Global Strike Task Force

Logistics: The Task Force Enabler

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Editorial Abstract: The authors have developed an innovative approach to logistics support of the Global Strike Task Force concept of operations. This paper outlines modification of the AF's wing structure, deployment processes and automated information systems to facilitate the seamless transition from an in-garrison peacetime role through deployment and sustainment support of steady state other contingency support tasking.

With the advent of the Global Strike Task Force Concept of Operations (CONOPS), General Jumper has in effect issued a challenge to the logistics community. How can the logistics community position itself to facilitate rapid force deployment and sustainment?[1] The purpose of this article is to raise the bar and propose a logistics planning strategy essential to prepare, deploy and sustain *any* Expeditionary Aerospace Force.[2] To this end, we must: 1) Examine how we organize, train and equip personnel to fully realize the potential of the expeditionary aerospace task force conops. 2) Examine how automated systems can be transformed to support this new strategy. 3) Examine ways to analyze logistics data in proposed deployment libraries. So where is AF logistics planning efforts today?

Over the years AF logistics has become reactive and has abdicated much of its deployment planning functions; relying instead on operational planners to request needed support. This leads to the inefficient utilization of logistics support violating basic logistics principles such as economy of scale. Failing to capitalize on synergistic effect logistics can have on successful operations planning and theater combat support. A contributing to the uneconomical utilization of combat support rises from how the AF views and executes its logistic support. To remain a viable force enabler logistics must transform itself from a reactive support posture to a predicative logistics support posture

Contrary to popular opinion, logistics is *not* about moving and storing parts or building tents or communications infrastructure.[3] Logistics represents a complete system of support. Properly prepared, deployed and employed logistics support is capable of increasing the amount of combat capability deployed forward. Predictive logistics not only increases support to combat forces forward but can also reduce the amount of airlift needed to provide support. Logistics analysis must be included in preliminary beddown assessments to take full advantage of opportunities in theater logistics weighing the optimal balance between operational bed down requirement and optimal logistics solutions. There will always be trade-offs to consider however, if the logistics' solution could actually support an additional wing (72 aircraft) in theater wouldn't that enhance our combat capability? How could this be accomplished? How fast and at what cost? We need to start with how the Air Force is organized.

Air Force units are organized in a wing structure. Originally deemed as the smallest, deployable self-sufficient unit in the AF, wings by and large are not currently tasked to deploy as such. Normally fighter and/or bomber squadrons, as opposed to wings, provide the supported (combat) capability[4] that would be deployed forward. Additional Combat Support Squadrons (CSS) and/or Base Operating Support (BOS) are added to provide essential support-- beans, bullets and bombs.

According to AF Doctrine Document 2, Organization and Employment of Aerospace Force, "The Air Force component in a joint force will organize as an Aerospace Expeditionary Task Force (ASETF). The ASETF is a scalable, tailorable organization…)". With this being the case, *how* do in garrison wings organize, train and equip to prepare forces to transition seamlessly into the task force structure described above?[5] Currently the Air Force divides itself into "buckets" of capability lacking any type of comprehensive force structure, combat force projection analysis, combat support sustainment rates, deployment rates, airlift requirements, et cetera. Portions of capability are pulled from these buckets and deployed forward as Aerospace Expeditionary Forces (AEFs). These AEFs have little or no opportunity to train and develop as a cohesive unit prior to arriving at their deployed location. In fact, between sixty-five to over one hundred locations were tasked to provide personnel to create and sustain many of the Forward Operating Locations (FOLs) the Air Force currently supports. As forces rotate into and return from the theater, additional locations are tasked at the same rate to replace this support. This is referred to as "swiss-cheesing" the force. The longer the rotations are sustained the weaker the remainder of the force becomes. Additionally, creating an ad hoc combat support organization has other adverse affects as well.

Currently the largest individual portion of the AEF to deploy forward is interestingly the operational flying squadrons. To their credit, operators learned the value of unit cohesion long ago and have organized and deploy in this manner. It may well be time for the rest of the Air Force to follow their lead and refine the wing structure to include sufficient resources to deploy the wing and retain some limited, residual capability at home station. Deploying an entire wing (72 Primary Assigned Aircraft (PAA)) is a much more efficient use of logistics support and provides additional advantages as well. Deploying truly independent wings is a lesson learned during Vietnam and is easily quantifiable today.

> *During the early stages of the war, independent squadrons with their support Base Operating Support (BOS) where deployed into the theater. This organizational construct of truly independent fighter squadrons was proved to be logistically wasteful to maintain.[6] This policy was quickly changed to the deployment of independent wings. This strategy proved to be a much more efficient use of logistics support as incremental increases in the Base Operating Support (BOS) proved sufficient to support much larger numbers of combat aircraft. Today there are additional gains to be achieved by deploying entire wings forward.*

Current logistics support deployed into the theater are sourced from across the United States and from around the world. The Air Force organizes these capabilities in the form of Unit Type Codes (UTCs). Unfortunately, these UTCs are thrown together into ad hoc units that exist only

on paper as part of the Time Phased Force Deployment List (TPFDL). Since the ad hoc unit is not actually a unit until tasked to develop, leaders at every level are denied the opportunity to train and develop with or even assess his or her "unit". All benefits normally associated with unit development, cohesion, training, support and espirit de corps which are enjoyed by the aviation UTCs are violated due to the way support UTCs are scheduled. UTC development is an art. We must treat it as such. When properly developed, flexibility and responsiveness can be designed into the UTC construct. This is not the case in most UTCs today.

Properly sized and prioritized, BOS should be established as a fully modular, stackable *generic* capability based not on a specific type of aircraft but on the number of personnel supported. This capability should provide full spectrum logistics support based on the size, duration, risk and operating environment of any mission. In additional to this generic BOS construct, there is a need to develop specific combat support packages capable of providing mission/aircraft specific support (i.e. B-2 aircraft shelters). These additive packages will be coupled to the BOS force modules (FMs) as the beddown and theater planning "matures". Initial BOS and additive packages will be focused on establishing essential services only. This would minimize combat support's initial lift requirements in order to maximize combat forces deployed forward. This serves as an important combat force enabler capability as aerospace forces "shield" the build up of US ground forces.

To facilitate this essential movement, UTCs must be created individually as modular, stackable capabilities. Multiple UTCs may then be in turn grouped into larger modular, stackable capabilities known as Force Modules. With FMs then being organized into independent Aerospace Expeditionary Task Forces (ASETF) as described in AFDD 2. ASETFs should be similarly designed as modular, stackable "theater sized" capability. Proving ultimate flexibility regardless of the size and duration of tasking. This is do-able today simply by refining AF scheduling and incorporating logistics planning principles to the force development.

In fact, there is evidence of a *de facto* ASETF in existence today. It was created as a result of each functional[7] assessing each location and selecting the same UTCs (over and over again). Recognition and refinement of this de facto task force construct must be thoroughly conducted. Additionally, this capability can be conducted in such as manner as to allow this one task force construct to be rapidly molded to support *any* requirement. There are many advantages to developing a force in this manner.

Given the ASETF construct, essential core UTCs could be deployed almost immediately at the CINCs request. Deployment could actually begin *prior to the destination being known!* Essentially, the initial (core) elements of the ASETF represent both *a robust site survey team as well as the initial elements of force beddown.* In addition to establishing and almost immediately deployable, expeditionary capability, this task force structure would facilitate a thorough analysis of combat and combat support capabilities. Properly designed it is capable of providing full spectrum support anywhere, anytime. By its very definition, the ASETF is a truly expeditionary capability. And a capability that will reduce logistics response times by a minimum of 24 hours.

Additionally this organizational structure can be used to develop a comprehensive library of information. This information, combined with theater specific installation as well as theater level

infrastructure will provide vital information to Air Force leadership at every level. Theater and base level data can also be collected at execution; if current planning processes and software are modified to actually allow for rapid reporting and tailoring of UTC data (tailoring or personnel, supplies and equipment). This is *not* the case today. Today the tailoring process is very difficult and time-consuming. Compiling this newly reconfigured data will empower AF leaders to make exponential improvements in the Air Force deployment and sustainment processes. This information can also be used to develop computer programs that are process-based rather than functionally stove-piped and further refine deployment and sustainment planning and execution.

This database would be available for use to either modify or create a new breed of Automated Information Systems (AISs). A standard Common Relevant Operating Picture (CROP) must be adopted to facilitate information flow. All new software development must seamlessly support training, peacetime and contingency operations processes. Another innovative approach to Air Force planning strategy is to incorporate lessons learned directly and immediately into the planning process. Immediately integrating these lessons learned into the way the Air Force plans, organizes, trains and equips its leadership and personnel to seamlessly transition from peacetime to contingency support is essential. Software programs should also be designed to *minimize* the communications pipeline and be robust enough to work *both* as a stand-alone *and as* a web-enabled capability.

These programs must be fully integrated and be able to rapidly and precisely cross walk information between ASETF sustainment requirements (Combat and Combat Support) and a given theater, adversary, capability, environment and current aircraft/munitions maintenance/performance trends. In turn this information will be used to determine future requirements. This is an essential capability of any expeditionary force deployed over such vast distances especially given the increasing combat (munitions) capabilities and tempo of operations.

These AISs could also be used to perform an entire range of analysis. For example how could this information be used to enhance equipment procurement strategy *in support of expeditionary concepts?* Here is one lesson learned during OPERATION Joint Endeavor. Shower-shave facilities were purchased to deploy to the theater. Unfortunately, the trailers were approximately 3 inches too tall to be placed on a C-130 and several inches too wide to allow them to be "side-by-side" loaded on C17s. As a result, C17's were used to perform what was originally thought to be easily and rightfully supported by intra-theater C-130's. Artificially reducing the efficiency of available strategic wide body lift capacity.

Bottom line:
Developing an effective expeditionary mindset requires a fully integrated planning effort.

This challenge is ours in the logistics community to take up. Evolving into high-speed, combat support operations such as the Global Strike Task Force Concept of Operations (CONOPS) requires an equally evolutionary approach to improving logistics support concepts. Some of this work will require a rethink and a retooling of how we organize, train and equip personnel to become an expeditionary aerospace task force. AF Logistics Planning functions must also

examine how automated systems can be transformed to support this relatively new expeditionary concept. We must think of new innovative ways to apply this knowledge to improve efficiencies; reducing footprint, time and costs while sustaining the global warfighter. This is do-able today. With the advent of the Global Strike Task Force conops, AF logistics leadership has been presented with a target-rich environment. Lt Gen Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller got it right when he said:

> "All right, they're on our left, they're on our right, they're in front of us, they're behind us…they can't get away this time".

In the same spirit and speaking for our fellow logisticians, "We're in . . . let's roll!"

Notes

1. "The Expeditionary Air Force idea was born of a need to be able to react quickly. It was to get back to the rapid part of deployment. It was something we did very well back in the mid-50s.", General John P. Jumper

2. "Logistics is the careful consideration of transportation, supply, warehousing, maintenance, procurement, contracting, and automation into a coherent functional area; in a way that prevents suboptimization in any of these activities; and in a way that permits and enhances the accomplishment of a given goal, objective, or mission.", Lt Gen Pagonis, USA

3. "The purpose of all logistics effort is the creation and continued support of combat forces which may effectively carry out our national strategy. This evaluation is one that requires the finest kind of mature and fully informed professional judgment. It is not an area where amateurs and the use of superficial statistics can contribute to our national security." Admiral Henry Eccles, USN

4. The supported force could be related to a humanitarian mission and not necessarily a combat capability.

5. "Teamwork allows us to be an effective fighting force-a rapid expeditionary force capable of deploying anywhere in the world in a minimum of time and in austere conditions-not operating from where we are stationed, but from where we are needed, not when we can, but when we must." General Ryan, Quotes for the Air Force Logistician.

6. Basically, the same logistics footprint needed to support a squadron could be adjusted slightly to support an entire wing. Thus, proving support for a 300 percent increase in the number of fighter aircraft support with relatively small, incremental increases in BOS.

7. Every AF technical area has a "functional" (area) expert responsible for coordinating and scheduling required combat (logistics) support.