

FROM THE EDITOR

As a reader of the journal, you are an active participant in the ongoing development of the ideas that fill these pages. The articles herein contain propositions that demand engagement, both as a supporter and as a critic. The 15 articles in our inaugural issue cover a broad range of strategic topics of concern to Airmen, Guardians, and others invested in national and international security as they relate to airpower and spacepower. We hope you find much with which to grapple. This issue begins with leading voices from the US Air Force and US Space Force, commentaries and perspectives intended to ground the journal in its airpower and spacepower foundations. In future issues, scholarly contributions will engage national and international security challenges and will explicitly highlight their relevance to airpower and spacepower.

The inaugural issue of *Æther: A Journal of Strategic Airpower & Spacepower* has been in development for over six months. The journal team, from editors to typesetters to illustrators, has worked tirelessly to produce this volume, and I am exceedingly grateful for the many hours of hard work involved. Similarly, I want to thank the authors, without whom we would have no journal. Their support and professionalism are unequalled, and we appreciate the many hours of drafting and revising they spent on their contributions to this issue.

Chief of Staff of the Air Force General CQ Brown Jr., headlines the journal with a call to the Air Force to meet the challenges of the next few decades in the accelerated manner in which it has for the duration of its existence to date—from propellers to jet-powered aircraft in the proverbial blink of an eye. Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne Bass, mindful of the criticality of our force and their families, advises our Airmen to be vigilant against influence operations waged by adversaries, recognizing information warfare for what it is and actively combatting it.

The forum then shifts to the critical concern of logistics, the importance of which has made a resurgence across the nation as a whole due to recent months and years of a global pandemic and compromised supply chains. Commander of US Transportation Command General Jacqueline Van Ovost pledges that to meet the complex and dynamic nature of future challenges to national security, US Transportation Command will reemphasize maneuver and evolve how that concept is applied across domains. In a thought experiment, the Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategy,

Integration, and Requirements Lieutenant General S. Clinton Hinote looks to a fictitious but possible future scenario of defeat, calling on the Air Force to implement necessary changes to avoid this outcome. Specifically, he emphasizes space and air defense by deterrence, rebuilding key alliances, and rebuilding our aerospace nation and that of our Allies and partners.

Turning to spacepower, Deputy Commander of US Space Command Lieutenant General John Shaw, Major Jean Purgason, and Captain Amy Soileau delve into the significance of the designation of space as a military area of responsibility. They highlight four propositions and propose new terminology that will help guide the development of the military stewardship of this domain, ensuring its relevance to everyone. The Joint Staff J3 Vice Director of Operations Major General Dagvin R. M. Anderson and US Air Forces Europe/US Air Forces Africa Director of Plans, Programming, and Analysis Brigadier General Jason Hinds take us through an analysis of the lessons learned from Joint Task Force Quartz. They find that as the Air Force develops new operational concepts, command relationships must be built upon centralized command, distributed control, and decentralized execution: in short, mission command.

Retired Lieutenant General David Deptula, director of the Billy Mitchell Institute at the US Air Force Academy, closes the “Leading Voices” forum, arguing that as the service embarks on its massive evolution from a combined air and space operations center-focused structure to more agile and disbursable command and control structures, it must immediately implement the architecture for the command and control this new system will require.

In the first article in the second forum, “The Fine Print,” Heather Venable pulls on threads introduced by General Brown, Lieutenant General Hinote, and Lieutenant General Deptula, observing that calls to accelerate change or lose provide brief nods to concepts and ideas but inherently privilege more technological solutions. She asks, even if we can innovate or adapt, does that mean we should? The absence of a sound strategy makes innovation or adaptation a questionable proposition at best. Marybeth Ulrich alerts readers to a general decline in civics knowledge in recent decades across US society and its correlative effect on Airmen and Guardians in the service today. She observes that the 75th anniversary of the Department is the critical time to recommit to a democratic ethos preferencing service members’ obligations to the oath of office above personal interests and shares an innovative program at the US Air Force Academy designed to address this.

The forum continues with a contribution by Everett Dolman that discusses the notion of space as a warfighting domain. He heralds the long-overdue declaration of the military domain, noting the implications for force structure, budget decisions, and public and international perceptions, and what this means for the culture of the nation’s newest military service. Principally, he explores the role military spacepower plays in the larger context of civil and commercial spacepower. Karen Guttieri concludes the forum, bringing it back full circle to notions raised by General Brown and CMSAF Bass. To win against our near-peer adversaries, the Department, through a fully developed interdisciplinary professional military education curriculum, must develop and

promote strategists, growing an officer corps that can overcome vulnerabilities and seize opportunities—execute a new way of war—in the cyberspace domain and information environment.

The third forum, “The Test of Time,” invites back to the journal pages leading elder statesmen of airpower. Robert Pape updates his key airpower theory promulgated in *Bombing to Win*, contending that effective airpower lies not so much in technology, balance of forces, civ-mil relations, or command and control over forces but instead turns fundamentally on understanding the enemy. John Warden posits that as the United States prepares for war with a near-peer competitor, the best course toward victory involves an accepted and practiced methodology for developing a high-resolution, unequivocal strategy inculcated by the principles of parallel war and strategic paralysis.

The forum closes with Mark Clodfelter who discusses his 2006 framework as a method of analysis for the different applications of airpower. He identifies five key variables that affect the ability of a distinct application of airpower to achieve political success, namely, the nature of the enemy, the enemy’s way of war, the combat environment, the magnitude of military controls, and political objectives.

Our issue concludes with a new permanent forum that aims to reengage our Allies and partners, critical to our national security and the promotion and perpetuation of democratic institutions and global stability. “From Our Friends” features a reprint of a recently published chapter penned by Royal Air Force Air Vice-Marshal Johnny Stringer, most recently Director of Strategy for UK Strategic Command. AVM Stringer examines key events in the last decade of airpower employment and finds the West and its allies are at an inflection point in the employment and utility of airpower and spacepower—we can no longer dictate all the terms of the debate.

We are grateful for your continued support of the journal. To the next 75 years!
~The Editor

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