perhaps the most recognized force presentation framework amongst Airmen. Although "AEF" has become a mainstay in the USAF lexicon, Jumper's call for every Airman to understand the basics of air and space planning and employment must not be forgotten.

Force Structure and Air Power Articulation

The nexus between air power planning and employment and the strategic use of air power lies in force structure. Though Deptula's FEAF brief suggests that the AEF, in addition to being a predictable deployment model for Airmen, was supposed to help procure and modernize the USAF, the events of the past 13 years suggest otherwise. As the insurgency in Iraq grew and the fight in Afghanistan dragged on, the narrative surrounding the USAF's force structure plans revolved around perceptions of USAF leadership choosing F-22s over "the current fight" along with suggestions that the USAF dragged its feet on a number of ISR initiatives. Long looked at as the service that reveres technology and its new "toys," the USAF must use the AEF framework to provide a capabilities-based approach to force structure. The USAF must become better at using the AEF to articulate capabilities vice "buckets" of platforms. For example, while Figure

[18] General John P. Jumper, address to the Air Force Association's Air Warfare Symposium, Orlando, FL, 26 February 1998.

14 clearly describes how the USAF's CAF force structure is the oldest and smallest it has ever been, USAF strategists must be able to communicate that deficiencies in numbers

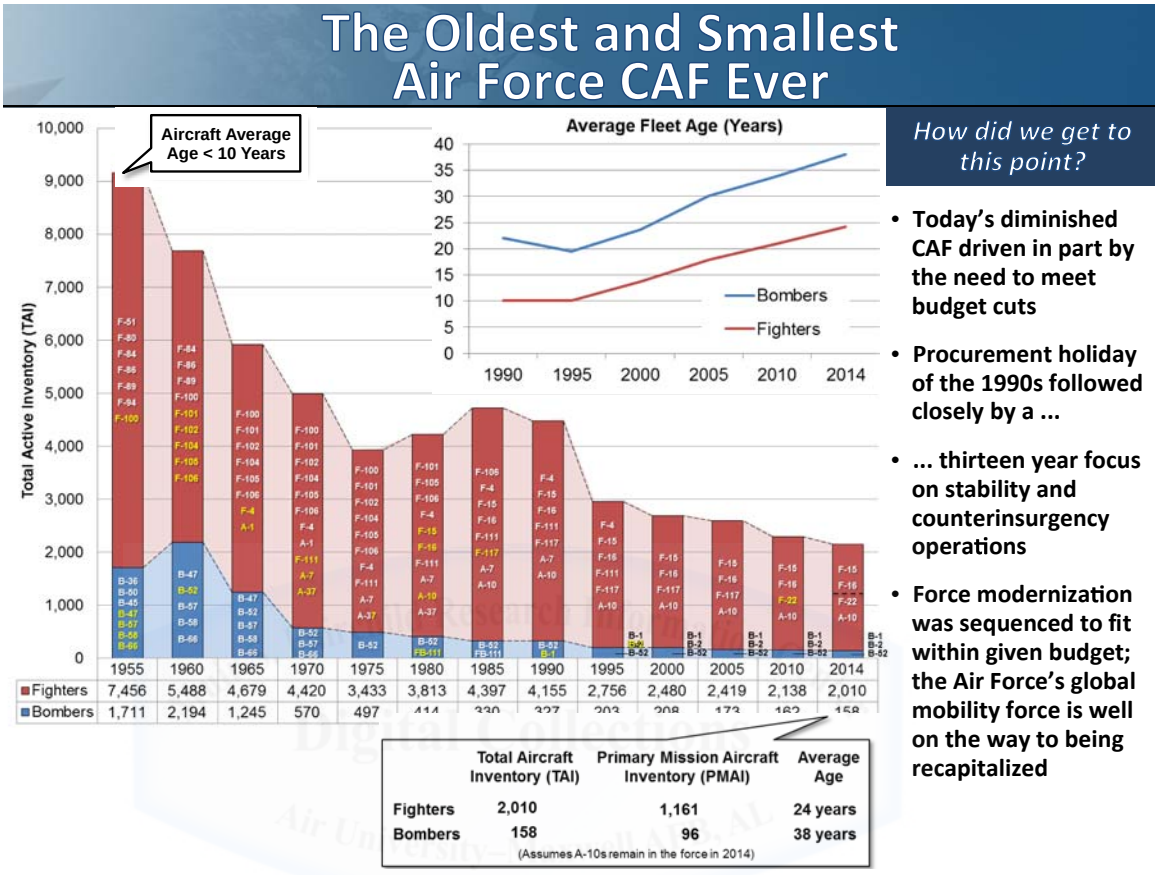

Figure 14. CAF Trends on Age and Size
Source: David Deptula and Mark Gunzinger, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments Briefing, Subject: Thinking About a Balanced Future Combat Air Force, Washington, DC, 14 April 2014, http://www.afa.org/mitchellinstitute1/Presentations/ (accessed 14 April 2014).

translates into a lack of future Joint capabilities and capacities for COCOMs. Briefing slides like these not only need to articulate risk to the service, but also risk to the effective execution of the NMS and NSS. Furthermore, a 2009 Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments study argued:

> The Air Force should also explore how its AEFs could be tied more closely to DoD's "steady-state security posture," the vignettes that describe the day-to-day scenarios, advisory and partnership building efforts, and long-duration peace-making and peace-keeping efforts that will most likely continue to exert the greatest stress on the Air Force. By testing a current force against those vignettes, its own historical

> deployment patterns, and larger conventional contingency scenarios, Air Force leaders can explore configurations that would provide more relevant force sizing and composition models.[19]

Deptula also noted how the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan detracted from the AEF's use as a tool for force structure:

> There was no force structure rationale associated with AEF structure at that time but I think we need to go there. Right now, we have no fundamental force sizing mechanism for our force structure. Nobody can explain to you, or justify, why in our force structure plans there's 2,250 fighters and that that ought to be our target. Well who says? Or why we have 1,763 F-35s as our target goal. Now the dirty little secret on that is that it's a one-to-one replacement for the A-10s and the F-16s when the requirement was established back in the mid-90s – which is a really stupid rationale.[20]

Deptula later concluded:

> At some point I'm hoping that…in this town [Washington, DC]…we start talking about strategy, we start talking about priorities, we start talking about our national security strategy, and what's required to actually execute it…From a U.S. Air Force perspective, the way that we force structure to contribute to those enduring tenants of national security strategy are through these organizational constructs known as Aerospace Expeditionary Forces.[21]

Jumper also noted that the USAF has gotten away from a capabilities-based concept of operations (CONOPS) for force structure:

> You have to have a concept of operations that describes how you address the strategic issues and how you configure yourself to address those. In the case that we're living with right now, we have a stated strategy that we're going to do a pivot to the Pacific. What the heck does that mean? If we had an AEF construct, it would mean that half of our AEF bucket construct would [have] the ability to deploy forces that could become a conventional deterrent option for the President and be in close contact with the Navy on how to coordinate those activities. Most anything that happens in the Pacific…is going to be an air and navy show…There's a thousand things that you have to do right down to the tactical level to prepare yourself for that and I don't know that we do any of them...To the

[19] Ehrhard, *An Air Force Strategy for the Long Haul*, 56.
[20] Deptula, interview.
[21] David Deptula, address to the Mitchell Institute, Washington, DC, 14 April 2014, http://www.afa.org/mitchellinstitute1/Presentations/ (accessed 14 April 2014).

> extent that you can't fill out the [AEF] packages with a balanced capability, than that starts to dictate your priorities for force structure.[22]

Undoubtedly, the defense budget and USAF force structure are intertwined. While the intricacies of the budget are outside the scope of this study, what is germane to the symbiotic relationship between force structure and the budget is how logically strategists can articulate what capabilities are required to fulfill the objectives of the NMS and NSS. Without an ability to articulate those capabilities and then link them to force structure, strategists will artificially impose cognitive restraints long before the budget will.

Strategic Narrative

Much like Airmen are directed to understand what AEF they are assigned to, the USAF must reinvigorate processes that teach Airmen to what end the AEF is used towards fulfilling the demands of national strategy. For example, many Airmen do not understand why the USAF is divesting itself of the A-10 fleet. While budget pressures accelerated the USAF's divestiture timeline, Welsh and other USAF senior leaders are on record as saying that even if A-10 monies were reintroduced into the budget, the USAF would use them to fill higher strategic priorities. Critics of the USAF's decision argue, most recently Senator John McCain (R-AZ), the force is turning its back on the close air support (CAS) mission. Offended by the notion, Welsh argues the best way to prevent combat deaths on the ground is through air superiority, precision strike on an enemy's operational reserves, and then, as a last resort, CAS. This example highlights how Airmen must become agile enough to not only be the best at their function, but also to understand the strategic vision of their service. Airmen should familiarize themselves with the two faces of the AEF: predictability and the strategic rationale for combat air power. The AEF is about much more than when it is time for an Airman to pack his bags again.

Conclusion

[22] Jumper, interview.

Welsh argues the USAF must find a way to articulate that it is more than just an enabling force. The premise of his argument stems from the fact that the NCA authority and the Joint services take for granted key USAF contributions that are always assumed to be there; these include air superiority, globally integrated ISR, and air mobility to name a few. In fact, the framework for such an articulation tool does exist within the EAF concept. With IRAQI FREEDOM in the history books and ENDURING FREEDOM coming to an end, the USAF needs to rediscover the dual nature of the original EAF concept. Ryan's EAF was organizationally introspective yet also had the capacity to deliberately project its capabilities towards the strategic end state of the NSS. ALLIED FORCE showed that Ryan's model was not a panacea for air power. However, while some shortcomings of the EAF were noticeable throughout its growth, the concept was meant to foster a journey towards an efficient use of air power, not a prescribed solution. The USAF's post-9/11 use of the AEF suggests that the organization has used the model to reflect on its Airmen, and not how the service fits into the strategic capabilities of the United States.

Conclusions

> *Strategy is the craft of figuring out which purposes are both worth pursuing and capable of being accomplished.*
>
> *Richard P. Rumelt*

> *In order to make effective decisions, you must articulate them to begin with.*
>
> *Peter Schwartz*

This study is a chronological presentation of the USAF's evolution in the employment of expeditionary air power. The USAF's expeditionary air power experience began with the CASF in the 1950s and, while tactically proficient, the USAF was operationally and strategically confused as it dealt with the United States' strategic transition from massive retaliation to flexible response. Jolted by the end of the Cold War, success in Operation DESERT STORM, and the new strategic direction created by the Clinton Administration, the USAF responded with the creation of the AEF. This organizational response helped the USAF discover how combat air power can be strategically effective yet organizationally efficient. Later in the 1990s, AEF matured into the EAF concept that projected combat air power but also brought predictability to Airmen. This concept transformed USAF organizational culture into an expeditionary one and gave Airmen a way to rethink how the EAF could be used to better articulate USAF force structure and its contributions to national security. This transformation revealed how the EAF concept, in addition to serving as a capability and predictability tool, can be used to explain the strategic implications of combat air power. However, in the post-9/11 era, the USAF became uncomfortable with the EAF as a strategy articulation instrument and instead transitioned to the "combat wing equivalent." Currently, the USAF uses a subset of the original EAF concept to focus inward on solving the conditions under which Airmen deploy.

The future of the USAF is an uncertain one. Fiscal constraints, sexual assault, questions on the efficacy of the nuclear enterprise, and an uncertain global strategic environment are just some of the issues that detract from the service's core premise of

how it should organize itself to maximize combat power in support of the larger national military strategy. This study traced the roots of the AEF concept from the CASF to AEF Teaming to conclude that the ideas Ryan espoused in the EAF should not be forgotten and abandoned by the USAF.

Almost from its inception, the USAF has used its expeditionary air power experiences to shape its organizational identity and to articulate what capabilities it brings to the Joint fight. This journey has not always been a smooth one; Weyland fought SAC's nuclear fascinations, Warden's studies that championed the strategic efficiency of air power met years of organizational resistance, and the strategy-to-task methodology Deptula used to articulate USAF force structure never took hold. This historical study has revealed that the air power journey the EAF was created to inspire has been becalmed by events in the post-9/11 era. How should the USAF organize itself to maximize combat power? This study concludes the USAF should harness its historical past to realize that now is the time to remember its expeditionary air power journey and reclaim the EAF for what it was intended to be: an efficient way to project combat air power, a force-sizing methodology, a strategic readiness indicator, and a predictor of an Airman's deployment schedule.

Topics for Future Study

This study illuminates a number of topics that should be pursued for the betterment of the USAF and larger U.S. national security interests. Detailed in Chapter 4, the USAF is organized as an expeditionary force whereas the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy are organized via a deployable operational force and a non-deployable supporting force. A study comparing and contrasting these often competing organizational techniques may discern whether or not U.S. national interests are better served by the USAF's expeditionary organization. Strategy is the culmination of all national IOPs working in tandem toward a desired strategic end state. While this study focused on the USAF as a subset of the military IOP, a further study may help articulate how the USAF, and specifically its force structure, contributes to the United States' economic IOP. A major theme of this study is concerned with how the USAF can better articulate the strategic character of combat air power and link it to force structure requirements. Additional

historical study could explore the pervasive trends of past military declines following a MTW and identify where the smallest amount of strategic risk lies when the DoD must adhere to budgetary cuts, such as those mandated by sequestration. A study such as this may help the USAF discern which type of drawdown, whether of people or aircraft inventory, is easier to recover from when the next conflict presents itself. Lastly, this study highlighted how the expeditionary organization of the USAF negatively impacted in-garrison training, services, and infrastructure when ACS Airmen were used to support ILO taskings from other services. If the USAF believes it will need to support ILO taskings during future MTWs, the USAF would be wise to study if its current CONUS basing plan is appropriate for its expeditionary organization.

Recommendations

Confucius said, "The beginning of wisdom is calling things by their right names."[1] The USAF has muddied the concept of the EAF by using one acronym to describe the spectrum of the EAF concept: AEF. Since the inception of the EAF concept, the USAF has used the acronym "AEF" as the Air and Space Expeditionary Force, the Aerospace Expeditionary Force, the AEF Task Force, AEF Next, and AEF Teaming, to name a few. Doctrinally, AFPD 10-4 defines the AEF as a force generation construct that meets COCOM requirements. Unfortunately, this definition constrains the strategic framework the EAF concept was designed to foster. Therefore, the concepts behind the EAF span the tactical, operational, and strategic spectrum of air power and should not be limited by a single "AEF" acronym. **The USAF should reject the term "AEF" to define when Airmen deploy, and use it strictly as a way to articulate how the USAF presents forces for combat.** Re-categorizing Airmen into "Deployment Windows" would give Airmen the same predictability as the current AEF model does, but would reconcile status quo confusion regarding whether the AEF is more about Airmen or more about the articulation of combat air power. This recommendation would bring coherence back to Airmen who are asked, "What is an AEF?" An operationally thoughtful response

[1] Quoted in Colonel Charles M. Westenhoff, *Military Air Power: A Revised Digest of Air Power Opinions and Thoughts* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2007), 239.

could then answer with: "An AEF is how the USAF presents combat air power" and not, "The AEF is when I deploy." Clearly, this transformation will not occur overnight.

Since the USAF has constrained the EAF concept for over a decade, rebranding the AEF will take time to take hold. As such, **the USAF should educate the force on how the AEF presents forces for air combat.** Much of Welsh's tenure as CSAF has revolved around telling the USAF's "story." This initiative shows how Welsh is cognizant of how strategic messaging inside the USAF is just as important as it is outside the organization. Airmen should be the best ambassadors of air power; an initiative like this will simplify, categorize, and clarify to what end the USAF uses the AEF to meet the strategic needs of the United States. Internally, Airmen can use this education process to reclaim USAF organizational identity that has atrophied as a result of extended deployments that relieved U.S. Army shortfalls. Indeed, the ability for Airmen "to develop the capacity to change requires a high degree of shared worldview, and a mutual commitment to change."[2] In addition to bolstering organizational culture, an AEF education initiative will create a cohort of Airmen who use reasoned judgment to question assumptions and thereby promote the evolution of air power. The Vietnam War, for instance, taught the USAF that the more Airmen lose the capability to think about air power, the more likely it is that air power will be misapplied in the future. Other recommendations detail how the USAF should strategically message outside the USAF.

The USAF does not have a sound force structure articulation strategy. Whether in terms of "combat wing equivalents" or using the F-35 as a one-to-one replacement for 4th generation fighter aircraft, the USAF has struggled in communicating that it is more than an enabling force. **Building on the AEF as a model for force presentation, the USAF should use the AEF as a strategic construct to articulate force structure requirements.** Using the AEF in this manner links strategy (how USAF force structure supports the NMS) to task (how the USAF presents forces for air combat). Just saying that status quo USAF aircraft inventory is the smallest and oldest it has been in the service's history is not enough. The USAF must articulate *why* the force should be recapitalized in terms of *risk to the NMS*. For example, the USAF has a stated

[2] Schwartz, *The Art of the Long View*, 223.

requirement for somewhere around 80 long-range strike bombers. The USAF needs to explain that if it is to posture itself to "successfully conduct two nearly simultaneous" MTWs, it requires 174 long-range strike bombers; one 12-jet squadron for each AEF, 25 percent for test and training, and 20 percent for backup and attrition.[3] Just as important, the USAF must be able to explain how operational and strategic risk increases the more force structure requirements are not met. For instance, if policy makers assume that a Persian Gulf War-like air campaign occurs in the future, the USAF should be able to succinctly articulate how the percentage of the force used to conduct a campaign like that in the future is substantially higher than what was used in 1991. The implication of this comparison may show that, in fact, the force structure of the USAF cannot conduct two nearly simultaneous MTWs. This strategic anecdote may not necessarily translate into a force structure solution for the USAF; however, it formulates the problem in terms of risk to national security objectives instead of risk to the USAF's "latest toys."[4]

Finally, **the USAF should frame the AEF as an exemplar of how the U.S. strategic interests laid out in the NMS and NSS are secured through strategic access.** What makes the AEF so effective as a strategic mechanism is that it uses the *efficient* application of combat power to strike a balance between efficiency and effectiveness in order to achieve the strategic objectives of the United States. The speed, rapidity, and flexibility of the AEF provide the United States with a strategic agility that spans the spectrum of military functions, from shaping the environment to combat operations. The USAF must remember why the EAF concept was used to transform the USAF of the late 1990s. The EAF was about more than the combat capability of air power and predictability for the USAF's Airmen. The EAF provided a framework that recognized the changing global strategic environment, the adjustments made to the NMS and NSS due to this change, and the transformation the USAF needed to undergo to serve the national interests. The USAF in the post-9/11 era has used the nomenclature of the EAF to look inwardly at how Airmen have been affected by NOBLE EAGLE, ENDURING FREEDOM, and IRAQI FREEDOM but has failed to use the concept to look outwardly.

[3] Deptula and Gunzinger, briefing, 14 April 2014.
[4] Julian E. Barnes, "Pentagon Toils to Build a Bomber on a Budget," *Wall Street Journal*, 3 November 2013, http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304384104579141982099354454 (accessed 15 April 2014).

In this regard, the USAF must reinvigorate the EAF's utility by using it to think about how the service must strategically evolve to meet future U.S. security challenges.

Appendix A

1. What, in your opinion, is “expeditionary air power”?

2. Please describe your contribution to the development of the AEF concept.

3. What were the major milestones in the evolution of the AEF concept?

4. Were there decisions made during your USAF career that had an adverse impact on the development of the AEF concept?

5. What has been the long-term impact of the AEF concept on the USAF in terms or organization, culture, and identity?

6. How do you view the current USAF organization and presentation of forces? Have they adequately equipped the USAF to face current challenges?

7. What has been the effect of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on the USAF’s presentation of forces?

8. What future role(s) do you see for expeditionary air power?

9. If political and fiscal constraints were not an issue, what would you change about current USAF structure and organization, and how would deploy those forces for combat?

10. Is there anything you would like to add that I have missed with the above questions?

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