

Army – Air Force Cooperation: Looking Backward to Move Forward

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

Army – Air Force Cooperation: Looking Backward to Move Forward, by Lt Col Eric A. Smith, USAF, 37 pages.

Integration of airpower in the Army's predominant domain of land warfare has always been and remains a tricky business that requires compromise and tough choices. From the introduction of the airplane in 1907 until 1947 the US Army was the master of its own destiny. Evidence and lessons learned during combat in World War II led to the creation of a separate and equal branch of the armed forces, the US Air Force. Overnight, the Army found itself reliant on air support capabilities wholly contained in a separate service with its own ideas on how airpower is best utilized. This dependency and the resulting friction resulted in the start of a competitive symbiotic relationship characterized by power struggles for missions, compromises over roles and responsibilities and never enough resources to make either side content. Today's rapidly changing strategic environment, limited resources, and diverging service strategies mean that Army - Air Force competition will increase requiring even more compromise in the future. This monograph examines the relationship and spirit of cooperation between the Army and the Air Force over the years to uncover a framework for compromise based on historical precedence that can be used today to ensure sound initiatives that bolster national security, maintain service specific strategies and ensure the gaps and seams that exist between the air and land domains are not a US vulnerability.

Following the Army's shift to its AirLand Battle doctrine in 1982 the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force created a small group of Army and Air Force Officers charged with achieving service level compromise wherever the Army and Air Force missions intersected or overlapped. The group produced thirty one proposed initiatives that remain the single largest and most successful service compromise to date. The 31 Initiatives, as they would be called, provide a historical example of successful service level compromise that the Army and Air Force should emulate to continuously improve the air land enterprise. In 1991, Operation DESERT STORM provided evidence the 31 Initiatives and AirLand Battle were successful. The same year, the end of the Cold War eliminated the Soviet Union as the peer competitor AirLand Battle was designed to defeat.

Since the end of the Cold War the Army and the Air Force have been transforming themselves to meet potential enemies of the future. The strategic operating environment has changed considerably since the 31 Initiatives were released and acted upon. The Army's new operating concept released in October 2014 is a large departure from its AirLand battle doctrine of 1982. The Army's new operating concept, entitled *Win in a Complex World*, combined with new information age technologies and declining defense budgets indicate it is time once again for the Army and Air Force to clearly define the strategies and initiatives required to ensure the air and land domain seams remain unavailable for exploitation by our ever-evolving 21st century foes. The Army Operating Concept, *Win in a Complex World*, provides the impetus and a starting point for another round of Army - Air Force compromise and set of initiatives that are required to ensure America's role as the preeminent air land power on the planet. Examining how the 31 Initiatives achieved similar results following the Army's move to AirLand battle provides a glimpse of what a new round of service-level compromise might produce.

Contents

Acronyms	v
Introduction	1
Overview of Army – Air Force Cooperation.....	4
Agreements and Compromises.....	6
The Army Air Forces Era, Pre-1947	6
The Competition Era, 1947-1973	7
The Post Vietnam Era, 1973-1991	13
AirLand Battle.....	16
The 31 Initiatives.....	17
The Post-Cold War Era, 1991-Present	22
The 2014 Army Operating Concept	25
Air Force Support of the Army’s Operating Concept	28
Develop Situational Understanding	30
Shape and Influence Security Environments	31
Provide Security Assistance	32
Project Forces and Conduct Forcible Entry	33
Conclusion.....	34
Bibliography	37

Acronyms

AGEG	Air Ground Enterprise Group
AOC	Army Operating Concept
ATP	Allied Tactical Publication
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
CAS	Close Air Support
CSA	Chief of Staff of the Army
CSAF	Chief of Staff of the Air Force
DoD	Department of Defense
DOTMLPF	Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership & Education, Personnel, and Facilities
EUCOM	European Command
FORSCOM	Forces Command
FM	Field Manual
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
JAIO	Joint Assessment and Initiatives Office
JCIDS	Joint Capabilities Integration Development System
JFACC	Joint Forces Air Component Commander
JFC	Joint Forces Commander
JFDG	Joint Forces Development Group
JROC	Joint Requirements Oversight Council
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OPSDEP	Deputy Chief for Operations and Plans
TAC	Tactical Command
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command

Introduction

The need to rethink how the Air Force and Army synthesize transformation initiatives to best facilitate victory in the joint air-ground operations environment is paramount.

—Major General David A. Deptula

The creation of an independent Air Force in 1947 marked the beginning of recurring Army - Air Force competitions for missions, roles, responsibilities and resources that continue today. In 1947 the disagreements centered on which service should provide close air support of the land battle.¹ Today's disagreements focus more on control of unmanned reconnaissance drones, providing air base defense and conducting counter electronic warfare operations. Left unresolved, these well-intended competitions threaten national security by providing our adversaries with exploitable gaps and seams in the air ground battle.² This raises the question; how should today's Army and Air Force leaders synchronize strategies to ensure interdependent air ground capabilities address all exploitable seams between the air and land domains?

Since airplanes first entered military service, at every juncture where the air and land combat domains overlapped or met, the competition for service responsibilities and resourcing required compromises negotiated by the Service Secretaries or Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force.³ In extreme cases, difficult decisions required elevating the issue to the Secretary of Defense.⁴ While at times contentious, bi-service compromises generally benefit the Department

¹ Thomas A. Cardwell III, *Airland Combat: An Organization for Joint Warfare* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 1992), 17.

² Aaron Blumenfeld, *AirLand Battle Doctrine: Evolution or Revolution?; A Look Inside the U.S. Army* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1989), 86-87.

³ Alfred Goldberg and Donald Smith, *Army-Air Force Relations; The Close Air Support Issue* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1971), 1.

⁴ Richard H. Kohn, foreward to *The United States Air Force: Basic Documents on Roles*

of Defense by eliminating redundancies, lowering costs and increasing joint efficiencies.⁵ Due to the fluid nature of air land combat, ever-changing strategic environments and improved technologies, these service-level agreements require periodic updates and changes. Therefore, a comprehensive and enduring agreement between the Army and Air Force that forever settles bi-service competition over inter- and intra-theater transportation, air base defense, air defense, air interdiction, close air support, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), is not practical. By understanding how Army – Air Force compromise was achieved in the past, today's leaders can institutionalize an iterative process for effective interdependent air ground cooperation.

History demonstrates that ever-changing strategic environments require a military willing to transform and adapt.⁶ The Army, in its 2014 operating concept, *Win in a Complex World*, explains how it intends to deal with the challenges of the twenty-first century's strategic environment. Therefore, it is time once again for the Army and Air Force to come together to ensure the gaps and seams of twenty-first century air land operations are eradicated. Utilizing an agreement framework, similar to a 1984 compromise known as The 31 Initiatives, maximizes the chance for successfully achieving and implementing a new bi-service air ground agreement.

In 1984, the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force commissioned a small team of air land operators and planners to craft a comprehensive strategy for service-level compromise centered around the Army's doctrine to defeat the Soviet Union on the plains of Europe, known as AirLand Battle. This small team of officers generated a report containing thirty-one recommendations to improve cooperation between the Army and the Air Force. While the

and Missions, by Richard I. Wolf (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1987), v.

⁵ Elwood P. Hinman et al., *AirLandBattle21: Transformational Concepts for Integrating Twenty-first Century Air and Ground Forces* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009), 8-15.

⁶ Hinman, *AirLandBattle21*, 1-4.

recommendations were important to improve air land operations at the time, it is the characteristics of the overall compromise that provide an analogous framework that Army and Air Force leaders can emulate today to refocus service strategies on air land operations. Done correctly, an updated service-level compromise enables institutional change, informs joint interdependent operations and increases trust between the services. Left undone, Army and Air Force air land strategies stagnate or diverge resulting in the air land enterprise becoming more risky, less efficient, and more costly.

Past Army - Air Force agreements examined here show, service-level compromise starts with the Chiefs of Staff and is best exemplified by the 1984 agreement called the 31 Initiatives. A new agreement or initiative is required now due to recent changes in strategic and fiscal environments as well as codified, post-Cold War, service transformations. The history of Army - Air Force cooperation dating back to 1907 is briefly examined in order to understand the driving concerns of the individual services, the implications of service-level agreements achieved, and the expected life-expectancy of these agreements. Special attention is paid to The 31 Initiatives agreement, one of the most influential and successful Chief of Staff initiated agreements in joint military history.⁷ This initiative redefined and adapted service roles and responsibilities within the air land operating environment shortly after the Army adopted AirLand Battle as its organizing and equipping doctrine. AirLand Battle was the Army's attempt to avoid attrition warfare by using maneuver forces and airpower to attack second echelon forces and the enemy's rear area thus isolating the enemy's main fighting force.

The scope and success of the institutional changes put in motion by the 31 Initiatives effort following the Army's switch to AirLand Battle doctrine are then characterized in order to provide a framework for future Army - Air Force initiatives and compromises. With a solid

⁷ Richard I. Wolf, *The United States Air Force: Basic Documents on Roles and Missions* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1987), 12,413-414.

framework of what successful inter-service cooperation looks like, one can then envision what an updated agreement today might entail. Therefore, this monograph examines the current strategic environment, makes the case for a new Army - Air Force agreement, and uses the 31 Initiatives framework to describe what such an effort might look like. The strategic environment today is vastly different from the one that existed when AirLand Battle was conceived, yet the era of cooperation surrounding AirLand Battle provides a successful model that the Army and Air Force Chiefs should emulate in order to synchronize air land operations strategies in today's strategic environment. The 2014 Army Operating Concept, *Win in a Complex World* provides a starting point for this post-Cold War era of Army – Air Force cooperation.

Overview of Army – Air Force Cooperation

The relationship between air and ground forces can be broken up into four distinct time periods or eras, each characterized by similar service strategies and the wars fought during the period. Doing so clarifies the motivations of Army and Air Force leaders and the agreements and compromises that were sought and achieved throughout the history of Army – Air Force relations. The first period from 1907-1947, was characterized by the transformation of the US Army's air force from a small section within the Signal Corps to a separate armed service – the US Air Force.⁸ This period of Army – Air Force cooperation is referred to as the Army Air Forces era. The second era, from 1947-1973, was characterized by the development of aviation within the Army in direct competition with the air support roles and missions assigned to the Air Force. This stemmed from the Army's desire for direct control over on-call fire support aircraft as

⁸ Richard G. Davis, *The 31 Initiatives* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1987), 5.

well as aircraft that could move forces rapidly to critical points in the battle area.⁹ This period is referred to as the competition era. The third period, referred to as the post-Vietnam War era, was characterized by increased Army - Air Force cooperation following the United States' exit from the Vietnam War in 1973. The lessons learned from increased air-ground coordination during the war, post-war funding cuts and a shift in planning focus toward confronting the Soviet Union on the plains of Europe forced the Army and Air Force to develop air land strategies that were mutually beneficial. Both services sought greater cooperation in the area of joint operations during high intensity conflict and to re-examine roles, functions, capabilities, and weapon systems to avoid duplication of effort.¹⁰

The post-Vietnam War era of cooperation culminated in 1991 with Operation Desert Storm, the first practical test of the AirLand Battle warfare, and the near simultaneous collapse of the Soviet Union. The overwhelming military success of AirLand Battle in the Gulf War and the end of the Cold War marked the end of the post-Vietnam era of Army – Air Force cooperation and ushered in a fourth era of Army – Air Force cooperation referred to as the post-Cold War era. The post-Cold War era is characterized by information age joint, interagency and coalition expeditionary military operations that span the spectrum from conventional state-on-state warfare to counter terrorism operations against non-state actors. This wide range of military operations is taking place during a period of fiscally constrained transformation within the department of defense.

The post-Cold War era of cooperation is also characterized by lessons learned during years of counterinsurgency operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan that show joint interagency operations are essential for effective and efficient conduct of military operations that lead to

⁹ Davis, *The 31 Initiatives*, 5.

¹⁰ Ibid., 6.

successful political outcomes. However, as the United States' involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan continues to draw down, the Army and Air Force Chiefs of Staff are presented with an opportunity to solidify Army - Air Force cooperation in the post-Cold War strategic environment. Stagnant defense budgets, a smaller transformed Army, and shift in focus to the Pacific region all indicate the post-Cold War era of Army – Air Force cooperation is at hand. The air ground enterprise needs a strategy refresh. The actual ends, ways and means of this new air land strategy are left to future individuals, teams of officers, or working groups that have the time and resources required to undertake this very large and critical task.

Agreements and Compromises

The Army Air Forces Era, Pre-1947

It is important to understand the history of the air ground enterprise to discern how changes occur and progress is made. Air forces prior to 1947 existed as part of the Army. The seeds of an independent Air Force were sown and took root in America's involvement in WWII. The first Allied operation in the European theater in 1942, Operation Torch, demonstrated the inefficiencies of airpower in support of air-land combat when coordination occurs at inappropriate levels of command. The Army's Twelfth Air Force, created to support the Ally's operation to retake Northern Africa, split its air power into three portions; the Bombardment Command (tactical and strategic strikes behind enemy lines), Air Defense Command (rear area protection), and Air Support Command (direct support of land troops). The Air Support Command was further divided into corps air forces with squadrons parceled out to army divisions on a semi-permanent basis. Division Commanders held onto their air assets in the same manner

they did their artillery assets. This fragmented control of tactical and pursuit air assets prevented massing of firepower which in-turn permitted the German Army to mass and strike at will.¹¹

The lessons learned from air operations in Operation Torch led air power advocates like General Carl Spaatz and General Henry Arnold to lobby for and succeed in obtaining a new air doctrine and organization concept in mid-1943. General Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, approved creating a tactical air force and a separate strategic air force. Additionally, Field Manual (FM) 100-20, Command and Employment of Air Power, was released in July of 1943. FM 100-20 stated that land and air power were equal and interdependent forces. It also advocated that air power control be centralized and coordinated through a single air force commander.¹² This initial separation of the land and air forces within the army in 1943 set the stage for a major post-war reorganization in 1947 that created a completely independent Air Force. This shift from air forces under Army control to separate services within the Department of Defense enabled better command and control of air assets but ushered in a contentious era of competition between the Army and the Air Force.

The Competition Era, 1947-1973

The transition from the Army Air Forces era, where land and air forces were part of the same military service, to the era of competition occurred when the National Security Act of 1947 directed the creation of an independent Air Force. The US Army was forced to transfer headquarters, aviation equipment and personnel not organic to its land combat mission to the

¹¹ National Security Act of 1947, Public Law 253, Chapter 343, July 26, 1947, in *The United States Air Force: Basic Documents on Roles and Missions*, by Richard I. Wolf (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1987), 63-83.

¹² Cardwell III, *Airland Combat: An Organization for Joint Warfare*, 14-15.

Department of the Air Force.¹³ The US Army, under the direction of the newly created Secretary of Defense, was given two years to accomplish the transfer. The National Security Act of 1947 single-handedly created two separate services that were independent but over the course of their existence have been required to work closer together. The history of achieving today's US Army and Air Force is wrought with rivalry, competition, and parochialism as much as it is with consensus and cooperation. After its independence from the Army, the Air Force spent vast amounts of energy trying to justify and solidify its roles and missions. At the same time, the Army resisted any and all changes that forced dependence on non-organic forces to supply its required air support.¹⁴

As directed in the National Security Act of 1947, the job of playing referee between the services, regarding matters that could not be worked out between service Chiefs of Staff or the Service Secretaries, falls squarely on the shoulders of the Secretary of Defense. Considering the size of the seam that exists between the air and land domains where wars and battles are fought, it is not surprising that the Army and Air Force, each with their own culture and philosophies, can't always agree. The creation of an independent Air Force in 1947 resulted in numerous agreements through the years that affect how the Air Force provides air support for the Army and how the Army provides support for the Air Force to accomplish its mission. The Army in 1947 found itself suddenly dependent on the Air Force for much of its air support needs. While this reorganization prevented costly redundancies in aircraft and capability, the details of executing mutual support required numerous clarifications, compromises and written agreements over the years.¹⁵

¹³ Cardwell III, *Airland Combat: An Organization for Joint Warfare*, 16-17.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁵ Wolf, *The United States Air Force*, vii.

Immediately following WWII, the Army felt that the newly formed Air Force's emphasis on strategic bombardment came at the expense of tactical air support of the land forces and they were not satisfied with the arrangement.¹⁶ This debate over the roles and missions of the services led the Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal, to meet with his service chiefs and broker an agreement. Through a series of meetings in Key West, Florida in 1948, the Army and Air Force Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed on principles and functions.¹⁷

The Key West Agreement of 1948 would be the first of many compromises reached between the Army and Air Force as they competed for roles and missions and the money that accompanied them. The Key West Agreement states that the Air Force is responsible to, among other things, furnish close combat and logistical air support to the Army, to include interdiction of enemy land power and communications. It goes on to direct the Air Force to support and supplement the other services in carrying out their specific primary functions, where and whenever such participation will result in increased effectiveness and will contribute to the accomplishment of the over-all military objectives.¹⁸ While very broad, this guidance laid the foundation that the US Air Force is responsible for the close battle air support of the US Army.

From 1947-1949, as Army Air Corp assets were still being transferred from the Army to the Air Force, additional agreements concerning the roles and missions surrounding air ground operations were made between the service chiefs. This early agreement, like many after it, was named after the Chiefs of Staff that signed it. General Omar Bradley, CSA, and General Hoyt Vandenberg, CSAF, signed the Bradley-Vandenburg agreement which temporarily settled the dispute over the term "organic aviation equipment" which appeared in the National Security Act

¹⁶ Cardwell III, *Airland Combat: An Organization for Joint Warfare*, 17.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Wolf, *The United States Air Force*, 163-64.

of 1947. It permitted the Army to maintain fixed and rotary wing aviation assets as long as they did not exceed a weight limit of 2500 pounds and 4000 pounds respectively.¹⁹ This agreement dictated that the Air Force was responsible for the development and operations of all other aircraft.²⁰

In addition to parochial service concerns over maintaining a viable independent fighting force, wars that the United States involved itself in also largely shaped agreements between the two services. The operational requirements of the Korean War intensified Army concerns over the Air Force's support in the area of tactical air, especially close air support. The Army objected to what it considered a needlessly complex, multi-command, layered air-ground coordination scheme and to the Air Force's inability to supply quickly all of its close air support needs. The Army used the Air Force's perceived inability to meet its operational requirements to acquire rotary wing aircraft that exceeded the previously agreed to weight limit which required an updated memorandum of understanding between the two services. In 1951, the first of two compromises removed aircraft weight limits, limited duplication of effort through assigned roles and missions, and defined a seventy mile deep combat zone. This combat zone extended from the rear echelon of friendly forces forward into the enemy's lines and differentiated areas of Army and Air Force responsibilities.²¹ The agreement allowed the Army fixed and rotary wing aircraft for the purpose of expediting and improving ground combat and logistical procedures within the combat zone but forbade army aviation from duplicating Air Force combat functions such as close air support, assault transport, aerial photography, tactical reconnaissance, and the interdiction of enemy land power and communications.²²

¹⁹ Wolf, *The United States Air Force*, 237.

²⁰ Cardwell III, *Airland Combat: An Organization for Joint Warfare*, 17.

²¹ Wolf, *The United States Air Force*, 239.

²² Davis, *The 31 Initiatives*, 12.

This 1951 agreement lasted little more than a year before it was revised. In 1952, a second agreement was signed which reinstated a weight limit on army fixed wing aviation aircraft, extended the combat zone of army aviation and gave army aircraft two new functions; survey for the purposes of artillery and topography information and medical evacuation of casualties from the battlefield. The second agreement retained the prohibitions on duplication of Air Force missions and a lack of a weight limit on rotary wing aircraft.

For the remainder of the Korean War and most of the Vietnam War as new technologies led to new tactics and strategies, this cycle of Army – Air Force competition and compromise continued. For example, the Army’s innovative concept of “sky cavalry” forced Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson to clarify Army- Air Force roles and missions before the Armed Forces Policy Council in 1956. The resulting memorandum strictly defined the missions and types of aircraft assigned to army aviation, added a weight limit for helicopters, further enlarged the combat zone, assigned the point air defense mission to the Army, and permitted the Army to continue developing its two hundred mile range surface-to-surface missile system.²³ Forcing the Defense Secretary to arbitrate between the services came with a veiled threat. Wilson’s distaste for the inter-service competition surfaced when he somewhat sarcastically asked the Joint Chiefs for a recommendation on the number of Air Wings he could cut because of the Army’s new extended range missiles.²⁴

Department of Defense Directive 5160.22 was released in March 1957 to institutionalize the definitions of roles and missions. This document directed the Air Force to continue supporting Army needs from the onset of hostilities, through all combat operations, and for peacetime

²³ Charles E. Wilson to Members of the Armed Forces Policy Council, memorandum, November 26, 1956, in *The United States Air Force: Basic Documents on Roles and Missions*, by Richard I. Wolf (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1987), 300.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 300.

training. Furthermore the Air Force would meet “reasonable” Army requirements for support and should be prepared to devote a suitable portion of its assets to such support and to the establishment of command and control forces and organizations necessary for Army cooperation.²⁵

The competition for roles, missions and associated resources came to a head again in 1962 under Secretary of Defense Robert M. McNamara. This time a “fly-off” would be required to settle the argument. The Army’s 1962 Howze Board Final Report made the case for vastly increasing attack, observation, utility, and cargo airplanes and helicopters in the army aviation inventory. However, the Army’s attempt to encroach on traditionally Air Force mission sets would backfire. Within a month the US Air Force issued its response under the auspices of the Disoway Board Report that objected to the Howze Board report conclusions based on grounds that it attempted to change service roles and missions, created another Air Force, lacked substantive supporting data and incorrectly stated Air Force capabilities. To break the impasse and better inform the dispute, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed US Strike Command to independently test the Army’s new mobility concepts performed separately by both the Army and the Air Force. In the end, the Air Force won the fly-off and the Army lost its bid for additional missions as well as lost its existing fleet of observation aircraft and had its proposed troop transport program severely curtailed.²⁶

Undeterred by the setback of the fly-off, CSA General Harold K. Johnson and CSAF General John P. McConnell signed yet another agreement in 1966 that further divided responsibility for certain aircraft between the two services. The agreement directed the Army to give up all of its fixed wing tactical lift aircraft in return for the Air Force relinquishing claims to

²⁵ Wolf, *The United States Air Force*, 317.

²⁶ Davis, *The 31 Initiatives*, 16-20.

helicopters designed for intratheater movement, fire support and supply of army forces.²⁷ This agreement combined with Secretary McNamara's support of armed helicopters for the Army pressured the Air Force to reassess its responsiveness to the Army's need for air support or risk losing the mission altogether. As a result the Air Force purchased A-7Ds specifically for the close air support role and began development of the A-10 Thunderbolt II. Seizing the momentum of army gains in the aviation arena the Army began development on the AH-56 Cheyenne attack helicopter also known as the Advanced Aerial Fire Support System. With war funding still pouring in, the Secretary of Defense approved an agreement reached between the service Secretaries that recommended the continuation of both the A-10 and the AH-56 even though the roles and mission of each service specific aircraft were in many aspects identical.²⁸

The Post Vietnam Era, 1973-1991

By the end of the Vietnam War the Army nearly had its own Air Force. In 1972 the Army possessed 10,480 fixed and rotatory wing aircraft while the Air Force possessed 14,880.²⁹ However, the end of the Vietnam War, Congress's push to reduce the size of the force, decreased defense spending, and an effort to refocus the US military on the Soviet Union all contributed to the Army and Air Force beginning to consider the benefits of closer cooperation. Both services knew it would take time and effort as well as some sacrifice to increase joint operations in the areas of greatest overlap between air and land force responsibilities. Before they could agree to cooperate however, they first needed to reach consensus on a post-Vietnam war-fighting doctrine. Although service competition did not completely cease in 1973 it began to lessen. The end of

²⁷ Wolf, *The United States Air Force*, 379.

²⁸ Davis, *The 31 Initiatives*, 22-24.

²⁹ Ibid., 23.

United States combat in Southeast Asia and a renewed interest in a potential land war with the Soviet Union on the plains of Europe slowly ushered in the post-Vietnam War period of Army – Air Force cooperation.

In 1973 the Chiefs of Staffs of the Air Force and Army assigned the task of conceptualizing a war in Europe to General Depuy, Commander of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), and General William W. Momyer, Commander of the Air Force's Tactical Air Command (TAC). At the first meeting between the TAC and TRADOC commanders they discussed matters of mutual interest such as battlefield reconnaissance, surveillance, and airspace management. The commanders directed their staffs to set up joint working groups to explore each of these and other air land operations issues. It was agreed these working groups would concentrate on procedures to improve joint combat capability and to implement existing doctrine rather than concentrate on creating new doctrine.³⁰ This freed the staffs to work on practical interoperability issues rather than squabble over long-standing disputes of service roles and missions. This began an unprecedented dialogue between TAC and TRADOC that continued as the Army changed its conventional war fighting doctrine to Active Defense in 1976 and then to AirLand Battle in 1982.³¹

From 1973-1976 the TAC-TRADOC dialogue centered around General Depuy's idea of Active Defense that the Army formally published on July 1, 1976. This new Army doctrine was based on lessons learned during the Vietnam War and observed from the 1973 Arab-Israeli War projected onto the dilemma of how to fight the Soviets in Central Europe. General Depuy believed that the Army needed to move away from the light infantry mindset of the Vietnam conflict and refocus on the mechanized threat posed by the Soviets in Europe. He gave the

³⁰ Davis, *The 31 Initiatives*, 26.

³¹ Ibid., 26-27.

Armor School at Fort Knox primary responsibility for revisiting the Army's doctrinal concepts.³² The Armor School, led by Major General Donn Starry, advocated a shift toward doctrine centered on mechanized forces.³³ Characterized by a defensive posture, Active Defense doctrine utilized mechanized infantry to find and fix the target allowing artillery and air support to decisively engage and kill the enemy. Commanders were encouraged to look for opportunities to strike but the general rule of thumb given them was they needed an overwhelming six-to-one ratio of fighting men and vehicles to make the offense palatable in terms of losses expected and certainty of coming out victorious. Fighting from the defense, commanders could expect favorable results even if they were outnumbered three-to-one. General William Depuy codified his doctrine known as "Active Defense" in the 1976 version of Field Manual 100-5, Operations.

In his effort to build consensus with the German Army, the primary force providers in central Europe, General Depuy incorporated the Bundeswehr's desire for a "Forward Defense" into the 1976 doctrine. In addition to getting a consensus from his German counterparts, a large portion of the "Active Defense" success was dependent on support from the Air Force. Realizing this, General Depuy, made concentrated efforts to convince the commander of Tactical Air Command of the doctrine's validity. This was not a hard sale because the "Active Defense" fell in line with the Air Force's mindset that sapping a country's strength was most efficiently accomplished by striking deep against targets of opportunity necessary for the war effort. An Army designed to stop the enemy's advancing forces would allow the Air Force time to concentrate more of its forces on the enemy's strategic centers of gravity.

The release of FM 100-5, Operations: Active Defense, in 1976 spurred debate in the US Army over the undue emphasis on defense over offense. The argument centered around the

³² Blumenfeld, *AirLand Battle Doctrine*, 13.

³³ *Ibid.*, 14.

defense's ability to effectively inflict substantial losses on enemy forces versus the offense's premise of destroying the enemy's will to fight.³⁴ While this debate has been around since the advent of modern warfare in the 19th century, the Yom Kippur War in 1973 added additional fuel to the fire because of the perceived decline of armor firepower and the rise of precision guided firepower such as the anti-tank guided missile and the laser guided bomb.³⁵ Defensive proponents viewed precision-guided munitions as a nail in the coffin of tank warfare. Still, the Active Defense doctrine left many in the Army wanting a strategy that placed more value on the human dimensions of leadership, cunning and morale.³⁶ From this desire AirLand Battle doctrine was born.

AirLand Battle

In 1979, General Starry, who replaced General Depuy as the Commanding General of TRADOC, began a revision of the Active Defense doctrine that would become known as AirLand Battle. Prior to becoming the Commander of TRADOC, General Starry commanded at the Corp level in Germany and had formed his own ideas on how to fight in central Europe. His doctrine focused heavily on delaying, disrupting or destroying the enemy's follow-on forces and moved the Army away from a defensive mindset toward more of an offensive mindset. To delay, disrupt or destroy the enemy's follow-on forces he realized the Army needed the Air Force. While the Army worked out the details of this new doctrine published as AirLand Battle in 1982, the TAC-TRADOC dialogue continued to pay dividends. An Army - Air Force agreement in 1981 paved the way for joint attack of second echelon forces when the Army and Air Force agreed to adopt

³⁴ Blumenfeld, *AirLand Battle Doctrine*, 26-28.

³⁵ Ibid., 27.

³⁶ Ibid., 28.

the provisions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization tactical publication, ATP-27, published in 1979. Additionally, US Readiness Command published a TAC-TRADOC inspired joint pamphlet entitled “Concept for the Joint Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses.”³⁷ This period of unprecedented TAC-TRADOC cooperation laid the groundwork for a momentous effort of joint cooperation primarily focused on aligning service strategies to ensure forces were trained, postured and equipped to fight according to AirLand Battle in central Europe. This agreement known as The 31 Initiatives, resulted from the Army and Air Force Chiefs of Staff cleverly using AirLand Battle doctrine as a means to initiate institutional strategic changes in how their respective services collectively organized, trained, and equipped forces in support of air ground operations.

The 31 Initiatives

General Charles Gabriel, CSAF and General John Wickham, CSA publically announced the 31 Initiatives in May, 1984.³⁸ These initiatives were the recommendations stemming from a thirteen month process titled “joint force development of the most effective, affordable forces required for AirLand combat operations.”³⁹ The process of developing the recommendations officially began in April, 1983 with a memorandum of understanding signed by the service chiefs. In this memorandum, the two service chiefs pledged to commence joint efforts to increase integration of Army and Air Force tactical field training and command post exercises, enhance inter-service communication during the planning and programming process, and resolve any doctrinal and procedural concerns as AirLand Battle doctrine was integrated into joint theater

³⁷ Davis, *The 31 Initiatives*, 29-31.

³⁸ Cardwell III, *Airland Combat: An Organization for Joint Warfare*, 34.

³⁹ Davis, *The 31 Initiatives*, 36.

operations. It was this later portion of the April 1983 memorandum that the two Chiefs were committed to follow through on and they did so by having their Deputy Chiefs for Operations and Plans (OPSDEPs) draw up a charter for a process to initiate the joint development of AirLand combat forces.⁴⁰

The OPSDEPs assigned one Colonel from the Air Force and one from the Army to draft a charter, titled The Terms of Reference, which would task and govern a Joint Force Development Group (JFDG). By November 1983 the Terms of Reference document was reviewed and approved. The Chiefs issued a memorandum of understanding with the Terms of Reference attached thus officially creating the JFDG.⁴¹ The memorandum's stated purpose was to initiate "a joint process to develop, in a deliberate manner, the most combat effective, affordable joint forces necessary for air land combat operations."⁴²

The Terms of Reference directed the JFDG to "develop a joint plan, leading to coordinated programs for the Army and Air Force beginning with their Fiscal Year (FY) 1986-1990 Program Objective Memoranda, for the purpose of fielding an affordable, effective force to execute air land combat operations."⁴³ Additionally the Terms of Reference defined the problem with contextual background information and provided the group clear objectives. It also defined the project's scope, limitations, possible approaches, priorities, organization, specific tasks, and milestones.⁴⁴ The group's charter was synched with the FY 86-90 budget cycle. As military historian, Richard Davis, noted all that remained was for the group to "identify realistic resource

⁴⁰ Davis, *The 31 Initiatives*, 36.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 94-104.

constraints; examine and coordinate service roles and missions; eliminate duplication; particularly in special access “black world” programs; identify affordable systems and forces with which to conduct the AirLand Battle; and design command and control schemes optimizing combat effectiveness.”⁴⁵

The JFDG officially formed immediately after the service chiefs signed off on the Terms of Reference. The group was kept small and made up of only twelve officers, six from the Army and six from the Air Force. Three of the Air Force officers came from TAC and three from the Air Staff. The Army chose officers from TRADOC, Department of the Army Command and the Army Staff. The members of the group other than the co-chairmen, which were Colonels, were Majors and Lt Colonels handpicked because of their joint experience and their willingness to negotiate and compromise. Staunch advocates of service specific roles, missions, doctrine, or weapon systems were avoided. The co-chairmen reported directly to a senior advisory group made up of only the Deputy Chiefs of Staff for Operations and Plans for the Army and Air Force.⁴⁶ The structure of the group was important to the Chiefs because it reduced the bureaucratic layers typically involved in service-level strategy and organization decisions.

The JFDG presented the Chiefs of Staff of the Air Force and Army thirty-two initiatives. The Chiefs approved the group’s final report accepting all but one of the group’s initiatives. The only initiative rejected pertained to the fusion of Army and Air Force battlefield intelligence. Arguably still an issue today. In May, 1984 with a signed memorandum in-hand the Chiefs of Staff revealed the results of the JFDG, now known as The 31 Initiatives, at a Pentagon press conference.

⁴⁵ Davis, *The 31 Initiatives*, 38.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 40.

Through the JFDG the Chiefs of Staffs of the Army and Air Force achieved true innovation from the top down. While existing processes were in place to recommend similar types of changes, they were typically slowed by the bureaucracy of the service staffs and heavily filtered to prevent loss of service roles, missions and funding. By circumventing the service staffs the Chiefs were able to receive and review recommendations that were as unbiased and unfiltered as possible. In a single effort lasting only 13 months, the Chiefs of Staffs of the Army and Air Force merged service strategies pertaining to air land combat by plotting a course to organize, train and equip their respective forces to better support the Unified Commander's (equivalent to today's Combatant Commanders) air land combat requirements. All that remained was for each service to follow through with the initiatives laid out by the JFDG. The fact that the service Chiefs fully supported and issued the final recommendation made it difficult, if not impossible for the service staffs to undermine the changes put forth.

The 31 Initiatives covered seven areas of air land combat; air defense, rear area operations, suppression of enemy air defenses, special operations forces, joint munitions development, joint combat techniques and procedures, and fusion of combat information. With the 22 May 1984 memorandum of agreement signed, the service staffs began the work of implementing the initiatives. To help with the implementation of the initiatives, but more importantly to institutionalize the inter-service cooperation, the Joint Assessment and Initiatives Office (JAIO) was created on June 14, 1984. With an organizational structure similar to the JFDG, the JAIO was tasked to develop independent, operationally based analyses of programmatic, force development and force employment issues between the Army and the Air Force. The JAIO briefed the Chiefs quarterly on the thirty-one initiatives and new proposals as they emerged. This provided the Chiefs with a single-source clearinghouse for the joint force development process. In June 1986, the Navy became permanent members of the JAIO as well. The JAIO would eventually become what is today the Joint Requirements Oversight Council

(JROC) that is part of the Joint Capabilities Integration Development System (JCIDS) discussed later.

The 31 Initiatives is arguably the largest, most comprehensive and successful Army – Air Force cooperation agreement ever signed and implemented. Identifying the underlying characteristics of The 31 Initiatives effort provides a framework that current and future Army and Air Force leaders can emulate as Army – Air Force cooperation and air ground operations continue to change and evolve. The seven most important characteristics are identified here:

1. initiated and fully supported by the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and the Air Force
2. examined all overlap, gaps and seams between the air and land domains
3. eliminated pre-existing barriers over defined roles and missions
4. circumvented large change-resistant institutional bureaucracies and staffs
5. focused on improving interoperability rather than revising doctrine
6. encouraged a joint-minded air land culture
7. anchored to an agreed upon land war operating doctrine

The true joint cooperation between the Army and the Air Force around AirLand Battle succeeded because the cooperative effort was initiated by and fully backed by the Chief of Staff of both services. Without their support, achieving similar results may not have achieved the momentum required to overcome pre-existing inter-service rivalries and parochialism. The Chiefs and their deputy's realized that overcoming a bureaucracy's predisposition to resist change required a top down approach. Their ability and desire to work together toward a joint solution was enhanced because of their close personal relationships. Generals Gabriel and Wickham were West Point classmates while their operations deputies General Mahaffey and Chain attended the National War College together where they played on the same softball team.⁴⁷ This effort

⁴⁷ Davis, *The 31 Initiatives*, 44.

continues to exemplify what is possible when two services work jointly toward a common end. Two years after the agreement was signed, the US Congress took discreet action to make all the services work more closely by passing legislation mandating inter-service cooperation, known as the Goldwater Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.

The true increase in combat effectiveness achieved by The 31 Initiatives is difficult to measure. If the results of the Gulf War in Kuwait are used as a litmus, the air land combat capabilities of the United States seven years following the release of the 31 Initiatives certainly proved effective against a foe much less formidable than the foe for whom the initiatives were developed. Thankfully, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 meant the true test of effectiveness, a war against the Soviets on the plains of Europe, never materialized. Instead, the collapse of the only other super power competitor sent all the services, especially the Army, in search of a new operating concept. The events of 1991 thus ended a successful post-Vietnam era of Army – Air Force cooperation and ushered in the Post-Cold War era that faced a drastically altered global strategic operating environment.

The Post-Cold War Era, 1991-Present

Like the numerous agreements before it, the lifespan of The 31 Initiatives agreement was short lived. The end of the Cold War and lack of a peer competitor in the early 1990s marked a temporary end of any large conventional threat to the United States and its allies. Realizing the possibility of having to stop the Soviet, now Russian, Army from marching across Eastern Europe was small, the Army migrated away from AirLand Battle toward expeditionary ground warfare that maintained AirLand Battle-like capabilities, exploited Information Age technology and relied

more heavily on joint interdependent support.⁴⁸ This concept moved the Army away from the idea that a large conventional force-on-force conflict was the highest threat and began a transformation to a lighter more mobile Army capable of fighting smaller regional conflicts. With any institution as large as the U.S. Army, change did not occur overnight. Training, equipping and organizing to fight as a smaller, more flexible force would take time.

The post-Cold War Air Force on the other hand was forced to transform to expeditionary operations sooner than the Army because they were called on in the 1990s to conduct operations such as Deny Flight in Kosovo and Southern Watch in Iraq. While joint operations were still the goal, the Air Force's primacy as the "go to service" in the 1990s along with declining defense budgets rekindled the competition between the Army and Air Force. The rapid increases in Information Age technology and the rising cost of technologically advanced weapon systems such as the Air Force's stealthy F-22 and the Army's Comanche and Future Combat System made the competition over defense department dollars more acute. The Air Force's success and lack of significant Army participation in Operation Allied Force led some to explore the idea that air power alone could win wars while the Army struggled to define its role in the evolving post-Cold War reality. All of these elements combined to muddy the waters of Army - Air Force cooperation throughout the 1990s and into the first part of the 21st century.

For most of the 1990s, joint operations remained primarily a buzzword around which the Army and Air Force planned to coordinate their efforts. However, at the headquarters service level, each service pursued its own agenda centered on big-ticket weapon system purchases. The Air Force primarily sought advances in Information Age technologies, precision, and stealth that would enable it to employ expeditionary operations in support of national objectives. The Army on the other hand was undergoing a complete transformation. Then in September 2001; in the

⁴⁸ John Sloan Brown, *Kevlar Legions; The Transformation of the US Army, 1989-2005* (Washington, DC: Center of US Military History, 2011), 482.

midst of transforming from an Army that fought as Corps to an Army centered on Brigade Combat Teams, terrorists crashed civilian airliners into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon putting both the Army and the Air Force on a new path for the next thirteen years.

In response to the terrorist attacks in September 2001, US Forces invaded Afghanistan in 2002 and Iraq in 2003. After a short conventional fight in each country, the Army became mired in both counterinsurgency and stability operations for which it was ill prepared. The Department of Defense (DoD) and the Army spent the first decade of the new century redefining itself and studying how the unfolding strategic operating environment affected the future force. In 2008 and again in 2014 Congress issued DoD Directive 3000.07 that dictates the DoD will treat irregular warfare as strategically important as traditional warfare and must be equally capable in both through at least 2024.⁴⁹ The Joint Chiefs of Staff also provided high level seminal guidance when they released the *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020*, that described the expected future operating environment that all the services would be required to operate in.⁵⁰ Army leadership used this guidance and all of the lessons from Operations Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Iraqi Freedom (OIF) to author a new Army Operating Concept (AOC): *Win in a Complex World* along with their strategy entitled Force 2025 and Beyond. In *Win in a Complex World*, the Army defines the operating environment, force structure and capabilities required for an effective and efficient Army in the near (2015-2020), mid (2020-2030) and long (2030-2040) term.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Robert O. Work, *DoD Directive 3000.07, Irregular Warfare*, DoD Issuances, August 28, 2014, accessed December 1, 2015, <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/300007p.pdf>.

⁵⁰ US Department of Defense, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020* (Washington, DC: 10 September 2012), 1-4.

⁵¹ US Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command, *Pamphlet 525-3-1: The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World* (Ft Monroe, VA: 2014), 33-36.

The 2014 Army Operating Concept

The Army's release of its 2014 operating concept, *Win in a Complex World*, provides a unique opportunity for the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force to once again re-baseline the air ground enterprise and ensure air support of land operating concepts is efficient, effective, interdependent when possible and non-duplicative. The validity of *Win in a Complex World* as a relevant or effective Army operating concept is not argued here. It is merely noted that its 2014 release and the magnitude of the change it imparts on the Army are analogous to the release of AirLand Battle in 1982. The Army, coming out of twenty-four years of transformation and two land centric wars, has issued its operating concept for future land conflict. The Air Force should seize the opportunity and take a proactive role in developing new air land concepts and doctrine alongside transformed Army forces.⁵² The timing of the release and the radical departure from its previous operating concept are analogous to the institutional change of direction that resulted from its release of Active Defense and AirLand Battle. The present situation of declining budgets, reduction in personnel and the ever present push for the services to be more joint and interdependent are also analogous to the pressure felt during the post-Vietnam era. The fact that 1984 was the last time the Army and Air Force completely re-examined their procurement, training and operations strategies from an air ground enterprise perspective adds additional impetus to the need for such an effort today. Utilizing the framework of successful Army-Air Force cooperation surrounding AirLand Battle maximizes the chance for successfully initiating institutional changes based on the 2014 AOC, *Win in a Complex World*.

The AOC lists twenty, first order Army capabilities derived from Army functional concepts. Almost all of these Army capabilities touch or overlap similar or complimentary

⁵² Bruce R. Pirnie, et al, *Beyond Close Air Support; Forging a New Air-Ground Partnership* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2005), 112.

capabilities in the Air Force. Bridging the organizational, command and control, training and equipping gaps that exist across services is the challenge that faces the Service Chiefs today just as it did after AirLand Battle was released. Whether the gaps are examined through the lens of the twenty capabilities spelled out in the AOC, through the mission sets examined in the Terms Of Reference of 1984, or by developing a new system is inconsequential relative to the fact that the air ground enterprise gets an updated in-depth look based on the emergence of a new operating environment and a transformed Army with a new operating concept. In order to be successful, this effort needs the complete support of the Service Chiefs, should look beyond joint operations and toward interdependent air ground operations, and should be capable of circumventing service bureaucracies intent on posturing for scarce resources and DoD budget dollars.

The Army's operating concept *Win in a Complex World*, endorsed by the CSA, shifts the focus of the Army away from a large conventional combat force capable of defeating simultaneous near-peer competitors to a lighter, expeditionary, full-spectrum of war force that maintains a dominant conventional combat capability. A new operating concept means new or revised requirements to train, organize and equip. It may also mean the Army's support requirements have changed. In other words, the loss of a near-peer competitor means the requirement to attack an enemy's second echelon forces may not have the same priority today as it did in 1984. As the possibility of fighting large state-on-state war diminishes for the time being, persistent intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capable of locating and identifying an irregular enemy is a much higher priority and more readily available today than it was in 1984. The Army's new mission focus and required capabilities spelled out in the AOC require a concerted Army-Air Force effort specifically focused on air-land capability gaps. Support from the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force for such an initiative is paramount to bring each service to the table now to meet a Post-Cold war strategic environment.

The AOC is far from perfect and has its critics who claim it lacks a clear vision of what the future geopolitical situation looks like.⁵³ It simultaneously claims the world of the future is unknown, unknowable and constantly changing⁵⁴ while at the same time touting the world's predictability when it quotes Thucydides 2500 year old adage that nations and organizations in the future will go to war for the same reasons they always have; fear, honor and self-interest.⁵⁵ Additionally, its assertion that projecting power onto land from the air, maritime, space, and cyberspace domains is vital to joint operations, but that the employment of land forces is essential to achieve political outcomes is a bit parochial.⁵⁶ Iranian economic sanctions and air power's success in Kosovo are two examples of political outcomes brought about by methods not involving land forces.

The CSA, General Raymond T. Odierno, expressed the Army centric view in the foreword of the 2014 AOC that "conflicts in the future, like those in the past, will ultimately be resolved on land."⁵⁷ While there is some element of truth to his statement, a more precise statement harkening back to the influence of Carl Von Clausewitz might read, 'conflicts in the future, like those in the past, will ultimately be resolved in the political realm and since the military is politics by other means then our military needs to be prepared to fight on the land, in the air and on the seas.'⁵⁸ Regardless, General Odierno and the AOC go on to define the complex operating environment of the future and how the Army plans to prepare itself to operate within it.

⁵³ Brad Hardy, "The New Army Operating Concept Has a Bit of Something for Everyone," Task & Purpose, October 23, 2014, accessed December 2, 2015, <http://taskandpurpose.com/new-army-operating-concept-bit-something-everyone/>.

⁵⁴ *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, iii.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, i.

⁵⁸ Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 90-99.

What needs to be worked out now is how an interdependent Army – Air Force air ground enterprise can be optimized to execute its significant portion of *Win in a Complex World*.

The AOC explains that the Army's primary contributions to the joint fight beyond 2014 fall into three categories. First, the Army must be a tailorable and scalable combination of special operations and conventional forces. Next, it must organize itself into regionally aligned and globally responsive combined arms teams capable of fighting jointly and alongside mission partners. Finally, it must become the joint operations enabler through its capacity to organize and coordinate foundational theater capabilities.⁵⁹ The AOC defines the enemy for the foreseeable future as both state and non-state actors. Non-state actors include transnational terrorists, insurgents and criminal organizations that desire state instability as a means to make their organizations more secure. Because the U.S. currently possesses a capability overmatch against both state and non-state actors, the AOC predicts that future enemies will avoid U.S. military strengths, strive to emulate U.S. capabilities, attempt to overwhelm our defensive systems, and apply technology in new ways to disrupt U.S. advantages in communications, long range precision fires and surveillance.⁶⁰

Air Force Support of the Army's Operating Concept

The AOC's framework for building the future Army to deal with potential enemies in the operating environment of the future is broken into three smaller executable time periods. The Army plans to adapt its doctrine, policies, leader development and training to deal with the near term requirements from now until approximately 2020. During the decade from 2020-2030, the Army strategy is to evolve through modifying existing capabilities and rebalancing its force

⁵⁹ *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, i.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

structure, readiness and modernization. Capability needs analysis and total army analysis modeling tools will inform the recurring budget priorities during these first two time periods. Looking forward to 2030 and beyond, the Army looks toward innovation through research and development in the areas of capabilities, capacities and weapon systems to help maintain their overmatch advantage.⁶¹ A present day 31 Initiatives-like effort is required now in order to synchronize and maximize the efficiencies of near and midterm air ground strategies. By rallying around the current AOC, *Win in a Complex World*, a theoretical Chiefs of Staff appointed team of Army and Air Force Officers, referred to here as an Air Ground Enterprise Group (AGEG), could eliminate pre-existing barriers surrounding roles and missions and focus potential initiatives on synergistic interdependent air ground opportunities. Long term big ticket materiel purchases should be excluded from any such effort allowing them to undergo the scrutiny of the Joint Capabilities Integration Development System (JCIDS) process approved in 2012.

The JCIDS process started its development under Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in 2002 and was approved by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2012. The JCIDS process is a complicated, multi-tiered and multi-step process intended to ensure the combatant commander's capability needs are met, that capability solutions are common across all services, and that joint capabilities are weighed with and against independent service requirements. The JCIDS process is robust in that it analyzes all requirements and provides a functional solution analysis that looks at solution alternatives across the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership & education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) spectrum. Solutions are then categorized as non-material, material, or a combination of the two. Identified approaches to close the capability gaps typically contain elements of training, doctrine, existing material solutions and yet to be purchased material solutions. The JCIDS process is a DoD wide program that attempts

⁶¹ *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, 34-35.

to eliminate service capability redundancies and ensure Combatant Commander's war fighting requirements are met. It is not designed to generate the specific detailed air ground initiatives and compromise required periodically between the Army and the Air Force.

The 2014 AOC identifies numerous capabilities that the army of the future must possess in order to be successful. If Army and Air Force leaders can set aside service allegiances and work toward interdependent and integrated strategies then many of these capabilities could be achieved at a fraction of the cost while avoiding duplication of effort. The following few paragraphs list several first order capabilities called for in the AOC and examines how these same capabilities, when viewed through an interdependent strategy lens could increase synergy while lowering cost. While the list is not all-inclusive and the vignettes are light on specifics, the idea is that there is a great opportunity for an AGEF to make significant institutional strides toward ensuring the AOC is supported efficiently through interdependent air ground force solutions that are tailorable, flexible and ultimately successful.

Develop Situational Understanding

The AOC states that Army forces must develop and maintain a high degree of situational understanding while operating in complex environments against determined, adaptive enemy organizations.⁶² While this is true for all the services, not just the Army, a true interdependent strategy would look at the information required to achieve situational understanding, understand how the information is gathered and shared, ensure information sharing standards and protocols exist and are followed, and ensure the situational understanding is communicated laterally and to the lowest levels requiring the information. This capability is better communicated as Army forces must collaborate on, develop, share and maintain a high degree of situational

⁶² *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, 29.

understanding while operating in complex environments against determined, adaptive enemy organizations. This conveys the interdependence of the air ground team on each other as well as coalition and interagency partners. Once situational understanding requirements are codified then the Air Force as part of the air ground enterprise can maintain compatible network architectures, employ air and space ISR platforms in support and ensure information is shared between command and control nodes. Future non-linear battlespace makes homogenous situational understanding across multiple dispersed BCT operating areas difficult. How situational understanding requirements and information is communicated from the BCT operations center vertically to the Joint Force Commander (JFC) and then laterally to the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC) and subsequently to the air maneuver force planners and pilots is critical.

Situational understanding comes from numerous sources and platforms spread across joint, coalition and interagency organizations each managed and controlled by its respective joint, coalition or interagency command and control structure. No one service should plan on possessing the means to gain situational understanding through all the available means of collecting intelligence. Instead, an AGEAG can define air ground information and analysis requirements and ensure within the air ground enterprise that information is assessable and shared among the forces affected.

Shape and Influence Security Environments

Another required capability listed in the AOC is Army forces must shape and influence security environments, engage key actors, and consolidate gains to achieve sustainable security outcomes.⁶³ When Army forces are tasked with shaping and influencing operations, utilization of

⁶³ *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, 29.

Air Force maneuver forces and enablers in support of the tasked BCT should be built into the plan. Air Force maneuver forces and enablers capable of performing or supporting shaping, securing or destroying operations are a force multiplier that BCT commanders should habitually train with and ask for. Pre-planned kinetic strikes, persistent ISR, no fly zones and counter improvised explosive device (IED) missions are just a few examples of areas where an AGEg could find opportunities for interdependent operations in support of consolidating gains.

Provide Security Assistance

A third example of a future Army capability listed in the AOC that could be examined by an AGEg is the need to provide security assistance to support policy goals and increase local, regional, and host nation security force capability, capacity and effectiveness.⁶⁴ As experience in OIF and OEF demonstrated, in lieu of perpetual occupation, long-term sustainable security outcomes eventually fall to the host nation police and military forces. This makes Army use of Air Force capabilities throughout security operations, especially the transition to host nation security operations, vital until host nation Air Forces are ready to pick up the load. The time to prepare the Air Force's Security Forces and Air Base Defenders to provide needed surge capability in the future should the Army require it is now. Training, equipping and organizing these forces in an interdependent manner is essential for seamless operations in any future conflict. Additionally, the Army and Air Force should both examine how they are postured to perform the train and assist mission, look for areas of overlap, eliminate redundancies and look for opportunities to train foreign Army and Air Force forces together.

James S. Corum, an airpower theorist, believes that early twenty-first century conflicts demonstrate the Air Force's lack of a solid counter-insurgency doctrine. He believes conflicts

⁶⁴ *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, 29.

similar to Iraq and Afghanistan are not anomalies in the post-cold war era.⁶⁵ Unfortunately, the Air Force was caught unprepared to execute the train and assist mission on such a large scale with most of its three hundred personnel prepared to train allied nation Air Forces assigned to Special Forces units in 2007.⁶⁶ The need to train Afghan and Iraqi pilots was identified as early as 2006 but the training did not begin in earnest until 2014. The delay was a result of the lack of a suitable low-tech airframe and United States pilots prepared to train foreign pilots. Corum's belief that counter-insurgency conflict is here to stay mirrors that of the AOC and therefore his position that the Air force should revamp its counter-insurgency doctrine to place considerably more effort into the train and assist mission has merit.⁶⁷

Project Forces and Conduct Forcible Entry

A fourth and final example of capabilities where interdependent forces are required and would exceed an Army-only capability is the need to project forces, conduct forcible and early entry, and transition rapidly to offensive operations to ensure access and seize the initiative.⁶⁸ Just as strategic and tactical airlift was vital for these reasons in AirLand battle it remains as important if not more so on today's non-contiguous battlefields. In his 1987 research into airlift support of AirLand Battle, Air Force Major Richard Heffner recommended that the Air Force appoint a single office of responsibility to oversee all airlift doctrine, equipment, and training in order to support Army doctrine. He also recommended an annual review of Air Force airlift doctrine and

⁶⁵ James S. Corum, "Air Power and Counter-insurgency: Back to the Basics," in *Air Power, Insurgency and the "War on Terror,"* ed. Joel Hayward (Royal Air Force College, Lincolnshire, UK, 2009), 216-218.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 218.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, 32.

Army operating doctrine to prevent costly and unproductive force restructuring or hardware acquisitions.⁶⁹ An AGEg effort would fulfill both of these recommendations and ensure the Army is capable of achieving its desired first order capability.

Conclusion

Current trends are worrisome and show the need for an AGEg now more than ever. The Air Force's desire to divest the premier close air support aircraft, the A-10, and the controversy over possession, command, and control of MQ-1 predator-class unmanned aerial vehicles harkens back to the competition era of the 1950s and 60s. The Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Mark Welsh damaged the trust between practitioners of air ground combat in the Army and Air Force and with mission supporters in Congress when he attempted to retire the A-10, a proven close air support capability, in order to fund modernization and multirole aircraft. While the move made sense from a budget perspective, General Welsh failed to understand the delicate balance of Army – Air Force cooperation, its history and the trust that makes it work. At the same time the Army is pursuing greater quantities of larger and more capable unmanned aerial vehicles. Unhappy with the Air Force's ability to provide for all of their reconnaissance needs in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army set out on a path to acquire and control their own fixed wing unmanned aerial vehicles. In 2010 the Army published the US Army Unmanned Aircraft Systems Roadmap 2010-2035. By allowing duplication of capabilities between the Army and Air Force, Congress is

⁶⁹ Richard P. Heffner, *Airlift Support of AirLand Battle Doctrine: Focus on Requirements, capabilities, and the C-17*, Report # 87-1145 (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University, 1987), vi.

enabling both services to avoid moving toward a truly interdependent force. Synergy of effort and cost savings are not achievable until all practical duplication of effort is avoided.

Readers of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Operations 2020, should be reassured because the document is filled with statements that indicate the services have every intent of working closer together. For example the Chief of Staff of the Air Force writes in the Air Force section of the document, "... while the integration of the air, space, and cyber domains will be this document's primary focus, it is only when operations in these domains are effectively integrated with those in the land and maritime domains that the joint team will be able to reach its true potential. This recognition is central to the Air Force Future Operating Concept."⁷⁰ The same document states that, "truly effective integration between Services requires familiarity, trust, and teamwork created by repeated joint training, as well as the precise combination of specialized skills."⁷¹ These types of statements and commitments are rife throughout joint doctrine and publications. However, as experience shows, cross-service relationships are not always as cordial when tough budgeting decisions must be made. This makes agreement and cooperation at the Service Chief level aimed at ensuring all the air land combat gaps and seams are covered even more important.

Astute observers of history might also question the feasibility of the Air Force trying to adjust its strategy every time the Army changes its leading war-fighting doctrine or operating concept. Since 1947, for varying reasons such as emerging national security threats, lessons learned from recent conflicts, and the opinions of new leaders and chief strategists, the Army has adjusted its doctrinal operating concept numerous times; Combined Arms, Pentomic Divisions, Reorganization Objectives Army Divisions, Counter-insurgency, Active Defense, AirLand Battle,

⁷⁰ *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020*, 9.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

Full Spectrum Operations and Objective Force to name a few.⁷² While this monograph does not argue the Air Force should review Army - Air Force air land cooperation every time the Army changes its vector, it makes a strong case for recognizing when the change in vector is large enough to warrant a comprehensive review of service strategies toward air land combat. Post-Cold War changes in the global strategic operating environment, the Army's transformation over the last twenty years, the lessons learned from thirteen years of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, tighter defense budgets, and the release of the Army's new operating concept all combine to make now the right time to initiate the next 31 Initiatives-like review.

The 31 Initiatives released following the Army's move to AirLand Battle provide a starting point from which the Chiefs of staff can begin to examine Army - Air Force cooperation based on the Army's *Win in a Complex World* concept. A truly concentrated AGEg effort possessing similar characteristics of the 31 Initiatives effort is needed today to shape the near and midterm air land operating environment by examining how the services organize, train and equip to effectively and efficiently synchronize future interdependent air land combat operations. The advantage that today's Chiefs have over Generals Gabriel and Wickham is that many of the outputs of an AGEg effort requiring a material solution could be fed directly into the JCIDS process for vetting. This would allow the Army and Air Force staffs to pursue the less expensive initiatives focused on training and organization while the high-dollar initiatives with material solutions get adjudicated with all other Department of Defense priorities.

⁷² Blumenfeld, *AirLand Battle Doctrine*, 7.

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