STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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AIR MOBILITY COMMAND: PROVIDING GLOBAL REACH OR REACHING TO BE GLOBAL?

BY

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel James David "JD" Clifton, United States Air Force

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The Air Force has invested heavily in the concept of "global reach" for the Air Mobility Command and the nation. This paper will examine this concept, provide a snapshot of the Air Mobility Command's current capabilities to meet the country's political, economic, and global military needs, assess where the command appears to be heading (both in terms of equipment and personnel), and make suggested corrections the Air Mobility Command and the nation can make in order to facilitate meeting future global logistical challenges.

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PREFACE

The following quotes were selected because of the impact these thoughts, as well as these individuals, will have in the future on National Security Strategy policy.

"Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts. The victims were in airplanes or in their offices: secretaries, businessmen and –women, military and federal workers, moms and dads, friends and neighbors. Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror."
President Bush, Oval Office remarks, 9-11-01

"This is going to be a dividing point in history. If they still teach history 100 years from now, children will still be reading about this day. We haven't seen such destruction on our own soil since the Civil War." **Historian David McCullough, WP, 9-12-01**

"We are in a different era. I think the President has made that clear. The Secretary of Defense has made that clear. Everything is going to change." **Wolfowitz, DoD briefing, 9-13-01**

"It's a new kind of war ... It will be political, economic, diplomatic, military. It will be unconventional, what we do." **Rumsfeld, "Fox News Sunday," 9-16-01**

"We have a choice, either to change the way we live, which is unacceptable, or to change the way that they live, and we have—we chose the latter."
Rumsfeld, State Department Brief, 9-18-01

"On my orders, the United States military has begun strikes against al Quaeda terrorist training camps and military installations of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan ... The battle is now joined on many fronts. We will not waver. We will not tire. We will not falter. And we will not fail."
Bush, Presidential Address to the Nation, 10-7-01

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AIR MOBILITY COMMAND: PROVIDING GLOBAL REACH OR REACHING TO BE GLOBAL?

General Nathan Bedford Forrest, a Confederate Civil War general, once said, "The secret of victory is to get there first with the most."[1] While some would find this view rather simplistic, the axiom is still as sound today as it was during the Civil War. General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold's modern day thoughts revolved around this essential theme when he wrote: "We have learned and must not forget that from now on air transport is an essential element of airpower, in fact, of all national power."[2] The Air Mobility Command is chartered by the nation to provide the ability for the United States to project power across the globe. This power projection, simply put, is the act of getting to a potential conflict area quickly and with a decisive force. It also entails more than just accessing a certain area of the world, but also sustaining that access once it is gained. Furthermore the command must be capable of projecting this force across the entire spectrum of conflict.

This paper will examine the United States' current policies as found in the National Security Strategy report (December 2000) which drives and defines the Air Mobility Command's "Global Reach" mission. It will then provide a snapshot of the command's current capabilities as well as scrutinize the Department of Defense's perception of the abilities of the Air Mobility Command to meet the policies laid forth in the Quadrennial Defense Review (September 2001) and the Congressional Budget Office's Budget Options Report (March 2000). Finally it will suggest revision of the country's National Security Strategy which will facilitate our ability to meet future global logistical challenges.

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY AND AIR MOBILITY COMMAND

In a speech given 1 August 1999 at the United States Transportation Command change-of-command ceremony at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, General Henry Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated, "Try fighting without us [Air Mobility Command]."[3] In order to fully understand the Air Mobility Command's mission, one must first begin with an understanding of the strategy which drives this mission. In the 1992 National Security Strategy document, President George Bush wrote: "We must be able to deploy substantial forces and sustain them in parts of the world where pre-positioning of equipment may not always be feasible, where adequate bases may not be available, and where there is less-developed industrial base and infrastructure to support our forces once they have arrived."[4] The requirements for a strong strategic mobility force which can project power across the globe continue to grow. Former Air Force Secretary F. Whitten Peters wrote, "It is clear to me that expeditionary operations, as

planned by the Air Force and now as planned by our sister services, are going to require more strategic airlift. Today, we cannot meet the wartime requirements we already have without accepting risk--and we never could--and our future requirements are growing. We just don't know how much yet."[5] Secretary Peters went on to add, "Unfortunately, we do not have an executable plan to meet those growing needs."[6] All operations, whether it be all out war or military operations other than war (MOOTW), require the services of the Air Mobility Command.

Consider for a moment the movement of a fictional mechanized infantry battalion. They are desperately needed in some corner of the world. What will it take to move them quickly where they are needed?

> *"A United States mechanized infantry battalion weighs about 2500 tons, whereas a Russian battalion weighs about 1500 tons. These weights include the armored personnel carriers, which can only be carried by large cargo aircraft. The air transports would also carry ammunition, fuel and other supplies for two or three days' combat.*
>
> *Aircraft-carrying capacity is restricted by size ('cube' or cubic feet) as well as weight. Because the movement of commonly used large, light military equipment wastes capacity, it will take 60 C-141 or C-5 aircraft to move a U.S. battalion's vehicles. Civilian aircraft can be used to move most of the remaining men and supplies. Only three wide-bodied passenger aircraft would be required to move the battalion's 900 men, including their personal equipment, weapons and supplies in the aircraft's cargo containers. Almost 100 military and civilian aircraft would be required to move this one mechanized infantry battalion. You could not move more than five battalions at a time because only about 300 aircraft are available that can carry the armored personnel carriers. Forget about tanks; only the C-5 can carry them, and only one at a time. A tank battalion has 58 tanks, the U.S. Air Force has almost as many C-5s ready to fly at any one time...*
>
> *If you are content to carry only nonmotorized infantry, the carrying capacity increases significantly. War can be waged without tanks, particularly when defending. Antitank missiles weigh, at most, 50 pounds each; mortars can fit into a cargo container. Except in primitive areas, you can commandeer local trucks. Thus a light infantry battalion of 900 men armed with 18 107mm mortars, 90 tons of ammo for them, 60 antitank guided missile launchers and 1000 missiles, 50 tons of mines plus the usual armament of machine guns, rifles, grenades, sensors and other supplies, will require only 20 wide-bodied civilian aircraft."*[7]

One can see the advantage to airlifting a lighter battalion. Unfortunately a lighter battalion also leaves behind a significant amount of firepower and maneuverability, something a motorized infantry battalion commander might be loath to do. Yet this is precisely the direction the Army has begun to pursue. "In 1980-81 General Edward ("Shy") Meyer, then Chief of Staff of the Army, set out to solve this force structure dilemma by creating a prototype light division that could be deployed in approximately 1,250 C-141B sorties. To develop sufficient lethality

with its light air-transportable equipment, this division would depend upon the latest high-technology precision-guided weaponry and advanced computer-supported command, control, communications, and intelligence. Thus the High-Technology Light Division was born."[8] This trend continues today finding new life in the Army's Transformation plan as a lighter, more lethal objective force. Consider that this objective force is being designed to be able to deploy a brigade anywhere in the world in 96 hours; put a division on the ground in 120 hours; and five divisions on the ground in theater in 30 days.[9] How will they accomplish this? One way is by using and exploring new technologies in order to reduce the weight of their combat vehicles while still allowing for increased lethality. Also, there is a need to find new ways to increase a unit's deployability without sacrificing its survivability. Finally a way must be found to reduce in-theater logistics.[10]

The 2000 version of the National Security Strategy's focus on power projection echoed the previous strategy with the pivotal statement, "The United States must be able to respond at home and abroad to the full spectrum of threats and crises that may arise."[11] This policy implies a level of commitment of our nation's resources in order to meet a threat or crisis, which in turn requires the projection of power in some shape or form. This commitment does not necessarily need to take the form of military power, but can also use any tool or combination of tools at our country's disposal to project power (e.g. diplomacy, economic, law enforcement, military). The ability to respond across the spectrum in a form of our choosing protects our finite resources, and no one method of projecting power can be ignored. Power projection should never be thought of in terms of military power alone, but due to constraints, this paper will focus mainly on the military aspect.

The National Security Strategy report also states the first line of our military response force begins with "our forward and rotationally deployed forces."[12] These forces not only represent our first line of defense in being able to shape or deter a potential crisis, but also represent a commitment to our allies. On the other hand, these forces can be vulnerable unless they are capable of being rapidly augmented and supplied, especially during a crisis. The force currently designed to accomplish this augmentation and supply in a timely manner rests with the strategic mobility forces found in the Transportation Command, and the Transportation Command relies heavily on the speed that the Air Mobility Command brings in moving personnel and equipment. "Strategic mobility is critical to our ability to augment forces already present in the region with the projection of additional forces for both domestic and international crisis response. This agility in response is key to successful American leadership and engagement."[13]

If the response of strategic mobility is the key to success, what is the key to having a strong strategic mobility force? The National Security Strategy report also answers that question. "Access to sufficient fleets of aircraft, ships, vehicles, and trains, as well as bases, ports, pre-positioned equipment, and other infrastructure will of course be an imperative if we are to deploy and sustain U.S. and multinational forces in regions of interest to us."[14] To use the vernacular of General Forrest, it is tough to get there first with the most if you do not have the tools at your disposal to get there in the first place!

Yet equipment is only one-third of the battle. To speak about lifting men and equipment is misleading without a discussion on the logistics of carrying this load. Without a strong infrastructure, the best equipment in the world will have little impact on our nation's ability to shape the crisis. A robust infrastructure is a critical component in power projection and represents the middle third of a strong strategic mobility force. James Dunnigan explains further:

> *"What you can lift depends on how far you are going. With an average cruise speed of 500 to 800 km per hour, a 5000-km 'hop' would take 7 hours. Landing, unloading, refueling and reloading take another hour or two. Round-trip flight time—14 hours. And that's with only the most routine and perfunctory maintenance. The following typical distances in hours of flying time (at 800 km per hour) do not include refueling stops every 6 to 10 hours for aircraft that cannot refuel in the air. From Washington, D.C. to Berlin—8.5 hours; to Cairo—12; to Instanbul—10.5; to London—7.5; to Madrid—7.5; to Teheran—13; to the Persian Gulf—12; to South Africa—16. From San Francisco to New Delhi—15.5 hours; to Hawaii—5; to Hong Kong—14 hours; to Tokyo—10.5; to Peking—12; to Singapore—17; to Saigon—16. From Moscow to Berlin—2 hours; to Peking—7.5. It takes 7 hours, and 84 tons of fuel, to get across the North Atlantic.*
>
> *Lift capacity also depends on refueling opportunities. U.S. military aircraft can refuel in the air, whereas most Russian aircraft cannot. No civilian aircraft can refuel in the air. A Boeing-747 wide-body jet burns 12 tons of fuel per hour of flight. Fuel must be available at both ends of the trip, as well as a stock of spares, technicians, and maintenance facilities.*
>
> *There aren't many airfields capable of handling large transports. These large fields make such good targets for enemy aircraft, missiles and ground forces. Europe has about 50 that can support long-range aircraft, but most of the refueling and maintenance capacity is concentrated in 30. Losing an airfield is bad enough, but losing the maintenance and refueling facilities is worse because these items are harder to replace."*[15]

Time, fuel, maintenance, and accessibility to loading and unloading equipment all contribute to complicate the airlift problem. Will the Army's Objective force be able to meet its lofty time requirements? The answer to that question will depend upon the quality of research and the dedication of the individuals who are working to make the transformation become

reality. It will also depend on how well the Air Mobility Command, in coordination with the Army's Transformation model, addresses the issue of providing for a robust and capable infrastructure.

The National Security Strategy also addresses another critical aspect of the strategic mobility force, namely people. "The quality of our men and women in uniform will be the deciding factor in future military operations . . . We must ensure that we remain the most fully prepared and best trained military force in the world."[16] Quality people represent the final third of the triangle designed to provide the nation with the ability to have an effective strategic mobility force, but as we shall soon learn, even that goal has become difficult.

> *"Despite the prestige, glamour, and career opportunities associated with being an aviator, the Air Force will likely be battling its severe pilot shortage for years, as the service has found the shortage resistant to easy fixes. Moreover, the shortage is concentrated almost totally in the corps of experienced pilots, the ones most valuable and most difficult to replace.*
>
> *Some reasons for the shortage are familiar. A booming economy creates lucrative private-sector job opportunities, while quality-of-life concerns, such as excessive deployments, family disruption, and frequent moves, have spurred pilots to leave the force at rates higher than expected.*
>
> *However, other factors also are driving pilots from the service. For starters, each aircraft tasked to support an ongoing contingency operation...has only a limited number of experienced pilots to it. New deployment patterns that some consider overuse affect these pilots most...*
>
> *The high operations tempo of recent years combined with the force drawdown after the Cold War have created deployment levels many pilots have found unacceptable over the long-term...*
>
> *The unusual peacetime pilot shortage is not expected to fully dissipate until after 2010, according to the service."*[17]

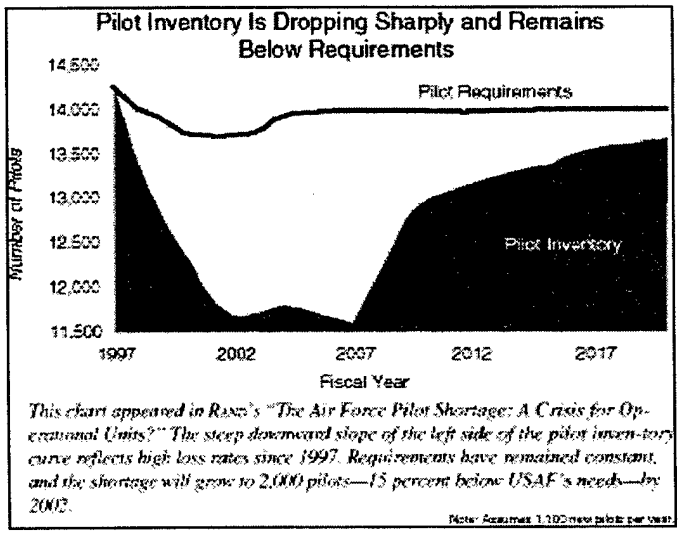

FIGURE 1: PILOT INVENTORY VERSUS REQUIREMENTS BY FISCAL YEAR[18]

Air Force leaders are concerned about the continuing low pilot retention. "The 'take-rate' for the pilot bonus at the eight-year mark, which fell from 81 percent in 1994 to 27 percent in 1998, ticked back up in 1999 to 42 percent. This is still far below the Air Force goal of 50 percent, and USAF's pilot shortage grew from about 800 in 1998 to 1,200 last year." [19] This dismal retention picture does not end with the pilot force, but even extends to the enlisted force. "The enlisted force continues to be the focus of concerns. That is because 1999 was the second straight year in which the USAF failed to meet goals in all three major re-enlistment categories. First-term enlisted retention dropped to 49 percent (goal: 55 percent). Career airmen retention fell to 91 percent (goal: 95 percent). Second-term airmen retention stabilized at 69 percent (goal: 75 percent)." [20] The hemorrhage of trained personnel may continue even in light of the events of September 11th. If this trend continues, it will have significant impact on future military operations.

EVOLUTION OF THE GLOBAL REACH CONCEPT

Since 1945 the United States national security strategy has changed several times, but the common thread was always the same—deterrence.[21] With KC-135s providing aerial refueling to B-52s, the concept of deterrence was made feasible because it allowed our nation to project power in the form of a nuclear bomber over our adversaries. Airlift forces were also critical since they provided rapid logistical support to our military nuclear forces across the globe. "Air mobility was the silent force that made the U.S. strategy feasible. Air mobility was the backbone of deterrence; without it, U.S. deterrence strategy would most likely have failed."[22]

Suddenly in the early 1990s, an event occurred which shook the world. "The destruction of the Berlin Wall mirrored the collapse of the Soviet Union, which necessitated the most dramatic change in U.S. strategy since the end of World War II ... Today, the United States is confronted with regional conflict, humanitarian relief operations, and peacekeeping efforts much more often than it was before 1990."[23] Global Reach – Global Power was first coined in an Air Force white paper during General Merrill McPeak's tour as the Air Force chief of staff.[24] Keith Hutcheson further explains the Global Reach concept when he writes:

> *"As the doctrine document proclaims, air mobility involves much more than transport aircraft flying from one location to another; instead, it is a system that combines airlift, aerial refueling, and mobility-support assets into an integrated team that performs its wartime mission everyday and expands as necessary to meet contingency requirements. This team, working alone or with other military forces and civilian agencies, provides U.S. leadership with the ability to respond rapidly to any crisis, anywhere in the world, in a precise, measured manner. This air mobility system is unique to the United States.*

No other country—not even the former Soviet Union—has ever possessed this capability on such a scale.

The air mobility system has provided the United States with the power to achieve its national strategy, both during the Cold War and in today's unsteady environment. The system leads U.S. military forces into whatever engagements the U.S. leadership deems appropriate. Air mobility forces help ensure that, regardless of the course of action the U.S. leadership chooses to take in a crisis, the United State can be responsive, adaptable, and decisive."[25]

The last evolution in the Global Reach concept revolves around the Air Force's Expeditionary Aerospace Force (EAF). The EAF meant that the Air Force restructured its forces to become more lean, light, and lethal.[26] The EAF concept relies upon regularly scheduled rotations of Air Expeditionary Forces (AEF) to accomplish its missions.[27] These AEFs consist of 10 notional AEFs linked to operational active duty, Reserve, and Guard wings and consist of about 175 aircraft—75 forward-deployed and 100 on call. Two AEFs are scheduled to be on call or deployed for 90 days every 15 months.[28]

Aircraft	Forward	On Call
A-10	12	14 (ANG)
B-2A	0	3
B-52/B-1	0	6
C-130	8	10 (ANG)
C-21A	3	6
E-3 AWACS	3	0
F-117A	0	6
F-15E	10	14
F-16CJ	8	10
HH-60	3	9
KC-10	4	2
KC-135	3	7(AFRC)
KC-135	3	7(ANG)

TABLE 1: NOTIONAL AIR EXPEDITIONARY FORCE [29]

What does the EAF have to do with the Global Reach concept? AEFs are structured to be U.S. based and must be subsequently deployed to overseas theaters. Keith Hutcheson writes that:

> *"The EAF and AEF concepts incorporate two of the Air Force's core competencies—rapid global mobility and precision engagement—and are designed to use limited assets in the most efficient manner possible. In many ways, they are new and revolutionary ways of doing business. At least one element remains unchanged, however: air mobility still is as critical to the success of the AEF concept as it was to the fight-in-place concept. The adage 'you can't fight if you can't get there' is applicable still, perhaps even more so. Air mobility forces will play significant roles in the AEF—both as an enabler projecting the AEF's power wherever the U.S. leadership decides is necessary and as a member of the AEF itself. In both these roles, air mobility forces will be essential to seizing the initiative rapidly, containing conflict, and resolving the situation on terms favorable to the United States and its allies."*[30]

CURRENT CAPABILITIES OF AIR MOBILITY COMMAND

From the National Security Strategy we can see the importance of the contributions the Air Mobility Command makes to the nation, but what does the command have at its disposal to execute that mission? General Charles T. Robertson, Jr., Commander-in-Chief, United States Transportation Command and Commander of Air Mobility Command, summed it up best when he wrote: "The value of air mobility transcends the U.S. military. This year, AMC [Air Mobility Command] will fly to all countries of the world but five—and three of those lack runways—and to non-countries as well, including 45 missions to Antarctica. When fully mobilized, AMC operates close to 1,500 aircraft—approximately the number of aircraft in the fleets of American, Delta, and Trans World Airlines together. AMC has 150,000 active-duty, Guard, and Reserve men and women—the equivalent of United and Delta Airlines combined."[31]

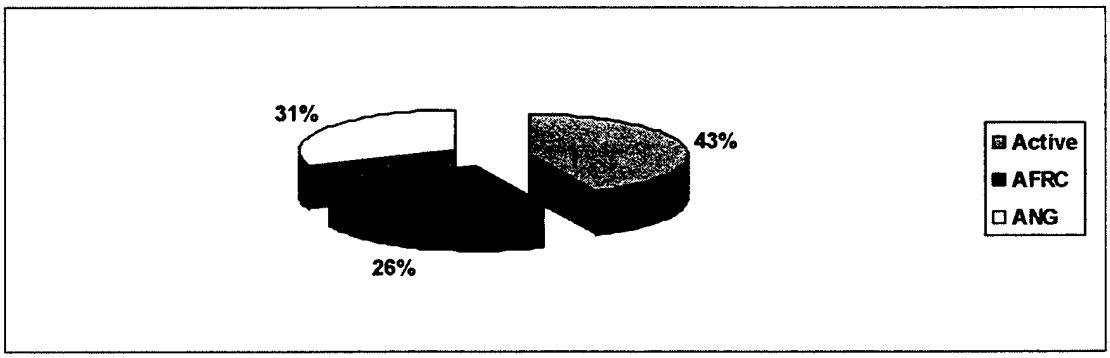

FIGURE 2: AIR MOBILITY COMMAND PERSONNEL[32]

The operative words from General Robertson's comment were "fully mobilized." As of 30 September 2000, Air Mobility Command had some 49, 930 active-duty personnel (8,562 officers and 41,368 enlisted), 81,132 reserve personnel (33,076 from the Air National Guard and 44,368 from the Air Force Reserve), as well as 7,798 civilian personnel.[33] The primary authorized inventory of aircraft included 15 helicopters (UH-1), 222 tanker aircraft (KC-135 and KC-10), and 325 transport aircraft (C-5, C-9, C-17, C-20, C-21, C-32, C-37, C-130, C-137, C-141, VC-25).[34] In order to fully mobilize it becomes necessary not only to mobilize the Air Reserve Components (Air National Guard and Air Reserve forces), but also components of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF). How important is the CRAF? According to General Robertson, "In addition to the contributions of Guard and Reserve forces, the mission of AMC would be impossible to carry out if it were not for the Civil Reserve Air Fleet. Every major passenger- and cargo-carrying airline in the United States—38 in all—participates in the CRAF program. In peacetime and in war, the CRAF provides over 90 percent of the passenger airlift and approximately 50 percent of all cargo airlift for the United States. Unfortunately, the CRAF aircraft are unable to carry large outsized cargo, which is critical to U.S. forces and only fits on larger military airlift aircraft. Additionally, CRAF carriers provide vital wartime strategic aero medical evacuation capability."[35] While the CRAF provides an important boost to the command, both in times of war and peace, there is a critical issue which must be addressed with full mobilization. Many of the CRAF pilots are also in the Air National Guard or Air Reserve. If these units are activated, the CRAF force might be severely impacted!

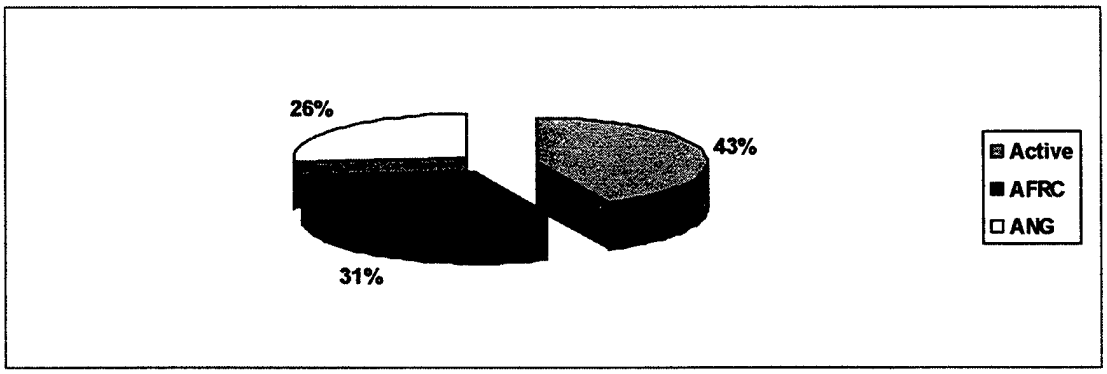

FIGURE 3: AIR MOBILITY COMMAND AIRCRAFT [36]

Mission Area	Percentage
Aerial Port	66
Aeromedical	93
Chaplain	52
Civil Engineering	61
Comptroller	34
Intelligence	60
Judge Advocate	34
Medical	46
Personnel	26
Public Affairs	44
Security Police	58

TABLE 2: AIR RESERVE COMPONENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO AIR MOBILITY COMMAND [37]

Mission Type	Aircraft Type	Stage I	Stage II	Stage III	Total
International Long Range	Passenger	41	116	264	421
	Cargo	36	94	240	370
International Short Range	Passenger	0	15	63	78
	Cargo	0	16	16	32
National Domestic	Passenger	0	0	50	50
	Cargo	0	0	0	0
National Alaskan	Passenger/ Cargo	0	6	6	12
Aeromedical	Medi-Evac	0	25	28	53
Total		77	272	667	1016

TABLE 3: CIVIL RESERVE AIR FLEET AIRCRAFT CONTRIBUTIONS [38]

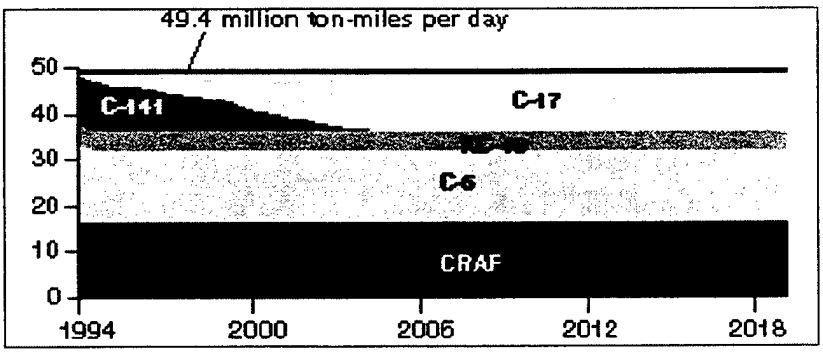

FIGURE 4: STRATEGIC AIRLIFT REQUIREMENTS [39]

How important is this Air Mobility force? Col Edward Mann III puts it into perspective when he writes:

> *"Is it possible to exert global power without global reach? Is there any value in global reach if it does not produce global power? The answers seem obvious and lead us, once again, to embrace the comprehensive view of aerospace power.*
>
> *The versatility of that power makes it a national treasure—not just one or two things we do, but all the myriad options we offer national decision makers in defense of the United States through our control and exploitation of air and space. The ability to deliver precision firepower anywhere in the world overnight (demonstrated [once again] during Desert Storm) is part of the powerful presence the United States casts across the international community. But an equally important part of that presence (and one that will probably grow in the future) is the ability to rapidly organize, transport, and construct vast infrastructures over thousands of miles (demonstrated during Desert Shield and Desert Storm). Indeed, Carl Builder believes that during the Gulf War 'it was not our combat aircraft that set us so apart from our allies or enemy in capabilities; it was our projection of essential infrastructures for modern, precision warfare.' Airlift provides not only reach but national power. Nor do bombs on target equate directly to global power. Without global range, our fighters and bombers could exert nothing beyond local or regional power. Neither airlift nor combat aircraft represent anything at all without the help of many other functions."*[40]

Since the Gulf War the United States has not been that involved in "shooting wars," and yet the operations tempo is at an all time high. The answer can be found in the form of military operations other than war (MOOTW). "U.S. interests in the twenty-first century will be closely tied to both the moral and practical benefits of delivering humanitarian assistance. Air mobility forces always have been—and will continue to be—crucial to this mission."[41] Be it a natural disaster or a conflict-related emergency, the rapid response abilities of the Air Mobility Command almost ensure its involvement in one way or another. This ability was best stated by President Bill Clinton when he was referring to the crisis in Rwanda, "There does not appear to be any choice. We will use airlift."[42] "U.S. air mobility assets have been used in nearly every humanitarian emergency in the past seven years—often providing the majority of the requirements, as they did in Somalia from 1992 to 1993."[43]

There are signs this involvement with MOOTW is beginning to strain the mobility as well as the political system. Again, Hutcheson guides our discussion when he writes:

> *"The end of the Cold War changed things. Because the risk of a small conflict escalating into a large one had lessened considerably, humanitarian agencies began to advocate that the West, particularly the United States, take advantage of changed circumstances and use its power to end long-standing conflicts or to create protected safe areas in which war victims could flee to receive humanitarian aid and sanctuary. Many had advocated such an*

arrangement for the crisis in southern Sudan. There were financial considerations, as well. The U.S. foreign assistance budget, spent increasingly on responding to conflict-related emergencies, subsequently cut its funds to help poor countries develop their potential. In the 1980s, 11 percent of the disasters to which the U.S. government responded were due to conflict. In the 1990s, the number increased to 32 percent.

The debate grew. Were national interests at stake? Most ongoing conflicts were long-running civil wars with sizable guerrilla forces—would the United States risk becoming entangled in another Vietnam? Moreover, lingering political questions remained, the most prominent being the issue of national sovereignty. Small countries, joined politically in the Non-Aligned Movement, could vigorously oppose any intervention by claiming it would constitute meddling in their internal affairs. The issue of national sovereignty was elevated to such a point that it alone stopped talk of intervention, except with humanitarian aid, in most conflicts."[44]

The 1990s were, for the most part, the decade of MOOTW operations. Former Secretary of State Madeline Albright framed this emerging role of the U.S. military in a new definition of nation security when she stated in 1993, "In the aftermath of the Cold War, the security of the United States is no longer determined by the size and strength of our nuclear arsenals and military deployments on the front lines of the Iron Curtain. President Clinton has spoken often of this nation's security being defined by the strength of our economy, the adaptability of our armed forces to the new threats of the 1990s, and the spread of democratic government in the world."[45] Was this National Security Strategy working? Did the nation have the assets to continue on this path?

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PERCEPTIONS OF AIR MOBILITY COMMAND

While the National Security Strategy has some grand designs for power projection across the globe, how does the Department of Defense see its abilities to meet these lofty goals? "While U.S. military forces . . . remain the best trained, best equipped, and most capable in the world, there are significant challenges that are eroding the advantages the United States currently enjoys."[46] It appears the Department of Defense is trying to say that the horse has been ridden hard and, instead of being put away wet, is being ridden even harder! "Excessive operational demands on the force have taken a toll on military personnel. Since the end of the Cold War, the Armed Forces experienced a reduction to total personnel but an increase in the demands placed on those smaller forces."[47] In 1990, the Air Force participated in approximately 60 deployments—in 1997, it exceeded 600![48] The Congressional Budget Office confirms part of this statement where they report a 34 percent reduction in Department of Defense employees between 1989 and 1999, including a 26 percent reduction in reserve forces.[49] It also includes a

discussion between the chiefs of the military services in testimony to the Congress in September 1998 when the chiefs testified the readiness of their forces was declining. The chiefs argued this declining readiness was due to recruitment and retention concerns, quality of life issues, increase in overseas deployments, and a decrease in the percentages of equipment ready for action.[50] The first three of the four reasons offered to explain this decline in readiness centered on purely personnel issues.

The fourth reason the chiefs gave for decreased readiness is even more critical for our strategic mobility forces, forces we rely upon to take us into a crisis area. "The U.S. military has an existing shortfall in strategic transport aircraft. This shortfall is aggravated by continuing low readiness of the C-5 airlifter, which has had an average peacetime mission capable rate over the last five years of approximately 60 percent."[51] This statement leads us to conclude that more than just military personnel are growing tired. The C-141 is in the process of retiring, and there are not enough C-17s to replace it. "The C-17 is replacing the C-141 on nearly a one-for-two basis, meaning that, although the tonnage that can be moved with the larger airplane is roughly the same, there are fewer individual aircraft to spread around the globe. General Robertson, addressing the House Armed Services readiness subcommittee in October of last year, said 'Even though tonnage capabilities remain close to the same, we lose tremendous flexibility with so many fewer tails.' The 135 C-17s can only be in half as many places as 270 C-141s.'"[52] Additionally, the workhorse of the refueling fleet, the KC-135, has a median age over 40 years and currently projected to remain in the inventory for another 40 years.[53] Former Secretary of the Air Force Peters was worried about the tanker fleet when he noted, "We have no significant replacement programs on the books for our aging tankers." He went on: "It is not that we aren't going to have the tankers immediately, but what we are seeing on the KC-135 fleet are what appears to be an increasing mission incapable rate due to technical surprises...These are the kinds of problems which can put a whole fleet down or 200 aircraft down overnight for a period of time and those are the kinds of worries we have."[54]

This downward trend is not just found in the areas of personnel or equipment; it can also be found in the critical area of infrastructure, an area the chiefs never addressed. "The defense infrastructure has also suffered from under funding and neglect. Defense infrastructure includes facilities such as piers, runways, and hangars that support U.S. combat forces, the buildings where Department of Defense personnel work, and the housing in which military personnel and their families live, and training space."[55] The most telling comment this document makes in looking forward to the future is when it states, "The Department of Defense cannot transform the force to deal with tomorrow's security threats without also addressing today's challenges."[56]

RECOMENDATIONS

We have seen the National Security Strategy policies as they relate to power projection, and how the Department of Defense sees its abilities to meet those policies. Will these policies stand up to the test of time, or at least to the year 2020, in light of current trends and threats? The policies in and of themselves seem sound; however, there is a serious disconnect between the ideas and reality. In light of the events of 11 September 2001, the current "shape, respond, prepare" defense strategy may be outdated. An alternative strategy would be to limit the engagement of military forces on a more selective basis while accelerating service transformations designed to meet current and future threats. This strategy would result in a change of priorities where we would engage militarily while investing in the transformation of our military to meet the emerging threat of terrorism on the United States homeland. This alternative has drawn some support because of its emphasis on transformation and homeland defense programs.[57] It also drew praise for "both its emphasis on reducing the employment of today's military and for its focus on transforming the Department of Defense to deal with emerging and future challenges that could, if not adequately addressed, compromise U.S. military superiority and ultimately threaten vital national interests."[58] The strategy must be readdressed. In the continuing debate over "ways, ends, and means," the means do not match with the ends or the ways. "The General Accounting Office, in a study of airlift capabilities it completed in June for the late Rep. Herbert H. Bateman, who was then chairman of the House Armed Services subcommittee on military readiness, found that the Air Force is short about a third of the organic airlift necessary to meet national strategy requirements."[59] After all is said and done, this option or any option chosen is fraught with peril should we as a nation decide not to fully fund or commit to it.

"The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review must be both strategy-driven and resource-constrained."[60] Michele Flournoy argues that this statement is one of the elements of success for the Quadrennial Defense Review. The option of selective engagement while accelerating transformation appears to be the best option to pursue in terms of power projection. It forces us to think both in terms of overarching strategy while still mindful of the fact we do not have unlimited resources. It also forces us to look into the future, analyze our potential adversaries, and plan our forces to meet this threat, in terms of personnel, equipment, and the types of quality personnel we need to project power. This approach would also address many of the problems this paper already identified in the September 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). Again, we are assuming sufficient funding from The Congress. John Correll addressed this new strategic approach when he wrote:

"The Bush Doctrine is clearly the cornerstone of the new strategy, but major building blocks will be supplied by Rumsfeld and his QDR team. A key point, which Rumsfeld has been pushing since last summer, is that we should move from a 'threat-based' strategy to one that is 'capabilities-based.'

The capabilities-based model concentrates on how an adversary might fight rather than—as previous strategies did—on who the adversary might be and where a war might occur. This would, the QDR report said, 'refocus planners on the growing range of capabilities that adversaries might possess or could develop' and point to the capabilities we will need ourselves.

It would also anticipate surprise."[61]

In 1921 Italian airpower advocate General Giulio Douhet argued, "Victory smiles upon those who anticipate the changes in the character of war, not upon those who wait to adapt themselves after the changes occur."[62] Force projection boils down to being able to take sufficiently sized force and project them to some spot on the globe in order to meet our nation's requirements. The current policies, as found in the National Security Strategy of 2000, do not address the realities of today or tomorrow's strategic challenges. The September 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review clearly shows the nation, at least in terms of strategic mobility, is not at the level called for in this National Security Strategy. Should we change the strategy of "shape, respond, prepare"? Yes, if it is not working or unobtainable! The new strategy we adopt should be selective engagement while advancing the transformation of our military. The Quadrennial Defense Review recognizes this need to transform our military, especially in terms of power projection. "Transforming the U.S. global military posture begins with the development of new ways to deter conflict."[63] There are signs that this transformation is beginning to take place. Unfortunately it took the events of 11 September 2001 to provoke the effort.

"That changed suddenly with the terrorist attacks on Sept 11. A quick revision to the Quadrennial Defense Review made homeland security the top defense priority.

More important was the 'Bush Doctrine.' The President declared that the focal point of his Administration will be destroying the terror networks. Nations must choose: 'Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists,' Bush said. 'From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.'

With that, the President laid the foundation for the first real defense strategy we have had since the Cold War. It is unlike the loose strategies of the 1990s, which scattered too much of their attention on interests deemed 'important' but not necessarily 'vital.'

This time, the security of the nation is at risk. This time, there are enemies intent on bringing us down."[64]

Now is the time to make this critical change to our National Security Strategy. The events of September 11th have given us the opportunity to disengage from those areas where we do

not have vital interests and concentrate only on those where we do. By doing so, we will find ourselves at a strategic crossroad where we can pause and transform the Air Mobility Command into a command equipped to meet our future global challenges well into the 21st century.

WORD COUNT = 6,285

ENDNOTES

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[2] Keith Hutcheson, Air Mobility: The Evolution of Global Reach (Beltsville, Maryland: Todd Allan Printing, 1999), p. 35.

[3] Ibid, p. vi.

[4] Ibid, p. 38.

[5] John A. Tirpak, "A Clamor for Airlift," Air Force Magazine, Volume 23, Number 12, December 2000, pp. 24-30.

[6] Ibid.

[7] James F. Dunnigan, How to Make War: A Comprehensive Guide to Modern Warfare (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1988), p. 544.

[8] Richard J. Dunn III, "Transformation: Let's Get It Right This Time," Parameters 31 (Spring 2001): pp. 22-28.

[9] http://www.objectiveforce.army.mil/oftf/pages/objectiveforcewhitepaper.pdf

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[11] A National Security Strategy for a Global Age, The White House, December 2000, p. 19.

[12] Ibid, p. 19.

[13] Ibid, p. 20.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Dunnigan, p. 545.

[16] Ibid, p. 18.

[17] Adam J. Hebert, "Learning to Live With the Pilot Retention Problem," Air Force Magazine, Volume 84, Number 1, January 2001, pp. 66-69.

[18] Ibid, p. 68.

[19] Robert S. Dudney, "Still in the Hole," Air Force Magazine, Volume 83, Number 4, April 2000, http://www.afa.org/magazine/watch/0400watch.html.

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[24] Edward C. Mann III, Col, USAF, Thunder and Lightning: Desert Storm and the Airpower Debates (Maxwell AFB, Alabama: Air University Press, April 1995), p. 187.

[25] Ibid, p. 38.

[26] Ibid, p. 45.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid, p. 46.

[30] Ibid, p. 47.

[31] Ibid, p. xv.

[32] Hutcheson, p. 110.

[33] "Air Mobility Command," Air Force Magazine, Volume 84, Number 5, May 2001, p. 88.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Hutcheson, p. xv.

[36] Ibid, p. 115.

[37] Ibid, p. 113.

[38] Ibid, p. 121.

[39] John A. Tirpak, "Airlift Moves Up and Out," Air Force Magazine, Volume 79, Number 2, February 1996, http://www.afa.org/magazine/0296airlift.html.

[40] Mann, p. 191.

[41] Hutcheson, p. 84.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid, p. 92.

[44] Ibid, p. 80.

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[46] Quadrennial Defense Review Report, The Department of Defense, September 30, 2001, pp. 7-8.

[47] Ibid, p. 8.

[48] Hutcheson, p. vi.

[49] Budget Options for National Defense, The Congress of the United States, Congressional Budget Office, March 2000, p. 1.

[50] Ibid, p. 2.

[51] Quadrennial Defense Review Report, p. 8.

[52] Tirpak, "A Clamor for Airlift," pp. 24-30.

[53] KC-135 Serial Number Coding, Flight Manual, Technical Order 1C-135(K)-1, 30 June 2000, pp. iv-viii.

[54] Tirpak, "A Clamor for Airlift," pp. 24-30.

[55] Quadrennial Defense Review Report, pp. 9-10.

[56] Ibid, p. 10.

[57] Michele A. Flournoy, ed., QDR 2001: Strategy-Driven Choices for America's Security (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2001), p. 149.

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[59] Tirpak, "A Clamor for Airlift," pp. 24-30.

[60] Flournoy, p. 376.

[61] John T. Correll, "Strategy for Changing Times," Air Force Magazine, Volume 84, Number 12, Dec 2001, p. 2.

[62] Col Allan W. Howey, Global Dynamic Operations (Airpower Research Institute Papers, April 2001), p. 4.

[63] Quadrennial Defense Review Report, p. 25.

[64] Correll, p. 2.

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