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Foreword

With the ending of the Cold War, the apparent conclusion of many political leaders of states that war is hardly a practical tool of statesmanship, and the recent preoccupations of the American military on counterinsurgency, some people have wondered whether the original reasons for the founding of a separate air force are any longer valid. Dr. David Mets is well qualified to write this monograph to comment on this perception. He enlisted in the Navy before there was a United States Air Force and was a petty officer with an aviation rating at the time of the air arm's founding and can remember the times well. But more than that, he has been a student of the history of airpower for 50 years—first at Annapolis as a midshipman, and later as an Air Force officer teaching at the Air Force Academy and at West Point. He was thus exposed to the arguments and counterarguments about independent airpower from the perspectives of all three services. He has witnessed the exercise of independent airpower as a Strategic Air Command pilot as well as in supporting operations at the tactical level with two tours in Southeast Asia. One of his books is a biography of Gen Carl Spaatz who was the first chief of staff of the Air Force and his research for that work included an interview with Stuart Symington who was the first secretary of the Air Force. Mets argues that all the other services have competent pilots in their ranks. Thus, that cannot be the foundation for a continued separate air force. Rather, he concludes that the Airmen in the Navy necessarily are focused on maritime affairs and those in the Army must be equally focused on the local land battle from the beginning of their service. The original argument for the autonomous air force was that its Airmen would be the only ones whose perception was concentrated on the global level. The conclusion is therefore that the argument remains valid that a service with consistent culture focused on the problems of global vigilance, global reach, and global power is a fundamental requirement for United States national secu-

rity. Only an organization made up of Airmen whose indoctrination from the start of their service is concentrated on a global outlook can satisfy that requirement.

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The Case for an Autonomous Air Force

The need for the justification of the autonomous USAF seems to be increasingly questioned. This article will argue that the issue arises from a bad case of "presentism," making it inevitable that in future conflicts the Air Force will again be accused of having prepared for the last war. Part of the case is built upon the assumption that military value is dependent upon the number of combat deaths suffered. The whole country has grieved those deaths ever since the American Revolution, but as a great *soldier* once remarked, "The object is not to die for one's country, but rather to make the other guy die for his."[1] In fact, it seems likely that the victorious side in war and battle is *usually* the one that suffers the fewest casualties. It is even better if the objective can be gained without any casualties at all. This essay explores the original reasons for creating the separate USAF in 1947, the ways in which the environment has changed since then, and whether or not America should revert to the old ways or bring about still further change.

Why Was the USAF Founded in 1947?

The First World War was a watershed event for western civilization if there ever was one. It was an endless agony in the trenches that had traumatic effects on several generations in Europe and America. It followed glowing memories of the Victorian era in Europe, and the emergence of America as a great power and an economic engine of the first order. The agony in the trenches wiped out entire generations of young people. Ninety percent of the French military academy's class of 1914 was dead by the time of the Armistice. This was followed by the worldwide flu epidemic that carried away additional millions. The old optimism of the ninteenth century seemed trashed forever.

Many different efforts followed that were utterly dedicated to preventing the agony of the trenches from ever happening again. That was the dream of the League of Nations, and the purpose of the naval disarmament treaties of the 1920s. Various peace movements were also mounted everywhere. In England, the Oxford Movement vowed it would never again fight for

king and country. Some army folks in England and Germany began to move toward mechanized and armored warfare hoping to restore the mobility to fighting and thus avoid long stalemates and the stationary trench ordeal. Airmen like Giulio Douhet and William Mitchell began to think the same thing via

USAF Photo

Figure 1. Brig Gen William Mitchell

strategic bombing of either people in cities or industrial resources supporting militaries in the hope of quickly bringing any war to a quick end and avoiding the trench mayhem of 1914–18. Thus, a powerful moral argument said that millions of young people's lives would be saved by a quick and decisive attack on the very roots of enemy military power.[2] It did not turn out that way, but later it was argued that even the atomic attacks saved millions of lives that would have otherwise been lost in the invasions of the Japanese home islands.[3]

RAF Precedents

The Royal Air Force (RAF) has been an important influence on the thinking of American Airmen and Sailors, positive for the former and negative for the latter. The RAF became a separate service in the midst of World War I largely as a result of the attack on the British homeland, first by airships and later by Gotha bombers. The air defense of the homeland then was its primary mission. The bombings did not have that much material effect on industry or morale, but did cause a substantial weakening of airpower on the Western Front when the British brought back flying units to protect the homeland. The political leadership decided that airpower had to be unified in a separate service in the spring of 1918.[4]

The RAF soon had developed a strategic bombing idea and actually deployed forces to the front with the intent of attacking Germany before the Armistice.[5] Mitchell had visited for a time with Hugh Trenchard who was to head the RAF through the 1920s, and Carl Spaatz spent some time flying with British air units as well. The Royal Navy, especially, and the army as well, was bitterly opposed to the creation of the RAF, fighting to undo the decision throughout the 1920s. Thus, both the American army Airmen and the RAF flyers felt beleaguered, which built a connection among them.

WW II Experience

Mitchell and his circle (especially Henry "Hap" Arnold, Spaatz and Ira Eaker) at first were more interested in developing a separate Air Force, coequal to the Army and Navy with all three subordinate to a department of defense (DOD).[6] They realized

that this would not likely happen as long as the air arm was deemed an auxiliary or tactical supporting force—it needed an independent mission. Initially, Mitchell thought this could be coastal defense: one Air Force could defend both coasts but would require two navies.[7] Further, he used Alfred Mahan's idea that the battle fleet had to be kept unified seeking the great and decisive sea battle. That had some appeal to some navy men. But, especially after the early 1930s, that did not turn out to be a winning issue.

The Airmen therefore became increasingly committed to the idea of strategic bombing the key industrial and transportation nodes of an advanced industrial enemy. That was not an argument that could be made publically in isolationist America, but was a major theme at the Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) even before it moved to Montgomery, Alabama in 1931.[8] The ideas of the Air Corps chiefs, such as Mason Patrick and Benjamin Foulois, had much in common with those of the Mitchell people and the ACTS though their methods were not as confrontational.

By the eve of Operation Overload, Gen George Marshall, chief of staff, had in large part bought the Airmen's program, and in so doing opted for the formation of 90 ground divisions rather than the much larger figure many soldiers thought would be needed to invade Europe. In 1941, some thought that as many as 213 divisions would be required to defeat Germany. Later, when the requirement to invade Japan was added, some estimated the need at 350 divisions.[9] Marshall decided that building up strong airpower would more than compensate for that perceived shortfall and thus save American lives. Even before Pearl Harbor, Airmen built a plan that would result in a force of 2,300,000 people and tens of thousands of airplanes with a huge emphasis on heavy bombers for strategic bombing.[10] At least secretly, some of them (like Spaatz) hoped that the strategic bombing would be decisive and would eliminate the need for landings. That was not to be the case. Tactical airpower supporting the drive across Europe turned out to be more clearly effective than the strategic bombing. Still, the crippling of the German petroleum supplies and ultimately the ground transportation system *inside Germany* turned out to be great facilitators and the 90 divisions turned out to be sufficient. The US Strategic Bombing Survey's (USSBS) European report was

disappointing to Arnold and Spaatz because it merely said that airpower (not strategic airpower) had been a (not the) decisive factor in the victory over Hitler. Perhaps in anticipation of the report, Arnold had pulled all the stops on developing the B-29 force for the Pacific in the hopes that it would be *the* decisive factor there. In the end, the Pacific report of USSBS declared that the combination of the submarine blockade and the strategic bombing *in all probability would have been decisive* by November 1945, if the nuclear weapons had not been dropped and if the USSR had not intervened.[11]

Nuclear Weapons

Somewhat fortuitously from Arnold's point of view, the nukes *were* dropped and were widely deemed an Air Force weapon and ones that could instantly settle wars in the future. Authority Bernard Brodie soon wrote that the nuclear weapons had removed all of the defects in Douhet's theory of strategic bombing, which was a pretty strong endorsement of a separate Air Force with the mission of strategic bombing.[12] The prospects for postwar military organization had been under investigation for some time before Hiroshima, and even in the Navy (until Adm Ernest King quashed it) there was some sentiment for a DOD and separate Air Force.[13] There was little or no thought that nuclear weapons could be miniaturized to permit carriage on naval aircraft any time soon.

Aviation Technologies

The technology for strategic bombing had advanced enormously by the end of World War II, and Mitchell's dream of bombers with intercontinental range seemed within grasp. The largest engine in World War I had been the 400 horsepower (hp) Liberty; the Pratt and Whitney R-4360 engines developed for the B-36 would ultimately produce 3,500 hp.[14] The payloads hauled by B-17s to Berlin were about 4,000 pounds; the Fat Man nuclear weapon hauled twice as far by the B-29 to Japan was 10,000 pounds. Fighter speeds in World War I had been barely over 100 miles per hour (mph); by the end of World War II, they were four times that—and still more with the emerging jets. However, General Arnold and most other senior

USAF Photo

Figure 2. Gen Carl A. Spaatz presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Col Paul Tibbets after the Hiroshima bombing, August 1945.

Airmen in the immediate postwar period did propose a balanced Air Force with ample tactical and airlift aircraft along with the strategic bombers. All concerned knew, though, that the bread and butter mission was to be strategic bombing; and the Airmen thought they would have a monopoly on the delivery of atomic weapons.[15]

Political Arguments

In 1917, Vladimir Lenin had argued in *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* that the imperialists would engage in one last Armageddon over the last scrap of available territory and from the resultant ashes would emerge the socialist paradise.[16] Amidst the ashes of Germany, the modern communists were saying the Armageddon was at hand, capitalism was collapsing, and the imminent depression will bring on the workers' paradise.

In America, the national debt dwarfed all previous experiences. Pres. Harry S. Truman was absolutely determined to prevent a collapse, needing to balance the federal budget to do it. As he perceived it, since depressions had soon followed most of our previous wars, it *was* a danger he needed to prevent. Armies, navies, and tactical air forces are very expensive. Truman sought to rely on nuclear armed strategic airpower for national security, and cut the rest to the bone with a strict cap on military expenditures. Thus, the Army and Navy were to suffer a drastic reduction, and the Air Force would have to give up many units of the 70-group Air Force it had been planning. Naturally, as much as possible of the strategic bombing capacity would have to be preserved as that was the justification for the separate Air Force. Most of the units that had to go would be airlifters and tactical fighters and tactical bombers.[17]

Economics

Close to half of the gross national product went into World War II, and entailing severe restrictions on consumption. Thus there was a huge pent-up demand for consumer goods. Atop that, the country had adopted price controls. Ending them was to be a difficult problem for fear that inflation would follow with tough economic consequences. As successor to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Truman had a tough act to follow. Increasing taxes in that environment would have been a hard sell. That was all the more reason to economize on national security, and to rely on strategic airpower and an independent Air Force for the purpose.

Media Attitudes

Spaatz was the first chief of staff of the US Air Force, and had a congenial relationship with the press. After he retired in early 1948, he became the National Press Club's master of the bar and for many years afterward was a military correspondent for *Newsweek* magazine—assisted by journalist Kenneth Crawford.[18] As with most of World War II, the press did not have its usual adversarial relationship with the military, and especially so with the Air Force in part because of its glamour and possibly because the reporters thought it less formal and forbidding than the other services. Thus, in the immediate aftermath of

World War II, the Airmen had important allies in the media favoring an independent air arm.

Personalities

Gen Jimmy Doolittle once suggested that he and most other senior officers thought that Mitchell did more harm than good to the cause of airpower because of his confrontational methods.[19] I think I favor that, but there were many personalities involved with the creation of a separate Air Force who did have vital roles. One was Stuart Symington. His first father-in-law had been an advocate of airpower from the 1920s onward,[20] and Symington himself was a stalwart from an early time. At least two soldiers were stout supporters of an independent Air Force, George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower.[21] All three people remained political high rollers throughout the first decade of Air Force independence, and this was a major benefit for the infant service. Symington had a direct line to the Truman White House.

The first chief of staff, Spaatz, had been Eisenhower's Airman throughout World War II and both were West Pointers. Spaatz was a fairly frequent guest at the White House when Eisenhower was president, and in fact he had been grand marshal of Eisenhower's first inaugural parade.[22] Spaatz was succeeded by Hoyt Vandenberg in 1948 and the latter served until 1953. He was a power in his own right, and it did not hurt that in his youth he had lived in the home of his uncle Senator Arthur Vandenberg for a year.[23]

James Forrestal who was the first secretary of defense also played a crucial role in the creation of the Air Force. While still secretary of the Navy, he decided not to oppose the president and General Eisenhower who were behind the Airmen's position. Instead, he maneuvered the Navy and Marine Corps to limit the powers of the DOD and indirectly the new Air Force as well. His lobbying succeeded in inserting the requirement for three marine divisions into the law. It also limited the powers of the new secretary of defense to "coordination" and capped his staff to 100 persons. Also crucial to the legislation were Gen Lauris Norstad and Adm Forrest P. Sherman. They hammered out the agreement in private that was to compromise the Navy

and Army Air Forces positions that opened the way to the passage of the legislation for the autonomous Air Force.[24] It helped that Sherman soon became the first naval aviator (Admiral King had wings but never served at the squadron level) to become the chief of naval operations, serving until he died in 1951. He was in office during the crucial early years of the infant Air Force.[25] Norstad went on to become the first Airman to command the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

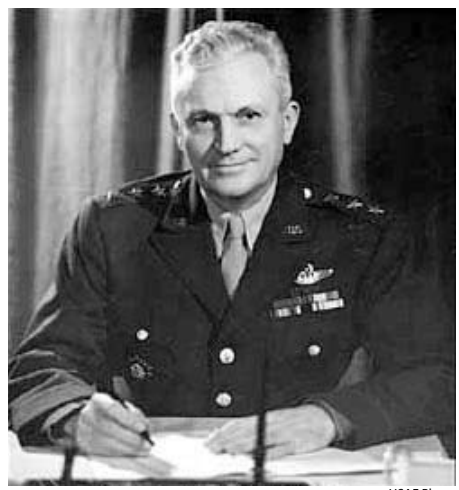
Service Cultures: Army, Navy, Air Corps

There have been many studies examining the reasons why the Navy retained its aviators while the Army did not. Much had to do with culture. Practically all admirals were US Naval Academy (USNA) graduates until after World War II, and that commonality was an important foundation of the entire naval culture. USNA then (and still) strongly asserted that a graduate had to be a naval officer first and foremost, and only secondarily an aviator, submariner, or battleship sailor.

That was not the case with the Army. Many Army generals were not West Pointers, and there were deep divisions between the combat branches and the rest of the officer corps. In the days of John J. Pershing and for some time afterwards, it was almost an article of faith that the Queen of Battle was the infantry branch and everything else (including the Air Corps) existed to support it. Thus, it was almost axiomatic that none of the other branches could have a function independent of what the infantry was doing. Thus, when in 1935 the General Staff of the Army conceded to the creation of a General Headquarters (GHQ) Air Force and to the notion it could have an independent role prior to the engagement of the ground armies, it was deemed a major concession. Some in the Air Corps saw it as a way station on the road to an independent Air Force.[26] The GHQ Air Force had control of all the Army's combat aircraft except observation airplanes, and that was seen by some to be a precursor to the fundamental USAF doctrine of centralized control.

As to the Air Corps culture, Spaatz himself proclaimed that Airmen were a "different breed of cat."[27] I suppose that he meant that they were more individualistic and informal than Army officers. Arguably, they thought themselves more prag-

matic and logical than their brothers in the other branches where the officers were deemed more doctrinaire and "regulation" than the Airmen. Perhaps institutional paranoia was not altogether abnormal in the RAF for the other armed forces indeed were "out to get them." Maybe there was less justification for paranoia in the Air Corps, though, because *it was far better funded* than any other branch of the Army throughout the 1930s.[28] One cannot make sweeping generalizations here, though, because there were some Airmen like Oscar Westover and Frank Andrews who were more "regular Army" than others. Usually, they had enjoyed a longer period of service with the cavalry or one of the other ground arms than did the likes of Spaatz, Eaker, James Doolittle, and others. It does seem that that service with other branches made them more acceptable with the officers of the General Staff.



USAF Photo

Figure 3. Maj General Frank M. Andrews

Promotions between the wars were slow in all parts of the military. But the aviators were generally younger than other officers, and as advancement was almost entirely dependent upon seniority in those days, the Airmen felt left behind because they thought their responsibilities were greater than those of officers of the same rank in other branches. Mrs. Spaatz once remarked that the flight pay enjoyed by the flyers was a source of resentment as well—but fatal accidents *were* far more frequent those days than they have become. The Air Corps was not alone with these discontents. The aviators in the Navy who had been in flying from the beginning had their own resentments of people like William Halsey and Ernest King who worked their way into flight training as captains (colonel equivalents), won their wings, and in so doing preempted carrier and naval air station commands from the ground-up pilots who had done the dan-

gerous work of carrier development in the 1920s.[29] Still the puzzle remains as to why the Air Corps lusted for separation, but the naval aviators did not.

Fortuitous Events

As Karl von Clausewitz taught, war is the province of uncertainty and accident. Two of the giants of the Air Corps aviators were Oscar Westover, chief of the Air Corps, and Frank Andrews, commanding general of the GHQ Air Force. Both had substantial service in other branches of the Army. Westover had several years experience with the infantry, and Andrews had several with the cavalry. Both were held in high regard by the General Staff. Both graduated from West Point in 1906. Both were senior to Spaatz and Arnold. Both liked to fly their own airplanes. Westover on 21 September 1938 was flying his own aircraft, an A-17, on a trip to California to award a flying safety trophy to a unit at March Field. That afternoon, he flew up to Burbank, and pulled it too tight turning final to stall out. Both he and the sergeant in the back seat were killed.[30] Andrews, flying a B-24 en route to Iceland on 3 May 1943, reported in to the radio ground station at Prestwick, Scotland. He was told the weather was bad at Keflavik, but he elected to proceed nonetheless. He was never heard from again and the remains were found with the airplane wreck on the Icelandic cliffs.[31] Further speculation would be unreliable counterfactual history.

How Has the Environment Changed?

Memories of trench warfare have faded: In the 1930s, city boys in New York could not escape the memories of the trenches. Mutilated people walking around the streets with faces and limbs blown away were too common. Those memories have faded now. The horrors had stimulated many movements for political and military reforms, but the scarcity of such veterans on the streets, among journalists, and on the floors of Congress makes a huge difference.[32]

Assumptions of total war gone: To the high school senior in the United States in August 1945, the assumption he had lived with all his life was one of total war—that wars were *not* a thing of the past and they would always escalate to total levels.

Arms control and international organizations were hopeless dreams. When the nuclear weapons (nukes) were detonated, Winston Churchill declared they had been a "miracle of deliverance" and hardly anyone of draft age would have disagreed.[33] Not only did they end the war, but soon the notion was afoot that they made it *so* horrible that they would end all war. Not only would nuclear energy bring the benefit of peace through terror, it also was widely assumed that it would amount to a free source of power, making the entire world so prosperous that a major cause of poverty and war would be removed. The assumption of total war was not an easy one to give up, but the incentive to do so was strong. The generations that followed knew nothing of total wars, and they became jaded to the threat.

Half-century non-use of nukes: The consequence was that nuclear weapons were not used in the Berlin Blockade of 1948, nor the Korean War of 1950–53, nor in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, nor in the Vietnam War from 1965–75. Though they did not bring universal prosperity or universal peace, to many it seemed that they would never be used and for whatever reason limited war would be the only war.

Coming of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBM), space, Internet, choppers: In 1947 there was a powerful assumption that only the Air Force would be able to deliver nuclear warheads for some time to come. However, that notion was quickly undermined. The miniaturization of warheads came far sooner than anticipated so that Navy and Army systems could handle them, along with the fighter aircraft of the Tactical Air Command. At first, the result was a proliferation of nuclear weapons, but gradually their limited utility and the coming of other methods of delivery in the ICBM and SLBM tended to reduce the need for strategic bombers (and their crews.) Though Marshall and Eisenhower were in favor of a separate Air Force with the mission of strategic bombing, there were many other soldiers who were not. Many came away from Korea envious of the Marine Corps methods of close air support (CAS) and unhappy with the apparent Air Force obsession with strategic bombing. They could not overtly go about building a new air corps within the Army with Eisenhower, Marshall, and Symington still prominent, but they began thinking of workarounds at Fort

US Army Photo

Figure 4. Army UH-1 Huey airlifting troops in Vietnam.

Rucker, Alabama very early. They built their ideas around the helicopters that came on strong after 1947, and amply demonstrated their utility in medical evacuation in Korea. When the principals of the unification trauma of 1947 had passed from the scene, the helicopters were applied to a wider variety of missions like tactical airlift and CAS (though another name was invented for that). Thus another of the Air Force missions of 1947 was brought into question.

Diminished military experience in politicians: All the US presidents from 1945 to 1993 had military experience in or near combat. None since then has done that. As late as 1970, about two thirds of the congressmen had military experience of some sort, but in 2009 the proportion is down near a quarter.[34] Such experience is likewise diminished among the journalists and population. In part, that has been due to the disappearance of the draft in the early 1970s.

US no longer economic hegemon: World War I did much to transfer the banking capital of the world from London to New York. World War II badly bent the economies of all the European powers and nearly destroyed that of Japan. But though the United States had multiplied its national debt, its economy had a received a major boost in many ways. She was still an exporter of petroleum, and her industries were dominant in other world markets. American human resources had suffered much less of a blow than those of other industrial powers, and they had acquired many skills that had not existed theretofore. However that could not last forever. Now the United States has a great economy, but there are many others that have risen since 1947. It has also become a major importer of petroleum.

USSR gone: The collapse of the USSR was a surprise to many Americans. From 1947 at the latest, it had been perceived as the most likely and most serious threat to national security. It did not have a blue-water navy in 1947, and the

thought of sending the US Army against its hordes was suicidal. Thus, at first the principal instrument that could possibly deter the Soviets was the USAF with its strategic nuclear bombers. All involved knew that the US nuclear monopoly could not last forever, but most were startled when the USSR exploded its first nuclear device only two years later. Still, as the years went by, the growth of the USSR nuclear capability was fearsome, but the deterrent value of US nuclear forces remained. The Soviets in the meantime built up a formidable submarine fleet of both attack boats and missile launchers, and even the beginnings of a blue-water surface fleet. It could threaten not only the US homeland but also the line of communications between the United States and her allies. When the USSR collapsed, both functions of the US submarine fleet and the strategic nuclear forces of the USAF were thought to have lost much their utility. Insofar as the US allies valued her for the "nuclear umbrella" that also was diminished.

Media love affair with aviation gone/presentism/TV: A review of the news reports and editorials before the Spanish–American War and those just prior to the Vietnam War will convince many readers that the need for long-term consistency is a much greater requirement for political and military leaders than it is for the media. In the first case, American "jingoism" dominated the journals, but as the Philippine Insurrection wore on, the anti-imperialist movement grew to serious proportions. In the latter case, Pres. John F. Kennedy's plea to "Ask not what your country can do for you. . . ." resonated loudly everywhere, but disappeared once the tax bills and body bags began to mount. From the First World War until the eve of Korea, in general the romance of aviation had a strong pull for the public and the media. But, nobody ever won the Pulitzer Prize for journalism by declaring that a government agency did about as good a job as could be expected. Clearly, in the usual circumstances scandal sells better than virtue. Yet, no politician or commander wants to make his own party or service look bad. Thus, there is the usual tension playing an increasing role with the coming of the electronic media after 1947. The need for brevity in electronic media programs makes oversimplification an issue, and sensation is even more important there than in the print media. In Thomas Jefferson's day it was only

the upper reaches of society that could read. But the coming of universal literacy and the cheap linotype methods of printing and later the television reached ever wider circles of the public and made presentism and drama a growing phenomenon in reporting. In the 60 years after 1947, then, the Airmen lost much of their favored place in the hearts of journalists.

Bureaucracy versus personalities: Many would argue that in the years that have passed since the creation of the USAF, the huge complexities of the growth of technology along with much improved communications have reduced the role of "heroic leadership" and increased that of "bureaucratic managers." In the First World War, a new airplane could be designed and constructed in a matter of weeks. The P-51 was first built for the British in a few months, but now a new fighter takes many years of development and testing—and there has been a quantum leap in the costs of weapons systems as well. Therefore the numbers have come down greatly and huge organizations have become necessary to manage development and production.

Military cultures much changed: Educational levels much higher; great advances in technological career fields. The Air Force culture has changed dramatically since 1947. As late as 1953, only 32 percent of the officer corps had college degrees. The majority were rated as pilots or observers. Only pilots were deemed qualified to command flying units, and only a small minority held regular commissions. Academy graduates were even rarer in the early Air Force than they had been the Air Corps. People with graduate degrees were even scarcer. Officers were heavy drinkers and smokers, and most were more interested in flying than officership.

Flying safety in 1947 and for the next decade was taken much less seriously than it is now. Buzzing was common. Now all officers have college degrees as do many enlisted men. By the time the former reach the field grades, the majority have acquired graduate degrees. Physical conditioning is taken much more seriously than in earlier decades. Flying is clearly more disciplined than it was in the 1950s. The accident rate is radically lower.

The Air Force Academy has been producing about 1,000 lieutenants every year for many years past. More than half the general officers in 2009 are Air Force Academy graduates. Navi-

gators now can and have commanded large flying units. Many of them have reached senior ranks. A whole new set of space officers has appeared all the way up to the senior most levels. Fewer than 20 percent of officers are rated at all. An Air Force career is not as frequently a family proposition as it used to be. Many spouses have careers of their own, on-base quarters are not nearly as sought after as they were, and officer's club membership is no longer a requirement. Few if any active officers can remember the times when the "Bomber Barons" of the nuclear units were said to dominate the Air Force. For the first time in the history of the Air Force, the chief of staff is neither a bomber nor a fighter pilot. A recent four-star vice chief of staff was a space officer without an aeronautical rating at all. At one time in the 1990s, neither he, nor the commander of Air University nor the superintendent of the Air Force Academy was a rated officer. Inevitably the institutional world view had changed greatly. Finally, the transition from a drafted force to an all-volunteer system has changed the culture in important ways. It is now significantly older, more married, and more professional that it used to be.

9/11 unpredicted event: presentism focus: Decision theory teaches that more recent traumatic occurrences affect our thinking more than older events. Those that happen in our own lifetimes are more meaningful than those known only from history. Events in our own environment have a much greater impact than contemporary affairs elsewhere. Arguably, these phenomena have more effect on young people, journalists, and politicians than others. Doubtless the horrific events of 11 September 2001, tended to strongly focus our thinking on terrorism and counterinsurgency—both not having much obvious relationship to the main reason for the original founding of the Air Force. A case could be made that the second order effects of 9/11 made it the single most effective economic strategic bombing raid in history. However, the main plank of the original argument for an autonomous Air Force was its potential as a decisive instrument in independent strategic attack. Since al-Qaeda offers neither industrial targets nor population centers that can be held at risk, the main mission does not seem to apply.

The next most important mission of the original argument was tactical support of the ground battle through interdiction

NASA Photo

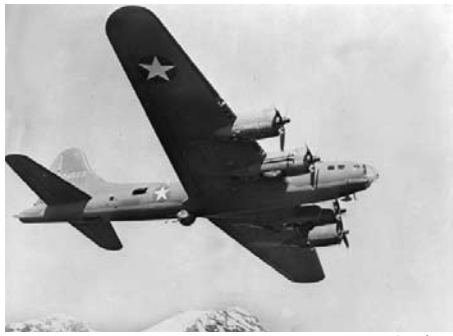
Figure 5. Atlas Launch. Early models of the rocket carried the Mercury astronauts into space.

and CAS. That seems to require discrete, concentrated military units or lines of communication vulnerable to air attack neither of which seems to exist in Afghanistan. Much of the counter-insurgency literature seems to hold that airlift and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) are the main utilities of airpower in that kind of conflict.[35] All are support missions that hardly justify the case for an autonomous Air Force.

Public sensitivity to casualties even greater: The worth of the individual has always been greater in the Western culture than in other societies. Nowhere in the West has individualism been stronger than in America, and that phenomena has existed since Colonial times. One of the reasons America was one of the leaders in mechanization of agriculture was because the high value of labor made such expenditure wise. It is also the reason why so many have asserted that the United States has been ever ready to attempt to substitute bucks for bodies. Americans have always been sensitive to casualties; since the passing of the total war era (and the foundation of the USAF) that seems to have increased. That has been one of the great appeals of precision guided munitions and remotely piloted aircraft (RPA)—to try to make the other guy die for his country rather than to die for our own. The coming of modern psychology and its ideas of the necessity of self-esteem have only emphasized this, and some say have caused us to approach narcissism in the younger generations. The concern about the annihilation of whole generations of the young in trenches seems to be but a distant memory.[36]

Case against Twenty-First Century Autonomous Air Force?

Been no nuclear strikes in 64 years/mission now shared: The USAF is obsolete because it was created for strategic attack, eventually with nuclear weapons. The strategic attack on Germany failed in both the British and American versions. It did not defeat the *Wehrmacht*, and the other outcomes were not worth the cost. German industry did not stop until well after the armies were across her borders, and the public never quit work whatever the effects on its morale. In the case of Japan's surrender, the USSBS said that it *would have been* a combina-



USAF Photo

Figure 6. B-17F, a pillar of the daylight strategic attack on Germany.

tion of the bombing *and* the submarine blockade *if it had not been* for the nuclear attacks and the Soviet intervention. Those were the only two nuclear strikes and have not been repeated for more than a half century. In any event, the mission is now shared with the Navy who can perhaps do it better because of the mobility and stealth of the missile submarines, a superior foundation for deterrent stability than vulnerable bombers and stationary missile silos.

Long-range strike absent in Korea and failed in Vietnam: There were no nuclear attacks in the Korean War, and there were no really substantial strategic targets within the country that could be destroyed with conventional bombs. Unhappily, the B-29s were used to burn down Pyongyang in an inhumane way for no commensurate military purpose. Otherwise these "strategic" bombers were used against such tactical targets as bridges and airfields, and then not effectively. In Vietnam, the United States was afraid to use the strategic bombers against the air defenses of North Vietnam, so they were used against tactical targets in the south and then only with conventional bombs. Their effectiveness was widely proclaimed, but folks on the ground argued that principally they were used to kill monkeys in the jungles because the enemy was forewarned and had evacuated the principal Arc Light target zones.

Before 1972, the only losses of B-52s came from collisions with each other. When they were finally sent against the North Vietnamese, they used an inexpert plan and did not coordinate well with the supporting fighters. The result was that they suffered 15 losses to the ground defenses in only 11 days of bombing. The Strategic Air Command public relations people proclaimed loudly that they had achieved a victory. However, the United States only got back her prisoners while the North Viet-

namese got South Vietnam. Recovering one's prisoners, if it is the *only* war aim, is a pretty poor objective.

Homeland air defense not used for many years: The only other Air Force independent mission is air defense of the homeland that is shared with the ground-based defenses of the Army. That mission has done no good at all for more than a half century because it has been built against a nonexistent threat. Even if it did exist, in a nuclear age a defense system would have to be leak proof because one nuclear weapon getting through is too many. Perfection in a cordon defense is an impossibility, as the abandonment of the Strategic Defense Initiative of the Reagan years demonstrates.

Practically all USAF work in Iraq/Afghanistan is support: Practically all of the USAF contribution in Iraq and Afghanistan has nothing at all to do with the primary reasons for its initial foundation—rather it is all auxiliary to what the Army and Marine Corps are doing on the ground. It has consisted mainly of CAS, tactical airlift, convoy escort, and ISR—all to enhance the effectiveness of the troops in ground operations. Its utility has been great in "armed overwatch" which is a direct contradiction of the original USAF tactical air doctrine. Armed overwatch is practically identical in concept to the combat air patrols that Lt Gen Lloyd Fredendall demanded for his divisions in the early phases of the North African campaign. Beyond that, the Air Force has supplied considerable ground augmentation to the jobs that soldiers do.

One Air Force captain wrote in *Naval Institute Proceedings* (December 2007) of her impressive work as a convoy commander in Iraq.[37] She is an Air Force Academy graduate, but Billy Mitchell would roll over in his grave at the thought that after that fine education she was used in such operations with no apparent objection.

Air Force dependent upon permissions for overflight and to use foreign airfields: The Air Force weakness in its dependency on foreign air routes and airfields has been repeatedly demonstrated (Yom Kippur War, 1973/Libya, 1986/Afghanistan, 2001). It shows that in many situations long-range strike can be better delivered from aircraft carriers that do not need foreign permissions nor prepared airfields to operate.

USMC CAS superior to USAF CAS: The legislation of 1947 assigned CAS for the Army to the Air Force, but the Marine Corps has stimulated the envy of soldiers because of the superiority of its organic airpower in the CAS role. Air Force officers have continually demonstrated their preference to go chasing MiGs in the wild blue yonder over the need to support the troops. Marine aviators are, however, first and foremost riflemen who understand the problems of the troops on the ground and who consequently have known the proper priorities and techniques. Moreover, the Air Force has repeatedly demonstrated that its people do whatever they can to avoid forward air control or air liaison officer work for a variety of reasons and thus the most effective officers have seldom been found in that work; in the Marine Corps there is the opposite effect.

Choppers/RPAs provide Army's own CAS and airlift: Since the founding of the Air Force, helicopter technology and force structure has come on to the degree that it can be more responsive to the needs of the infantry than can the jets. Too, manned as they are by soldiers and Marines, they can do the work better than USAF officers in any event. As the helicopters cannot be swung to an air battle or long range bombing role, they can be better counted upon for support when the ground commanders need them. Too, the unit costs of helicopters is less than it is for jets, and the CAS and much of the tactical airlift can be provided by the Army at a lower price than the Air Force can deliver. The coming of RPAs has progressed to the point that ISR and CAS can be provided for ground troops at a much lower price, and can be done in a much more responsive way than can the same functions from manned USAF aircraft.

Peer state-on-state wars improbable/counterinsurgency (COIN) wave of the future: The experience of the two world wars and the last half century proves that the political leadership of the world has realized the futility of state-on-state war. Therefore such wars are impossible or highly improbable. Too, Desert Storm and Phase III of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) demonstrate to the world that it is suicidal to take on the US armed forces in a conventional war. Therefore, the huge resources invested in long-range strike and air superiority are wasted. On those rare occasions when long-range strike is required, the aircraft carriers can do it better. They do not need

diplomatic permissions, carry their own logistical support with them, and can be inserted and withdrawn into troubled regions much more easily than can ground-based aircraft. Thus COIN is the wave of the future and our investments in that mode of conflict should increase.

Piloting skills and attitudes of diminished importance: Insofar as piloting skills ever were the essence of the USAF contribution, they are not so anymore. The USAF pilot force is less than 20 percent of the officer corps, with the majority of them not assigned to lethal weapons systems. But RPAs are quickly increasing in numbers and competency, and the role of the pilot of manned aircraft is quickly disappearing. In any event, there are plenty of people in the other services who have piloting skills, and those talents have little to do with campaign planning or strategic leadership. The utility of Air Force officers in the strategic leadership of joint forces is a demonstrated weakness because so few have ever been appointed as joint force commanders and still fewer as combatant commanders (COCOM).[38]

Air Force elitism inappropriate for democratic society: In both the alleged eras of the "Bomber Barons" and "Fighter Generals," the Air Force officer corps has demonstrated an elitism that is inappropriate for a modern democratic society. The Soldiers and Marines are far less pretentious and have clearly shown they can do and are doing the dirty work (and dying) of the Republic in an unpretentious way—as true public servants and professionals. Carl Builder was right in saying that Air Force officers are obsessed with their toys, and their massive flight to the airlines when they are hiring demonstrates where their heart has been.[39]

Case for Twenty-First Century Autonomous Air Force?

Reason for absence of nuke war = USAF: The very absence of any nuclear attacks since 1945 tends to prove the effectiveness of the USAF in its strategic attack role. To deter, it is necessary to have and demonstrate both the capability and the will to use it. It is impossible to prove a negative, but it is at least clear that the USAF strategic capability *did not fail*.

Whatever it was, the air campaign in Vietnam was *not* strategic bombing because the vital targets were not there: In any event, neither the Korean nor the Vietnam Wars proved anything about the primary mission of the USAF because the vital targets were not within those countries, but rather in the People's Republic of China and the USSR. The very fact that [Joseph] Stalin strictly held his MiG pilots to the immediate region of the Yalu, and at the same time would not help the Chinese and North Koreans establish jet fields near enough to the front to contest our air superiority, demonstrated restraint. As Curtis LeMay held his B-50s and B-36s on alert in the continental United States and refused to deploy them to Korea, it is arguable that they very well might have been the cause of Stalin's restraint.

9/11 suggests continuing need for air defense: It may well have been that Stalin never intended to attack the American homeland or that the strategic nuclear capability of the USAF deterred him from trying it. It may also have been that the USAF and Canadian air defenses were enough to promise him unaffordable losses so that he would not try.

USAF space capability global effects: Clearly there are competent pilots in all the services, so that cannot be the essence of what the USAF provides to the Republic. It also seems clear that the flyers in all the other services see their roles as auxiliary to either sea power or land power—their perspective is limited largely to the maritime or the tactical environment. The USAF is the leader among the services in the American space effort, possibly because it has *from the beginning seen more of a global view* of human conflict. Orbital physics automatically makes space a global asset though it does have more local utility as well. Arguably, through self-selection or some other factors, members of the USAF have automatically taken more of a global perspective or a strategic view of conflict. From the beginning level in the ground forces especially, the focus is almost necessarily on the battle immediately in front. Many soldiers have demonstrated the capability to grow from the operational to the strategic levels and beyond, but their minds are initially conditioned by the focus on the immediate front of their company or platoon. As the air and space both blanket the *sea and the land*, and because the USAF has a leading role in both

domains, it follows that it should be one of the main national instruments for the sustenance of our vital interest in maintaining free access and stability in all the "Global Commons."

USAF strike assets/tankers global effects: Even granted that in rare circumstances the absence of available airfields may make aircraft carriers a better choice for long-range strike, even nuclear carriers steaming at full speed take several days to make it from Norfolk to the Middle East. Some may be closer than that, but their scarcity necessarily leaves many potential trouble spots several steaming days away. With crews of more than 5,000 and huge investments in fleet defense, the loss of even one carrier would be a national disaster. On the other hand, the most capable USAF aircraft supported by tankers can strike any given spot on the globe within a matter of hours.

USAF airlift assets/tankers global effects: Similarly, the unmatched USAF strategic airlift fleet is long ranged in its own right, but it is also plumbed for air refueling. The hundreds of USAF tankers give it the additional range to reach any spot on the globe, and to do so with large payloads that can be offloaded either by air landing or parachute delivery.

USAF Photo

Figure 7. KB-29 refueling B-45 after World War II, developed to extend the reach of jets to ultimately reach a Global Strike Capability.

Only Air Force Can Deliver Early Global Effects

Early response = less force required: Crisis theory has demonstrated time and again that in the case of lethal delivery, the sooner it is delivered, the less force that is usually required. Too, in the usual circumstances, naval airpower cannot reach very far inland without the aid of USAF tankers. Even with that, its payloads are necessarily rather limited. In the case of response to natural disasters, early delivery can reduce the total damage and the scope of human suffering. Naval forces can also accomplish much, but arrive at a slower rate and cannot reach very far inland.

Army necessarily more focused on tactical level: Because no strategy can work if it is based on tactical failure, the Army must first and foremost focus on the tactical battle. It has made major recent efforts to lighten its forces so that it can load up and move more rapidly. But there is just so much that can be done in that regard. Too, the organic airlift and firepower provided by helicopters is limited in range and payload, and making it somewhat limited in its ability to quickly concentrate at crisis points. Thus, when speaking of the local level, it is true that organic resources can sometimes be more responsive than those provided by the other services. However, either the forces are going to be spread widely, or the responsiveness to distant crises will be less than optimal.

Air Force rapid mobility and reach *can* mass tactical effects flexibly: The Air Force, when its airlift and CAS assets are controlled at the theater level, can mass them quickly at any spot in the theater—even in the case where they are dispersed at the outset. Thus they can add an important element of flexibility and security to Army theater operations and even enable some more risky operations for the ground forces. The ground forces can practice economy of force in inactive areas of the theater if they can count on rapid reinforcement from distant places aboard fixed-wing aircraft or quickly supplied massive fire support at whatever points are threatened.

USMC mission different from USAF on CAS: It is true that the Marine Corps' delivery of CAS is different from that of the Air Force. In part that arises from the size of the forces. The Army has many more divisions usually spread over a wider

area than the Marine Corps. Too, in theory at least, the Army is designed for sustained operations while the Marine Corps was envisioned for forcible entry to be early relieved by the heavier forces of the Army and the Air Force. Thus, the Marine Corps is lighter on organic artillery than is the Army, and more fire support from its own aircraft and those of the Navy is therefore necessary. Further, the organic Marine Corps aviation's principal and almost only mission is CAS for its divisions. Air superiority over the battlefield, airlift, interdiction, and distant ISR are among the other functions of naval aviation and the USAF. If the USAF provided dedicated air support to *all* the divisions in the Army *all* the time, it would either bankrupt the treasury, be unable to cover some of its other missions, or focus on the divisions most in need of the CAS.

Excellence in COIN will stimulate enemy asymmetric response: One is tempted to say that intelligent enemies will *always* opt for asymmetric responses. Were the United States to focus all of its thought and other assets on developing its COIN capabilities, then it will likely be prepared for the wrong war when that intelligent enemy finds yet another asymmetric response. British military historian R. J. Overy has attributed the Allied victory in the air war over Germany to the practice of generalized airpower as opposed to the more specialized airpower of the Axis.[40] Thus, in his mind, developing as wide a set of competencies as is practical is a virtue so as to avoid being prepared for the wrong war.

Piloting skills not essence; cultural strategic outlook is: Clearly there are great aviators in all the services, and those in the Army, Marine Corps, and Navy are rightly focused on the support of their own form of warfare. Ideally, what the Air Force brings to the fight is not its piloting skills, but rather more of a global outlook on conflict. Those global capabilities, especially in the "Global Commons," are the principal contribution, but they also entail the capability to help the other services in a supporting role. A C-17 can deliver a load of medical supplies to a location thousands of miles away; if part of its load of fuel is replaced with ammunition, it can bring early help to ground units anywhere from a few hundred miles distant to about any spot on the globe.

USAF Photo

Figure 8. Two of the pillars of Global Reach, the C-17 airborne and the C-130 in the background.

Democratic military: USAF led the way on minority and gender integration: As for any notion of elitism, compared with others the relative informality of the Air Force is sometimes seen as a vice—but it does suggest that notions of elitism are inept. Further, while the armed forces have been proclaimed the institutions leading the rest of the society in both racial and gender integration, the USAF arguably has been second to none in that endeavor. Like the rest of the armed forces, it has been the engine for the training and education of many generations of humble people climbing out of poverty-stricken lives into better situations.[41]

Should American Air Forces be Unified?

Arnold and Eaker both thought 1947 only a start: Both recognized that insofar as airpower was concerned, the unification legislation was really "triplication." Spaatz argued that the compromise had been the best that could be achieved, and further consolidation would have to be achieved down the pike, if ever. Former secretary Stuart Symington later declared that the outcome should not be viewed as a shortfall, but rather a triumph for the Airmen.[42]

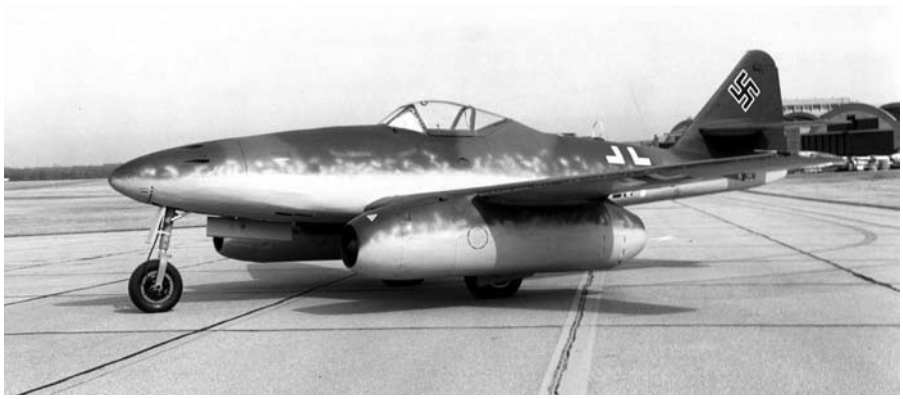
Mitchell argued for everything that flies: General Mitchell at first was not particularly focused on strategic bombing. His main interest was to achieve a separate Air Force coequal with the Army and Navy. His vision was that this autonomous Air Force should include everything that flies: bombers, fighters, ground attack, reconnaissance, and transport. On occasion he even asserted that aircraft carriers should belong to this new Air Force—at least until aircraft acquired intercontinental ranges. Douhet focused on an Air Force that would be almost entirely composed of bombers; even its escorts would be built on bomber airframes carrying guns and ammunition instead of bombs. Not so with Mitchell who appreciated the need for an air-to-air battle for air superiority and for ground attack and reconnaissance in support of the ground forces.[43] Partly because of him the initial post-World War I air organization included: 1st Pursuit Group, 2nd Bomb Group, and 3rd Attack Group.[44] The United States was one of only two nations that maintained ground attack specialist organizations throughout the interwar period.

Lately no one seems to argue that all the air forces should be unified: The Mitchell vision seems to have faded away, and currently we are dealing with the assertion that the USAF should be abolished, not expanded to include all airpower.

Navy has its private army and air force: In 1947 the US Navy was the principal opponent to what was called unification. It already had its own air force and infantry. In the compromise that emerged, it managed authority for three Marine divisions carved into stone through legislation. It also retained land air stations and the authority for long-range airpower described as maritime reconnaissance.

Luftwaffe (a poor example) *did* own the paratroopers and ground-based air defenses: Though the Luftwaffe ultimately lost in a spectacular way, it did have its successes and in the end, the defense it developed *was* a tough nut to crack. Even in defeat, though, it demonstrated that other methods of air organization are conceivable. At the end of World War II, the inclusion of the air defense artillery in the new USAF was deliberated, but the Airmen themselves did not campaign for that. Now, in theater air warfare, the ground-based defenses are indeed subordinate to the joint forces air component com-

mander for operational purposes though administratively they remain a part of the Army. The original reason for that was that branch's officers rightly feared that the new Air Force would be dominated by pilots, and they desired to remain with the Army.[45] That is far in the past now, and one has not heard an argument for reconsidering that question for many decades.



National Museum of the USAF Photo

Figure 9. The Messerschmitt 262 was one of the things that made the Luftwaffe a tough nut to crack, but it came too late to reverse the outcomes.

Army has rebuilt its Air Corps and owns ground air defense: By law in 1947, CAS for the Army and tactical airlift were to be functions of the new United States Air Force. In fact the Tactical Air Command (TAC) was created in spite of the tradition of the centralized GHQ Air Force *precisely to reassure the soldiers those missions would not be ignored by the airmen in favor of long- range strike*. For many years the C-130s and C-119s were not a part of the Military Air Transport Service or Military Airlift Command, but rather belonged to TAC. Now the tactical airlifters have migrated to the Air Mobility Command and the COCOMS, and TAC merged into Air Combat Command. Meanwhile, the Army has rebuilt an organic CAS and tactical airlift capability under other names in its rotary wing units, and made a stab at returning to fixed-wing tactical airlift with its Joint Cargo Aircraft program. These Army moves certainly have not stimulated the passionate opposition among the Airmen that they had provoked in the 1950s.

Was 1947 more a disunification act than not? The current moves to debate the further disintegration of Mitchell's vision of a unified air force do not seem to appreciate that there are additional airpower futures conceivable in the other direction—toward a resurrection of that vision and the consolidation of all airpower in a single service. (That is not recommended here, but it is conceivable.)

Futures other than abolition of USAF are possible? The leadership should consider whether the current suggestions that the USAF be transformed back into the Air Corps are a bad case of "presentism." Has the scarcity of military experience and the shortness of memories among journalists and young Congressional staffers made them forget that futures of war other than COIN *are conceivable*? Is there any way of reminding them that an excessive focus on COIN will stimulate a search among potential adversaries for other asymmetric ways to overcome the US advantages? Are there ways to remind them that crises usually have not come alone—that when we get deeply preoccupied with the current threat, other enemies of another kind might well see the opportunity to advance their interests while we are distracted? Would the Japanese have struck Pearl Harbor if the Nazis had not been rattling the gates of Moscow at that very moment? Should we therefore cultivate generalized airpower capable of reacting to local crises in places like Iraq and Afghanistan or, if need be, to new troubles in the "Global Commons"?

Should the armed services be unified?

If the USAF is to rejoin the Army, why not include the USMC in the Army as well? Should the ideal of unified armed forces be revisited? Should the goal be unified national security forces? Should a sleeping dog be disturbed?

Conclusions

The USAF's job is to control the air, which it has done ever since the spring of 1944 at the latest: The Germans planned the Battle of the Bulge to commence at the beginning of a forecasted poor weather period, grounding both air forces.

They knew that once the weather lifted, Allied airpower would decimate their ground forces—which is what happened. In Korea, it is true that a few ground troops were killed by enemy air power—bombs dropped at night from open cockpit biplanes doing harassment missions. The losses over North Vietnam were grievous but the enemy was never able to prevent attacks on their capital; the command of the air over South Vietnam was complete. The same was true over Iraq in 1991 and 2003 as well as over Afghanistan in 2001.

Eliot Cohen argued that no one has nor will have the rapid Global Reach the USAF provides. He asserted that the air bridge more than halfway around the world and the sustainment of the attack there with tankers could not soon be duplicated. No other power has the human, technical, and economic resources to duplicate the feat and will not for a long time to come.[46]

For all the hand wringing over it, the United States does lead the rest of the world in space and the Air Force is a large part of that—Global Vigilance unmatched: Many are rightly concerned about this, not because of our weaknesses but rather our strength. Space yields such a disproportionate advantage that any adversary must consider ways to overcome it, and intelligent enemies will strive to have an answer before undertaking offensive action.

USAF Photo

Figure 10. Predator, and other remotely piloted aircraft are also a part of Global Vigilance. Though some of its operators and those of the space systems are not physically in the combat theater, that does not mean that they are not in the fight.

All admit that military force does not answer all problems, but the long-range strike of the USAF is unmatched and has both visible and invisible effects—Global Power: Whatever the limitations of global strike, it is worth remembering that the major goals in World War II were to stamp out German and Japanese militarism. Since 1945, no two developed powers have been more given to pacifism than Japan and Germany. Deterrence is hard to prove because it involves inaction on the part of a potential adversary. But despite several serious international crises, no world war has erupted since 1939. It may well be that American long-range strike capability is precisely what has kept limited wars limited.

USAF Photo

Figure 11. Gen Curtis LeMay, one of the grandfathers of Global Strike.

Because Airmen do not die as often as do Marines and Soldiers in Iraq/Afghanistan does not mean they are not there. The great soldier George Patton said expiring for one's country is not the goal: Without the air superiority, mobility, strike, and information provided by the USAF, how well would the ground forces have done in the Middle East? In the Balkan wars of the 1990s, the ground forces argued that even when they were not at-risk participants, nonetheless it was the fear of their possible engagement that made the likes of [Slobodan] Milosevic give way. If that was true then, why is it not true also in Iraq and Afghanistan where the Airmen are not dying in as many numbers as Soldiers and Marines? Is it not conceivable that the airpower threat tends to prevent enemies from massing for an attack?

In any event, OIF and Operation Enduring Freedom will presently be the "last war" which the military is often ac-

cused of preparing for and perhaps we are suffering from too much "presentism." It is true that military history is not a reliable guide to the future of war. But is it possible that it is the *only* guide? It is composed of continuities and discontinuities. Professional historians generally agree that history does not repeat itself; it does not prove anything. Yet it can suggest possibilities and add to perspectives. Some of the "lessons" of Iraq and Afghanistan will apply, and others will be false beacons. Thus Overy's notion that generalized airpower is essential in order to meet the challenges arising from "lessons" emerging from those false beacons.

The Army's job has been to take and hold territory, and the USAF can help with that and provide other benefits for national security as well.

Notes

1. According to "tankmastergunner," the actual George Patton quote was: ". . . No bast--- ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making the other poor dumb bast--- die for his country. . . ." http://www.tankmastergunner.com/quotes-patton.htm (accessed 12 August 2009).

2. For a good summary of Giulio Douhet's ideas, see Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1959, 1965), 71–105; on William Mitchell's views, see Mark A. Clodfelter, "Molding Airpower Convictions: Development and Legacy of William Mitchell's Strategic Thought," in Phillip S. Meilinger, ed. *Paths of Heaven* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1998), 79–114; on Hugh Trenchard, see Meilinger, "Trenchard, Slessor, and Royal Air Force Doctrine before World War II," also in *Paths of Heaven*, 41–78.

3. Paul Fussell, *Thank God for the Atom Bomb, and Other Essays* (New York, NY: Summit Books, 1988) stimulated a good deal of debate on the subject.

4. Phillip S. Meiliger, "Trenchard and Morale Bombing: The Evolution of the Royal Air Force Before World War II," *The Journal of Military History*, April, 1996, 243–70.

5. Henry H. Arnold, *Global Mission* (New York, NY: Norton, 1949) 77–78, 87, 160.

6. Robert F. Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force, 1907–1960*, vol. 1 (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1989), 32.

7. Brig Gen William Mitchell, *Winged Defense* (1925; repr., New York, NY: Dover Books, 1988), 215.

8. Peter R. Faber, "Interwar US Army Aviation and the Air Corps Tactical School: Incubators of American Airpower," in Meilinger, *Paths of Heaven*, 183–238; Robert T. Finney, *History of the Air Corps Tactical School, 1920–*

1940 (new imprint, Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1998) 56–59.

9. Maurice Matloff, *The United States Army in World War II, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943–1944*, (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1959), 408; Matloff, "90 Division Gamble," 70th Infantry Division Association, http://www.trailblazersww2.org/history_gamble.htm.

10. James P. Tate, *The Army and its Air Corps: Army Policy Toward Aviation, 1919–1941* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1998), 163–75.

11. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, vol. 5, *The Pacific: Matterhorn to Nagasaki* (new imprint, Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History), 737–42.

12. Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1959, 1965), 105.

13. Herman S. Wolk, *Planning and Organizing the Postwar Air Force 1943–1947* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1982), 31–44.

14. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, vol. 6, *Men and Planes* (new imprint, Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 243–46. The 4,360 number represents the piston displacement, not the horsepower.

15. Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine*, 168–69; Wolk, *Planning and Organizing*, 215.

16. Vladimir I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1917, 1939).

17. Wolk, *Planning and Organizing*, 215.

18. Kenneth Crawford (*Newsweek* journalist), interview with author, Washington, DC, 4 August 1982.

19. Gen James H. Doolittle, interview with author, Washington, DC, 19 May 1982.

20. Senator James W. Wadsworth, Jr., (New York); George M. Watson, Jr., The Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, (Washington, DC: Center for Air Force History, 1993), 3,882.

21. Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *The Eisenhower Diaries* (New York, NY: Norton Publishers, 1981), 134–35.

22. Mrs. Carl A. Spaatz, interview with author, Washington, DC, 25 March 1982 and 12 April 1984.

23. Phillip S. Meilinger and Hoyt S. Vandenberg, *The Life of a General* (new imprint, Washington, DC: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1989), 92. First published in March 1989 by Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana.

24. Ibid., 82–84.

25. Clark G. Reynolds, *Admiral John H. Towers: The Struggle for Naval Air Supremacy* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute, 1991), 257, 370–71, and Chapter 17; Keith D. McFarland and David L. Roll, *Louis Johnson and the Arming of America* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2005), 185.

26. Henry H. Arnold, *Global Mission* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1949), 145, 148-49.

27. Tate, *Army and Its Air Corps*, 1.

28. Ibid., 89.

29. Theodore Taylor, *The Magnificent Mitscher* (New York, NY: Norton Publishers, 1954), 88–89, shows that Admiral Mitscher himself was not immune to those feelings.

30. Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine*, 90. Henry Arnold who was assistant chief at the time succeeded Gen Oscar Westover.

31. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, vol. 2, *Europe: Torch to Pointblank, August, 1942 To December 1943* (new imprint, Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 635; DeWitt S. Copp, "Frank M. Andrews: Marshall's Airman." in *Makers of the United States Air Force*, ed. John L. Frisbee (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1987), 69–71.

32. Gerald F. Selb, "The Decline of Veterans in Washington," *Capitol Journal, Wall Street Journal*, 25 May 2009, http://ac360.blogs.cnn.com/2009/05/25/the-decline-of-veterans-in-washington (accessed 11 August 2009).

33. US Department of Energy, Office of History and Heritage Resources, "First Steps Toward International Control," http://www.cfo.doe.gov/me70/manhattan/international_control-1.htm (accessed 11 August 2009). Churchill had also used the "Miracle of Deliverance" term in 1940 in connection with the Dunkirk evacuation.

34. Selb, "The Decline of Veterans in Washington," reported that in the current Congress there are 121 Members who have been in the military whereas in the Congress serving from 1969–71 there were 398.

35. James S. Corum and Wray R. Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars: Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 437.

36. I recognize there is some current literature arguing that Americans are willing to accept casualties if the object is deemed worthy and practical. However, the Japanese General Staff, Ho Chi Minh, and Saddam Hussein all assumed that the United States was highly sensitive to personnel losses, and our affinity for precision guided munitions and unmanned aircraft systems seems to support the latter interpretation. Clearly, if it is a matter of survival, as it seemed to be in the total war era, then the case is different.

37. Capt Charity Winters, "Not Home Yet…" *US Naval Institute Proceedings Magazine*, December 2007, http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/archive/story.asp?STORY_ID=1204 (accessed 11 August 2009).

38. Howard D. Belote, *Once in a Blue Moon: Airmen in Theater Command* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2000).

39. Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins, 1989).

40. R. J. Overy, *The Air War: 1939–1945*, (New York, NY: Stein and Day, 1980), 261–62.

41. Hon. Eric E. Shinseki, secretary of Veterans Affairs, "Investing in Veterans," *Huffington Post*, 12 August 2009, http://ebird.osd.mil/ebfiles/e20090814696023.html (accessed 14 August 2009).

42. Senator W. Stuart Symington, interview with author, Camden, Maine, 4 August 1982.

43. Brig Gen William Mitchell, "Tactical Application of Military Aeronautics" (lecture, Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1921). Copy on file 97–10, Army War College Curricular Archives, Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1–2.

44. Mitchell, *Winged Defense*. Page 171 cites "Attack" as the third great branch of aviation. The "Attack" term was used to describe ground support operations until World War II, when gradually "Tactical" replaced it to describe flight operations in support of the ground battle.

45. Wolk, *Planning and Organizing*, 105–08.

46. Thomas A. Keaney and Eliot A. Cohen, *Revolution in Warfare? Air Power in the Persian Gulf* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 220.

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Reflections of a Middling Cold Warrior

Should the Army Air Corps Be Resurrected?

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