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**PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE
COMBAT EMPLOYMENT OF AIR POWER
IN PEACETIME CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS**

Army - Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict

Langley Air Force Base, Virginia

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This paper describes ways U.S. military commanders and planning staffs can use combat air power within peacetime contingency operations. It offers several suggestions to enhance the use of air power in this area. It is intended to generate thought on a topic with a high probability of future occurrence. It (continued on back) | | | | | |
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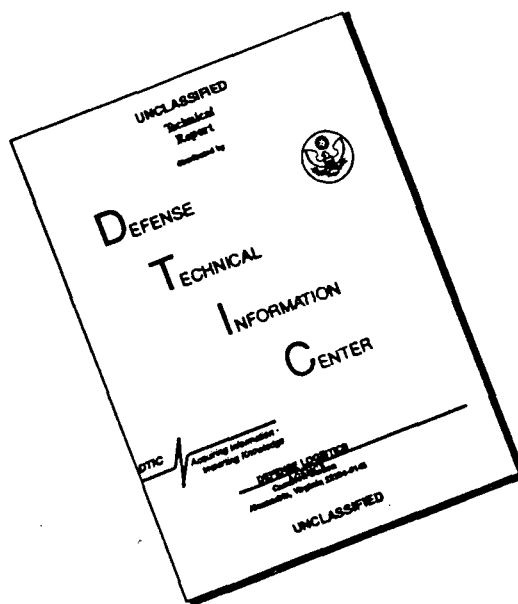
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**PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS
FOR THE
COMBAT EMPLOYMENT OF AIR POWER
IN
PEACETIME CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS**

by

Maj Bradley L. Butler, USAF

**Army-Air Force Center for Low Intensity Conflict
Langley Air Force Base, Virginia 23665-5556**

May 1988

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PREFACE

A common misconception within the military services is that dealing with "small wars" or low-intensity conflict is similar to the preparation required for conventional conflict. The general consensus is: if we organize, train, and equip to employ large forces in mid- to high-level conflicts, then we can surely satisfy taskings at the low end of the conflict spectrum. This paper supports the view that LIC is more than just a difference in degree. It is also a difference in kind, requiring forces uniquely organized and specifically tailored to the task at hand.

This paper describes ways U.S. military commanders and planning staffs can use combat air power within peacetime contingency operations. It offers several suggestions to enhance the use of air power in this area. It is intended to generate thought on a topic with a high probability of future occurrence. It is an outgrowth of A-AF Center for Low Intensity Conflict efforts to develop joint doctrine for low-intensity conflict.

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**PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS
FOR THE
COMBAT EMPLOYMENT OF AIR POWER
IN
PEACETIME CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS**

1. **Introduction.** This paper focuses on ways commanders and staffs can use combat air power in planning low-intensity conflict (LIC) peacetime contingency operations (PCOs). More than any other category of LIC, these operations often stress the direct employment of combat air power. The other categories (insurgency and counterinsurgency, combatting terrorism, and peacekeeping operations) tend to place priority on support (non-warfighting) uses of air power, such as logistical airlift and medical airlift support. This paper will address the following specific areas.

- o General background of LIC
- o LIC imperatives
- o Planning and execution considerations
- o Recommendations to enhance the use of air power in PCOs
- o Conclusion

A purpose of this paper is to give the reader a better appreciation of the combat employment of air power in PCOs in general, and, in particular, the detailed planning behind these operations. The basic combat skills to successfully carry out PCOs already exist. It is the author's contention that the biggest obstacle which must be overcome is the context in which the U.S. thinks about PCOs. This directly affects the planning process and eventual outcome of such operations. Another purpose of the paper is to stress the importance of teamwork in conducting PCOs. Whenever possible, recent examples in which U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, and/or Marine Corps air power played a prominent role were selected. The role of teamwork also extends beyond military boundaries, to include interagency and combined operations. Although the focus of this effort searches for new lessons learned that can be applied in planning future air power operations, many of the factors and considerations covered in this paper can be applied equally well to use by ground and seaborne units.

2. **General Background of Low-Intensity Conflict.**

a. **The Threat.**

(1) **General.** Low-intensity conflict is nothing new. It has existed for centuries. Throughout history, groups have sought to complete their goals with various types of power, including military action. For almost 40 years, attention has focused on the intense competition between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. During this period, the U.S. placed heavy emphasis

on deterring theater conventional and nuclear warfare, which is the spectrum of conflict posing the highest immediate risk to national survival. As a result of American success in deterrence, the Soviets, their allies, and surrogate third world nations have focused much of their activity on the level of conflict below conventional war. From their point of view, LIC is very attractive because of its low cost, worldwide media attention, and the retaliation problems it causes the U.S. Therefore, LIC is our most active threat for the remainder of the century. (3:--) Failure to compete successfully in the LIC arena can gradually isolate the U.S. from allies, friends, and major trading partners in the following areas.

- o Interruption of Western access to vital resources.
- o Gradual loss of U.S. military basing and access rights.
- o Expanded threats to key sea lines of communication.
- o Gradual shifting of allies and trading partners away from the U.S. into positions of accommodation with hostile interests.
- o Expanded opportunities for Soviet political and military gains. (21:32)

(2) As Grenada clearly showed, the Soviets and their clients are willing to use subversion to expand their influence. (4:62) Other states, for instance Iran and Libya, also use both indirect and direct aggression and sponsor terrorist attacks on U.S. and other states' citizens to gain their ends. America must be able to counter such threats when they arise. This requires a full range of capabilities, from special operations forces to general purpose forces, equipped and trained to respond immediately and decisively when called upon. (4:62)

b. LIC is an environment. Low-intensity conflict is not a type of warfare, with specific missions and capabilities associated with it. It is a conflict environment. Also, the LIC environment is quite unlike other environments the U.S. must deal with. (24:--) Figure 1 and the following discussion help to illustrate this.

c. Environments of Competition. The routine interactions between states trying to maintain or increase their status in the world community naturally generates competition. Such competition can take three forms: routine peaceful competition, low-intensity conflict, and war.

(1) Routine Peaceful Competition. In a routine peaceful competition environment, interests are contested without using force or threat of force. An example would be economic sanctions such as reduced wheat sales to the Soviet Union. All the

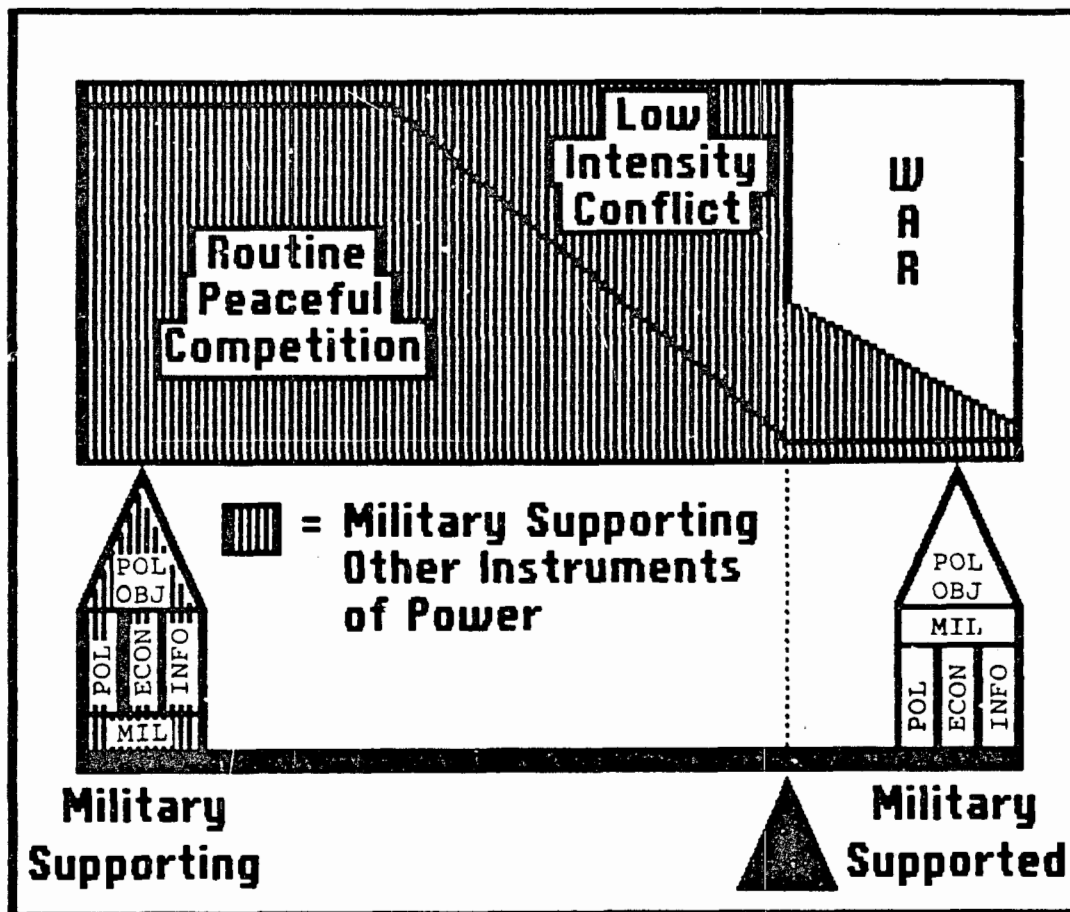


Figure 1. Total Environment in Which the U.S. Competes With Others

instruments of national power (political, informational, economic, and military) may be employed, but the lead instruments are political, economic, and informational. Non-combatant aspects of the military instrument, if used, are employed in a supporting role for their political, economic, or informational effect. The concept of forward basing is an excellent example of how the military can be used in this role. For example, U.S. military bases in the Philippines or Panama clearly support political and economic objectives, sending strong signals of U.S. intentions to the rest of the world and helping critical sea lanes stay open.

(2) **Low-Intensity Conflict.**

(a) In LIC, interests are contested, but organized violence or the threat thereof may be used to influence outcomes. The term "organized violence" as used here includes non-military forms of violence such as attacks by terrorist groups for political reasons, but not matters such as criminal violence done for other reasons. A good example related to the use of air power would be the U.S. Navy's crossing of the "line of death" across the mouth of the Gulf of Sidra in August 1981, in which the U.S. contested Libya's maritime boundary by downing two Libyan jets. (5:144)

(b) As in routine peaceful competition, in LIC, all the instruments of national power may be employed. The political, economic, or informational instruments may again be used in a lead role, with the military instrument used in a supporting role. The U.S. may work indirectly through third parties using security assistance, or directly through the employment of U.S. forces. If used directly, the influence of political, economic, or informational instruments is so strong that they drive the tactical conduct of operations. (6:16) For example, in the April 1986 air strike on Libya, political considerations strongly influenced target selection, forced flight routes to be altered which required the use of elaborate tanker support, and even dictated the weapons employed and the method of employment.

(3) **War.** In war, national interests are openly contested, with organized violence used to effect or influence outcomes. All the instruments of national power are likely to be employed, with the military instrument used in a lead role to establish the conditions under which strategic aims can be realized. Other instruments are employed in a supporting role to contribute to military effects. Using the previous example, if the U.S. had been at war with Libya, political considerations such as limiting collateral damage to avoid adverse world public opinion or fear of loss of face over aircrew casualties would have been minimal. The military response in war would have been quicker and much more intense, and targeting would have been expanded to include non-terrorist targets such as counterair facilities, air defense assets, and command and control centers. As a final point, war employs direct operations, that is, the direct engagement and defeat of the enemy by U.S. forces.

d. **LIC Operational Categories.** Evolving doctrine categorizes LIC into the following four categories: insurgency and counterinsurgency, combatting terrorism, peacekeeping operations, and peacetime contingency operations. (16:1-12 - 1-16; 22:14-15; 4:60-63) This paper focuses on the last category, but may apply to other categories as well if conditions exist similar to those present in PCOs. Many actions taken by the U.S. in combatting terrorism can be treated for planning

purposes as PCOs. As one example, in October 1985, Navy carrier jets forced down an Egyptian commercial airliner carrying terrorists suspected of hijacking the cruise ship Achille Lauro. (13:26) See Figure 2 for a graphic representation of the various LIC operational categories. For a more detailed discussion of all the categories, see draft FM 100-20/AFM 2-XY, Military Operations in Low-Intensity Conflict. (16:1-12 - 1-16)

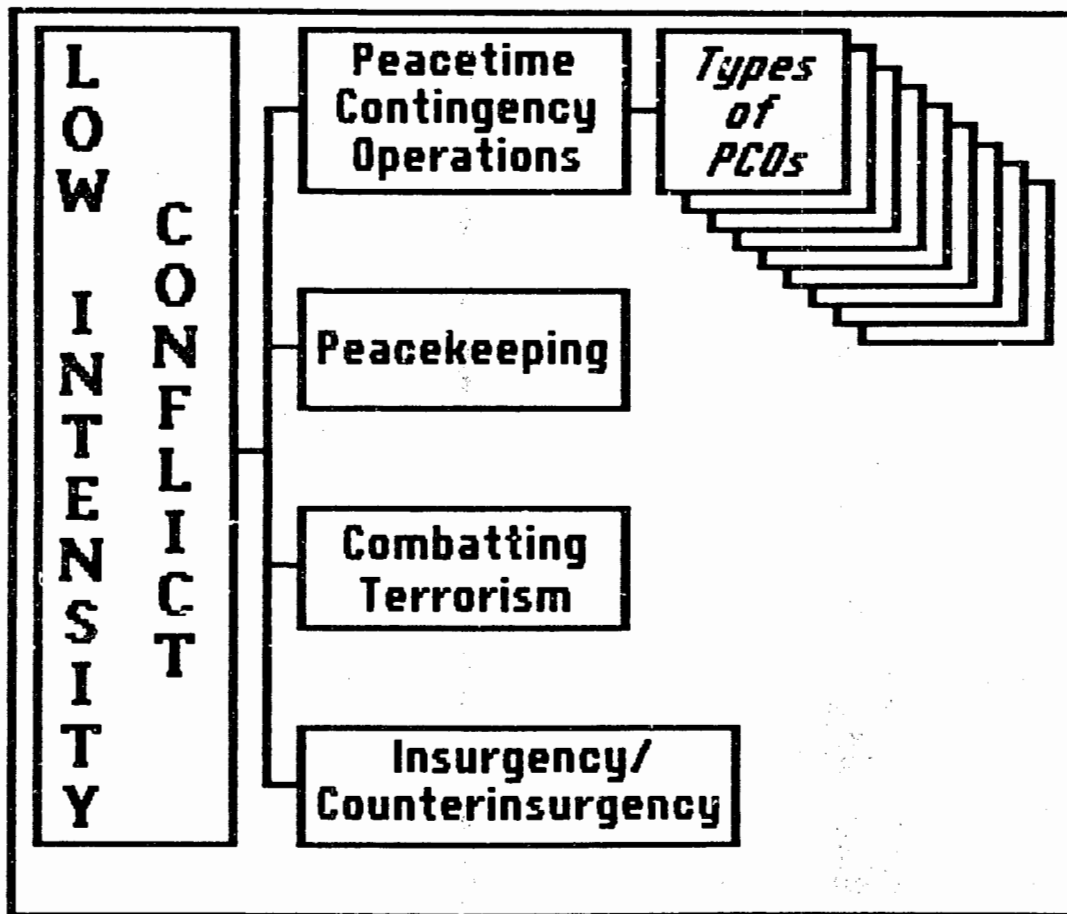


Figure 2. Low-Intensity Conflict Operational Categories

(1) **Peacetime Contingency Operations.** These operations use carefully tailored forces to complete a specific, clearly defined mission. Such operations can range from small to massive employment of military forces. They range from short duration events planned in secrecy and boldly executed, sometimes on short notice, to large, highly visible commitments of U.S. military power over extended periods of time. Examples of short duration

events include the U.S. air raid on Libya, the rescue of U.S. citizens on Grenada, or the recent deployment exercise to Honduras. An example of a longer commitment is the U.S. protection of U.S.-flag shipping in the Persian Gulf, to include the extensive use of Army and Navy air assets. (22:15) Peacetime contingency operations include, but are not limited to: shows of force and demonstrations, noncombatant evacuation operations, rescue and recovery operations, strikes and raids conducted in self defense, unconventional warfare (defensive), and support to U.S. civil authorities in areas such as drug interdiction. (16:5-6, 5-16)

(2) **Relationship between General Purpose and Special Operations Forces.** Peacetime contingency operations may be done with conventional forces or special operations forces in a lead role, or vice versa. Recent historical examples show that either case is equally probable. As examples, Grenada, the air raid on Libya, and the 1983 Navy raid on Lebanon were all conducted with conventional forces in a lead role, while the Son Tay raid of Vietnam, the raid at Entebbe, Uganda by Israel, and the attempted rescue of American hostages in Iran were all conducted primarily by special forces.

3. **LIC Imperatives.** The direct use of combat (fighting) military forces is but one of several responses available to prevent, contain, or end conflict. As Vietnam showed, superior combat power does not guarantee success. (14:--) Also, direct use of military force can be counterproductive within the total context of the conflict. The following discussion focuses on the nature of the environment which makes PCOs different from conventional warfare. Before PCOs can be conducted successfully, several LIC imperative "wickets" must first be cleared (see Figure 3). These include the following.

- o Political dominance
- o Unity of effort
- o Adaptability
- o Legitimacy
- o Patience

a. **Political Dominance.** In a democracy, public opinion exerts an extremely powerful influence on the options selected by U.S. decisionmakers. For example, in a late 1986 Gallup survey, when questioned about the use of military force and drug interdiction, large majorities of the public (82%) and U.S. leaders (81%) favored using military and civilian personnel to help foreign governments. However, direct use of military force was rejected by 67% of the public and 91% of U.S. leaders. (23:33) In LIC, such political considerations hold great weight. The long-term adverse effects of using military force may not be worth the short-term gains they achieve. In PCO, the "war of words" can be more important than anything else. Peacetime contingency operations have strong psychological effects on the

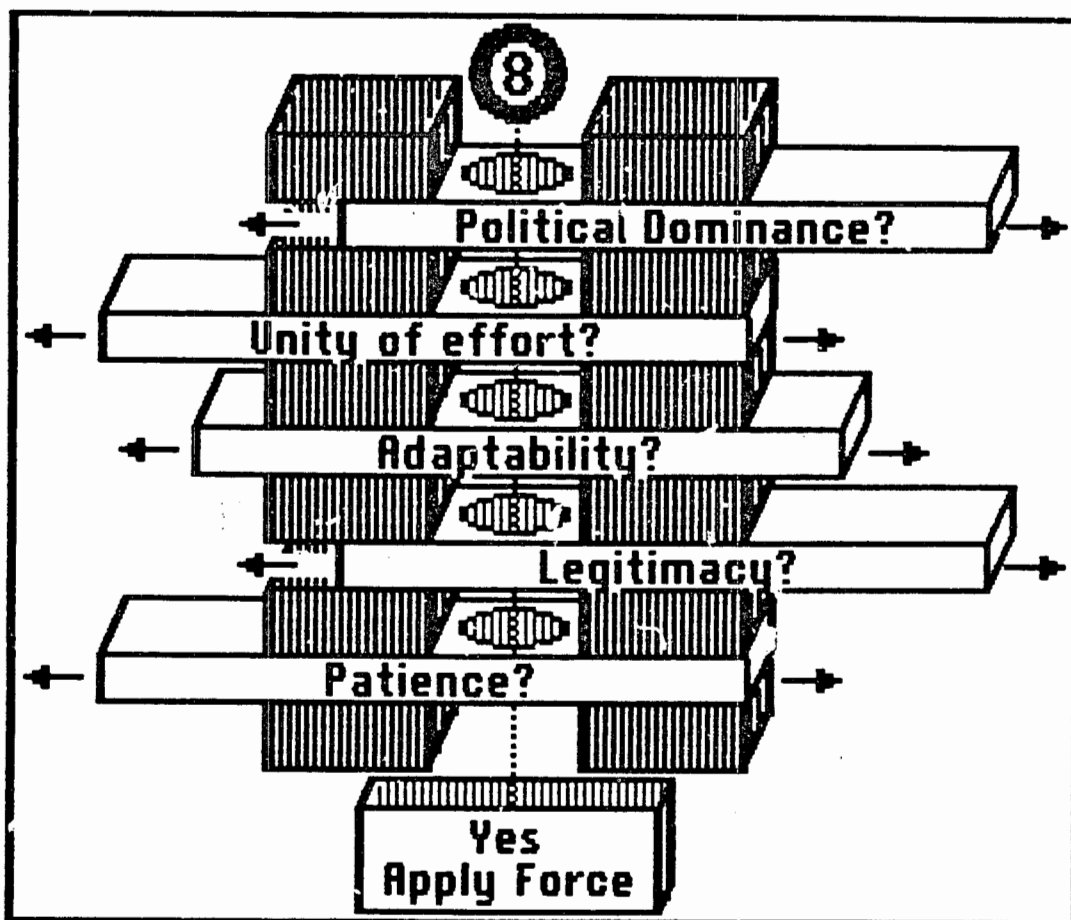


Figure 3. Force Application--Aligning the LIC Imperative Decision-making Wickets

attitudes and behavior of domestic and foreign audiences. A delicate balance exists between maintaining operational security (OPSEC) to ensure the safety of U.S. forces and keeping the public informed in order to get and maintain their full support. Understanding the dominant role of the political dimension over the military is the first imperative for success in LIC. (8:3)

b. **Unity of Effort.** The military, political, economic, and psychological nature of LIC calls for an integrated national policy and strategy. This is especially true in PCOs. For the military, joint or combined operations using a tailored force structure, often in concert with the military and civil forces of another country, will generally be the norm.

c. **Adaptability.** The resources must exist to actually perform the PCO. Additionally, in PCOs, the right weapons systems must be matched up in tailored packages to carry out the task at hand. In the Iran rescue mission, for example, planners did a good job of selecting the right mix of air power (MC-130s, EC-130s, RH-53Ds, and C-141s), but did not allow an adequate margin of error for equipment malfunctions in a harsh desert environment. (2:7-8) This mistake was not repeated in the air raid on Libya, in which a total of 32 F-111F and A-6E were used in the attack, together with a large support package of KC-10s, KC-135s, KA-6s, EF-111s, F/A-18s, A-7s, E-2Cs, F-14s, EA-6Bs, EP-3s, search and rescue helicopters, and others. (11:--; 1:2) Such resources include not only the proper equipment, but also the proper organization, training, and doctrine. Decisionmakers must have a very high assurance that a PCO will succeed, because the loss of prestige associated with failure can be devastating to other important U.S. interests.

d. **Legitimacy.** Legitimacy is the perception that authority is genuine and effective and that it uses proper agencies for reasonable purposes. There are two key constraints which help to establish legitimacy: ethical and legal.

(1) **Ethical Constraints.** United States leaders must feel ethically justified in imposing the U.S.'s will on another nation prior to the execution of a PCO. As an example, American leadership felt Libya had exceeded moral prerogatives in its support of terrorist attacks on U.S. citizens. The U.S. had protested this support through diplomatic channels to no avail. Economic sanctions and military shows of force had not achieved the desired results. Therefore, the U.S. felt it was ethically justified in acting militarily as a means of self-defense. Ethical responsibilities do not end with the decision to stage a PCO however. Military actions taken must be proportionate to the offense. In Libya's case, this dictated strict rules of engagement (ROE) concerning the selection of targets associated with terrorism, and the selection of tactics and weapons limiting collateral damage to innocent civilians. (20:26)

(2) **Legal Constraints.** United States military forces conducting PCOs in LIC must recognize the conflict is being prosecuted under the constraints of international, U.S. domestic, and, if applicable, host country law; multinational and bilateral agreements; and Congressional authorizations and appropriations. For example, to satisfy the requirements of international law in the air strike on Libya, the U.S. would have to establish that its actions were not punitive reprisal, were conducted in self defense to meet the threat to U.S. interests, and were necessary, proportionate to the offense, and reasonable under the entirety of the circumstances involved. (9:2C) While these constraints may encourage a restrictive or bureaucratic mind-set, the constraints should not be viewed as the sole determinant of military actions. Such constraints are one very significant element in the commander's estimate of the situation. (8:3)

e. **Patience.** Low-intensity conflict is generally a protracted struggle in which there are no quick and easy victories. Although PCOs are conducted to accomplish specific objectives, they are often part of a larger campaign. For example, the air raid on Libya supports the U.S.'s struggle in combatting terrorism and was only conducted after diplomatic efforts, economic sanctions, and lesser shows of military force had failed. (9:2C)

f. Having reviewed the general areas which make PCOs different from conventional war, discussion will now narrow itself to planning and execution considerations. United States experiences in PCOs have resulted in many hard-earned lessons learned which can be applied to planning for future operations.

4. **Planning and Execution Considerations.** In simplest terms, planning and executing an air power PCO is nothing more than implementing the basic problem-solving process. Using the time available, which can be a major factor, U.S. political and military leaders must identify the problem(s), key assumptions, and factors bearing on the problem; determine broad strategies and alternative courses of action to deal with this problem; then pick the best course of action and implement it. Accordingly, this section will cover the following areas.

- o Time requirements
- o Defining the problem
- o Determining strategy
- o Developing a course of action
- o Refining the plan
- o Execution

a. **Time Requirements.** Time is the most critical element in any planning process. Normally, planning is deliberate, with formal processes and procedures used for military operations. Emergency situations, however, may prescribe a greatly accelerated planning process. Two different methods of planning have been developed in the Joint Operation Planning System (JOPS) and its successor, the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System (JOPES).

(1) **Deliberate Planning.** When time permits, deliberate planning is the cyclic process used to ensure total participation of the commanders and staffs of the supported command, component commands, supporting commands, and government agencies. Deliberate planning is described in JOPS Volumes I, II, and III.

(2) **Time-sensitive Planning.** This is the method used during emergencies. It is managed through the Crisis Action System. More flexible than deliberate planning, it is better able to respond to a fluid environment. It provides for interaction between commanders, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and the National Command Authorities (NCA). Time-sensitive planning is described in JOPS Volume IV. (19:6-4, 6-6)

b. **Defining the Problem.** Two requirements exist in order to understand potential problems needing the use of air power: monitoring the situation, and threat identification and assessment.

(1) **Monitoring the Situation.** Reliable, current intelligence regarding U.S., friendly, hostile, and neutral forces and assets is essential from the very start. Perhaps the best example of this can be seen in the Entebbe raid. The People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine gave Israel 6 days before hostage executions were to begin. Israel collected a striking body of intelligence during this time, using contacts in France, Scotland Yard, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and Federal Bureau of Investigation, police and military specialists throughout Western capitals, informants within the Amin government, the Ugandan underground, commercial airline pilots and technicians, and their own agents posing as tourists and vacationers. (28:48)

(2) **Threat Identification and Assessment.** gain, good intelligence is key to detecting actual and potential threats to U.S. interests, informing decisionmakers, and evaluating the true nature of the threat. Particular emphasis must be placed on determining the capabilities, limits, and intentions of hostile forces. Assumptions must be clearly distinguished from facts. In an air power PCO, it is highly probable there will be several political considerations which must be treated as assumptions. If an assumption is particularly essential to the success of a mission, it is wise to develop alternate plans should the assumed condition or event not happen. As a simple example, consider agreements with friendly nations. Political requirements such as basing, servicing, and overflight rights must be identified early and passed on to the proper agencies, so they can be dealt with. A lack of such rights may drastically limit the U.S.'s ability to respond or severely complicate planning, calling for changes such as extra tanker support, and greatly degrading crews and aircraft systems because of the longer flight time involved. (19:6-14, 10-6; 27:7-2, 7-3)

The following three levels of planning organizations will be used as defined here:

- o **Strategic.** Commanders and staffs at the Service level, the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff level, and above.
- o **Operational.** Commanders and staffs of unified commands, specified commands, and Joint Task Forces.
- o **Tactical.** Commanders and staffs below operational-level planning organizations.

c. **Determining Strategy.** Once a situation is thought to have possible national security implications, the JCS quickly assess the military aspects to determine the nature of these implications. Reasoning and conclusions are forwarded to the NCA. The NCA may decide to do nothing, may request increased reporting to gather more information, or may decide to take some form of action. In this event, they will identify the national interests at stake, determine national objectives, and identify possible options. This drives planning at all levels, but the immediate concern is at the strategic level. (19:7-8, 10-6) Possible strategic options range from diplomatic effort to application of U.S. military force. So, in potential PCO situations, commanders and staffs at the strategic level must be particularly concerned with the broad range of diplomatic, political, economic, informational, and legal issues. If national options include military actions, the JCS assess their operational, command and control, and logistic implications. They also identify possible courses of actions (COAs) and the support needed to implement them. This includes such areas as consumption, attrition and utilization rates, deployment and procurement status, mobilization status, force status, and facilities status. (19:7-8, 7-9)

d. **Developing a Course of Action.** The supported commander must develop and test alternative COAs based on NCA and JCS guidance and allocated resources. Alternate COAs may be derived from existing operation plans (OPLANS) or concept plans (CONPLANS), or developed from scratch if no suitable plans exist. Types of analysis that must be conducted include force-on-force, and force, sustainment, mobility, and closure. (19:7-10, 10-6)

(1) **Choosing a Course of Action.** Products of COA development include the commander's estimate and a concept of operations for the chosen COA. In deliberate planning, the supported commander makes this final selection. In time-sensitive planning, alternate COAs are developed by the supported commander, listed in priority order, submitted to JCS for their review, and, ultimately, presented to the NCA for their decision. The selected COA has a major effect on planning at the operational level. (19:7-11, 10-6)

(2) **Operational-level Considerations.** Of utmost importance, commanders and staffs at the operational level must be generally familiar with both strategic and tactical concerns and must be able to establish firm links between the two. Courses of action must have measurable results. Criteria must be developed which will clearly show whether both strategic and tactical goals have been met. Decisionmakers must know precisely what air power contributes. The Department of State Political Adviser counsels unified commanders and their staffs on matters of political significance to the planning process. (19:6-14)

(3) **Complexity.** Expect planning to be complex at first, especially when conducting interagency, joint, or combined operations with several widely dispersed planning centers. It is better to start complex and then simplify instead of the reverse. (27:7-2) Key considerations include the requirements for secrecy and surprise and taking actions necessary to reduce response time, should the situation dictate. (19:7-9)

(4) **Unusual Support Requirements.** Support requirements are extensive and often out of the ordinary in PCOs. The air raid on Libya, for instance, required unprecedented tanker support. Intelligence and communications support requirements have already been mentioned. Logistics personnel must also be part of the planning process right from the start, so that they can begin to foresee and help define the supply, transportation, maintenance, and other needs of the operation. It is important to realize that in "lesser conflicts" the logistics tail must frequently be tailored to small force packages. (27:7-2)

e. **Refining the Plan.** Once a COA has been selected by the NCA, JCS, or supported Commander-in-Chief, a detailed, fully integrated schedule of mobilization, deployment, employment, sustainment, and redeployment actions must also be developed. Planners must pay special attention to logistic and other support requirements, such as medical, civil engineering, air refueling, host nation peculiarities, and transportation. (19:10-6) The focus now begins to shift into the following areas.

- o Tactical considerations
- o Mental wargaming
- o Practice and rehearsals
- o Simulations
- o Aircrew access to information

(1) **Tactical Considerations.** Commanders and staffs at the tactical level responsible for actual execution of an air power PCO must pay particular attention to factors such as the ROE. There are two reasons why it is important to understand the ROE in terms of the total environment. The first is to ensure the implications of violating the ROE are clearly understood. The second is to be sure that as the ROE becomes more specific, they do not become more restrictive. The NCA will normally determine the criteria for using tactical forces in peacetime. (15:7-6) Other important factors which must be considered at the tactical level in PCOs include the news media and the requirement for OPSEC. (27:7-2) Once a tactical plan has been formulated, it must be tested as thoroughly as time permits to find and address weaknesses. This will be covered in the following paragraphs.

(2) **Mental Wargaming.** Use experienced aircrews outside the planning cell to review and challenge the plan. Major considerations should include matters such as ROE and the threat.

The primary plan should have enough leeway to allow considerable deviations without causing an abort. It should include options for bad weather, timing triangles to make up or lose time, or options for late arrivals. Backup plans should be developed to address major deviations from the original plan, e.g., loss of overflight rights or loss of tanker support. Remember, Murphy was an optimist. Make room for at least one imaginative person in the group--someone who can think like crazy, coming up with ideas others would never dream of. Occasionally, such ideas will have real value. (27:7-2)

(3) **Practice and Rehearsals.** Commanders should conduct practice sessions using all players, as much as time and OPSEC permits. Such rehearsals should include both operations and support personnel and should make use of tactical deception.

(a) **Aircrew Considerations.** Develop and refine realistic procedures and methods to make habit patterns instinctive. Although there is no way to truly predict how individuals will react in high-stress situations, the tendency is to fall back on what has been thoroughly practiced. Ensure training programs avoid complacency and an "I will do it differently in combat" mentality. Training must focus on proper skills in the proper environment, e.g., finding and accurately striking targets during night low-level flight. Other major considerations include:

- o Try to use units which have worked together before. If this is not possible, compensate with good liaison officers placed at key monitoring points and a plan which needs the least interface among such groups. This is especially true for operations between joint, combined, and interagency activities.
- o Strict flight and communications discipline must be emphasized.
- o Ensure enough assets are available and people trained to handle surge requirements. This includes extra planners and aircrews.

(b) **Logistical Support Considerations.** Existing support agreements should be exercised, as long as undue attention is not drawn to the upcoming operation. Communication interoperability and logistics capability should both be thoroughly tested to ensure they can meet actual requirements. This can be done best in full dress rehearsals involving all participants with due consideration for OPSEC and communications security requirements. Planners should be used to monitor the results to get the best possible feedback for necessary adjustments. (27:7-3)

(c) **Tactical Deception.** Tactical deception operations are intended to induce the key leadership and forces of target groups hostile to U.S. interests to take, or fail to take, action that will result in advantages to the U.S. In PCOs, tactical deception must not purposely lie to or mislead the public, media, or Congress. Timing is critical. Hostile forces must be given time to collect, digest, and react to the deception. It is not essential that such forces be taken completely unaware, only that the leadership becomes aware too late to react effectively. Such operations depend on excellent OPSEC to effectively hide real activities. Tactical deception planning should not be an afterthought, but an integral part of OPLAN development. (10:3, 4, 6, 22, 25) Examples include:

- o Creating false air orders of battle by decoy aircraft, installations, logistics actions, stockpiles, and equipment; false command, control, and communications; simulated preparations and deployments; and planned information leaks. (10:5-6)
- o The use of frequent exercises to establish a signature for tactical deception plans, desensitizing the local populace and news media, who in turn might inadvertently alert hostile forces.
- o Camouflage to hide and disguise troops, materiel, equipment, and installations. (10:10)
- o Psychological operations campaigns to convey information to intended target audiences and foreign intelligence systems. (10:10)
- o Use of tactical support aircraft (EC-130, EF-111) to mask or draw attention away from strike aircraft.

(4) **Simulations.** Although many problems remain, computer simulations can be expected to be used more in future PCOs using air power. Both strategic and tactical applications exist.

(a) **Strategic Applications.** The JOPES is developing simulation and analysis capabilities in several areas:

- o Force-on-force assessments (suitability analysis).
- o Generation of force requirements.
- o Comparisons of requirements to capabilities (feasibility analysis).
- o Sourcing of force listings.

- o Generation of mobilization and sustainment requirements based on employment needs.
- o Comparisons of planned versus actual events to identify problems and constraints.
- o Integration of mobilization, deployment, employment, and sustainment schedules. (19:10-7)

(b) **Tactical Applications.** In the tactical arena, flight simulators can already be programmed with data on terrain, threats, weather, and targets to enable aircrews to realistically practice most procedures used on the actual mission. Soon the capability may exist to tie together all air power combat participants. Such a capability would greatly complement OPSEC considerations by reducing or eliminating the need to conduct full dress-rehearsals with actual equipment. It would also allow delaying the movement of forces and support equipment for the real operation until actually needed, minimizing hostile reaction time.

(5) **Aircrew Access to Information.** Compartmentalization is often a problem. (18:7-4) In the effort to protect unique sources and sensitive information, systems have been developed which slowly and carefully screen potential users to determine their need to know. Tactical aircrews do not normally have a need to know such information on a day-to-day basis and, hence, have difficulty gaining access to this information during short notice crisis situations.

f. **Execution.** A major lesson learned for those who may fly in PCOs is to not be lulled into complacency when planning. Although it may seem to be done only for the sake of practice, sometimes, especially after several false alarms, such planning can be for keeps. The cost of failure can be great to both individuals and the nation. The phases of execution and command and control matters will now be discussed. (19:10-6)

(1) **Phases.** Execution involves several phases: final pre-launch preparations, undetected closure (get in), the attack itself (do it), safe recovery (get back), (27:7-1) and the return to normal activities.

(a) **Final Pre-launch Preparations.** Avoid unnecessary last minute changes like the plague. The larger the strike package, the more difficult it is to make late changes successfully. Also, plan for plenty of rest by aircrews before they launch and ensure that they get it, and that spare aircrews are available if needed for unforeseen reasons. (27:7-2, 7-3)

(b) **Undetected Closure.** Since PCOs are executed during conditions of peace, not declared war, many other normal flight activities will also be happening during this phase.

Cooperation with friendly nations' flight following agencies can be extremely helpful. Routes of flight can be picked which avoid close flight following or radar signatures, using visual flight rules if able. Tactical deception can play a major role here. For example, a normal peacetime exercise can be used to mask the actual operation.

(c) **The Attack.** Know when to cut losses, but avoid having many abort or recall points. This encourages outside interference. (27:7-2) Go/No-go checklists can aid individual aircrews in determining their own criteria for completing the mission, but overall responsibility for continuing or aborting the mission must rest with the mission commander. Individual aborts must be reported to him expeditiously so that he is able to make knowledgeable judgments and act decisively when the plan begins to come apart. As an example, in the Iranian rescue attempt, excessive emphasis on maintaining OPSEC through strict control over radio and other electronic emissions prevented adequate command and control of the rescue force and was one of the most important causes of mission failure. (7:428)

(d) **Safe Recovery.** The egress plan is just as important as ingress. This is often the most dangerous part of the mission, especially if full tactical surprise was kept through the moment of weapon release. Threat defenses will be at full alert following a successful attack.

(e) **Return to Normal Activities.** This can be extremely difficult, taking months to do. Security may need to be greatly increased. Work routines may have to be varied to maintain a low profile; distinctive duty uniforms such as flight suits should not be worn to or from work. The local populace, especially in host nations, may not be supportive of U.S. interests. Even when everything goes perfectly and world opinion is favorable, the fear of reprisals against aircrews, their families, or other military personnel may force development of a media avoidance plan. Such a low profile can be destructive to unit morale, unless aircrews are mentally prepared to remain quiet and to ignore the inaccurate and often adverse publicity such silence may cause. Again, the air raid on Libya is a good case in point. (5:132)

(2) **Command and Control.** Peacetime contingency operations involving the use of air power can be complex from a command and control point of view. A major lesson learned involves balancing the needs of senior-level decisionmakers against those of tactical commanders, as discussed below.

(a) **Senior-level Decisionmakers.** Senior-level decisionmakers now have the tools to monitor, analyze, and control events during execution of PCOs. The ability to monitor and compare actual with planned events is essential to the U.S. ability to make valid strategic assessments. It also helps in

making associated adjustments in controlling, directing, monitoring, planning, redirecting, and ending operations. Simultaneously, it must be understood that once an operation has begun, the on-scene commander is in the best position to make tactical decisions. Also, just as information is passed up the chain of command, it should generally be shared downward, in order to help the tactical commander make the best decision possible as the situation dictates.

(b) Operational and Tactical Commanders.

Commanders must expect and head off senior-level personnel not directly responsible for execution who try to give guidance not only on what to do but also on how to do it (micro-management). Specific mission planning and tactics must be left to the individual units actually executing the mission, limited only by the ROE. Establish and use a clearly understood chain of command. Whenever possible, strike units should deal only with their immediate boss. Questions should be funneled to higher authorities within the chain of command for resolution, allowing strike units to concentrate on the primary task. (27:7-2)

5. Recommendations. Based on the material presented in this paper, as well as research done in preparing it, the following areas were identified to enhance the use of air power in PCOs.

- o Beddown of aircraft near potential hot spots
- o Training
- o Organization
- o Joint training at common locations
- o Building the expertise of PCO planners

a. Beddown of Aircraft Near Potential Hot Spots. Beddown of strike aircraft with night/adverse weather capabilities should be examined closely for use near potential trouble spots. If permanent beddown of aircraft and aircrews is not possible, basing agreements permitting rapid deployment near potential hot spots should be pursued and periodically used. Rotary wing aircraft with such capabilities could do very well in regions such as Central America. Fixed wing aircraft with long range and accurate ordnance delivery capabilities and large weapons payload would make an excellent candidate in the Pacific, Africa, or the Middle East.

(1) Advantages. The most important feature of land-based air power is its range. The beddown option extends power projection capabilities into many areas other forms of air power cannot reach. This is especially true in remote areas of the Third World, many of which have already been identified as potential problem areas. Another important feature includes the ability to deliver large amounts of conventional ordnance. This bombing potential, coupled with the ability to place the force on a high alert status ready for immediate deployment or use, clearly gives the U.S. a very flexible military option for crisis

response. (17:3) With the proper OPSEC, this option offers a new element of deception that currently does not exist with the use of Naval carrier assets alone. Presently, sensitivities within many areas are aroused every time the Navy goes to some region they do not normally visit. With land-based assets prepositioned in or near areas of concern, Naval forces could be used as a diversion for the real operation the U.S. wishes to conduct elsewhere, or vice versa. It expands available options and compounds the planning of adversaries.

(2) **Disadvantages.** Other agencies such as the State Department would have to work harder to get basing and overflight rights in these areas. Unfortunately, forecasts from recent reports show a diminishing ability to gain such agreements, and agreements to maintain bases in Third World countries will be costly in numerous ways. (12:10) When budgetary constraints are more limited but demands on U.S. forces are growing, the answer may be more mobile and versatile forces. Such forces would deter aggression by their ability to respond rapidly and discriminately to a wide range of attacks. (12:11) Examples of the types of forces required include greatly expanded tanker capability or vertical take-off and landing fighters and support aircraft requiring little or no runway, a situation common throughout the Third World. Such forces might also be used on floating barges called "Deployable Waterfront Facilities" located in international waters or in an ally's territorial waters but still out of view. (12:22; 25:70) A final disadvantage of the beddown option was illustrated clearly in the long-range flight of F-111s from England to Libya. For various reasons, seven of 32 Air Force and Navy attack planes, almost one-fourth of the force, were forced to abort their bombing runs. (20:26) Most of the aborts were a result of the grueling long-distance flight. Clearly, more reliable avionics packages than presently exist are needed to face the reliability problems associated with long flight times.

b. **Training.** Training should include periodic practice with packages that include a mix of all the types of aircraft that could be expected to work together in JCOs. Such training happens to a small extent today but needs to be greatly expanded. This includes work with other commands within a given service and joint operations among services. As examples, all the assets associated with Air Force strike packages should work together more often, and units from two or more different services located close to each other should practice realistic scenarios together. Such missions should include liaison officer exchanges to reinforce the effectiveness of mission debriefings and a full exchange of information on how each unit prefers to operate. Aircrew training should put particular emphasis on development of skills essential to carrying out the mission, such as night flying, radar scope interpretation, and communications-out procedures. Training should include not only operations personnel but also strive to iron out difficulties in support

areas, particularly communications and logistics. Scenarios should be developed with restrictive ROE typical of those encountered in PCOs.

c. **Organization.** Possible organizational changes should be examined to make the services more responsive to PCOs. As examples, different types of aircraft (e.g., squadrons of F-15E and F-4G) could be mixed within a given unit on a permanent basis. Such a mix would offer several advantages.

(1) Ready availability of aircraft to cover multiple missions, such as counterair and air interdiction.

(2) As covered previously, integration of training between aircraft with supporting missions. This would improve teamwork and the ability to work together in combat.

(3) An additional benefit of this approach, although not directly related to PCOs, is that in a major war, it reduces the risk of losing all of a unique asset if massive destruction of one base or station occurs (does not put all eggs in one basket).

This mix could be thought of as a land-based air power force similar in organization to the sea-based forces used by both the Navy and Marines. These sea-based forces presently maintain a broad mix of many different types of aircraft to preserve our global show of force capabilities. The major disadvantage of mixing forces is the difficulty of maintaining a logistics capability able to supply and maintain diverse forces.

d. **Joint Training at Common Locations.** More joint training exercises are needed to promote better understanding of each other's strengths, weaknesses, and basic methods of doing business. Such operations would not have to be extravagant. They could be as simple as working with a nearby unit from another service. Units should be of types with supportive missions for likely contingency scenarios, such as tanker/strike, electronic warfare/suppression of enemy air defenses, or airborne warning and control/air defense. This exchange could go a long way in tearing down many of the barriers which still exist between the services.

e. **Building the Expertise of PCO Planners.** There needs to be a better mechanism to build and maintain the "corporate knowledge" of planning cells. Permanent planning cells exist at all levels. However, the demands of day-to-day routine prevent cell members from spending time on serious analysis of past exercises and real-world operations. These staffs are generally only exercised for major wars (OPLANS and CONPLANS), not for minor, yet potentially high visibility PCOs, which have a completely different set of problems to contend with. Also, the system currently provides no rewards for this type of brainstorming effort. More emphasis needs to be placed on maintaining continuity of these planning teams, so that they are

totally comfortable working together. All too often, people are shuffled onto other duties just as they have mastered a key skill needed by their unit. In the words of a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Our first priority is war plans or military planning. We need to be sure our military plans support our national strategy. (I told the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the unified and specified commanders that) we could blame the Congress if the defense budget was too low; we could blame the parents and educators if the recruits could not be trained easily; we could blame the defense contractors if they didn't produce good equipment; but if our contingency plans were no good, it was our fault and ours alone. (26:--)

6. Conclusion.

a. Based on experiences since the end of World War II, by far the most likely form of conflict the U.S. faces in the future is in the LIC arena. The stakes--access to vital resources and maintenance of free lines of communications with friends and allies--are too high to not compete successfully in this gray environment between peace and war. One category of LIC in which air power can play a key role is peacetime contingency operations.

b. Peacetime contingency operations are different from those conducted in conventional war. Due to political realities, planners must ensure with a high probability of success that once is enough--there will be no second chance as there often is in conventional conflict. Although the tactics used to fight in PCOs are very similar to those used in full-blown conventional combat, the environment is much different and must be considered throughout all phases of planning and mission execution. Because war has not been declared, the political leadership will take a very keen interest in many details of the mission which in conventional conflict would ordinarily be left to the military to work out. Special attention must be taken to carefully link military goals and objectives to political ones. This, in turn, will strongly shape the tactics used and will call for exceptional discipline, leadership, and communications skill from the entire air power community to cut across Service, interagency, and functional boundaries.

c. This paper examined numerous planning considerations for the employment of air power in PCOs. But, it has only scratched the surface of the many problems that will have to be overcome. Every future scenario involving the use of air power in PCOs will be unique and require its own specially tailored considerations. Many will require the development of new concepts only hinted at here. But most importantly, they will require a team effort of people working together, able to put aside service and agency biases and concentrate on the real threat to America's interests.

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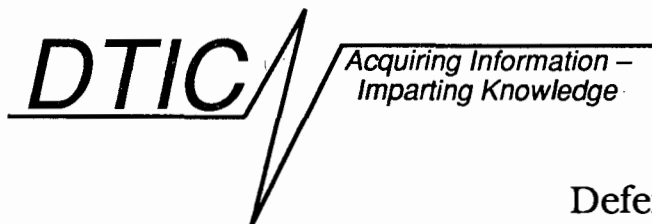
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