THE EXCEPTIONAL RELEASE
ISSUE 150 - SPRING 2020

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ON THE COVER

The 150th ER Special Edition cover features a sampling of ER cover designs from over the years. Explore and review past editions at issuu.com/teamloa.
Greetings LOG Nation!

I hope you are safe and well. Life has certainly changed since our last ER Winter Edition. One thing that remained constant, however, is LOG Nation’s continued tenacious and steadfast mission focus and humanitarian efforts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts and accomplishments that are simply nothing short of – well – incredible, but certainly not surprising! While we may be wearing masks and some are WFH (Working From Home), LOG Nation-ers rose to the occasion. After all, we are “Logisticians.” We kick down doors, we lean into the challenge(s) head-on, and we continue to produce. We innovate. We improvise. We succeed.

Case in point, here are just a few examples (there are so many more) that clearly depict LOG Nation in action:

A 509th Maintenance Group research and engineering (RE) computer-aided drafting manager, showcases a 3D printed medical face shield prototype, made by the RE shop at Whiteman Air Force Base. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Sadie Colbert)

Crew chiefs with the 919th Special Operations Maintenance Squadron, inspect the wheels on a C-146A Wolfhound at Duke Field, Florida. Airmen in the squadron now wear additional personal protective equipment, including cloth face coverings and gloves, while accomplishing vital training and mission tasks to help combat the spread of COVID-19. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole King)
An Airman assigned to the 48th Logistics Readiness Squadron vehicle maintenance flight adjusts hoist placement before lifting equipment at Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England. Vehicle maintenance Airmen have a critical role in ensuring first responders and mission-essential operations personnel continue to have top of the line transportation despite the current challenges of COVID-19. (Photo by Airman 1st Class Madeline Herzog.)

An 86th Logistics Readiness Squadron cargo deployment function technician measures the height of a pallet before it ships out at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Airmen from the Installation Deployment Readiness Squadron are taking extra precautions to protect themselves and others in light of COVID-19. (Photo by Senior Airman Kristof Riemann.)

By way of unplanned phenomena and events, COVID-19 is certainly not LOG Nation’s “first rodeo,” although it has presented unique challenges and will likely continue to do so in the future. That said, what comforts this LOA President, is knowing there is no door we cannot and will not kick down. LOG Nation will continue to innovate, improvise, and implement whatever needs to be done to safely and effectively get the mission done...no matter the shape or form, visible or not, that comes our way. Bottom line, the mission continues on, and so do we! To include your LOA Executive Board (EB)...
Fletcher), we are pleased to announce our theme – “Under Attack: Agile Logistics for the Future Fight.” Fitting, don’t you think? It matters not if the attack is conventional, near-peer, cyber, “Pandemic” or otherwise...we will be under attack, there will be a future fight, and we must be agile, nimble and innovative to win. We are excited with our theme and look forward to exploring a variety of topics with exciting guest speakers during our next Symposium. On that note, there is one bit of unfortunate news to share. The EB made the decision to postpone the October 2020 Symposium until Spring 2021 (the week of 29 March). While measured and solemn deliberation occurred, the health, safety, and well being of all far outweighed the notion of “tradition,” i.e., trying to make our October event a reality this year. We are still planning on Salt Lake City, UT as the Symposium site in 2021. Also of note, with this year’s postponement until the Spring of 2021, the National EB will use this unplanned circumstance to announce we will now hold our annual Symposiums in the Spring each year.

We’re excited to announce that with this year’s October Symposium postponement, we are working with our LOA University POCs, Capt Jared “Boyd” Stewart, Chief Learning Officer and Lt Col Jerry Ottinger, Dean LOA University, to discuss the possibility of holding a Virtual LOA U this October. The intent is to host a Virtual LOA U on or about what would have been the original 2020 Symposium date. We will certainly keep LOG Nation apprised, but do know the team is excitedly and enthusiastically preparing to provide an engaging LOA U this Fall – virtually!

So LOG Nation, have you heard of “The Leadership LENS” Podcast? No? Well, I am extremely excited to announce that one of our young professional officers and President of the Wasatch LOA Chapter at Hill AFB, Capt Monique Caraghiaur is the host of the new Leadership LENS Podcast. Aiding Monique in this exciting new endeavor is JD DuVall, the Executive Producer of the Podcast series. “Season 1” which runs from June through September, is chocked full of impressive leaders across the spectrum of active duty senior leaders to company presidents within industry. Here’s a sneak peek of just a few of Season 1’s line up: Lt Gen Warren Berry, Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Engineering & Force Protection; Deborah Lee James, 23rd SECAF and author of Aim High; Dr. Jannell MacAulay, Co-Creator of Warrior’s Edge; Rick Lamb, CSM (Ret) and Jennifer Anthony, CMSgt (Ret). And that’s just the tip of the iceberg. Stay tuned for upcoming airings on a wide variety of social media avenues. How awesome and exciting that two of our very own LOA members, Capt Monique Caraghiaur and Mr. JD DuVall are providing yet another means wherein our LOA membership can continue its professional development journey.

Lastly...she’s baaaacccckkk!!! I am super excited to announce to LOG Nation that Ms. Carol Howtiz is LOA’s newest member to join our Board of Advisors. And, Carol also volunteered to serve as our new Executive Board Officer Election Chair. My friend from the AMOC class of 1988 is still serving her (our) LOA in her recently-retired post-AF life. That’s no surprise...thanks Carol!

In closing...WOW! Nothing is going to knock OUR LOG NATION down. We “may” be slowed down, but we WILL NOT be knocked down! As always, this retired Maintainer/Loggie remains in awe of what you do each and every day. I know that while I worked from home rather extensively under Ohio’s Stay-At-Home order these past few weeks, many of you remained on the “front lines” doing what you do every single day to support the warfighter. I am proud to be your LOA President and fellow Loggie colleague.

Stay safe...stay well!

Tap a Shoulder!
Let’s Go — Let’s Grow — Let’s Get After It!

Scott Fike
President
Logistics Officer Association

Under Attack: Agile Logistics for the Future Fight

The Logistics Officer Association (LOA) Symposium is this year’s premier event dedicated to enabling interactive exchanges among logistics, acquisition and technology professionals from across the Department of Defense, defense industry and academia. In 2021 there will be a continued focus on Leadership, Innovation, Velocity, Excellence (L.I.V.E) with the theme of the Symposium being Under Attack: Agile Logistics for the Future Fight.
LOG Insights During a Pandemic

I usually carry my daily calendar inside the front cover of my note taker. The one posted in there right now is 19 March 2020, the last day we had a regular presence in the Pentagon as a result of COVID-19. By my math, this makes today Day 60 of living with a pandemic and driving on through a virus that will likely change us forever. So I thought I’d take this opportunity to give you a quick snapshot on how our sustainment enterprise is faring, and what we’ve learned over these last 60 days.

As you might imagine, there is undeniable disruption in our sustainment enterprise. You’ve all seen the reports of commercial airports largely silent, and passenger carriers reducing operations by up to 90%. We’ve seen hundreds of vendors cease operations, most temporarily, but certainly with some shuttering their businesses permanently. The organic industrial base hasn’t been immune to disruption, either, with slowing production based on delayed vendor deliveries and workforce availability. On the whole, though, you might be surprised to hear that our supply chain and sustainment enterprise remain healthy, despite what some of our adversaries might think or hope. Let’s look at each of those [distribution, supply chain, and depot maintenance] a bit closer to explain why.

While the distribution system has seen dramatic changes to its operations, it continues to function. Commercial passenger airlines have idled well over 50% of their fleets, and load factors have reduced to about 10%. Cargo carriers have seen less drastic impacts with a 19% reduction in demand, largely caused by less transoceanic traffic. Rail volumes are at 10-year lows, while truck traffic is down about 50% from last year. In response, your AF stopped some routine leveling actions to ensure critical supplies don’t get frustrated in a low-capacity market at the moment. But all of this capacity reduction is directly tied to demand. While we’re all personally ordering more on-line, it doesn’t completely make up for the bigger losses of high volume and high cube loads (coal, vehicles, etc.).

Now, the supply chain isn’t all rosy. Much like the distribution system, the longer we see disruptions, the more risk the system will have to absorb. First, we’ve seen a decrease in demand across most weapon systems. Flying hours are down about 25%, almost identical to the decreased orders in fuel. The supply chain, long primed for a higher level of consumption, is lagging the operational tempo slow down and, as a result, is pushing more parts to the field without a corresponding demand. Lower flying hours also gives our maintainers some time and space to fix aircraft, work on delayed discrepancies, and bring fleets to a healthier state. Second, we should also acknowledge that the supply chain worked as intended. That is, for cases where we had vendor disruptions, we had adequate peacetime operating stock on the shelf and safety stock built into the system. The “shock absorbers” designed to handle supply chain perturbations worked as intended.

The supply chain presents an even more interesting case study. We’ve seen over 500 companies curtail or cease operations, with 65% of those still not fully operational. That’s a big number, but it also requires some context. That represents only about 3% of our vendor base and accounts for less than 1% of our annual requisitions. Despite these vendor disruptions, we’ve actually seen our sustainment readiness indicators improve. Materiel availability, the measure of parts on shelves, rose almost 4% in the last 60 days. Supply rates have improved across multiple fleets, and aircraft readiness has improved by nearly 10%. So, what’s going on?

Some of this downturn will be helped by the restart of our Global Force Management moves; more help will come when a DoD stop movement order expires, and states begin to “open.” This industry also benefited from over $50 billion in loans, grants, and aid to workers through the CARES Act. Since this industry is meeting current demand, the impact on the DoD has been low, although we will pay higher prices than pre-COVID. Even today, the CRAF carriers remain 100% subscribed to the program, able to meet all wide-body equivalents that DoD would require in a crisis. But the longer this goes on, the more risk this industry will incur, and the more probable that “idle” capacity will become “lost” capacity. It bears watching, but for now, our sustainment system is functioning as well as can be expected.

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Now, the supply chain isn’t all rosy. Much like the distribution system, the longer we see disruptions, the more risk the system will have to absorb. We also know that not all suppliers are created equal. Disruptions in already fragile supply chains can be catastrophic, and we all know how we have our fair share of diminishing manufacturing sources with older weapon systems. Additionally, challenges with second-, third- and fourth-tier vendors can have ripple effects across fleets, and we often lack the visibility we need to understand when those vendors will be at risk. That said, our cohorts in AQ are making Herculean strides to keep the industrial base on solid footing using several levers, including the Defense Production Act, in order to keep supply chain risk low.

Finally, a word or two about our organic industrial base: our depots are national treasures, directly tied to readiness in the field through major repair and overhaul, commodity repair and production, engine overhauls, software development, and more. Between vendor disruptions providing supplies to the repair lines to workforce availability given the COVID threat, our depots had to slow production. KC-135, C-130, B-52 and B-1 lines, along with egress and paint shops, were hardest hit. But credit these great Americans, because we never had to close a depot, and they found new ways of getting after the business of repair and overhaul that is allowing them to
“Return to Full Capacity.” It will take us several months to recover some lost production and the resulting revenue, but our Air Logistics Complexes are postured to continue delivering for you, the warfighter.

Let me close with two observations. Some of you might be impressed with the data we were able to share. Fair enough. But none of it was easy to find or readily available. The Coronavirus has laid bare, again, our need for a single, authoritative Logistics Common Operating Picture, or LOG COP/C2. Fusing operational and business intelligence, from multiple systems across multiple stovepipes, is a basic necessity for us moving forward. Adding the ability to lay machine learning and artificial intelligence on top of that fused data will give us predictive capabilities that will allow us to maintain persistent logistics in the face of any adversary, be it a pandemic virus or a nation-state. It will be the key to conducting logistics under attack. The silver lining is that we are moving forward and developing a minimum viable product this month...but we have much more to do and much further to go.

Second, let me applaud all you are doing, even in the face of this virus. While flying hours are down, your optempo isn’t. You are “mission essential,” and you’ve all found ways to keep the mission going in the safest way possible to protect yourselves, your families and your fellow Airmen. It’s because of you that no one casts a sideways glance toward the United States and wonders if this might be a time to test our resolve. There is no weakness here. You ensure we remain ready for whatever our Nation calls on us to do. For that, you have our profound thanks and respect. Keep ’em flying, stay safe, and we’ve got your back!

Lt. Gen. Warren D. Berry

There is no weakness here. 
You ensure we remain ready 
for whatever our Nation 
calls on us to do.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lt. Gen. Warren D. Berry is Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Arlington, Virginia. General Berry is responsible to the Chief of Staff for leadership, management and integration of Air Force logistics readiness, aircraft, munitions and missile maintenance, civil engineering and security forces, as well as setting policy and preparing budget estimates that reflect enhancements to productivity, combat readiness and quality of life for Air Force people.
Leadership and the Art of the Possible: An Exceptional Release “Perspectives” Interview

with Lt Gen (Ret) Bruce A. Litchfield

“Strategy, like politics, is said to be the art of the possible: but surely what is possible is determined not merely by numerical strengths, doctrine, intelligence, arms and tactics, but, in the first place, by the hardest facts of all: those concerning requirements, supplies available and expected, organization and administration, transportation and arteries of communication…”

– Dr. Martin Van Crevel, Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein Patton

Lt Gen (Ret) Bruce A. Litchfield, sometimes known within the USAF as “The Architect of AoP” the Art of the Possible leadership model, is the vice president of Sustainment Operations for Lockheed Martin’s Aeronautics business. He served 34 years in the US Air Force, retiring after commanding the Air Force Sustainment Center. The Exceptional Release recently had the privilege of discussing his thoughts on leadership and the AoP leadership model during this interview.

Exceptional Release: Your 34-year Air Force career spanned logistics, acquisitions, and maintenance assignments, but you started your military career as an Electronic Warfare Engineer and then Program Manager after completing a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering. How do you think your early experiences in engineering and program management shaped your perspective and approach to leadership as your career progressed?

Lt Gen (Ret) Bruce A. Litchfield: My career was shaped by my first two assignments at Warner Robins Air Logistics Center (now called Air Logistics Complex), followed by an assignment in the Operations Directorate at Strategic Air Command. Those assignments provided a rich perspective into operational requirements, flightline needs, wholesale and retail logistics, fleet management, and Air Force decision making at all levels and across boundaries. I was given responsibilities well above my rank early in my career, encouraged to be aggressive, allowed to find the boundaries that enabled responsibility with authority, driven to make things happen, and learn from mistakes. I gained respect for our civil service workforce at the start of my career. I also learned some valuable lessons through the “school of hard knocks.” Everyone has an important job, and they deserve respect regardless of rank or position, being responsive to field needs, decisive actions coupled with prudent risk-taking, the value of senior non-commissioned officer mentoring, and personal conviction. I also learned that senior leaders were depending on me to know my job, provide solutions, and deliver on mission needs.

ER: What was one of your most memorable learned lessons from that time? Any stories?

Litchfield: As my assignment at Warner Robins was closing, I was recruited by a Major for Headquarters Strategic Air Command. As an engineer, that was not the preferred career path, nor was it supported by my assignment officer. I was told engineers would not survive a SAC assignment. I understood the arguments but decided to take on the SAC challenge and contribute to the high priority mission. I felt that was the best fit for my skills and passion to make a difference. Shortly after arriving in Omaha, I was in the 2-Star Director of Operations office defending a position paper I put forward to change paths on a system capability to advance our operational advantage. In that meeting, I was sitting across from the General who had operational control of nuclear forces…and he looked at me and said “Captain, would you bet your ##??? (sic) you are right?” After thinking of a million answers in a fraction of a second…I looked him in the eye and said, “Yes Sir.” The 2-star then grabbed my shoulder, and we walked to CINCSAC’s office, where he told the 4-star to listen to what I had to say. In that 30-minute period, I had a chance to make a significant change to our warfighting capability. It was a powerful lesson that drove my entire career and reinforced my passion for supporting the operational mission.

ER: Was there a career field during your military career that you identified with the most? I noticed from photos that you did not wear an occupational badge, why was that?

Litchfield: While not a career field, the position I aggressively sought was commander, which was the position that is most unique to military life. You can be a pilot, program manager, engineer, etc. as a civilian, but being the 24/7 leader of a unit responsible for mission and people (including families), morale and welfare, discipline, along with the Uniform Code of Military Justice, only comes with the title of commander. I had the privilege of carrying the flag six times, from a 400-person squadron to a 35,000-member center. Every day, I felt I could make a difference in that role. It’s what I miss most about hanging up my uniform. I was thankful that my last duty day was as a commander.

I had the privilege of carrying the flag six times, from a 400-person squadron to a 35,000-member center.
Not wearing an occupational badge was a personal choice because I did not want to confuse anyone that I am an Airman first. In the early 1990s, the Air Force was struggling through an identity crisis. There was a role and mission battle raging in the Pentagon. We were going through the "Base Force" reduction, and some were questioning the Air Force value. The criticism back then was, ask a Marine what they do for our country, and they would say, I'm a Marine." If you asked an Air Force officer, the response would be, "I'm a (pilot, maintainer, civil engineer, or whatever the air force specialty code they carried)." The label was the Air Force consisted of a bunch of tribes. At the same time that this was brewing, there was a big top-down push for occupational badges. The tribe label made me mad...I wore the "US" insignia on my uniform, representing an Officer in the United States Air Force. Since badges were optional, my silent protest to fostering tribe mentality was not wearing a badge. Interestingly enough, I did catch periodic negativity from senior leaders for not wearing a badge, but hardly anyone asked why. If my philosophical explanation is not enough...it was one less thing to keep straight on my uniform!

ER: The Art of the Possible (AoP) leadership framework and constraints-based management model has been one of the longest-lasting and most influential impacts of your career. Adopting "commercial best practices" and other efficiency management models in depot operations is something that has challenged, and in many cases, succeeded. Air Force depot leaders for nearly a century prior. How is it that the AoP model has been so successful in ways that other efforts were not?

Litchfield: AoP was born out of what I consider a once in a lifetime set of circumstances. The framework came during the standup of the Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) five center reorganization. The AFMC reorganization had roots back to 2002/2003 when first proposed as a command transformation effort. However, it was not implemented due to political and cultural resistance. Fast forward to the start of this decade and the initiation of sequestration, the environment drove the need for bold change. Sequestration was enacted because of failure to govern – the impact was devastating to both mission and people. Our Air Force needed to save every dollar just so it could do the basics. General Hoffman, AFMC commander at the time, made the strategic decision to put forward the concept to reorganize the command with substantial savings in resources and manpower.

I was nearing the end of my command tour at the Tinker 76th Maintenance Wing. As a bit of trivia, just prior to moving forward with the reorganization, I had a set of orders to PCS out of AFMC, but the orders were canceled due to unforeseen circumstances unrelated to my status. Therefore, I was given the responsibility to develop and run the planning for AFSC standup.

Many factors came into play that led to our overall success. We started with a design map that showed the organizational interplay based on the command and control concept of centralized planning and decentralized execution. Next, we created the leadership model that is the best, and maybe the only, "organizational leadership" model in existence in the Air Force. From there, we focused on standard work, process excellence, and a relentless governance structure that gives clear lines of responsibilities from the "Shop Floor to the Chief’s door.”

Aside from the approach, the key to standup success was the involvement of true sustainment experts from all organizations. They were selected based on a deep understanding of what it took to do depot operations, wholesale supply chain operations, and process masters. We also recruited a host of experts that focused on the enablers to make it all come together. Additionally, we capitalized on the lessons learned from the Global Logistics Support Chain standup that occurred a few years prior. It was a high performing team that was energized by the challenge and opportunity to make tomorrow better than today.

What happened next -- likely what history may look back upon as the best decision – was to involve high potential leaders who would ascend to run the command. This cadre of incredibly talented military and civilian leaders invested their time, energy, and sweat equity into making things run. Granted, we used a determined governance process to ensure compliance, but those leaders owned the success of the command in positions that allowed for learning, growing, and leading. This key group of individuals were true "believers" and their excitement rubbed off on others, creating additional "believers." They are now the leaders who are in charge and taking AoP to the next level.

ER: How important was the role of Enterprise Partnerships as that organizational and doctrinal framework took shape? How did the relationship management of commercial partners influence the early development and adaptation of the AoP model?

Litchfield: AFSC was not constructed to be a stand-alone organization. It was reliant on strong relationships with Air Force Life Cycle Management Center, Operational Commands who had the mission requirements, Air Staff and OSD Working Capital fund managers, Congressional delegations, and Industry partners. As we moved forward with the implementation of AoP it was viewed with some skepticism because of the new approach. However, as performance improved, so did our credibility, advocates, and partnerships. The decision was made to openly publish the AoP playbook so industry teammates could better integrate and align.

ER: How did those ideas and the AoP book come into being? Was commissioning the AoP book something that you had considered before commanding AFSC?

Litchfield: AoP book is the framework for success. The book was created as a living document to ensure enduring mission success to provide our Air Force "more readiness at less cost." There was clear concern that AoP might be personality-driven vice process-driven. History showed that when leaders moved to different assignments, the discipline and focus of continuous improvement eroded. There was also the realization that few understood the science of producing airpower. The credit for the book goes to the team who led and drafted the content. It was an amazing time as a small group of true believers struggled with developing the right approach, content, and examples to document a standard approach. There is a delicate balance between standard work and application-specific implementation. AoP should be considered an operations manual for all to follow.

Reading AoP provides a basic understanding of the concept. Mastery of the process comes from the implementation struggles. Consider AoP like an education – read the book, and you might be ready for middle school, master the principles, and you have an advanced degree. My challenge to current leaders is to write the next chapter, which enables greater success and demonstrates a true level of knowledge and commitment.

ER: On the topic of the science of producing airpower, and in reference to the AoP handbook -- Why is speed more significant than other factors, such as safety and quality? In addition, why is it important to recognize that "Throughput is King" in comparison to other important metrics?

The four elements of S² that create unsurpassed sustainment capabilities are High Reliability, Prognostics/Analytics, High Velocity Supply Chain, and Condition based Maintenance.

AoP book is the framework for success. The book was created as a living document to ensure enduring mission success to provide our Air Force 'more readiness at less cost.'
Litchfield:
The leadership model has four variables that underpin success: Speed, Quality, Safety, and Cost. Many will argue which is more important, but the one which got the marquee billing was speed when it was coined “throughput is king.” Speed, in this case, is process speed—not cutting corners...but eliminating constraints that inhibit efficient workflow. The easiest way to think about it is traveling on the backroads vice highway. The absolute point to point distance may be the same, but backroad red lights, stop signs, curvy roads, and slower speed limits make the trip faster (aka more throughput) on the highway of course I’m excluding traffic jams and accidents which would slow the constant pace of the highway…ripe for elimination). While “throughput is king,” Safety is an absolute commitment to the workforce and can’t be compromised; Quality determines an organization’s reputation; and cost is a differentiator that sets up future opportunities. All are important and determine the effectiveness and efficiencies. They are dependent variables and require a system approach to implementation.

ER: As you were influencing the diverse production systems of the depots, building process machines across AFSC and bringing them all under one umbrella, what was your vision for making those changes stick? What were your thoughts on auditability and the resiliency of those changes?

Litchfield:
The overriding drive during the AFSC standup and my tenure in command was to achieve the full potential of our depot infrastructure and supply chain operations to increase readiness and reduce cost. I believe AFSC has more impact on the Air Force readiness and weapon system lifecycle cost than any other organizational entity when it comes to AFSC and the investment into the depot structure late in their career and assumed the responsibility to the workforce and can’t be compromised; Quality determines an organization’s reputation; and cost is a differentiator that sets up future opportunities. All are important..."until you have learned the fundamentals, you will do more harm than good in your positions." Prior to attending the course, leaders were required to read the AoP book, write an essay on what they learned, and then provide written feedback on what the course added to their knowledge.

In terms of tactical elements, there was what some referred to as “dogmatic” adherence to standard process control (i.e., visual management) in each shop. The mantra prior to the reorganization was, “if you have been to one depot...you’ve been to exactly one depot.” Following the AFSC standup, the focus was standard processes and application unique implementations. While the weapon systems or commodities our depots repair may be different, the concept of flow is universal and requires a discipline approach.

We used a few basic reinforcement methods. First: the AFSC leadership team would rotate between locations and ensure staff meetings and operational reviews were performed via video teleconference as normal. Second: our focus during operational reviews – these were very intense, data-driven, and left no room for non-conformance to process discipline. There was also the very real threat of a no-notice visit. And finally, the AFMC 4-Star, General Wolfenbarger, made an annual trip and visited each location in a week’s timeframe, reinforcing the goodness of alignment and challenging each to be the benchmark.

As we looked to the future, I can’t emphasize enough the importance of engaging future leaders in the design and development process. The military and civilian leaders of today were the up and comers when I was in command. I was blessed to be surrounded by amazing talent who became invested in the overall success of the organization because they knew it meant a better Air Force. ER: Some say that the environment within the depots and relationship between the depots was competitive and opportunistic before the formation of AFSC and the development of AoP. Do you think the organizational model of AFSC and the common doctrinal understanding and lexicon of AoP influenced collaboration between the depot commanders? In your view, how important is that collaboration?

Litchfield:
Prior to forming AFSC, the common characterization of Air Force depots was if you have been to one depot...you have been to exactly one depot.” In other words, they were not aligned, nor was there any synergy and in fact, at times, had open competition for workload that resulted in redundancies and less than optimize solutions. The power of AFSC was to introduce the notion of “all boats rise together.” Working in cooperation, the ALC leaders demonstrated the power of teamwork and alignment. Furthermore, the ability to share best practices, innovation, and talent helped raise overall performance. There are lots of examples, but none better than the software consortium that developed between the complexes. Software work is exploding, and competition for software talent is a nationwide concern. Through ALC alignment, the strengths of each complex software group have made it possible to deliver more capability in an Agile systems approach.

ER: After retiring from military service in 2015, you have continued involvement in the Air Force logistics community and within defense aerospace in your current leadership role with Lockheed Martin. What are your thoughts on how AoP and Air Force logistics leadership have progressed? Moreover, do you have any thoughts or advice for the future of the Air Force?

Litchfield: I chose to go to work for Lockheed Martin Aeronautics as they asked that I help make the company the partner I wished I had when on Active Duty. To Lockheed Martin’s great credit, they have really embraced the notion of customer partnership. In fact, we have built our Sustainment Success System (5S) as an industry companion to AoP. 5S is built on the premise of the Flightsline as the Center of Gravity, Partnerships, and Engineering for Sustainment. The four elements of 5S that create unsurpassed sustainment capabilities are High Reliability, Prognostics/Analytics, High Velocity Supply Chain, and Condition Based Maintenance. In concert with AoP, the Sustainment Success System is a seamless means to bring unprecedented value to a government/industry partnership. When I was on active duty, I tried to reach out and find industry partnerships. My focus now is to build the bridge back to the government team that enables an exponential step towards More Readiness...at Less Cost. The notion of “the cost of readiness will determine the size of the force; and the size of the force will determine how we fight and win” was true when designing AoP and is more relevant today as we implement 5S. I look forward to the next article when we talk about the integration of the two-breakthrough operations framework!

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Standardizing the Unpredictable: Restructuring and Revitalizing USAF Readiness

By: Capt Kristy Leachman

Here’s the scenario. All communication capabilities are inoperable. The few generators not destroyed provide the last remaining volts of electricity to light the night sky. Radar is down. Most vehicles are destroyed. Alarms deaden your senses. You do not know if the aircraft are destroyed or not. You do not know if the cratered runway is being repaired, or if it is being destroyed. Alarms deaden your senses. You do not have experience operating in this environment. You try to remember your training…only to remember hours spent wearing a gas mask, laying under a desk, and waiting for the moment you can take it off. Based on the current global climate, the aforementioned scenario is well within the realm of possibilities. Yet, as also previously described, we are neither adequately prepared nor are we best preparing for this fight.

In October 2017, then-Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis, outlined three lines of effort that would enable the United States Armed Forces to remain the world’s preeminent fighting force; the first of which called for the restoration of military readiness. The memorandum’s core message of increasing readiness to restore global security and stability was not revolutionary; however, it concluded with a charge to DoD Personnel and its leaders, demanding the immediate, active pursuit of lines of effort toward this end. As tensions grew with North Korea, the Armed Forces’ individual services took this charge seriously, and the USAF began actively pursuing readiness restoration.

By October 2017, the term “Full Spectrum Readiness” began circulating within Air Mobility Command (AMC) after the Command’s Phoenix Rally conference emphasized preparation for both current and future conflicts and charged tactical and operational level leaders with upholding Full Spectrum Readiness (FSR). Soon after Secretary Mattis’ 2017 memorandum, the USAF modified its requirement for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High Yield Explosive (CBRNE) specific training from a 3-yr requirement to an 18-month requirement, presumably in response to the CBRNE threats of North Korea. However, it took at least another year, in the January 2019 Vision document from AMC, to define FSR as the “right amount of Airmen, properly led, trained and equipped, to accomplish the mission in support of the Joint Force.” Problematically, despite the initiative’s intent to be all-encompassing and the new definition of FSR from AMC, many Airmen view FSR as solely CBRNE-related training due to how Wings have tactically implemented the program. As an example of this disconnect, one Air Mobility base implemented a “Warfighter Wednesdays” program to bolster FSR, with an initial intent of encompassing all aspects of the “high-end” fight in its training plan. However, out of Warfighter Wednesdays’ 24 areas of focus, 16 have become CBRNE-centric. While the CBRNE threat must be acknowledged and trained for, there is more to assuring readiness and Airmen’s ability to deploy, survive, and operate in contested environments.

Not only has the focus of FSR training become myopic, but lack of guidance on how to implement FSR training has also created confusion and strained manpower at lower levels. Currently, the Higher Headquarters (HHQ) guidance that outlines what a “Full Spectrum Ready” Airman looks like is loose, at best; available only to the few Airmen with access to classified information. There is no easily accessible, widespread HHQ direction that defines the specific expectations of FSR. Wings must figure it out for themselves, while balancing the many competing priorities for types of War for which to prepare. Certain Wings assign Points of Contact (POCs) at each level from Wing to Section to conduct and implement training, and, at the Squadron level, a good number of Airmen dedicate additional man-hours (above and beyond normal duties) to being FSR POCs. HHQ expects Wings and Squadrons to innovate and create individualized training to best suit the unit’s needs. However, HHQ does not clearly define those needs, as a unit may be required to support multiple Operational Plans (OPLANs) or Geographic Combatant Commands at any given time. This lack of clarity and resourcing creates additional work, confusion, and ambiguous requirements for Airmen at the lowest levels.

According to our top leaders, efforts to revitalize USAF readiness, from a strategic viewpoint, are working. Then-Defense Secretary Mattis cited shrinking gaps in aircrew and skilled maintenance personnel, and the USAF getting more aircraft in the air as evidence of that revitalization success. However, individual readiness is still struggling and the effects of the additional requirements damage retention. Reclama rates, which excuse military members from deployment taskings due to personal readiness issues
or unit manning limitations, are currently higher than deferment rates by civilians drafted for the Vietnam War, with approximately 34,000 Airmen meeting the definition of “non-deployable” in the fall of 2018. The implementation of FSR aims to restore readiness and increase our ability to survive, fight, and win against a determined, high-end adversary, yet the current mandate with a lack of standardized guidance creates unnecessary work and breeds ambiguity, confusion, and unstandardized requirements.

To streamline the FSR message and standardize requirements, the USAF should further define what a “Full Spectrum Ready” Airman looks like. Functional managers at HHQ, in close coordination with tactical-level leaders, can identify and consolidate specific requirements that outline job-specific knowledge and experience required in high-end confrontations. Major Commands (MAJCOMs) with specific OPLAN requirements should layer in related readiness requirements as well, but should identify and provide credit for overlapping areas of readiness training (i.e. Pilots practicing landings satisfy readiness requirements for executing many different OPLANs—pilots have to be able to land effectively no matter the fight). The notion of HHQ pushing requirements down the chain of command may seem counterintuitive to the USAF striving for innovation at the lowest levels. However, setting expectations through a clear, concise and complete message from a centralized authority, while also delineating priorities for funding, would cut ambiguity and unstandardized requirements. The effects of implementing these changes would be far-reaching. Initially, Commanders may feel that centralized control of readiness tasks undermine their influence. However, centralizing the implementation of readiness tasks will rid countless POCs from FSR-related additional duties and return countless man-hours back to Airmen for their primary duty. Doing so will not only maintain readiness, but provide the USAF with a more focused, honed force. With the intended effect of improving overall readiness, there would be fewer reclamas, leading to better deployment predictability, providing Airmen a better quality of life, and work-life balance. In 2015, additional duties and lack of work-life balance were the top two reasons cited by pilots exiting the service. These influences are not unique to pilots, however, and taking steps to improve these areas could ultimately lead to increased retention of Airmen.

In addition to constraining factors, the main risks involved in these changes include the negative effects of change resistance, as well as the lack of buy-in due to the perception that the solution is too much of a blanket approach to accommodate unique mission sets and specific issues. To help mitigate resistance to change, the USAF should identify one or multiple Wings as testbeds. These Wings would act as prototypes, or models built to test the concept of a Readiness Branch and learn through a constant review to refine the process. Leaders at all levels must emphasize the importance of FSR and its clear, streamlined message, aiding in changing the culture surrounding the initiative. The Branch should invite Commanders, readiness experts, and average Airmen to critique operations through open planning, which aims to leverage multiple perspectives from all levels of authority to create plans understood by the organization. To mitigate the negative effects of using a large-scale approach to solve a wide array of issues, the USAF should stress the importance of FSR, explain why it is the chosen path to improving readiness and the reasoning behind centralizing the efforts into one branch, while also giving clear guidance on waiver authority. A rigid one-size-fits-all approach is doomed to fail, but a blanket approach that is dynamic and adaptable in nature ensures both standardization and flexibility to meet specific needs.

A “Full Spectrum Ready” Airmen should be able to conduct cross-functional operations at home station and in an expeditionary role. Periodic in-garrison FSR training should hone these proficiencies, including combat skills and knowledge, operating with degraded communication capabilities, survival skills in a full range of contested environments, and cross-functional education to expand our ability to employ Airmen in various roles. This list is not all-encompassing and will require the involvement of HHQ to best identify what specifically makes a “Full Spectrum Ready” Airmen and communicate those requirements to lower levels.

Readiness is more than the status of equipment or aircraft mission capable rates, and its restoration will take time, funds, manpower, and buy-in from Commanders and Airmen. It is not a temporary surge or timely requirement, and it must be done while still conducting real-world operations. By creating a vision of readiness restoration and streamlining the FSR initiative, the USAF can take steps to improve personnel readiness and Warfighter interoperability while simultaneously enhancing the quality of life and Airmen’s trust in the system.

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Monique is an active duty Air Force Logistics Officer, entrepreneur, speaker, coach, and photographer. She's been serving this great nation for nearly a decade and has been given the incredible opportunity to lead hundreds of Airmen, both military and civilians, in her career. She has served around the world to include the United States, Europe, and the Middle East.

She believes we were put on this earth to make a difference no matter how big or small. You are a leader and that means you are making a difference in people's lives every single day. On this podcast, we'll discuss how you can make a positive and lasting impression.

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Log Readiness: Preparing Logisticians for Near-Peer Threats

By: Capt Christopher McLeod & 1st Lt Susan McLeod

The Air Force can increase readiness to meet emerging Chinese and Russian near-peer threats by adapting its Human Capital Management (HCM) strategy to increase the utilization and development of rated and non-rated officers. This concept will help better align the Air Force with the National Defense Strategy (NDS) by developing the next generation of Air Planners capable of logistics-first Air Force and Joint operational integration to meet the evolving demands of Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) operations, while simultaneously addressing two critical aspects of pilot readiness and retention: Ops tempo and the availability of white space.

To continue aligning readiness with the NDS, the Air Force needs to improve planning processes and skills, and address pilot proficiency and requirements shortfalls. Gone are the days when large operational exercises can neglect the types of kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities that can exist on near-peer battlefields. Today, we need to develop more robust planning and operational exercising processes that emphasize, first and foremost, logistics-informed (“Logistics First”) planning in A2/AD operations. There are no effective distributed mission or follow-on operations without agile logistics.

Image Above: A 9th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron B-1B Lancer flies over Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, May 19, 2020. The 9th EBS and other units assigned to the 7th Bomb Wing from Dyess AFB, Texas, are deployed to Guam as part of a Bomber Task Force to support Indo-Pacific Command operations in the region. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman River Bruce)

Air Force Readiness vs. The Pilot Shortage

The Air Force has shown a need to increase pilot readiness in two ways – first, the Air Force needs their pilots to be proficient enough to meet the demands of the high-end/Fifth Generation fight; and second, the Air Force requires more pilots. The Air Force’s Aircrew Crisis Task Force verified the current pilot shortfall at roughly 2,000 across manned and unmanned aircraft, and the Air Force attacked the issue through a variety of short and long-term initiatives. One example of a short-term initiative is experimenting with longer dwell times and fewer TDY locations to alleviate unmanageable operations temps and improve quality of life. Approaches like this have the opposite effect on readiness, limiting quality training opportunities required to gain the proficiency needed to meet war plan readiness requirements. The Air Force’s emphasis in pilot recruiting is driving the pilot training burden – a $6-$10M investment per pilot across multiple years – which will not equate to combat readiness until a pilot is Combat Mission Ready. It is more cost-effective to invest in Aviation Bonuses and Incentive Pay than to invest in more pilots. Regardless of the training burden, the Air Force requires continued Fifth Generation pilot training capability and readiness, which requires both white space and significant investments in supporting infrastructure and budgets.

The Air Force missed an opportunity to broaden its solution by focusing on HCM more broadly and optimize assets already within its possession. Support officers, used to fill key billets and perform non-flying additional duties, represent a cost-effective and readily available means of creating additional white space and quality of life opportunities for aircrew. In this discussion, “additional duties” include jobs throughout a wing that are filled by rated officers where said position does not require rated officer-specific skills. For example, Operations Support Squadrons are manned and led by rated officers, drawing them away from flying squadrons when there are support officers with ample capability to lead those organizations.

Human Capital Management Solution

Evolve the Air Force HCM strategy to address rated readiness and expanded non-rated support officer’s responsibilities. If the Air Force shifts its investment to the human capital of its support and non-rated officers, flying squadrons can operate at a higher operational tempo, increase readiness, and sustain retention rates needed to support the National Defense Strategy. By utilizing foresight and evolving the career-field development requirements of rated and non-rated officers, pilots will be able to operate at the squadron-level longer to gain proficiency and experience, increasing white space and...
improving quality of life, while non-rated officers can build the skills necessary to improve planning and logistics integration in high-end fights. Simply put, evolving the antiquated ideology from focusing on the rated officer’s “universal leadership badge” to the idea that all officers have the capacity to lead Air Force organizations is paramount. In the era of Fifth Generation readiness, employing our combat support officers will contribute directly to bridging our readiness gaps.

**Shifting the Readiness Culture**

Now to switch focus to our logisticians specifically and provide examples of how HCM can be better applied to support officer career fields. This cultural shift will drive development of the next generation logistician with the human capital investment needed to operate and integrate at a higher level. The fundamental concepts of HCM are the relationships between education, training, productivity, and incentives. By changing the focus from pilot training/retention/bonuses etc. to readiness, and investing in the human capital of support/non-rated officers, the Air Force has the opportunity to redesign support officer roles that address readiness and critical logistics integration shortfalls.

A large concern lies in the current Air Force HCM approach for logisticians. In 2008, the Logistics Human Capital Strategy identified four workforce categories: Life Cycle Logistics, Maintenance Support, Deployment/Distribution & Transportation, and Supply Management. Additionally, the strategy broke out three levels of focus in education: I (present outlook), T (3-10-year outlook), and E (Enterprise/10-100-year outlook). Integrating the NDS to this tactical level intent and direction has been lost in translation, as we have trained and socialized logisticians to depend on ‘on-the-job’ training. The training gaps in tactical and operational employment are further amplified by shredding out our three primary functions (21R, 21A, and 21M). With an increased focus in HCM, logisticians can start to fill the gaps in education and evolve logistics strategy to better answer the problem sets in A2/AD operations. Modern electronic, aeronautical, and space-based warfare demands that logistics be in front of operations. Private industry companies like Amazon figured this out a long-time ago — logistics and process engineering determine success, operations are the execution of a package making it to your front door on time.

**Developing and Training Logisticians for the Fight**

The logistician’s Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) training and development system is not currently designed to meet these needs. The evolution of Air Force Logistics Strategy starts with focusing on extensive initial formal training to create multi-faceted logisticians focused on Agile Combat Logistics across the tactical level. Advanced education already exists in the logistics community but its focus is misplaced and its current curriculum is taught too late in a career. For example, if the Air Force moved the Advanced Sortie Production Course (ASPC) curriculum to a lower level and earlier on in a logistician’s career (specifically AMOC) then HCM through education, training, and productivity would overhaul the logistics community — that tactical training would instantly translate into Air Force combat capability as younger Company Grade Officers (CGOs) would operate at a standardized level imparting Combat Support tactics earlier than if they relied on the current on-the-job training. Add a few other concepts like data analytics and a mature First Lieutenant will actually be ready to lead an organization, think critically, and be capable to assume operational risk to promote a logistics push vs. pull mentality required in new concepts like Agile Combat Employment (ACE) and other A2/AD operations. This would directly feed wings and squadrons with the ability to integrate logisticians into tactical and operational planning roles clearing white space for rated officers. The Air Force would increase the education level of our entry-level CGOs, which in turn provides the development space needed by our advanced education programs to grow and evolve their curriculum into something that provides big L logistics learning. Examples of this would be: applying lessons learned from disaster relief to A2/AD warfare in order to find ways to solve operating logistics in that environment and Joint logistics integration in contingency operations. Said another way, the Air Force would be able to provide a T level of education across a younger logistics audience, originally requiring a more knowledgeable workforce to apply logistics concepts that actively work towards NDS objectives. Examples include – joint planning and logistics, contracting and acquisition solutions, and how to utilize partner nations to solve the network of redundancies required to be successful in contested environments (i.e. Mesh Network Logistics and the Joint Logistics Enterprise).

**Future Logistics Concepts**

During the 2019 DoD Maintenance Symposium, 3D DoD and private industry officials called out multiple familiar concepts: the most reinforced being, the need for joint communication and teamwork to apply “new” logistics solutions like condition-based maintenance plus, additive manufacturing, and joint utilization of Organic Industrial Bases. But Air Force logisticians lack the infrastructure to learn how to interact at a joint level until too late in their career. This is a problem we can solve.

Logistics represents a powerful capability in Phase Zero (NDS ‘Competition’) operations, to prepare the global playing field for more contested environments like A2/AD operations, which rely exclusively on logistics generation and support to counter near-peer capabilities. Logisticians trained under this new construct provide ample experience and value to concepts like the Multi-Domain Command and Control (MDC2) structure, an initiative from General David L. Goldfein to adapt operational concepts through advanced technologies across multiple domains. MDC2 requires T and E level logisticians capable in each of their respective domains to provide the logistics for new operational capabilities, primarily because logistics is the common thread that bridges all domains.

This is even more crucial in Fifth Generation applications as new Aircraft Mission-Design Series aircraft like the F-35 are building their operational capabilities. General Goldfein emphasizes, “If [China or Russia] ever do see an F-35… it will never be alone. It will be part of a penetrating joint team. And in the ‘we’re here’ message, the message is we’re here in space, we’ve been here for a while, we’ve been watching you, we know what’s going on, and we have already penetrated whatever defenses you think you have.” Logistics needs to be in the forefront of support and sustainability deliberations across all organizational levels but much more on the tactical level where execution takes place.

Major General Stacey T. Hawkins, AFMC Director of Logistics, Civil Engineering, Force Protection, and Nuclear Integration stated “we need to train our logisticians like we train our operators.” This concept of capitalizing on the Human Capital of our support officers takes the Air Force one step closer to that vision. Squadron and wing-level integration, and the introduction of joint planning certification courses for CGOs can provide the skills necessary to alleviate non-readiness burdens for rated officers and build the expertise required for Multi-Domain mission success. The integration of these full-spectrum Airmen
Captains and Majors are the real forces for change in our Air Force, while senior leader buy-in and support is a must, our Captains and Majors are the people that will apply this change culturally.

Conclusion
By developing logisticians that think big like logisticians, the Air Force can start to move from best practices to developing and implementing the next practices. The Air Force knows that we need to exploit technological shifts in order to operate at the speed of relevance, and the tactical and operational level leaders are the people most suited to do this. This ideology focuses on changing the culture of our support CCOs in order to operationally and strategically plan – the way rated officers are molded – to work in the unfamiliar, address immediate and long-term readiness, answer retention and capability shortfalls, as well as lay the foundation for a 20-year investment shift in the makeup of the next generation of the Air Force’s senior leaders. Captains and Majors are the real forces for change in our Air Force, while senior leader buy-in and support is a must, our Captains and Majors are the people that will apply this change culturally. When the Air Force applies cultural change from the bottom up, they’ll have invested and grown the capability, and built the culture and climate needed to succeed against our most capable future adversaries.

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References
You are at work, seemingly on auto-pilot as you proceed through another task that you have mastered. Arguably, one might say you could do this with your eyes closed. As mid-morning approaches and lunch is within sight, your mind runs through a mental map of all the local restaurants. Your fingers dance across the keyboard, tapping in a rhythm similar to a summer shower with raindrops beating steadily against the pavement. Before you consciously register that you have been typing the last 15 minutes, the task is complete. Without a second glance, the file is saved and sent to your boss, all while you grab your keys in a rush out the door.

The familiarity you reach in order to complete a task in this state of mind is what many strive to achieve. Each person seeks to learn any task with the goal in mind to be efficient in completion. When we become exceptionally proficient at a task, what happens to growth? What happens to progress and innovation? While the solution to both of these questions isn’t always simple, our awareness goes a long way toward finding an answer. Professional athletes, world-class musicians, and Michelin star chefs all have one thing in common with everyone in the world…the opportunity to have task awareness. Each of these examples represents individuals who have mastered their craft, yet are unceasing in their pursuit of growth. The pursuit of improvement through awareness is what separates the good from the great. Eckhart Tolle said, “Awareness is the greatest agent for change.”

The average person won’t spend thousands of hours perfecting a skill at work, so how do we get there? This is where “Other Hand Awareness” (OHA) originates. Think about common tasks we do each day where you are proficient in completion. Odds are a few common items probably come to mind. Brushing our teeth, writing a sentence and texting are great examples where most everyone would consider themselves to be very efficient. Now that these easy tasks are in our minds, let’s perform them with our non-dominant hand. Unless you are ambidextrous, or about 1% of the world population, your completion time was likely much slower. What seemed flawless under normal circumstances now feels faulty and rigid. The comfort level in performance is diminished while simultaneously increasing your level of effort.

If we think about how we normally complete a job, it revolves around two steps: identification and completion. How we apply it to our tasks, what exactly is OHA? It is the observant fulfillment of a job. It is a spotlight on a task, an amplifier of inefficiencies, and a platform for reinvention. It is deliberate and equally supports change when needed. Simply put, OHA is being attentive to what you’re doing.
about the authors

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Footprints weren’t left on the moon by people who walked to work staring at the ground. Each of us has the opportunity to make an impact just as those pioneers did.

Nearly one hour has passed, and lunch is almost over. Your return to work can bring much of the same routine, but it doesn’t have to. It’s far past the time for the mundane to end. Your attention thus far validates your desire to tap into your latent capacity. Nothing phenomenal happens on autopilot. Take hold of your agenda and breathe new life into it. See it as if it were the first time, with new eyes and an insatiable hunger for revitalization. Applying OHA can change a task in a work center today. OHA can lead to a policy change for tomorrow. OHA has the ability to create change for your organization’s future. Sun Tzu stated, “Can you imagine what I would do if I could do all I can.”

Wake up, pay attention; it’s time for us to get to work.
A New Lens on Deterrence

By: Lt Col Stephanie Q. Wilson & Dr. Kimberly K. Heltz

When many of us read the word deterrence, we instantly think of our nuclear triad and the term "strategic deterrence." Those who have lived in the conventional world may find nuclear impacts interesting, but will not invest a lot of time and energy in a realm that is not in their current wheelhouse.

After many years in and around the nuclear arena, we propose that we need to rethink our instant definition of deterrence.

Deterrence is a state of mind response to a state of force.

This state of deterrence or being deterred from negative action is based on the adversary’s ability to visualize and interpret what the cost of action might be and make a conscious decision to pursue a peaceful resolution. Our goal is to present a lethal force at all levels (to include logistics) to ensure that an enemy does not misinterpret US capacity and cannot exploit any potential seams in execution.

The second part of deterrence is ensuring our own leaders are confident in our capacity to execute the mission. Confidence in the force underpins the "will" to use and allows our leadership an opportunity to make a well-informed decision when the need arises.

Our enemies have advanced systems allowing them to study and understand our military capacity (equipment and training). This reality makes it far more important for the US to not only possess advanced systems but to exercise and demonstrate proficiency at all levels. The ambiguity we used to our advantage during the Cold War does not exist today.

With this definition, one can see deterrence in a lens encapsulating more than our nuclear triad. Deterrence is a key component of any force. It is with our military competence, demonstrated skill, and threat of use of force, we dissuade internal and external enemies of the United States.

From here, we must then ask how do we integrate conventional and nuclear forces to ensure consistent deterrence even after a nuclear event? This is important because, as an enemy determines they can no longer win a conventional fight against the US or an allied coalition, a nuclear option becomes a viable course of action for the adversary to consider.

If the adversary knows the US is prepared to fight through a nuclear attack the benefit of using a nuclear option to counter US/coalition advances is no longer a valid military choice. Because a nuclear option carries both a military and political risk, the enemy is less likely to take that course of action unless they are confident the benefits outweigh the long-term security risk to their sovereign nation.

Therefore, how do we prepare our forces, particularly our Air Force, to make sure we are appropriately trained and ready for the fight of the future? How do we ensure the right skill sets are in the room with decision-makers before the battle?

Over the past year, the staff of HAF/A10 have been traveling and meeting with all of the major commands to determine where we are successful and where we may have gaps in our training and/or equipment. The team has listened to a variety of issues and successes. They have found some agreements and disagreements, but most interesting is the support of the issue from our joint partners – sometimes more so than our internal Air Force.

As our Air Force balances the Air Force we need – against the Air Force we have, different priorities become important to various communities. How do we incorporate the additional requirements to enhance deterrence thinking and training, with the current training requirement load that allows us to maintain existing vital Air Force skills? We need to stop thinking of this as a separate training issue and think of it as an integrated one, complementary to all existing training programs.

At any exercise/training event, one can ask the question: "how would we do this if..." The experts are around to assist in asking the question and formulating methods of stretching ourselves to think differently. We will have to crawl, walk and then run to give this the effort it deserves.
From here, we must then ask how do we integrate conventional and nuclear forces to ensure consistent deterrence even after a nuclear event?