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IN SEARCH OF AN IDENTITY:

AIR FORCE CORE COMPETENCIES

BY

MAJOR STEVEN G. SEROKA

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Abstract

Today, contact with the Air Force, no matter the affiliation, inevitably leads to exposure to Air Force core competencies. As a tourist visiting the Air Force Museum, a contractor working with Wright laboratories, on the Joint Staff, or Air Staff, core competencies will be part of the interaction. But, what are core competencies, where did they come from, why does the Air Force have them, and, more importantly, what are their implications? This paper tackles those questions. Additionally, it will offer an alternative framework to the present application of Air Force core competencies.

First this paper introduces core competencies and explores the background information of their origin. This consists of a historical analysis, starting with the concepts incorporated in the documents published at the time the Air Force gained its independence, through significant documents up to the 1996 *Global Engagement: A Vision for the 21ˢᵗ Century Air Force*.

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About the Author

Major Steven G. Seroka received his commission from the United States Air Force Academy in 1984. Following graduation from pilot training he served as an F–15C instructor pilot at Langley AFB, Virginia, Keflavik NAS, Iceland, and with the air intervention composite wing at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho. Major Seroka has 1800 hours in the F–15C. Academically, he earned his Bachelors Degree in Operations Research from USAFA in 1984, and his Masters Degree in Management from Webster University in 1992. Professionally, he was a Distinguished Graduate and Top Graduate from Undergraduate Pilot Training in 1986 and Squadron Officer School in 1990, attended Air Command and Staff College in 1986, and the School of Advanced Airpower Studies in 1997 (SAAS). Upon graduation from SAAS in June 1997, he will be assigned to NORAD J–5 at Peterson AFB, CO.

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I would also like to thank Professor Dennis Drew not only for his insight into how to produce a well written product, but, most importantly, for his example how a well thought out and presented idea can make a difference.

Chapter 1

Introduction

[Air Force core competencies] provide those critical leveraging capabilities that only the nation's air and space force can bring to the joint table.

—Secretary of the Air Force Sheila Widnall

Today, contact with the Air Force, no matter the affiliation, inevitably leads to exposure to Air Force core competencies. As a tourist visiting the Air Force Museum in Ohio, one will find a display dedicated to core competencies. As a contractor working with the Air Force's Wright laboratory, one will find requirements shaped by core competencies. As a member of the Pentagon's Joint Staff, one will find core competencies in the Air Force's the planning process as well as influencing the development of Air Force doctrine. As a member of an Air Force unit, one will find core competencies in a position of prominence similar to that of the unit and Air Force mission statements. It appears that if one is affiliated with the Air Force, core competencies are the key to understanding how it will operate today and in the 21st century.

Core competencies were introduced in 1995, and since then have rapidly swept through the Air Force. The Secretary of the Air Force first publicly introduced core competencies through an article in *Armed Forces Journal International* in September 1995 and later published them in *Air Force Executive Guidance: 1995*. Since that time,

the Chief of Staff has taken the opportunity to discuss and brief the concept to many audiences. The topic also has been covered in numerous official and unofficial publications including *Air Force Magazine*, *Airman Magazine*, *The Air Force Times*, and RAND studies. Air Force news releases introduced core competencies into the vocabulary of Air Force personnel at every level. Only a year after their introduction, Air Force core competencies were the top issue at the 1996 Corona Conference in Colorado Springs. Yet, despite this broad exposure and their growing influence, the concept of Air Force core competencies remains unclear and, in some cases, results in confusion surrounding their purpose and meaning.

When first exposed to the term "core competency" one immediately begins to explore possible meanings for that expression. Does core competency mean a capability that is unique to an organization, exclusively developed and refined within one organization and by no other? Or does it merely mean this is a capability the organization provides, not exclusive of other organizations? The term begs many questions. Do core competencies represent the Air Force's new roles and missions? If so, what happened to the previous roles and missions? What is the long term impact of defining a capability as a core competency? Will it permit the organization to evolve, change, or eliminate particular capabilities as the environment demands? Or does defining a capability as a core competency constrain the organization within the boundaries of those definitions? And what is the impact on the other services? Must they avoid any capability defined for the Air Force? The Air Force never previously defined its core competencies, so why are they needed now? At whom are core competencies directed, the Joint community, Air Staff, or Air Force people in general? The questions go on and core competencies, to

many people, continue to confuse rather than provide a common focus for the Air Force. Understanding their origins and intended purpose can clarify many misperceptions and improve the use of core competencies in the Air Force.

Purpose

This paper uncovers the mystery surrounding core competencies by examining where Air Force core competencies came from; why the Air Force has them; and where they might take us. Chapter Two introduces Air Force core competencies and traces them to their origin, exploring why they appeared, and why they changed. Chapter Three examines the motivation behind their development. Chapter Four analyzes where they might lead the Air Force and if they appear on the right track, and offers an alternative framework for their development and application. Chapter Five makes the recommendation whether the Air Force should continue with its current approach or move to adopt an alternative approach to defining itself.

Limitations and Assumptions

To discover the answers to many of these questions I went directly to the source of Air Force core competencies, the Air Staff's Strategy Division. At the time of Air Force core competency identification, Strategy Division, known as the "Skunk Works," was under the direction of Major General Robert E. Linhard. He was an extremely intelligent man, with experience from having served at both the White House and within the Pentagon. General Linhard, from all indications, was the mastermind behind Air Force core competencies. Unfortunately, the general passed away shortly before the commencement of this research (August 1996). However, the members of his "Skunk

Works" team were eager to provide information regarding General Linhard and the process behind the identification of Air Force core competencies.

Core competencies are a relatively new concept and not much has been written about them. For the most part, the information collected regarding core competencies has been through direct contact with members of the "Skunk Works" under General Linhard. Of the documents that were written about core competencies, a significant portion of them only became available during the course of conducting research for this paper. As time passes, however, more information will become available about their role. Some anticipated major documents are *Global Engagement: Doctrine for the 21st Century Air Force*, *AFDD–1*, the next Joint Vision document, and the report from the Quadrennial Defense Review. Each of these documents should lend more insight to the impact of core competencies. Conversely, we will see the results of core competencies internally in the Air Force as force structure and budgets change to reflect this direction

I anticipate that each subsequent review and new publication will reveal a further commitment to core competencies, and their influence spreading throughout the Joint community. As demonstrated in the chapters that follow, we are already experiencing an evolving relationship between Air Force core competencies and Joint Vision 2010. Likewise, discussion surrounding the pending publication of the doctrine version of *Global Engagement* indicates that it, too, has embraced core competencies. The Army has articulated a similar relationship (though not calling them core competencies) in its *Army Vision 2010*. This trend is expanding rapidly and appears to be picking up momentum.

Process

To gain a better understanding of core competencies, this paper attempts to answer three basic questions, "where", "why", and "what." The "where" question explores the origins of core competencies. To answer this question, I looked to documents starting from the time the Air Force first gained its independence. I then trace the evolution of the concepts incorporated within those "cornerstone" documents to the concepts outlined in the documents of today. This analysis provides a "feel" for how the Air Force has articulated its purpose, and the influences that have shaped it along the way. This also provides the background for further discussion concerning core competencies in the chapters that follow.

The "why" question examines the purpose of core competencies. To answer this question I evaluate three probable explanations using Graham T. Allison's decision making framework. This framework provides a basis for analyzing the motivation behind decisions. Understanding the motivation, or the "why," behind core competencies lends insight into their *intent*. For example, who were they *intended* for, what were they *intended* to do, what was the *intent* behind identifying those particular core competencies, and so on. In addition, understanding "why" the Air Force has core competencies also helps to explain if they are being applied appropriately. If core competencies are applied to purposes for which they were not intended, they may be inappropriate, inaccurate, or misleading. Understanding "why" the Air Force has core competencies provides a great deal of insight into the mystery surrounding them.

The "what" question looks at the implications of having core competencies and where core competencies might take the Air Force. To answer this question I looked at

how the Air Force is applying core competencies. This "look" included the application

and implications within the Air Force, the Air Staff and the Joint community. When the

application is compared to the *intent* behind core competencies, one can get a feel if the

Air Force is on the right path. If not on the right path, the Air Force would benefit from

changing how it applies the core competencies, the core competencies themselves, or

both.

These "questions" provide a background and insight to challenge the current core

competencies. I address this concern by proposing an alternative framework to evaluate

the Air Force's needs for core competencies. I then recommend the Air Force adopt a

new set of core competencies and establish "operational concepts" as a means of more

accurately articulating Air Force capabilities and processes.

Significance

The influence of core competencies has been very insidious, making their impact

very difficult to comprehend, but they have become a decision making framework for the

Air Force. As a framework they provide structure and guidance for planning, and a

means to measure their capability. Their impact is directly felt in the budgeting process.

This, in turn, determines hardware, structure, and, eventually, operational capability. This

makes core competencies extremely powerful, and a concept that should be thoroughly

examined, understood and articulated.

The heart of the power of core competencies is in the budget process. The immediate

implications are fairly clear. If a requirement doesn't fit within the core competencies, it

will likely not get funded. The impact is not immediately felt outside of those working

the budget process on the Air Staff, because the Air Force is currently employing "requirements" acquired under different process. Under the current process, however, core competencies are shaping the Air Force of tomorrow.

Core competencies are having the greatest impact on the future Air Force. The early phases of the budgeting process are planning and programming of future requirements. These long range programs, too, must fit within the six capabilities described by the core competencies. The opportunity for an idea or concept to be supported, that doesn't fit the six capabilities of the core competencies, is very limited. Core competencies provide the structure for how the Air Force plans and thinks about its future. Therefore, one can expect the future Air Force to reflect the core competencies of today. It is through this long range planning process that core competencies have the greatest influence on the Air Force.

Ironically, the greatest power of core competencies over the Air Force budget resides outside the service, with the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC). The 1986 Goldwater–Nichols legislation requires the JROC to make recommendations[1] and "assign *joint* priority among major programs meeting valid requirements identified by the CINCs, Services and others."[2] The JROC that decides whether Air Force requirements are *valid*. Core competencies, described by the Secretary of the Air Force as what the Air Force "can bring to the joint table"[3], and by the Air Force Chief of Staff as what the Air Force must provide the nation,[4] are the JROC's "measuring stick" for Air Force requirements. How the JROC interprets core competencies, may very well shape the future of the Air Force.

As the framework for Air Force decision making, core competencies also influence its structure and operational capability. If the Air Force is expected, as it has stated, to provide Information Superiority, then the Air Force must reflect that capability, just as it reflects Air Superiority and Rapid Global Mobility. To do so requires organization, training and equipment to support such an operation. Likewise, if the Air Force has omitted a capability from its core competencies, can it be expected to perform that capability in the future? How will funding for them survive the gauntlet of Air Staff and JROC oversight if they are not articulated as core capabilities of the Air Force? For example, what future role can the Air Force be expected to play in Air Defense of the United States or Combat Search and Rescue, neither of which are addressed by core competencies? It appears many questions raised by core competencies are open to interpretation.

Last, with so much importance attributed to core competencies, who has the authority to interpret them. The capabilities described by the core competencies have yet to be thoroughly explained. For example, Global Attack implies an intercontinental or deep attack, but does it also include close attack and interdiction? The Air Staff may choose to interpret it that way, but will the Army member on the JROC, seeking funding for attack helicopter aviation, see it the same way? It appears, that by not doing so itself, the Air Force has delegated the authority to interpret them. Core competencies not carefully articulated, can work both for and against Air Force purposes.

Core competencies are having an enormous impact on the Air Force of today and tomorrow, and for those affiliated with the Air Force, it is important to be knowledgeable of them. It is the intent of this paper to assist in that endeavor.

Notes

[1] Charter of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (MCM–14–95), 7 February 1995, 4.

[2] Ibid., 1.

[3] Sheila Widnall, Secretary of the Air Force, "Beyond the Drawdown: US Air Force is Prepared To Support the National Military Strategy", *Armed Forces Journal International*, September 1995, 43.

[4] Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff, Speech delivered to the Heritage Foundation, Washington D.C., 13 December 1996.

Chapter 2

Origin of Air Force Core Competencies

Air Force core competencies are who we are and what we do.

Lt. Gen. Jumper
Air Force XO

1995	1996
AF Core Competencies	AF Core Competencies
Air Superiority	Air and Space Superiority
Space Superiority	Global Attack
Global Mobility	Rapid Global Mobility
Precision Employment	Precision Engagement
Information Dominance	Information Superiority
	Agile Combat Support

This chapter will examine the origins of Air Force core competencies which the Air Force first introduced in September 1995 and then modified to their current format in (month) 1996. Their development has included efforts by both civilian and military agencies coordinated with the Air Force Secretary and Chief of Staff. Much effort, study and thought went into their development and even the current set of core competencies is under continuous scrutiny and reexamination from within the Air Force. It is interesting to note that the highest levels of the Air Force have been actively involved in not only core competency development, but also in their dissemination to military and civilian Air Force personnel as well. Through these efforts, it appears Air Force leadership is

attempting to influence how the service thinks of itself and does "business" from within the beltway to the most remote location where Air Force people serve.

The concept of core competencies appears to have originated from the American business community. The 1990's has seen a revival of competitive business in the United States and one of the key attributes of this improvement has been the increaed organizational efficiency. Business overhead became smaller, reduced expenses made products more competitive resulting in increased profits. During this period business discovered there was a right way, and a not so right way, to streamline their organizations. The right way, they discovered, required reducing the organizations personnel and missions, without eliminating the organization's essential capabilities. To do so required the organization to identify what it represented or wanted to represent. Then, its identity defined, it could determine which missions, tasks and personnel were essential. Non-essential personnel, missions or tasks not supporting the primary effort could then be eliminated to streamline the organization without loss of its core capabilities. The result of this practice has been tremendous. US business, and hence the US economy, has overcome a difficult period and maintained its world leadership role. In the mean time its nearest economic competitor, Japan, has fallen off stride and its economy sluggish. This business lesson was not learned easily and significant enough to introduce it to the military services when they commenced a downsizing of their own.

Prompted by the collapse of the USSR, end of the Cold War and large debt, the United States looked toward reducing its military forces. Traditionally the US views the state peace as the norm and looks on war as the exception. As a result the US prefers to maintain a small "standing" professional military and calls on the reserves, or citizen

soldiers, during times of crisis. This structure was articulated in the Constitution by the founding fathers by only addressing the necessity to maintain a Navy[5]. The large peacetime US military force since W.W.II, however, has been an anomaly. In response to the Cold War and apparent Soviet threat, the US maintained the largest standing peacetime military in its history. For approximately 45 years a robust land, sea and air force structure had been the rule. With the collapse of the Soviet threat the nation questioned the size and structure of this military. Budgetary pressures, apparent lack of a threat to national security, and a shift toward an internal focus (felt to have been neglected in recent years) combined to encourage a thorough and objective look at the US military force structure. Force reduction was inevitable and (dictated) to levels (produced) by Secretary of Defense Les Aspin's (1993?) Bottom Up Review. The Commission on Roles and Missions (CORM) was then given the task of ensuring military efficiency and eliminating unnecessary duplication of effort.

The Commission On Roles and Missions looked to core competencies as a means of assisting them in meeting their charter of streamlining and improving efficiency of the military services. Drawing on concepts learned and applied in the business community, the commission incorporated downsizing strategies into their recommendations. Identifying what each service was to provide for nationa defense focused their efforts toward an economical and efficient national defense. The intent was to facilitate budgeting, procurement, training, and cooperation in a joint environment. As General Eisenhower envisioned in the era immediately following W.W.II (reference), the services should be dependent and not independent of each other. The commission identified the core competencies of each of the five services as:

Army	Mobile Armored Warfare
	Airborne Operations
	Light Infantry Operations
Navy	Carrier Based Air and Amphibious Operations
	Sea-Based Air and Missile Defense
	Anti-submarine Warfare
Marines	Amphibious Operations
	Over-the-beach Forced Entry Operations
	Maritime Pre-positioning
Air Force	Air Superiority
	Global Strike/Deep Attack
	Air Mobility
Coast Guard	Humanitarian Operations
	Maritime Defense, Safety, Law Enforcement
	Environmental Protection
Joint Organizations	Planning Joint/Combined Military Operations
	Conducting Joint/Combined Military Operations[6]
All Services	Overseas Presence[7]

Unfortunatley the CORM's application of the concept appears inconsisteant with is definition. The CORM defines core competencies as expressing "the set of specific capabilities or activities fundamental to a Service or agency role."[8] The term "fundamental" used to define core competencies denotes an "essential part of the system" or "the root" of the organization[9], but it is questionable that the CORM's core competencies actually meet this definition. As Andrew Krepinevich points out there are limitations to the core competencies spelled out by the CORM. "Why do", for example "each of the services have precisely three core competencies . . . ?, Why do the Marines have a core competency in maritime prepositioning and the Army no comparable competency in land-based prepositioning?", and "[i]f the services have more than three core competencies (as inferred by the listing of other core competencies in the report) why not list them all?"[10] It appears that CORM core competencies fall short of their

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mark of being "essential" or the "root" and the commission's report even alludes to other Air Force core competencies such as Combat Search and Rescue. The CORM list also appeared inadequate to Air Force Maj. Gen. Linhard (duty title) and he took it upon himself to explore core competency development specifically for the Air Force.[11]

Once the concept of core competencies came out of the CORM, Major General Robert E. Linhard (XOX) and the members of his HQ AF Strategy Division "skunk works" began working to improve them.[12] Looking out for the best interests of Air Force[13] and working closely with the Air Force Chief of Staff they took the approach that these would be evolving concepts. At some point, however, they would have to resist further change long enough to publish a document outlining their ideas. The group called upon civilian research organizations to facilittate thier understanding and development of the core competency concept. They envisioned core competencies as central to Air Force Doctrine, strategic vision and _____. These core competencies should reflect what the Air Force does. (Need more background data--talk to Leslie Lewis here to find civilian influenc on the process)----------. It appears that throughout their development, Strategy Division did not articulate a working definition of what specifically was meant by the term core competency. This may have contributed to the less than optimum first edition of Air Force core competencies.

The Air Force first publicly introduced its core competencies through two publications in September 1995. The first was an article by Secretary of the Air Force, Sheila Widnall, published in *Armed Forces Journal International* discussing the core competencies the USAF "brings to the joint table."[14] Secretary Widnall's article was followed shortly thereafter by a Department of the Air Force publication, *Air Force*

Executive Guidance: 1995, officially sanctioning the new Air Force core competencies.

This Executive Guidance outlined five AF core competencies:

Air Superiority
Space Superiority
Global Mobility
Precision Employment
Information Dominance

While these were looked upon as capabilities the Air Force "brings to the joint table"[15], neither Secretary Widnall's article nor the *Air Force Executive Guidance: 1995* attempts to define core competencies, but the latter does discuss "the need to articulate the rationale for the way we allocate our resources."[16] Irespective of their definition, once published, core competencies were rapidly and widely diseminated throughout the United States Air Force.

Once introduced, the concept of AF core competencies appears to have been rapidly distributed and embraced by the AF community. HQ USAF Programming, Planning and Budgeting used it as a common framework to streamline their system. They articulated their efforts in the *Air Force FY 97 President's Budget Highlights* published in March 1996, less than six months after the introduction of Air Force core competencies. In the document, the Air Force illustrates how its budgeting and acquisitions programs support the core competencies of the service. Air Force Planning is more efficient in that it can better communicate its intentions to other HQ USAF Divisions, especially those controlling the Air Force Budget. In addition, Air Force core competencies have targeted the Air Force community outside the beltway. Some of the more popular publications with Air Force military and civilian personnel, *Air Force Times*, *Air Force Magazine*, and *Airman Magazine* have taken the issue direct to the field. To reinforce this message

getting to the field, Air Force units are now displaying an Air Force core competencies "poster" in the same manner as they have displayed Air Force and unit vision statements. The concept is being rapidly and widely disseminated, but it is unclear if its message is truly understood except by a few with a stake in their development.

General Linhard and his "skunk works", once their concept was official, continued to debate and refine AF core competencies and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force officially adopted (sanctioned) the changes in (month) 1996. Some within the Strategy Division were not completely satisfied with the set of core competencies sent forth for publication. Questions were raised about the deep strike mission (addressed by CORM as sole responsibility of the Air Force), the term superiority versus dominance, the unique attribute of the speed of air mobility and other issues.[17] As a result, by the time of the first publication of core competencies in September 1995, the HQ USAF Strategy Division team had already developed changes for more universally accepted competencies. They felt it prudent, however, to not so quickly change what had just been billed as the core competencies of the Air Force and waited for an appropriate opportunity to introduce them. General Fogleman, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, found that opportunity[18] during an address to the Air Force Association in Los Angeles in (month) 1996. In that address he stated AF core competencies had evolved to:

Air and Space Superiority
Global Attack
Rapid Global Mobility
Precision Engagement
Information Superiority
Agile Combat Support

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In his address General Fogleman defined core competencies as (how do you do this punctuation) "the combination of professional knowledge, specific airpower expertise, and technological capabilities that produce superior military outcomes." (punctuation here too). . . "Said another way, core competencies are one means of expressing our unique form of military power and understanding how the various aspects fit together. They should help us focus on our strengths and guide us into the future."[19] He explained core competencies were not exclusive to the Air Force and would continuously evolve to meet national defense needs.

The latest set of Air Force core competencies have traveled a long road from their origins in the business community. Economic competition and hardship of the 1980's forced US businesses to trim excesses and restructure into very efficient organizations in order to survive. As an outgrowth of this trying period, the concept of core competencies appears to have justified itself through the blossoming US economy of the 1990's. So in the early 1990's, when the defense community was posed with essentially the same problem as 1980's business, it appeared only appropriate to adopt a similar approach. The CORM adopted core competencies as one method to assist in distinguishing roles an missions. Following CORM, however, the Air Force, Major General Linhard and HQ USAF Strategy Division in particular, felt the commission did an inadequate job of determining exactly what it was the USAF provided for national defense and pursued development of their own core competencies. The Air Force's initial set of core competencies, published in September 1995, was obsolete before it even came out of the printing office, yet made a significant impact on Programming, Planning and Budgeting and were introduced into the vocabulary of military and civilian Air Force personnel at

every level. It was just over a year after their first introduction that an updated set of core competencies was officially announced by the Air Force Chief of Staff. Throughout this period, no attempt was made to define "core competency" making it difficult to determine what they represent and if the are sufficient.

Depending how one defines core competencies determines the success General Linhard and his Strategy Division team's at tackling the core competency issue. If core competencies are what we currently bring to the joint table then it can be argued the current set of core competencies is resaonable. If core competencies are what the Air Force wants to bring to the joint table then there is much room for debate. Some issues the Air Force is pursuing that don't necesarily fit any category are theater and national missile defense and the air expeditionary force.

Notes

[5] US Constitution. __----_----------_--

[66] US Department of Defense. *Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1994), 2-20.

[7] US Department of Defense. *Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1994), ES-5.

[8] ibid., 2-20.

[9] Anne H. Soukhanov, ed., *Webster's II New Riverside University Dictionary* (Riverside Publishing Company, 1988), 512.

[10] Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *Missed Opportunities: An Assessment of the Roles & Missions Commission Report* (report for the Defense Budget Project).

[11] George R. Gagnon, HQ USAF Strategy Division, Electronic Mail to author, Subject: Re:SAAS thesis: Core Competencies, 4 December 1996.

[12] George R. Gagnon, HQ USAF Strategy Division, Electronic Mail to author, Subject: Re:SAAS thesis: Core Competencies, 4 December 1996.

[13] George R. Gagnon, HQ USAF Strategy Division, Electronic Mail to Tom Griffith, AF Chief of Staff Issues Group, Subject: Re: Core Competencies, 23 September 1996.

[14] Secretary of the Air Force Sheila Widnall, "Beyond the Drawdown: US Air Force is Prepared To Support The National Military Strategy", *Armed Forces Journal International*, September 1995, 43.

[15] ibid

[16] US Department of the Air Force, Air Force Executive Guidance: 1995, Washington D.C., 11 September 1995, 4.

Notes

[17] Interview by author with Lt. Colonel Clayton () Chun, member of Strategy Division, on (-----)

Background paper by (---).

[18] The team in USAF Strategy Division were unaware General Fogleman intended to use that forum and opportunity to introduce the change to Air force core competencies. Telephone interview with Lt. Col. Steve Chabolla HQ USAF Strategy Division on (---).

[19] Message, 211206Z Oct 96, OSAF Washington D.C. to AIG 10119, AIG 12883, AIG 7370, Subject:: Strategic Vision and Core Competencies--General Ronald R. Fogleman Chief of Staff, United States Air Force. Speech at Air Force Association Symposium in Los Angeles, California on 18 Oct 96.

Chapter 2-1

Origin of Air Force Core Competencies

Air Force core competencies are who we are and what we do.

Lt Gen John P. Jumper
Air Force XO

Explaining "who we are and what we do" has been a struggle for the Air Force since gaining its independence in 1947 and continues in today's joint force environment. With the signing of the National Security Act of 1947 by President Truman the USAF gained its independence and, in short order, Secretary Forrestal, the first Secretary of Defense, "concluded that the time had come to decide 'who will do what with what.' Hence, he assembled the Joint Chiefs of Staff at Key West, Florida, on 11 March 1948 to thrash out roles and missions."[20] The result of that meeting, known as the Key West Agreement, served as guidance for the service's roles and missions for the next 46 years. In 1994 roles and missions were revisited, this time by the civilian led Commission on Roles and Missions (CORM). In the interim period there were numerous technological advances, such as space, armed helicopters and theater air defenses, that confused the relatively clear lines of distinction accepted in the Key West Agreement. The publication of the CORM's report was during a period when the services (specifically the Air Force) were attempting to articulate what they "bring to the joint table."[21] This chapter will discuss the historical evolution of the attempts by the Air Force to establish its roles and missions up to and including the publication of core competencies.

Cornerstones of Air Force Roles and Missions: 1947, 1948

There are several documents that direct the Air Force to have specific capabilities and provide relevant guidance regarding its roles and missions that could be considered early core competencies. These documents are the National Security Act of 1947, Executive Order 9877, and the Key West Agreement. The National Security Act of 1947 defined the mission of the United States Air Force and remains relevant to this day.

> It shall be organized, trained, and equipped primarily for prompt and sustained offensive and defensive air operations. The Air Force shall be responsible for the preparation of the air forces necessary for the effective prosecution of war except as otherwise assigned and, in accordance with integrated joint mobilization plans, for the expansion of the peacetime components of the Air Force to meet the needs of war.[22]

This "mission statement" contains many significant elements and are listed below:

Offensive Air Operations
Defensive Air Operations
Rapid Response
Sustainment
Joint Operations
Expansion/Augmentation Of Peacetime Force

Executive Order 9877, signed on the same day by President Truman, provided more specific functions of the Air Force that can be summarized as follows:

Air Superiority
Strategic Bombardment
Air Support to Land Armies
Air Lift/Transport For The Armed Forces
Information and Intelligence
Air Defense
Joint Operations[23]

These functions were to provide guidance to the Air Force, and the other services, as to "who will do what with what." Unfortunately, there were inconsistencies between the Act and the Order that were unresolved prior to President Truman signing them both.

These inconsistencies were a major source of conflict between the services as each could interpret the guidance to serve their own purpose. These inconsistencies eventually led to the Key West Agreement and revocation of Executive Order 9877.[24]

To resolve interservice conflicts caused by the inconsistencies between the National Security Act and the Executive Order the service chiefs were directed, by Secretary of Defense Forrestal, to meet in Key West and agree upon specific functions for each service. Before proceeding, the service chiefs agreed upon some basic ground rules. The services recognized the "need for mutual support of each other's legal mission," the navy would not build a separate strategic air force but would participate in an "all–out air campaign," and each of the services held primary interest in the mediums in which they operated. The agreed upon functions were published in a 21 April 1948 statement, *Functions of the Armed Forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, by direction of President Truman who simultaneously revoked Executive Order 9877. The assigned Air Force functions can be summarized as follows:

Air Superiority
Strategic and Close Air Attack
Anti–Submarine Warfare (ASW) and Aerial Minelaying
Air Transportation and Logistical support
Information and Intelligence
Air Defense
Joint Operations[25]

As noted by the1994 Commission on Roles and Missions, the term *function* in the Key West Agreement appears to equate to *roles and missions*, "[w]hen the Joint Chiefs of Staff met at Key West in 1948, *roles*, *missions*, and *functions* all meant the same thing. The differentiation in terms . . . evolved only as DOD matured."[26] The official definition in the Key West Agreement's glossary states *functions* are "responsibilities, missions and

tasks."[27] This understanding, that *functions* from the cornerstone documents are the

roles, *missions*, and *functions* of today, will serve as the basis for discussion throughout

this document.

Several of the assigned functions appear to overlap or be redundant and can be

reduced to *fundamental* functions (or roles and missions) as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Reduction of Assigned Air Force Functions To Fundamental Functions

Assigned Air Force Functions	Fundamental Functions (roles and missions)
Air Superiority	Air Superiority
Offensive Air Operations	
Strategic and Close Air Attack	
ASW and Aerial Minelaying	Full Spectrum Air Attack[28]
Defensive Air Operations	
Air Defense	Air Defense
Rapid Response	Air Force Readiness
Information and Intelligence	Information
Air Transportation and Logistical support	Air Mobility[29]
Sustainment	Air Force Logistics
Joint Operations	Joint Operations
Expansion/Augmentation Of Peacetime Force	Air Force Expansion

The distinction made in these cornerstone documents between Air Defense and

Air Superiority is relevant to current arguments surrounding service roles and missions in

air defense. The original understanding by the services was that the missions of air

defense and air superiority were separate and distinct, and was reflected in the assignment

of those functions. The Key West Agreement specifically assigns the Air Force the air

defense mission as follows:

1) Air Force is responsible for the defense of the United States against air attack.
2) Formulate doctrine and procedures for the defense of the United States against air attack and provide Air Force units facilities and required equipment
3) Provide land–based air defense [does not specify for defense of US][30]

The only restriction in these documents regarding the Air Force's role in air defense was a statement in the Key West Agreement specifically assigning anti–aircraft artillery to the Army.[31] The document assigned the Air Superiority mission to the Air Force and defined it as follows:

1) Gain and maintain general air superiority
2) Defeat enemy air forces
3) Control vital air areas
4) Establish local air superiority

Current terminology, however, underscores that both "the freedom to attack and the freedom from attack"[32] are subsets of overall air superiority.[33] The combination of these subsets are in marked contrast to the separation of these functions in 1948. This is a significant point that appears to be misunderstood or misused when considering Army and Air Force air defense roles.

The Key West Agreement noted a few exceptions to the Air Force's primary role in air operations such as the Navy's requirement to conduct air superiority and other air missions essential to naval operations. General Spaatz voiced concern that "whether there were to be two air forces or one air force had not been resolved." But his successor, General Vandenberg, assured the other service chiefs the Air Force was not attempting to gain control over their air assets.[34] This agreement provided the foundation for the services' functions (roles and missions) for the next 46 years and some contend it was the last official Air Force guidance until *Global Reach–Global Power* (GR–GP) in 1990.[35]

Goldwater Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986

In 1986 the Goldwater Nichols Act (GNA) passed into law a framework for joint military operations. This law resurrected the emphasis on joint operations identified in the Key West Agreement. Among other changes, the services must, by law, consider their role in joint operations when organizing, training and equipping.

Global Reach–Global Power (GR–GP): 1990

A 1990 precursor to the 1994 Commission on Roles and Missions and in response to the collapse of the USSR and end of the Cold War, *Global Reach–Global Power* (*GR–GP)* articulated the strategic vision of the Air Force. The collapse of the USSR left the US military, for the first time in approximately 45 years, without an immediate peer military threat. Recognizing the need to adapt to the rapidly changing nature of the international situation, the Air Force took the first step toward articulating how it would continue to provide for the nation's defense. In 1990, under the direction of Secretary of the Air Force Donald B. Rice, the Air Force developed its strategic vision articulated in *GR–GP*—"the first official statement of the Air Force role in national security since 1947."[36] This document, later updated in 1992, outlined broad objectives the Air Force would provide in the new strategic environment. The Air Force's "five principles", or "five pillars", according to GR–GP, were to:

    Sustain Deterrence
    Provide Versatile Combat Forces
    Control The High Ground
    Ensure Information Dominance[37]
    Build US Influence

These five principles of GR–GP were described in several ways. They were said to be "the *concepts* of global reach and power,"[38] "an invaluable *capability*,"[39] or a "clear view of aerospace power's inherent *strengths*."[40] Whether concepts, capabilities, or strengths, these principles attempted to redefine the Air Force's purpose in the post–Cold War era.

GR–GP guided the Air Force's efforts through an uncertain period that included Desert Shield/Desert Storm and the increasing frequency of military operations other than war. In December 1992, following the Gulf War and as the post–Cold War environment began to take shape, *GR–GP* was updated. This revised document served as the Air Force's vision statement until *Global Engagement* was published in 1996. However, several issues intervened between the 1992 GR–GP and its 1996 successor, *Global Engagement,* that helped to shape the Air Force's strategic vision.

Commission On Roles and Missions (CORM): 1994

In 1994, under pressure to reduce military expenditures, the CORM was tasked to examine military roles and missions, resulting in the introduction of core competencies to the military services. The fiscal reality and no perceived threat of the Post Cold War era forced the US to reduce the size if its military forces. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin initiated the 1993 Bottom–Up Review (BUR) to establish the size of military forces DOD wished to maintain (though over time Congress has not agreed and the force has continued to shrink). It then became CORM's charter to evaluate and make recommendations concerning the definition and distribution of roles missions and

functions.[41] The CORM Chairman, John P. White, described the situation facing CORM this way:

> The traditional approach to roles and missions—attempting to allocate them among the Services in the context of the Key West Agreement of 1948—is no longer appropriate. That approach leads to institutional quarrels (as reported in the press during our deliberations) and unsatisfactory compromises (as discussed in our report). More importantly, it does not lead to achieving the Department's goals.[42]

In its report, the CORM introduced a significant change to the approach to armed forces' roles and missions with its recommendation of core competencies.

CORM generally liked what it saw of the military and its report, in general, conforms to traditional service distinctions. The summary of the CORM report states, "Our recommendations are designed to better focus DOD's *traditional* military functions, management and decision–making processes, and support elements more directly on effective unified military operations."[43] It failed to act on three of the most contentious issues brought before the commission and called them "nonissues." "In particular, Army and Marine Corps capabilities are complementary, not redundant; inefficiencies attributed to the so–called "four air forces" (i.e., each Service has aircraft) are found mostly in the infrastructure, not on the battlefield; and more joint training, not fewer Services, is needed to ensure effective close air support."[44] In addition, specific issues within the services such as structure, procurement and roles and missions were tactfully left unchallenged apparently yielding to service pressures.

Some may view the CORM's effort to avoid taking sides in the services' "institutional quarrels" resulted in the less contentious approach of focusing core competencies. From the outset the CORM was under much pressure from all services

and essentially in a no–win situation. A strategy of avoiding direct confrontation with the issues could permit the commission an "out," by both satisfying service parochialism and, at the same time, meeting its charter. The core competencies developed by CORM, in essence, do exactly that. They avoid challenging any of the service's current missions and are general enough to leave plenty of room for "maneuvering," adjustment, and interpretation.

The CORM defined core competencies as expressing "the set of specific *capabilities* or *activities fundamental* to a Service or agency role. They define the Service's or agency's essential *contributions to the overall effectiveness of DOD* and its unified commands"[45] The CORM identified core competencies for all the services and identified the following core competencies specifically for the Air Force:

Air Superiority
Global Strike/Deep Attack
Air Mobility[46]

The introduction of core competencies marked a significant change to the approach to roles and missions. In the context of the document, core competencies appear to span the definitions of roles, missions, functions and capabilities. CORM defines these terms as follows:

Roles: broad and enduring purpose specified by Congress in law for the services.

Missions: tasks assigned by President or Secretary of Defense to combatant commanders.

Functions: specific responsibilities assigned by Congress to enable services to fulfill the purposes for which they were established.

Capability: the ability to accomplish a particular mission or function.

Core Competency: a fundamental set of capabilities or activities that
define the service's contributions to unified commands.[47]

According to CORM's definitions, core competencies are not roles, missions or functions, yet at the same time, appear to address all of them. *Core competencies* are the set of capabilities that accomplish service *functions*, are the services' contributions that permit CINCs to accomplish their *mission,* and are based on each service's Congressionally assigned *role*.   The CORM's core competencies appear to be recommendations for "what" the services should *do* and not "how" to do it. In this manner, CORM's intent seems to be to replace past concerns over specific roles and missions by assigning broad capabilities to each service.

Air Force Core Competencies: The First Edition (1995).

The Air Force was not wholly satisfied with what CORM defined as its core competencies and set about developing its own list of core competencies, publishing them in *Air Force Executive Guidance: 1995*.[48] Following the CORM's report, Major General Robert E. Linhard and his AF/XOXS Strategy Division "Skunk Works" set out to define core competencies specifically for the Air Force. Working closely with both the Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Air Force, they intended their work to be an evolving process, halting the process only long enough to publish their ideas. The opportunity to publish their concept was realized in September 1995 when Sheila Widnall, Secretary of the Air Force, published an article in the *Armed Forces Journal International* outlining what "only the nation's air and space force can bring to the joint table."[49] This article was followed shortly thereafter by *Air Force Executive Guidance: 1995* officially sanctioning

the new Air Force core competencies and signed by the Chief of Staff and Secretary of

the Air Force. The following core competencies were outlined in the Executive

Guidance:

Air Superiority
We're not in the business of being defensive when we
engage. We want to take the fight to the other guy and we
are going to dominate his air space. We will operate in it,
and he will not.

Space Superiority
Air Superiority and Space Superiority are the degree of
control necessary in air and space to position, maneuver,
employ and engage with forces of all media, while denying
the same ability to adversary forces.

Global Mobility
Global Mobility is the timely positioning of forces through
air and space, across the range of military operations.

Precision Engagement (Employment*)
Precision Engagement (Employment) is our ability to
precisely employ forces against an adversary to degrade his
capability and will, or the employment of forces to effect an
event across the spectrum of conflict.
                                    * "Employment" in Secretary Widnal's article

Information Dominance
Information Dominance is the ability to collect, control,
exploit, and defend information while denying an adversary
the ability to do the same. [50]

The "Skunk Works" intended core competencies to serve as a guide for Air Force

Resource Allocation Teams, doctrine and strategic vision,[51] essentially complementing

the CORM report while at the same time achieving the broader ideal of influencing the

Air Force itself.[52] As a result, core competencies appear to have been intended to

influence how the Air Force is viewed from "outside" as well as to have a positive

influence on Air Force culture.

Joint Vision 2010 (JV 2010): 1995.

In November 1995 the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff published *Joint Vision 2010,* the first attempt at articulating the vision of the Joint Force in the post Cold War period. This statement of joint vision appears to be in response to CORM's recommendation, "The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) should propose for the Secretary of Defense's approval, a future joint warfighting vision to help guide Service force development efforts."[53] The result, *Joint Vision 2010,* is a "template [that] provides a common direction for our services in developing their unique capabilities within a joint framework of doctrine and programs as they prepare to meet an uncertain and challenging future."[54] It attempts to incorporate the trends of the changing strategic environment, technology, and current capability of our armed forces.[55] The Air Force attempted to incorporate, as much as possible, its core competencies into the development of *Joint Vision 2010.* At the same time, the Air Force was developing its second edition of Air Force core competencies that may have, likewise, been influenced by *JV 2010*. Despite the Air Force feeling the wording of the document was heavily "green" (Army), the CSAF did not want to draw any more blood developing the document than had already been spilled.[56] *Joint Vision 2010* articulates the joint objective of "Full Spectrum Dominance" throughout the *battlespace* through the application of four o*perational concepts* very similar to Air Force core competencies. These four operational concepts are:

    Dominant Maneuver
        Dominant maneuver will be the multidimensional
        application of information, engagement, and mobility

capabilities to position and employ widely dispersed joint air, land, sea, and space forces to accomplish the assigned tasks. Dominant maneuver will allow our forces to gain a decisive advantage by controlling the breadth, depth, and height of the battlespace.

Precision Engagement

Precision engagement will consist of a system that enables our forces to locate the objective or target, provide responsive command and control, generate the desired effect, assess our level of success, and retain the flexibility to reengage with precision when required. Even from extended ranges, precision engagement will allow us to shape the battlespace, enhancing the protection of our forces.

Full–Dimensional Protection

The primary prerequisite for full–dimensional protection will be control of the battlespace to ensure our forces can maintain freedom of action during deployment, maneuver and engagement, while providing multi–layered defenses for our forces and facilities at all levels. Full–dimensional protection will enable the effective employment of our forces while degrading opportunities for the enemy.

Focused Logistics

Focused Logistics will be the fusion of information, logistics, and transportation technologies to provide rapid crisis response, to track and shift assets even while enroute, and to deliver tailored logistics packages and sustainment directly at the strategic operational, and tactical level of operations. It will be fully adaptive to the needs of our increasingly dispersed and mobile forces, providing support in hours or days versus weeks.

The result of these efforts is "Full Spectrum Dominance," intended to support the US national strategy.

That is, taken together these four new concepts will enable us to dominate the full range of military operations from humanitarian assistance, through peace operations, up to and into the highest intensity conflict. [57]

Though operational concepts are not specifically defined, they are described as: "Each of the operational concepts incorporates America's strengths of high quality people and information–age technological advances, builds on proven *competencies*, and focuses the development of future joint capabilities."[58] Achieving each of the operational concepts is to be a joint effort not dominated by any one particular service. Its goal is to overcome service boundaries and focus on providing capabilities to the appropriate CINC.

Air Force Core Competencies: The Second Edition (1996)

Following the publication of *Joint Vision 2010*, General Ronald R. Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff, found the right opportunity to introduce a revised edition of Air Force core competencies during a 1996 address to the Air Force Association in Los Angeles. As noted earlier, it was intended for core competencies to be an evolving process and General Linhard's "Skunk Works" team continued to debate and refine the first edition. Some within Strategy Division were not completely satisfied with the set of core competencies sent forth for initial publication. Questions were raised about the deep strike mission (addressed by the CORM as an Air Force core competency, but not listed in the first Air Force edition), the term *superiority* versus *dominance*, the unique attribute of Air Mobility's speed, and other issues.[59] Another possible influence was Joint Vision 2010. Both were being developed at the same time and some of the issues (such as Precision Engagement) appear to have "rubbed off" on each other. In his address, General Fogleman stated Air Force core competencies had evolved to:

Air and Space Superiority
Global Attack

Rapid Global Mobility
Precision Engagement
Information Superiority
Agile Combat Support

He explained the core competency changes to his audience in Los Angeles.

> We've combined Air and Space Superiority into one core competency. This change reflects the transition to an Air and Space Force and the need to control the entire vertical dimension—the domain of air and space power. . . . In short, air and space superiority provide freedom from attack, and freedom to attack.

> A core competency we've added is one we elected to call Global Attack. There are two aspects to this core competency. The primary aspect of Global Attack is the ability of the Air Force to find and attack targets anywhere on the globe using the synergy generated by air and space assets to operate at the strategic level of war. The other aspect of Global Attack is the expeditionary nature of our force.

> Because our forces will need to move quickly and lightly, we reaffirmed Rapid Global Mobility as a core competency that will remain critical into the first quarter of the 21st century.

> Air and Space power also rely on a myriad of combat support activities that occur on the ground. This vital part of what the air force provides the nation is highlighted by a core competency called Agile Combat Generation. . . . Agile Combat Generation reaches outside of pure logistics to include functions like security police, engineering, and other combat support operations.[60]

General Fogleman defined core competencies as

> the combination of professional knowledge, specific airpower expertise, and technological capabilities that produce superior military outcomes. A particular core competency may, or may not, be unique to a service. What distinguishes the Air Force's core competencies is the speed, flexibility, and global range of our forces along with the strategic perspective of airmen. Said another way, core competencies are one means of expressing our unique form of military power and understanding how the various aspects fit together. They should help us focus on our strengths and guide us into the future.[61]

He explained core competencies were not exclusive to the Air Force and would

continuously evolve to meet national defense needs. General Jumper, the Air Force

Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, described Air Force core competencies as "who we are and what we do."[62] This implies, core competencies are to be used as a compass for Air Force planning.

The current version of Air Force core competencies play a role in supporting each of the operational concepts outlined in JV 2010. As a member of the Joint team, the Air Force provides many unique and shared capabilities to the joint commander. A possible relationship is outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Relationship Between Air Force Core Competencies and Joint Vision 2010 Operational Concepts

Joint Vision 2010 Operational Concept	Air Force Core Competency
Dominant Maneuver (Global)	Rapid Global Mobility
(Theater, Operational)	(nature of airpower)[63]
Precision Engagement (Offense)	Global Attack
	Precision Engagement
Full Spectrum Protection (Defense)	Air Superiority
Focused Logistics (Logistics)	Rapid Global Mobility
Air and Space Superiority	
Information Superiority	

The core competencies of Air and Space Superiority and Information Superiority provide a foundation for all Joint operations.

Global Engagement: A Strategic Vision For the 21st Century Air Force (1996)

In the fall of 1996 the Air Force published a compilation of its efforts of the previous six years in an updated strategic vision—*Global Engagement: A Strategic Vision For the 21ˢᵗ Century Air Force. Global Engagement* was the Air Force's third attempt since 1948 to explain the Air Force's role in national security and addresses joint concepts developed

since *GR–GP*. This document incorporated concepts developed in GR–GP, BUR, CORM, JV 2010, Air Force core values, and Air Force core competencies, into a single publication.

Global Engagement sheds some light on the mystery surrounding core competencies. It states that:

> Within the Air Force, core competencies provide a bridge between doctrine and the acquisition and programming process. In the context of long–range planning, defining future core competencies provides strategic focus for the vision. Each core competency illuminates part of the strategic vision that will guide decisions and set the course toward the Air Force of the 21st Century.[64]

It further states that Air Force core competencies, together with global awareness and command and control, provide air and space power to the Joint Force.[65] It appears that core competencies are being used to communicate to both inside and outside the Air Force, and at the same time, serve as the compass guiding Air Force decisions into the future.

There may be a relationship between the core competencies highlighted in *Global Engagement* and three emerging Air Force concepts: the Air Expeditionary Force (AEF), the planned ability "to find, fix or track, and target anything that moves on the face of the earth,"[66] and to emphasize the Air Force's evolutionary path from an *air and space* force to a *space and air* force.[67] It may be that core competencies are at the foundation of these efforts. On the other hand, core competencies may have been marketed merely to support these planned concepts. In either case, some significant changes will be required to achieve these goals, technological changes to improve detection and political changes to approve militarizing space, both of which core competencies may be attempting to

facilitate. Regardless, core competencies are prominently displayed and showcased within Global Engagement and have appeared more frequently in internal Air Force documentation.

Evolution of Terminology

The terminology and focus of "who we are and what we do" appears to have evolved over the past fifty years. In 1948 the Key West Agreement identified *functions* as the focus of each of the services. In the words of then Secretary of Defense Forrestal, they were to identify "who will do what with what." [68] In 1986 the *Goldwater Nichols Defense Reorganization Act* equated *functions* to *roles and missions*,[69] seemingly turning the focus onto *roles* and *missions*. In 1994 CORM stated that at the time of the Key West Agreement roles, missions and functions meant the same thing and proceeded to define the terms to reflect a distinction between them. Interestingly, they introduced *core competencies*, and simultaneously turned the spotlight away from *roles* and *missions* and focused it on *core competencies*. *Core competencies* are not *roles* and *missions*, in current terminology, but they are the focus of "who we are and what we do" and "who will do what with what" just as *functions* were in 1948.

It appears that the Air Force took core competencies a step further when it developed the list of core competencies incorporated into Global Engagement. The Air Force core competencies not only describe "who we are, what we do" (e.g., Air Superiority, Global Attack, Rapid Global Mobility), they add "*and how we do it*," (e.g., Precision Engagement, Information Superiority).

The next chapter examines the motivation behind the development of these specific core competencies.

Notes

[20] Robert Frank Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force 1907–1960, Volume I* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1989), 198.

[21] Sheila Widnall, Secretary of the Air Force, "Beyond the Drawdown: US Air Force is Prepared To Support the National Military Strategy", *Armed Forces Journal International*, September 1995, 43.

[22] The National Security Act of 1947, Sec, 208 (f).

[23] Executive Order 9877, Functions of the Armed Services (July 26, 1947), Section VI.

[24] Richard I. Wolf, *The United States Air Force: Basic Documents On Roles and Missions* (Washington D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1987), 85.

[25] *Functions of the Armed Forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (21 April 1948), Section VI.

[26] US Department of Defense, *Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces* (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1994),1–3.

[27] *Functions of the Armed Forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (21 April 1948), Section VII

[28] Full Spectrum Air Attack includes both the "effect" and "depth" spectrums. The effect spectrum includes tactical, operational and strategic effects. The depth spectrum includes close, intermediate, deep, and global ranges.

[29] Air Mobility includes inter–theater and intra–theater airlift from the strategic to the tactical level of war.

[30] *Functions of the Armed Forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff* (21 April 1948), Section VI.

[31] *Functions of the Armed Forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff,* Section IV.

[32] US Department of the Air Force, *Global Engagement: A Strategic Vision For the 21st Century Air Force* (Washington D.C., 1996), 12.

[33] Air Force Manual (AFM) 1–1, *Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force*, vol. 2, March 1992, 273.

[34] Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York: Viking press, 1951), in, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force 1907–1960, Volume I* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1989), 199.

[35] US Department of the Air Force, *Global Reach–Global Power: The Evolving Air Force Contribution to National Security*, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, (December 1992), 1.

[36] Ibid., 1.

[37] GR–GP was updated in 1992 following the Gulf War. This particular principle, Ensure Information Dominance, was added in the 1992 update.

[38] Ibid., 3.

[39] Ibid., 2.

Notes

[40] Ibid., 3.

[41] National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994, PL 103, 30 November 1993, in US Department of Defense, *Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces* (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1994), ES–1.

[42] John P. White, Chairman of Commission on Roles and Missions, memorandum for Chairman, Senate Armed Services Committee, Chairman, House National Security Committee, Secretary of Defense, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Subject: Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, 1994.

[43] US Department of Defense, *Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces* (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1994), ES–2.

[44] CORM report, ES–5.

[45] US Department of Defense, *Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces* (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1994) 2–20.

[46] Ibid., 2–20.

[47] CORM report, 1–1.

[48] Lt Col George R. Gagnon, Member of HQ/XOXS Strategy Division under Major General Robert E. Linhard during development of Air Force core competencies, Electronic Mail to author, Subject: Re: SAAS thesis: core Competencies, 4 December 1996.

[49] Sheila Widnall, Secretary of the Air Force, "Beyond the Drawdown: US Air Force is Prepared To Support the National Military Strategy", *Armed Forces Journal International*, September 1995, 43.

[50] Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff, *Air Force Executive Guidance: 1995*, 11 September 1995, 5.

[51] AF/XOXS Strategy Division Core Competencies Working Paper.

[52] Gagnon, Electronic Mail to author, 4 December 1996.

[53] CORM, 2–2.

[54] US Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2010* (Washington D.C., 1995), 1.

[55] Ibid., 1.

[56] Conversation between CSAF, Gen Fogleman, and "Skunk Works" members (members at the time) Chun Chabolla, and Maj Mason P. Carpenter as recalled by Chun in an interview with author, 11 April 1997.

[57] *Joint Vision 2010*, 19–25.

[58] *Joint Vision* 2010, 2.

[59] Chun, interview with author, 7 Feb 1997.

[60] Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff, Message 211206Z OCT 96 from OSAF Washington D.C. to AIG 10119, 12883, 7370, Subject: Strategic Vision and Core Competencies–General Ronald R. Fogleman Chief of Staff, United States Air Force. Speech at Air Force Association Symposium in Los Angeles, California on 18 Oct 96.

[61] Ibid.

[62] John P. Jumper, Lt Gen, Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, interview with author at School of Advanced Airpower Studies, Maxwell AFB, AL, 19 November 1996.

Notes

[63] Inherent advantages of airpower as discussed in AFM 1–1 pages 80–82. These advantages include speed, range, flexibility, maneuverability, and responsiveness.

[64] Global Engagement, 10.

[65] Global Engagement, 9.

[66] US Department of the Air Force, *Global Engagement: A Strategic Vision For the 21st Century Air Force* (Washington D.C., 1996), 1.

[67] Ibid., 7.

[68] Futrell, 198.

[69] Goldwater Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, PL 99–433 section 201.

Chapter 3

Application of Air Force Core Competencies

The traditional approach to roles and missions—attempting to allocate them among the Services in the context of the Key West Agreement of 1948—is no longer appropriate. That approach leads to institutional quarrels (as reported in the press during our deliberations) and unsatisfactory compromises (as discussed in our report). Most importantly, it does not lead to achieving the Department's goals.

John P. White
Chairman
Commission on Roles and Missions

Now that the Air Force has core competencies how does the Air Force plan to use them to their benefit? At the root one finds an evolving process that essentially began with the Air Force Strategic Vision Global Reach Global Power. From GRGP it appears to have progressed to CORM core competencies, to Joint Vision 2010 and most recently to global Engagement. It appears the Air Force has had core competencies under a different label for some time now. The Air Force intends to use these core competencies to influence the development of doctrine, stratigic vision and and the (POM/RAT)

Essentially the Air Force has had core competencies spelled out since Chief of Staff of the Air Force General Merrill McPeak's strategic vision Articulated in _____(date) of Global reach and global Power. Global Reach Global Power identifies (five) specific areas the Air Force provides to commanders in the field. These key areas were areas where the Air Force was to focus its efforts.

Following GR-GP the commission on roles and missions articulated its concept of core capabilities the services are to provide. At Key West in (194X) the services agreed on the specific roles and missions each would provide to the war fighting capability of the nation. This Key West Agreement served its intended purpose very well while the signatories were in positions to ensure compliance on all sides. As these service leaders lost influence, new technologies introduced, and an evolving threat the clearly defined roles of the services began to erode. This trend continued essentially unchecked through the collapse of the USSR. By the early 1990's there were concerns regarding redundancy and mission overlap between the services and CORM stated the Key West Agreement was no longer valid (_____something like that). The CORM investigated issues such as the contention of four air forces (Marine, Naval, Army and Air Force) and _____(other CORM issue). To assist in clarifying service issues the CORM looked to core competencies. Following the CORM the joint community produced a document it called Joint Vision 2010.

Joint Vision 2010 was published in (year) as the strategic vision for joint force employment. The Joint Vision document discusses a concept similar to core competencies but called (operational concepts). These (operational concepts) are what the military forces bring to the battle field. The impression it leaves is that the services should ensure they support these measures in one way or another. The Air Force has responded with its strategic vision Global Engagement.

(Core competencies came out either right before or right after JV2010. It may be nice to say that core competencies appeared to fill an interim gap in AF strategic visions

for a time. Then the proper opportunity [JV 2010 or pressure or what] afforded the air force to produce an updated strategic vision in GE.)

Global Engagement is an updated Air Force strategic vision incorporating the concept of core competencies and the joint (operational concepts Air Forces updated). The previous strategic vision, GRGP articulated areas of emphasis that are now more clearly articulated. In Global Engagement (_____what is in GE). This vision takes the USAF into the 21st century and is build upon core values core competencies etc.

As dicussed earlier, core competencies have already been applied to the Ai4r force (budgeting)process in the (FY 97 Presidential AF budget Highlights). This apears to be the wave of the future in Air force Programming, Planning and Budgeting system. Gen Linhard and his "skunkworks" origanlly

Core competencies have been applied as a building block for the developemnt of the strategic vision of the Air Force. It apears that the original concpet of core competencies envisioned them as influencing the debate on the services doctrie as well.

Chapter 3-1

Analysis of Core Competency Identification
"Why Do We Have Them?"

Core competencies provide a bridge between doctrine and the acquisition and programming process. In the context of long–range planning, defining future core competencies provides strategic focus for the vision. Each core competency illuminates part of the strategic vision that will guide decisions and set the course toward the Air Force for the 21st Century.

Global Engagement: A Vision For The 21st Century Air Force

Many questions surround the identification of Air Force core competencies and critics have taken different sides of the issue. Some argue that core competency identification was purely a rational act by General Robert E. Linhard and his "Skunk Works" team to positively influence Air Force culture and the Planning, Programming, Budgeting System (PPBS) process. Others contend it was primarily an evolutionary outgrowth of the core competencies outlined in the CORM study. Still others contend that core competencies are merely the Air Force's attempt to "turf grab" in the hopes of saving its programs and avoid impending budget cuts. It appears there is merit to each of these, and other arguments regarding the motivation behind the Air Force's core competency identification. This chapter examines the motivation behind developing the list of Air Force core competencies using Graham T. Allison's conceptual framework for decision making as a basis for the analysis. This chapter will first discuss Graham Allison's models of decision making; second, use these models to establish possible

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motivations (answer "why"), and third, determine which most reasonably explains their identification.

Understanding why the Air Force has core competencies is important when viewed with respect to how they are being applied. If the "why we have them" aligns with the "how we are using them," then one can consider this a sound application of a reasonable concept. If, however, the "why" does not align with the "how," we may be using them for purposes which are ill suited for the Air Force—such as using a B–52 as an air superiority fighter. Using Allison's models I hope to identify "why we have core competencies" and their intended significance, if any, to the Air Force. If core competencies were intended to be a "turf grab" they will likely be superficial, have a short life, and be of little significance to the Air Force. However, if core competencies are part of a well organized effort to integrate particular thoughts into the organization, their influence would tend to find its way into many significant Air Force issues. Determining the motivation behind core competency identification will help establish the influence, credibility, and significance of their application to the Air Force in general.

Allison's Three Decision Making Models

In his book, *Essence of Decision,* Allison examines decisions in terms of three models: *Model I* Rational Actor, *Model II* Organizational Process, and *Model III* Governmental Politics. [70] Allison describes the *Model I* rational actor as one who seeks the best alternative from the available options. This model assumes a single decision maker, whether an actor, group, or state, that acts in unison toward a common goal. "*Rational"* can be interpreted to mean using a logical, consistent process for decision

making. Allison states this process includes: first, establishing the objective; second, identifying various courses of action; third, analyzing the possible courses of action and associated consequences; and finally fourth, selecting the course of action with the most favorable outcome.

Allison's next model, *Model II* Organizational Process, views an organization's actions and choices as "outputs of large organizations functioning according to regular patterns of behavior."[71] *Model II* looks at organizations as "a conglomerate of semi–feudal, loosely aligned organizations, each with a substantial life of its own."[72] A large organization is often subdivided to better manage its responsibilities and tasks. Standard operating procedures, or "rules according to which things are done,"[73] are instituted to facilitate coordination between these divisions. Such an organization can be inflexible and may be only capable of providing a preprogrammed response to a given situation. The choices, and actions, of a *Model II* organization are dependent on numerous entities working together to achieve the organization's goal, with each entity imparting its own bias and parochialism into the outcome.

Allison's last model, *Model III* Governmental Politics, views an organization's choices and actions as the "*resultant* of various bargaining games among players . . . ."[74] *Model III* "sees no unitary actor but rather many actors as players. . . . Players who make . . . decisions not by a single, rational choice but by the pulling and hauling that is politics."[75] In this model decision makers support choices and actions that will put them in a stronger position than they would be otherwise. The one exception Allison notes is the case of national defense. He states it would be a most serious charge to be accused of playing politics with national security.[76] Allison doesn't state this kind of decision

making never occurs, he just makes the point that it would be very harmful if it appeared as if it were occurring. *Model III* decisions are based primarily on promoting the interests of the players involved and not necessarily on achieving a larger organizational goal.

Critics of Allison's models tend to point out difficulties in making a distinction between Allison's *Model II* and *Model III* decision making processes. Wagner argues that it is difficult to determine if *Model III* is independent of *Model II* or merely an extension of it. He also states that readers discussing the models tend to "mingle" the two models together.[77] Bender and Hammond illustrate this point by demonstrating that, depending on the variables, the two models can appear to swap places.[78] For the purposes of this paper I will attempt to keep them clearly identifiable.

Applying Allison's Models to Core Competencies

The Linhard Model

The approach by General Linhard and his "Skunk Works" appears to be best described by both *Model I* and *Model III* and will be described as the Linhard Model. *Model I* describes the efforts by General Linhard to have a positive impact on the Air Force and influence Air Force culture inside the "beltway." While *Model III* describes how General Linhard managed to negotiate core competencies through "the system" and to the forefront of Air Force issues. Evidence from correspondence with members of the "Skunk Works" involved with core competencies under General Linhard makes it appear the general was truly an individual reaching for the higher ideals for the Air Force.

As core competencies emerged from CORM the general recognized they could serve as an avenue to facilitate positive change in the Air Force and pursued their further

identification. The fact that he *elected,* and was not directed, to pursue the issue is significant and can be used to argue against a Model II standard operating procedure approach to core competencies. Perhaps his experience with the "big picture" of Air Force long range planning as Director of Air Force Plans provided sufficient insight and incentive to encourage pursuing the issue. He went out of his way to pursue this obscure issue (at the time) that he felt would help improve the Air Force's long range planning, PPBS, comply with CORM, and possibly influence Air Force Doctrine.[79] For example, he saw serious flaws in the Air Staff's planning and budgeting process where the two systems were incompatible. As a result, what was "planned" had to be interpreted by budgeting people and, too often, issues were lost in the translation. These incongruities were not only prevalent in the PPBS, but in the way the way people throughout the Air Force thought of themselves. People fit themselves into so–called "stovepipes" and were not identifying with the larger mission of the service. The general believed a possible spin–off for core competencies was a way for Air Force people to readily identify how they contributed to the Air Force mission. The main emphasis, however, was to influence Air Staff issues.[80] General Linhard had a vision, seized the opportunity, had access to some of the Air Force's finest minds (in the "Skunk Works"), and he put them to the task. From several interviews[81] and correspondence with "Skunk Works" members during core competency identification, it appears General Linhard was truly acting as a *Model I* rational decision maker.

General Linhard appears to have been practical as well as idealistic and realized it took more than a good idea to command attention in Washington D. C., and the Air Staff in particular. The weight and momentum of CORM appears to have given General

Linhard a foundation on which to stand with respect to the issue. CORM made very specific recommendations for the Air Force that received the attention of significant figures such as the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Air Force Chief of Staff, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and many others. General Linhard believed he could meet both the intent of the CORM's recommendations and overcome what he perceived to be their shortfalls by packaging and integrating them into the long range planning process. To gain acceptance of the magnitude of change he envisioned for the Air Force required careful planning and he forced his people to justify every step dealing with core competencies.[82] However, it appears the *Model III* practical side of General Linhard merely supported the larger *Model I* ambitions for a better Air Force.

Due to General Linhard's unfortunate death in August 1996, two months before the announcement of the second edition, we may never know his true intent behind core competencies, but this second edition appears to continue his efforts to improve the Air Staff. It is fair to interpret the addition of Agile Combat Support and Global Attack as a move to ensure these critical mission and support areas received sufficient attention in the planning and budgeting process. As for other changes, combining Air and Space Superiority could be administrative or could be intended to reflect Air Force plans to move operations into that medium. Adding Rapid to Global Mobility and replacing Information Dominance with Information Superiority could be seen as a more precise method to communicate Air Force capabilities.

In summary, the Linhard Model contends core competencies were embraced, staffed, and expanded as an unselfish act by General Linhard to improve the efficiency of the Air

Staff and have an influence on doctrine. He also anticipated there may be some possible spin–offs onto Air Force culture in general. It took a unique individual with the right vision, experience, and position to define them. In addition, it took savvy, imagination, and influence to make them a centerpiece of Air Force vision.

The CORM Model

The CORM Model contends core competencies are a *Model II* organizational output by the Air Force in response to CORM's recommendations. The services were understandably concerned about the impact that pending CORM recommendations would have on their future. As members of a large DOD organization, the Air Force and the other services, first attempted to work within the system to influence CORM's decisions. Each service Chief of Staff made an appearance before the commission supporting their service's interests. For example, the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Merrill McPeak, in his appearance before the CORM, specifically attacked the US Navy carrier aviation and the US Army deep attack mission while advocating superior Air Force capability in related roles and missions. Then, when handed the CORM's report and core competencies, the Air Force worked around the system by developing their own core competencies, reflecting self interests, and ushered them out for public consumption. Specifically, the Air Force received three core competencies from CORM, changed them into the preferred five (and later the six) core competencies, and published them with the endorsement of the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force. This could easily be seen as the organization doing staff work. Maybe even shoddy staff work at that, since they left out one of CORM's core competencies (Deep/Global Attack) in their haste to shuffle to the next project. This does not appear to reflect a rational or politically

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motivated approach as Allison's *Models I* and *III* would expect. Instead, viewing Air Force core competencies in this manner, makes them appear evolutionary in nature and reflect an organizational response to an input as *Model II* would explain.

In summary, the CORM Model contends core competency identification was merely an Air Force organizational response to the CORM's recommendations.

The "Turf Grab" Model

The Turf Grab Model uses *Model III* to contend core competencies are a political move by the Air Force's to "stake out its turf" in the face of near certain budgetary reductions and subsequent force sizing decisions. Tightening budgets could constrain the Air Force by forcing them to work with its sister services as a joint team with complimentary missions or core competencies. Core competencies, then, would be a tool to maneuver itself into a better budgetary position relative to its rivals. Examining pertinent budget issues of the period, such as F–22 acquisition, may help illustrate turf grab motivation behind core competencies.

Some of the major budget issues of the period were: F–22 acquisition, space considerations, B–2 and Global/Deep Attack, and the emerging concept of Information Dominance. In a *Model III* world, core competencies would be used to "fence off" issues by officially claiming Air Force mission ownership as well as the associated funding. In this case, core competencies are a product used to argue for certain Air Force programs and missions, instead of core competencies describing fundamental Air Force capabilities.

It can be argued that the first edition of core competencies, published in 1995, was intended to establish a playing field favorable to the Air Force's position on several

controversial or contested issues of the period. One of the major issues facing the Air Force at the time (and continues today) was the acquisition of the F–22 air superiority fighter. During this post–Cold War period of declining defense budgets, many questioned the need for this expensive but very advanced aircraft. Establishing a core competency of Air Superiority provided the Air Force a platform to rally around and build arguments to support its position on the F–22 acquisition issue to Congress and within DOD (i.e., deflect criticism from Army). I find it interesting to note a prominent Air Force mission in the past, Air Defense, was not listed as a core competency. It may be the "baggage" associated with Air Defense integrated systems, such as the radars, connectivity, and surface–to–air munitions, would have detracted form the single–minded goal of acquiring the F–22.

Likewise, the success of space operations in support of Operation Desert Storm had each of the services looking to increase their space capability, encroaching on the Air Force's turf in that medium. In the post–Desert Storm period, both the Army and Navy significantly expanded their own "Space Commands." The commercial sector, too, realized opportunities offered by space operations and began aggressive develop their own capabilities. Establishing a Space Superiority core competency could strengthen the Air Force's leading role in space and fend off the competition.

It is interesting to note the Air Force left Global Attack/Deep Attack out of its first edition, despite CORM listing it as one of the Air Force's three core competencies. The Air Force could have seen this as an issue directly related to the B–2. It is possible that, having already accepted that more than 20 B–2's was impractical (too expensive for Congress and President Clinton said no more B–2s), the Air Force decided not to waste a

"silver bullet" core competency on what it considered a "done issue." Later, the Air Force may have realized this omission as a big mistake, reflected in Global Attack being added to the second edition.

Another very prominent issue in the aftermath of Desert Storm was Information Warfare, or in terms of core competencies, Information Dominance. This new and emerging concept appears to have unbounded potential, and theoretically, access to similar amounts of funding. The Air Force could have viewed establishing the Information Dominance core competency as the means to staking its claim to this "pot of gold." This look at Air Force core competency identification, in relation to pertinent issues of the time, appears to give credibility to *Model III* politics as a significant source of motivation.

The second edition of Air Force core competencies, published in 1996, can be examined in a similar manner with respect to issues of the period. General Fogleman, the Air Force Chief of Staff, has taken the position that the Air Force is transitioning from primarily an *Air* Force to primarily a *Space* Force[83] in what could be an attempt to thwart Army and Navy claims for space. Linking Air Superiority and Space Superiority together into Air and Space Superiority, the Air Force reaffirmed its position that the two media cannot be separated in an attempt to strengthen its position. The argument follows that since the Air Force has primary responsibility for air superiority, and since there is no distinct point where air ends and space begins, then, logically, the Air Force must have primary ownership of the space superiority mission as well. This may be an attempt to "push" the militarization of space, and, in so doing, positioning itself so that when the time comes, the Air Force is the service of choice.

The second edition of core competencies also brought back Global Attack as a core competency from the original CORM. During the period between the first and second editions of core competencies, the other services immediately attempted to stake their claim to the deep attack mission. The Navy argued for its TLAMs and the Army for its ATACMS and Apache Long Bows as evidence of their ownership of the Deep Attack role and associated funding. As a result of the commotion created by the Army and Navy trying to fill the apparent vacuum left by the Air Force, the Deep Attack Weapons and Missions Study (DAWMS) was commissioned. The Turf Grab Model argues that the Air Force then realized the magnitude of its miscalculation of omitting Global Attack as a core competency and made the correction at the first opportunity.

The newest core competency to emerge from the second edition was Agile Combat Support. This core competency appears to be a "catch all" for functions otherwise not addressed. This core competency could also be a move to advertise the Air Force's latest rapid deployment concept, the Air Expeditionary Force (AEF). The AEF is a small land–based composite air force that is expected to respond to a crisis and be ready to employ force within 72 hours of notification. This is approximately the same time used to estimate a carrier battle group's capability. The AEF concept seems to fulfill dual purposes. First, the AEF meets the Air Force's need to project power with a CONUS based force, and second, to challenge the Navy's argument for more carriers to avoid a "carrier gap." The Air Force contends it can fill, but not replace, gaps in carrier coverage in the world's hot spots, specifically the Middle East, with the Air Expeditionary Force (AEF). In order to meet this claim, however, the Air Force requires Agile Combat Support to rapidly provide a suitable deployed environment for sustained combat

operations. In essence, the Air Force is not arguing against carriers, but that future dollars would be better spent by investing in other, especially Air Force, capabilities. The Turf Grab Model views Agile Combat Support as a way to advocate the Air Expeditionary Force concept.

In summary, the Turf Grab Model contends core competencies are a means to politically outmaneuver service rivals in the face of declining defense budgets. The first edition appears to directly support significant Air Force issues that were vulnerable under the decreasing budget conditions. The second edition of Air Force core competencies appears to reflect an Air Force attempt to better define turf issues vulnerable in the wake of the first edition. From the *Model III* perspective, Air Force core competencies reflect the image of a turf grab.

Most Likely Motivation

We know that Air Force core competencies originated from General Linhard and his "Skunk Works," but the question remains as to why he pursued their identification. It appears the motivation behind the identification of Air Force core competencies could be explained by any one of the Linhard, CORM, or Turf Grab Models. Each model not only contains elements of plausibility already discussed, but each model also appeals to different individual biases and personalities. The Linhard Model appeals to our rational side that believes the Air Force tries to do what is best for the Air Force, its people and the nation as a whole. The CORM model appeals to our practical side that believes core competencies were merely "staffed" as best as time allowed and work load permitted. This model accepts that mistakes are made, and, after sufficient criticism, we correct the

issues that attract the most fire and then get on with the next tasking. The Turf Grab Model appeals to our cynical side that contends everything boils down to funding, and the Air Force is merely trying to maximize its budget. It also gives life to the image of senior service leaders in Washington fighting over issues which company and field grade officers could work through in minutes. Each model has merit and appeal as the motivation behind Air Force core competency identification.

The issue, then, is to determine which model best explains the predominant motivation behind General Linhard pursuing the identification of Air Force core competencies. Using the term "predominant" is intended to be distinct from meaning merely having an influence, since it appears that each model had some influence on them. However, more than likely only one played the primary role in identifying core competencies. In addition, the term *identification* is intended to be distinct from the term *application*. It is possible that once core competencies were established, they could be applied in ways never intended during their identification. This section will look at each of the models and examine which could have been the leading motivation behind the identification of Air Force core competencies.

Criteria

What was General Linhard's role during core competency identification that would motivate him to pursue the task of identifying Air Force core competencies? Put another way, why did he care? To answer this question using the Linhard, CORM and Turf Grab Models requires looking at three questions. Did General Linhard identify core competencies to:

1) To help the Air Staff function better—long range planning, PPBS, doctrine? (Linhard Model)
2) As a standard operating procedure (SOP) to complete the tasking initiated by CORM? (CORM Model)
3) Or to maneuver the Air Force into a better budgetary position relative its rivals? (Turf Grab Model)

These appear to be the fundamental questions that need to be addressed concerning the identification (not application) of core competencies.

Linhard Model Predominant?

Considering General Linhard's role as Director of Air Force Plans (AF/XOX), he appears to have been predominantly motivated to identify core competencies to help the Air Staff function better. His responsibilities as AF/XOX covered quite a lot of territory including arms control, doctrine, and long range planning. In order to manage his responsibilities he developed a staff handbook that explained his vision for the directorate, and the various divisions he commanded. In this handbook he articulated his mission to be the "integrator[s] of the disciplines that embody the USAF's core competencies, and the developer[s] of the roadmap to sustain the next generation Air Force."[84] To do so, there must be a solid foundation of agreed upon capabilities that are the core competencies. They would then serve as the foundation for further program development.

This understanding lends insight into his motivation for identifying core competencies. Because he believed defining these core capabilities to be essential, he sought out the CORM's findings and furthered them for his purposes. This does not seem like SOP development or purely political maneuvering, but an officer actively fulfilling the obligations of his position. As an internal Air Force issue, his vision of core

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competencies needed to define not only what the Air Force did, but also how they were to do it. For example, Air Superiority is a "what" and Precision Engagement is a "how." This is a significant distinction. The Joint community is primarily concerned with the "what" and not necessarily concerned with the "how." The Air Force, on the other hand, is very concerned with the "how."

Of course there are rewards for doing a good job, such as promotion, that may motivate people to excel. There are occasions that the priorities between these two get reversed and promotion becomes the goal ahead of doing a good job. In this case the objective becomes to "appear" to be doing a good job even though that is not necessarily the case. This type of Model III behavior does not seem to be the case. General Linhard had a well conceived plan, clearly articulated and rigorously pursued.

Close examination appears to support the Linhard Model and refute major arguments supporting the CORM and Turf Grab model. Core competencies appear to have been identified for a rational purpose and pushed through the system to ultimately support the greater needs of the Air Force. They do not appear to be an organizational response or an attempt to bankroll the Air Force. However, we will look closely at the remaining two models to see the issue from their perspective.

CORM Model Predominant?

The CORM Model contends that core competencies are the result of SOPs in response to the CORM's tasking. CORM appears responsible for introducing core competencies to the Air Force, but does the CORM Model explain General Linhard pursuing their identification? CORM recommended three core competencies for the Air

Force. However, there was no guidance associated with their recommendation. Did they intend these core competencies to replace roles and missions, be a poster on the wall, or serve as guidance for budget issues? What about the guidance and directives from the cornerstone documents discussed previously, were they to be suspended? Were these CORM core competencies intended to address the Joint community or be directive to processes internal to the service? The CORM Model fails to sufficiently cover these issues that General Linhard apparently had plans to tackle from the start of core competency development.

Standard operating procedures, in the case of staff work, would seem to reflect a model which states the first step is to avoid it, second, to delegate it, and third, to settle for a satisfactory solution versus seeking the an optimal one. Following this model, it seems the least painful organizational approach to core competencies would be to ignore the issue altogether, as the Army, Navy, and Marines have done. This was obviously not acceptable to General Linhard who actively pursued them. Neither was the general interested in delegating the issue. One of the general's "Warrior Rules For Full Contact Staff Work" was "Control the paper and you control the issue."[85] The general wanted to control the core competency issue. Likewise, the amount of time, effort, and attention he devoted to them would refute he was "settling" for core competencies that were "good enough." Not one of the "Skunk Works" members interviewed believed the general could accept that he was seeking merely a "satisfactory" product.

It appears the CORM Model cannot satisfactorily explain SOPs as General Linhard's predominant motivation for identifying core competencies. The issue was staffed, but it

went far beyond SOPs. His personal involvement, vision of their integration, and his constant questioning of their soundness appear to refute such allegations.

Turf Grab Model Predominant?

The Turf Grab Model contends core competencies were an attempt to maneuver the Air Force into a better budgetary position than its service rivals, but fails to succeed as General Linhard's predominant motivation behind their identification. At first glance core competencies appear to be directed squarely at budgetary issues—F–22, B–2, space, and information. Conversely, core competencies could be accused of addressing most any budgetary issue that has confronted the Air Force over the past 50 years, such as the B–36, ICBMs, F–4, C–17, B–1, and F–117 (prior to the Gulf War). Is it possible core competencies, instead of addressing issues on the table, were truly attempting to articulate the Air Force's fundamental capabilities? At the same time, is it possible that the budget issues on the table were systems that reflected what the Air Force had always believed to be its fundamental responsibilities? If this is the case, then no matter when the Air Force articulated its core competencies it could be accused of attempting to influence the budget. That is, only if the Air Force were pursuing systems that directly helped it accomplish its tasks.

Why did the Air Force repackage and publish core competencies instead of maintaining the status quo that had evolved from the Key West Agreement through CORM . . . was it because of the budget? The first answer is that the status quo did not address technologies that evolved over the past 50 years, such as space, surveillance, and

surface to air munitions. The second answer is that the status quo was packaged to provide guidance to the Air Force, in terms of the National Security Act and Key West Agreement, but was never packaged to provide guidance to the Air Force process or its people. Core competencies appear to do both. In this period of declining budgets, it is even more imperative that an organization know its responsibilities. The answer to this "why" question does not appear to reflect budget politics as much as it reflects rational internal organization.

Summary

It appears that General Linhard's predominant motivation for identifying core competencies is explained by the Linhard Model, to help the Air Staff function better, and not as an SOP or to maneuver the Air Force into a better budgetary position as the CORM and Turf Grab Models contend. The most significant issue appears to be his position as AF/XOX. He viewed his position to be the integrator of core competencies, and to build a roadmap for the next generation.[86] He sought to use these core competencies as a common foundation and common language between each staff area within his Directorate as well as across its boundaries to other directorates. He felt this concept could have implications for doctrine and may communicate beyond the Air Staff, but it appears the staff was his intended target.

Core competencies viewed as an SOP or budget issue fails to be convincing as the predominant motivation behind General Linhard pursuing their identification. There appears to be little that could be considered standard about the way core competencies were treated or identified. There seems too much time was invested and senior officer

involvement was too great to consider them as merely having been "staffed." As a budget issue it appears to go well beyond the immediate concern of the Directorate of Air Force Plans—that was not his fight. His responsibilities primarily centered around laying the ground work for the Air Staff to function as efficiently as possible, not how others may use this concept as leverage over the sister services.

The next chapter examines the application of core competencies and where they may take us in the future.

Notes

[70] Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Harper Collins Publishers, 1971).

[71] Ibid., 6.

[72] Ibid., 67.

[73] Ibid., 68.

[74] Ibid., 6.

[75] Ibid., 144.

[76] Ibid., 146.

[77] Harrison R. Wagner, "Dissolving The State: Three Recent Perspectives on International Business Relations", *International Organization* vol. 28 (1974), 488, in "Rethinking Allison's Models", *American Political Science Review* vol. 86, no. 2, Jonathan Bender and Thomas H. Hammond, June 1992, 302.

[78] Jonathan Bender and Thomas H. Hammond, "Rethinking Allison's Models", *American Political Science Review* vol. 86, no. 2, June 1992, 303–4.

[79] Gagnon, interview with author, 15 April 1997.

[80] Gagnon, interview with author, 15 April 1997.

[81] See bibliography for list of interviews and electronic–mail.

[82] Chun, interview with author, 7 February 1997.

[83] Global Engagement, 7.

[84] *Directorate of Plans: The AF/XOX Staff Handbook*, 2–5.

[85] Staff Handbook, 4–3.

[86] Staff Handbook, 2–5

Chapter 4

Analysis of Core Competency Development

A particular core competency may, or may not, be unique to a Service. What distinguishes the Air Force's core competencies is the speed, flexibility, and global range of our forces along with the strategic perspective of airmen.

General Ronald R. Folgleman
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

This chapter will attempt to analyze the motivation for Air force core competencies through the framework of Graham TO. Allison's three conceptual models of organizational behavior.[87] Evidence appears to support the notion that any one of the three models explain the rationale behind their devlopment, marketing and application. dicussing the motivation for their develoment assists in having a clearer understatning of what is truley menat by core competency and explain where they are to take the USAF I the future.

Allison's three conceptual models of organizational behavior consist of Model I, the rational actor, Model II, the oranizational process, and Model III, governmental politics. Allison categorizes Model I behavior, or rational acotr, as looking for the best of all possible alternatives. A Model II, or organizational process actor, behaviour can be explained as outputs of large organizations functioing according to a standard patternof behaviour—hence getting an organizational answer. The Model III, or governmental

politics model, looks at leaders not as monolithic rational actors, but as individuals subject to the pulling and hauling of politics.[88]

Viewing core competencies for a Model I perspective it appears General Linhard was looking at eth best alternatives at solving an external probkem and posittively impact the culture within the Air Force. General linhard saw where the Air Force needed to improve, and not just within the beltway, and set about pursuing his vision for a better service.

Looking at core competencies from a Model II perspective, it appears the CORM produced organizationsl pieces of the pie andthe individual services took their share and proceeded to due pusiness as usual. Airforce coer competenciesa are an attempt to better claify the piece of the ;;ie the Air Force owns., the Army and the marines ahve relied on Doctrine to maintien thier mission and force capability whilethe air Force overlaps all the othe rservices and needs to defin itslef. The navy, for the most part, has a very distince line of distinction betweent itself anthe other services. Recently, however, it too has places greater emphasis on it s service doctrine to clarigy its piece of the pie

From the model three perspective, core competencies appear to be organizational tur grabs designed to articulate what had been lost by the obsolescence to the Key West Agreement of 1948

Notes

[87] Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Harper Collins Publishers, 1971)
[88] ibid

Chapter 4

Implications For The Future

The Air Force considers a core competency to be the combination of professional knowledge, specific airpower expertise, and technological capabilities that produce superior military outcomes.

General Ronald R. Fogleman
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

Chapter 3 concluded that core competencies were most likely developed according to the Linhard Model to help the Air Staff function better and with an eye to some possible future effects. This chapter examines the actual application of Air Force core competencies and questions whether they serve their intended purpose and possible implications. First, I examine where core competencies are being applied and discuss if they are taking the Air Force on an unintended path. Second, I offer an alternative to the current set of core competencies and their application.

Something New? A Comparison of Air Force Core Competencies to the Foundations of Air Force Roles and Missions

The set of terms defining Air Force roles, missions and similar categorizations does not appear to be new. Whether called functions, principles, or core competencies, the Air Force has essentially had a set of definitions that accomplish the same purpose since it was established in 1947. Remarkably, it appears that the initial functions (roles and

missions) established in 1948 at Key West have endured for the past fifty years, and the 1996 core competencies continue that trend. The 1996 core competencies, however the term is defined, closely resemble the original functions as illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Comparison: 1996 Air Force Core Competencies and Fundamental Functions From Cornerstone Documents

1996 Core Competencies	1948 Fundamental Functions (roles and missions)
Air and Space Superiority *	Air Superiority
	Air Defense
Global Attack	Full Spectrum Air Attack[89]
Rapid Global Mobility	Air Mobility[90]
Information Superiority	Information
Agile Combat Support	Air Force Logistics
	Joint Operations
Precision Engagement	
	Air Force Readiness
	Air Force Expansion

* term includes freedom to attack and freedom from attack

This table shows each 1996 core competency, except Space Superiority and Precision Engagement, has a 1948 counterpart (taken from my fundamental functions discussed in Chapter 2). These two exceptions are relatively recent advances driven by technology. In 1948 space was not a major military or civilian consideration. Also, Precision Engagement could be argued both ways, that the Air Force has always desired "pinpoint" and "pickle barrel" bombing, or that with nuclear weapons, accuracy was not considered significant except for Close Air Support. This relationship illustrates that core competencies are not a new concept, but a repackaging of a fifty year old precedent.

The table also shows that *information* is not a new concept to the Air Force. Information was recognized as essential to effective military operations in 1947 (and previous militaries), and was assigned as a function not just the to Air Force, but to each of the services.[91]

Application and Implications: Where Might Core Competencies Take The Air Force

As explained by the Linhard Model, core competencies are being applied within the Air Staff. Core competencies currently serve as the basis for planning, programming and budgeting within the Air Staff. For example, published in March 1996, the *Air Force FY 97 President's Budget Highlights* covers procurement and budget allocations by core competency. It matches the systems being acquired to the core competency it exploits, as well as the dollar value budgeted against each capability.   This ties planning and programming directly to budgeting and clearly demonstrates how the Air Force is spending its money to support its mission. Core competencies are also being applied to Air Force doctrine in *Global Engagement: Doctrine for the 21st Century Air Force*, which will replace AFM 1–1. This process is being repeated throughout the Air Staff reflecting the vision of the Linhard Model.

While serving their intended purpose within the Air Staff, core competencies are being applied in ways not envisioned by General Linhard and differently than any of their predecessors. Unlike the Key West Agreement functions, Air Force core competencies are becoming institutionalized within the Air Force through officer and enlisted education. They are prominent in *Global Engagement*, taught in the Intermediate and Senior Officer Schools[92] down to the most junior of PME courses in the new Air and

Space Basic Course.[93]   The entire officer corps is being indoctrinated with "core competencies" at every step of their professional military education.   No similar application of the "assigned functions" from the cornerstone documents was found in the Air War College or Air Command and Staff School curriculums from 1946 through 1954.[94] The implication of this widespread education is an error, or misrepresentation, in core competencies would be magnified tremendously throughout the entire Air Force. For example, some may believe (inside and outside the Air Force) the Air Force possesses the capability "to attack" and "defeat attack" in space (Space Superiority), despite international agreements and national policy stating otherwise. It was only during a "lapse between one Congressional testing ban and the passage of another" that the first (and only) actual interception of a satellite occurred in 1984 (by an ASAT launched from an F–15), and the last ASAT test occurred in 1986.[95]   The ramifications of this misunderstanding, or similar inaccuracies, could be enormous.

Also, unlike any time in the past, the 1996 core competencies are being applied as the measure of the Air Force's contribution to the Joint community.   This is an opportunity unlike any time in the past because the Joint community, for the first time, has articulated *its* vision and doctrine. The Air Force now has the unique opportunity to demonstrate how its capabilities contribute to the overall effort. In the past, the other services were skeptical of Air Force claims finding them self–serving and unrealistic. The Air Force's unique strategic, operational and tactical perspective as well as its speed, range and flexibility, made it difficult for the Air Force to communicate its capabilities to the Joint community. These unique characteristics also made it difficult for non–Air Force people to comprehend these capabilities. Unfortunately, Air Force people have

made this situation more difficult by making promises the Air Force could not fulfill, such as Colonel John Warden claiming airpower could win Desert Storm in six days[96] and the WWII strategic bombing advocates claiming strategic air attack alone would win the war for the allies. However, the development of core competencies coupled with Joint doctrine and the *operational concepts* of *Joint Vision 2010* provided the Air Force with the opportunity to clearly communicate its contributions to the joint arena. One possible explanation of Air Force contributions to the Joint arena is demonstrated in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Air Force Contributions to Joint Operational Concepts

Joint Vision 2010 Operational Concept	Corresponding Air Force Core Competencies
Dominant Maneuver	
Precision Engagement	
Full–Dimensional Protection	
Focused Logistics	
	Air and Space Superiority
	Rapid Global Mobility
	Information Superiority
	Precision Engagement
	Global Attack
	Information Superiority
	Air and Space Superiority
	Air and Space Superiority
	Global Attack
	Information Superiority
	Agile Combat Support
	Rapid Global Mobility
	Information Superiority

This does not appear to be the intended application of core competencies, but is the path the Air Force has chosen. For this particular application the list may be too large, inadequate, or just not accurate. In any case, this application of core competencies contrasts with the application of previous functions, and was not intended during their identification by General Linhard.

The application of core competencies to the Joint community also goes beyond vision and doctrine and directly to the heart of the budget, where the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) and the Joint Warfighting Capabilities Assessment (JWCA) teams approve service requirements. The Goldwater–Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 established the requirement that the JWCA and the JROC assist the CJCS to identify joint warfighting capability deficiencies, make recommendations[97] and "assign *joint* priority among major programs meeting valid requirements identified by the CINCs, Services and others."[98] Looking at it another way, the JWCA and JROC control access to funding, thereby, forcing the services to convince them their requirements are significant enough to the Joint community to warrant approval. This tie between core competencies, operational concepts and the JWCA/JROC process has major implications for all the services, and clearly not an application anticipated during their identification.

Considering their applicability to the Joint community, it is relevant to point out that the list of 1996 core competencies was developed without consulting the other services, and in doing so they may be vulnerable to attack. While core competencies closely mirror the agreed upon functions of the Key West Agreement, technology has confused distinctions that were once clear—such as surface–to–air missiles, armed helicopter aviation, and cruise missiles. Though the Air Force contends its core competencies are

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not intended to be unique to the Air Force or to be attempts to "turf grab," we may see interservice conflict over issues such as Space, Deep Attack, or Information that advances in technology has "grayed" the previously clear distinctions. The other services appear to have conceded the leading role in space to the Air Force, however, they have not abandoned the issue altogether as evidenced by the existence of Army and Navy Space Commands. The Deep Attack issue, already a contentious issue, has been addressed by the DAWMS and even carried over to the Quadrennial Defense Review. Likewise, the new frontier of Information Warfare is a potential source of interservice conflict as it moves to the forefront of capability and funding discussions. The Air Force unilaterally claiming predominance over specific capabilities may fly in the face of the Joint community and again injure its credibility in their eyes.

To an outside observer, the list of core competencies indicates the Air Force is moving away from an emphasis on flying and fighting to a less combat oriented mission. On the list of core competencies there is no distinction between "what we do" and "how we do it." As it stands, the list of core competencies makes them all appear equal. This appears to be a valid approach within the Air Staff that enables them to plan, program and budget for both "what" and "how" the Air Force operates. By applying them beyond their intended audience (such as to the Joint community), core competencies may be sending an unintended message. Are logistics equal to combat power? Is construction of air bases equal to the destruction of the enemy and forcing them to yield to your will? Instead of applying force could the Air Force achieve its objective by demonstrating Agile Combat Support? This appears to be the message the Air Force is sending. Right or wrong, this is a rather significant change in the focus of the Air Force. It is difficult to

determine whether this is an intentional move by the Air Force or merely an unintended consequence of applying core competencies in a manner not intended during their identification.

An example of the Air Force trying to "sell" the JROC/JWCA using both the "what" and the "how" of core competencies could be the Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) concept. In an October 1996 address, General Fogleman stated that the capability provided by the AEF is the key to providing air and space power to theater CINCs.[99] This tailored and rapidly deployable force could be CONUS based and forward deployed only when there was an immediate threat. Conceptually, this could obviate the presence we currently maintain in Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Core competencies help explain the AEF in terms of both "what" and "how" the Air Force could operate this way. They appear to explain the AEF's combat power, how they get there, and how they would be sustained as illustrated in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Relationship Between AEF Capability and Core Competencies

AEF Capability	Descriptive Core Competencies
Air and Space Combat Power	
Mobility	
Sustainment	
Air and Space Superiority	
Global Attack	
Information Superiority	
Precision Attack	
Rapid Global Mobility	
Agile Combat Support	

This may be an example of core competencies building a path for the future of airpower.

Air Force core competencies are being applied in ways never intended during their development. This has caused confusion over their intended audience, purpose and accuracy. In the end, the misapplication of core competencies could impact Air Force capability, credibility, and status. In addition, Air Force people may push core competencies aside as just another passing Air Force fad. The Air Force does not appear to be on the right path with respect to the application of Air Force core competencies.

To assist in applying core competencies as intended by CORM and General Linhard, I offer an alternative framework. This framework presents a clear representation of Air Force capabilities, as well as how to exploit them. It will also offer a means to connect them to external and internal structures. In the next section I offer my alternative approach to core competencies.

An Alternative Approach to Core Competencies

What is considered to be a core competency may depend if one is looking inside the organization (at the internal *process*) or at the output (the end *product*) of the organization. There are essentially two ways to view a system, as a *process* or as a *product*. If core competencies were viewed as an Air Force *process* then core competencies would be expected to express capabilities fundamental within, or internal to, the Air Force in order to meet its objectives. For example, core competencies that address internal issues would describe not only "what" the Air Force does, but also "how" it makes it happen. In this case it may be difficult to prioritize the core competencies because each may take on a greater significance depending on the phase of the operation (e.g. combat support and mobility are likely the most important capabilities during the

initial deployment). A positive spin–off of internal core competencies is that they would help a vast majority of Air Force people identify with their part of the Air Force mission.

However, if core competencies are viewed as an Air Force *product*, then they would express fundamental Air Force capabilities, such as the capabilities it provides theater CINC's. Core competencies that address external issues would describe the Air Force's "what," or its end product, and not the "how" it makes it happen. In looking at core competencies as a product, it appears what matters most is the combat power it provides to the CINCs, and not how the Air Force actually brings that combat power to bear. External core competencies would predominantly help those outside the Air Force to identify the product the service provides. If core competencies try to address both the process and the product, they may end up pleasing no one—the Air Force least of all.

There appears to be a consensus among CORM, SECAF, and the CSAF that core competencies should "conceptually" address the *product* provided to the Joint community (even though Air Force core competencies such as Agile Combat Support do not reflect this understanding). In its definition of *core competencies* CORM speaks directly of the intended audience. "[Core competencies] define the Service's or agency's essential contributions to the overall effectiveness of DOD and its unified commands."[100] Both the SECAF and the CSAF support this approach. Secretary Widnall states core competencies are what the Air Force "can bring to the joint table"[101] and the CSAF states that core competencies are what "air and space power must provide the nation."[102] Ideally these core competencies would be developed in a joint forum to solidify ownership and foster agreement of complementary capabilities. In the absence of a joint agreement, however, precedents such as the Key West Agreement or CORM could serve as the justification.

There appears to be agreement that core competencies should reflect the product an organization provides, therefore, it follows that Air Force core competencies should address an external audience.

Once core competencies are established, the Air Force should consider a set of "operational concepts," or internal capabilities required to exploit it core competencies. Borrowing the "operational concept" idea from JV 2010 (where four operational concepts together explained "how" to achieve Full Spectrum Dominance (the equivalent of a Joint core competency)), the Air Force could define "how" it intended to achieve its core competencies. These "operational concepts" would not replace doctrine, but would provide guidance to the Air Staff, essentially achieving what General Linhard set out to do. Establishing internal guidance ensures the Air Force will maintain the capability to exploit its core competencies.

Under this framework, doctrine maintains its essential role in military operations. Doctrine stands as the foundation for the above concepts (core competencies and operational concepts) and serves as guidance for the application of the service's capabilities.

Of course, Air Force core competencies should reflect any capability the Air Force has been directed to maintain. This guidance would primarily come in the form of existing laws, statutes, or joint doctrine. As in many military situations where guidance is absent or unclear, the service may be forced to develop its own vision of its role in Joint operations. These relationships are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                 Law                 │
│    i.e., National Security Act of 1947 │
│        Title 10 of the US Code      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                   │
        ┌────────────────────┐
        │   Joint Guidance    │
        └────────────────────┘
                   │
    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
    │           Service Vision            │
    │·····································│
    │      Service Core Competencies      │
    │               "What"                │
    │·····································│
    │     Service Operational Concepts    │
    │          "Big Picture How"          │
    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                   │
    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
    │          Service Doctrine           │
    │            "Detailed How"           │
    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
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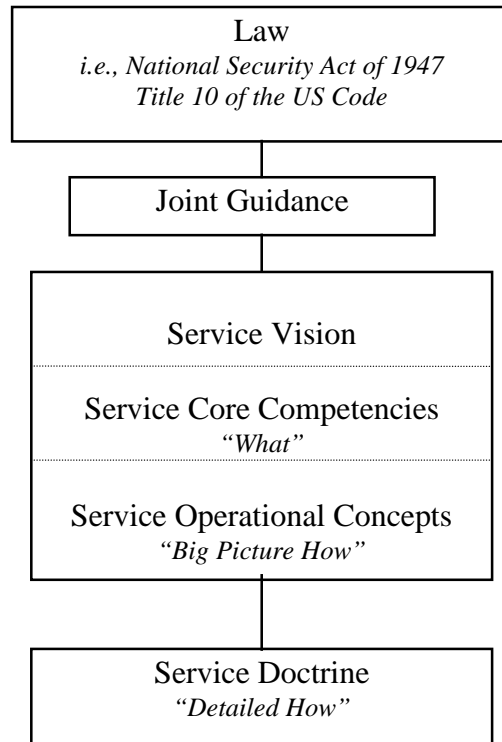
Figure 1. Proposed Intra–Service Relationship

While Figure 1 above illustrates the relationships within a service, the Figure that follows shows the relationships between the services and the Joint community. *Joint core competencies* are "what" the Joint community provides to the nation for its defense and *Joint operational concepts* are "how" the Joint community plans to achieve its core competencies. *Service core competencies* (products) are "connected" to Joint operational concepts as the product ("what") the services contribute to achieve the Joint operational concepts (such a relationship has already been established between Air Force core competencies and Joint Vision 2010's operational concepts, and was addressed earlier in this chapter). Likewise, service doctrine, while the foundation for service operational concepts and core competencies, should reflect the authoritative guidance of Joint doctrine. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│              Law                │
│  i.e., National Security Act of 1947 │
│     Title 10 of the US Code     │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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┌──────────────────────────────┐
│ National Security Strategy │
└──────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────────────┐
│ National Military Strategy │
└──────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│   Joint Vision   │   │   │
│   │   │   Service Vision   │
│ Joint Core Competencies   │   │   │
│   *"What"*   │   │ Service Core Competencies   │
│   │   │   *"What"*   │
│ Joint Operational Concepts │◄────────►│   │
│   *"Big Picture How"*   │   │ Service Operational Concepts │
│   │   │   *"Big Picture How"*   │
└──────────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│   Joint Doctrine   │ ········► │   Service Doctrine   │
│   *"Detailed How"*   │   │   *"Detailed How"*   │
└──────────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────────┘
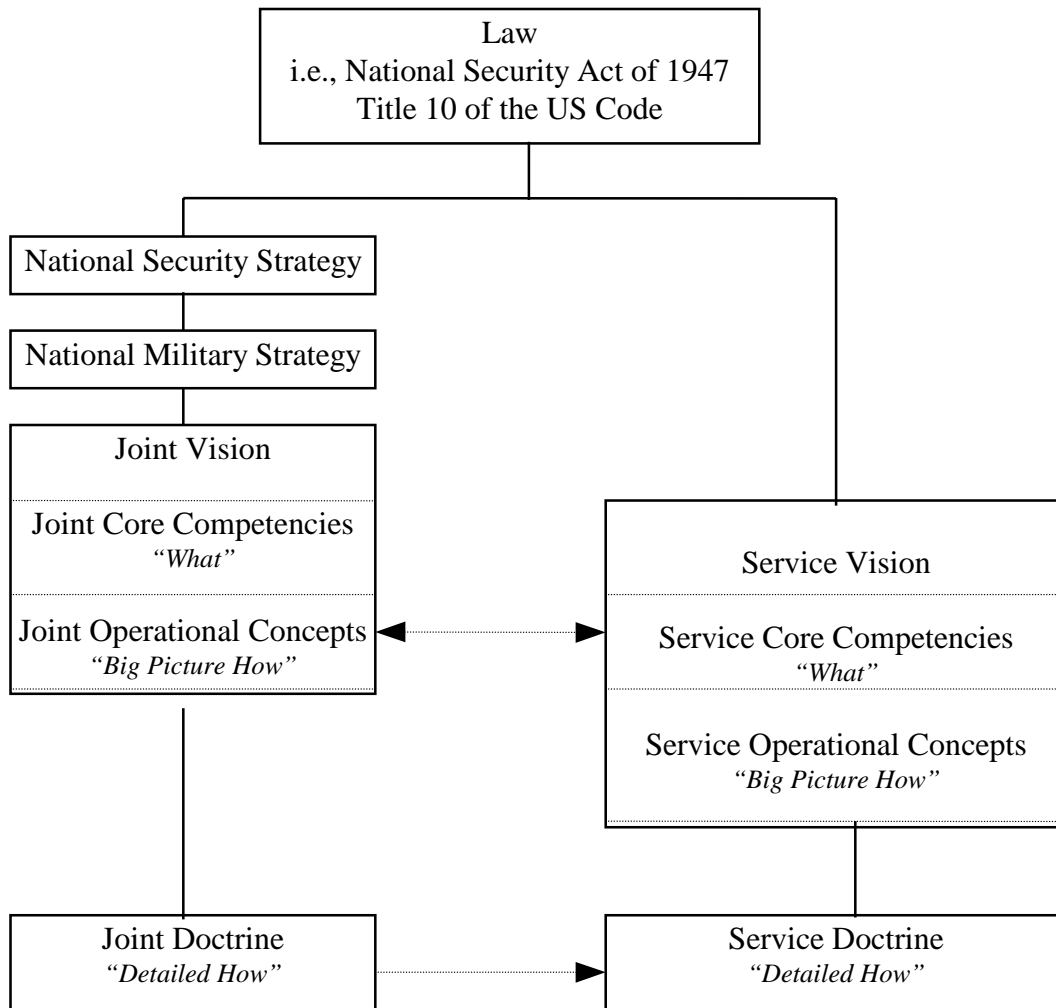
Figure 2. Proposed Inter-service and Joint Relationship

In summary, Air Force core competencies should have certain characteristics. First, they should address the external audience with the product the Air Force will provide to the joint conduct of warfare. Second they should be developed by joint agreement. Third, core competencies should reflect any capabilities directed by law the services bring to the "joint table."

Though not the focus of this paper, it is important to at least introduce the role of operational concepts and doctrine within the framework established above. These ideas are briefly discussed below.

Air Force operational concepts, not core competencies, and address "how" the service *plans* to exploit each core competency at the Air Staff level. These describe the big picture of how the core competencies will be achieved. This provides general guidance to the Air Staff as to how to organize, train and equip.

Air Force doctrine "is the guide for the exercise of professional judgment rather than a set of rules to be followed blindly."[103] Doctrine details what experience has shown to be the best means to *apply* air and space power to achieve the objectives. This detailed guidance (not directive) is for the *application* of air and space power. It serves as the *foundation* upon which the other concepts (including operational concepts and core competencies) are built.

Alternative Air Force Core Competencies:

The first edition of core competencies provoked many questions. What are core competencies—roles and missions? Who are they addressing? Are they supposed to be unique Air Force capabilities? What does Precision Engagement mean? I thought we always tried to hit what we were aiming for, so is this something new? Likewise, what is Information Dominance? Information has been, and will always be, an important element underscoring all military operations, so is this something unique to the Air Force or current military operations? The definition of Space Superiority does not fit the current US policy regarding the militarization of space, so what does Space Superiority mean? Should we say Space Power instead of Space Superiority? Where is Air Defense? General Fogleman's definition of Air Superiority does not even come close to describing Air Defense of the United States or theater air defense networks. Where is Global/Deep

attack from CORM's list of core competencies? Does the Air Force want the other services to undertake the mission? Some of these questions were clarified in the second edition, however, many of these, and others, continue to provide a mystique around the Air Force's list of core competencies.

When introducing the second edition of core competencies, General Fogleman answered some of the questions surrounding core competencies, but provoked some new questions. He clarified that Air Superiority is considered both freedom to attack (offense) and freedom from air attack (defense). He addressed the question of Deep Attack by introducing the Global Attack core competency. General Fogleman attempted to answer if core competencies were supposed to be unique to the Air Force, but his inconsistent definitions left the question unanswered. He did provoke some new questions such as, Rapid Global Mobility relative to what–the Navy or Army (rail transport, ship, or truck)? What about space travel and hypersonic space vehicles? What exactly is Agile Combat Support? It sounds like a term to include all the loose ends excluded from the first edition. Isn't Information Superiority merely one of many subcategories of Agile Combat Support?   Maybe we should eliminate Information Superiority and just have Agile Combat Support. Now the audience is really confused as to who is being addressed by Air Force core competencies, the Air Force itself or the Joint community. It appears the Air Force is trying to do both. The audience is also really confused over whether core competencies are supposed to unique to the Air Force or not. The Secretary of the Air Force says they are capabilities only the Air Force can provide.[104] The CSAF says they aren't unique to any particular service and then in the same breath says they are "one

means of expressing our unique form of military power . . ..”[105]   It is now time to clarify these questions.

Core competencies should not be considered capabilities unique to a service, but rather the capability that a particular service plays a predominant role in both its execution and development. For example, three services have air superiority assets, the Marines (F–18), Navy (F–14 and F–18) and the Air Force (F–15C), but only the Air Force should be defined as having the air superiority core competency. Each of the mentioned services has the skill and equipment, but the Air Force has the predominant capability and responsibility for its execution. Likewise each of the services has some airlift capability, but the Air Force has the predominant and global resources with the associated responsibility to the Joint community. It should also be clear that core competencies are expected to evolve over time to meet changing national interests and advances in technology to ensure our armed forces remain relevant in the future.

Considering the previous discussion regarding an alternative approach to core competencies, it appears the Air Force has three core competencies that are listed below in Figure 3.

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│          Alternative            │
│          Air Force              │
│       Core Competencies         │
│  ─────────────────────────────  │
│        Air Superiority*         │
│   Full Spectrum Air Attack**    │
│        Air Mobility***          │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 3. Proposed Core Competencies

*Air Superiority includes the freedom to attack and freedom from attack through the air.
** Full Spectrum Air Attack includes both the "effect" and "depth" spectrums. The effect spectrum includes tactical, operational and strategic effects. The depth spectrum includes close, intermediate, deep, and global ranges.
***Air Mobility includes inter–threater and intra–theater airlift from the strategic to tactical levels of war.

Simply stated these three items address "what" the Air Force Air Force provides to Joint community, reflect the law, and are clearly Air Force predominant responsibilities. What they do not describe is how to achieve them, that is not the concern of the Joint community.

This alternative list of core competencies is nearly identical to the Air Force core competencies identified by CORM. The only difference is the term Full Spectrum Air Attack versus Global/Deep Attack as identified by CORM. The term Global/Deep Attack gives the impression of only long range, intercontinental style attack, and does not describe that the attack is coming from the air. Full Spectrum Air Attack not only describes where the attack is coming from, but also appropriately describes the attack at any distance and at any level of war.

The differences between the alternative list of core competencies and the 1996 core competencies are much more dramatic and illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6. Comparison: 1996 Core Competencies and Proposed Core Competencies

1996 Core Competencies	Alternative Air Force Core Competencies
Air and Space Superiority	Air Superiority
Global Attack	Full Spectrum Air Attack
Rapid Global Mobility	Air Mobility
Precision Engagement	
Information Superiority	
Agile Combat Support	

The alternative list does not include Precision Engagement, Information Superiority, nor Agile Combat Support as core competencies because they describe ""how the Air Force exploits its core competencies and not "what" they are.[106]   At best, Information Superiority could be considered "Information From the Air and Space Perspective." These three capabilities would be more appropriately called operational concepts.

Space Superiority was not included in the alternative list of core competencies because it does not yet exist—the Air Force does not have it. The Air Force has the capability to use space, via satellites etc., but does not have the capability to attack or negate an attack in or through space. This capability should not be expected to change until there is a change in both US policy and capability. Perhaps it could be said the Air Force has a core competency of Space Power. That would describe the Air Force's ability to use space to support operations, but not necessarily operations in or through space. To say we have space superiority is misleading. Figure 4 below reflects evolving core competencies if there was to be a change in both policy and Air Force capability regarding space.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Possible Future            │
│            Air Force                │
│         Core Competencies           │
├─────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                     │
│        Air and Space Superiority    │
│    Full Spectrum Air and Space Attack│
│         Air and Space Mobility      │
│                                     │
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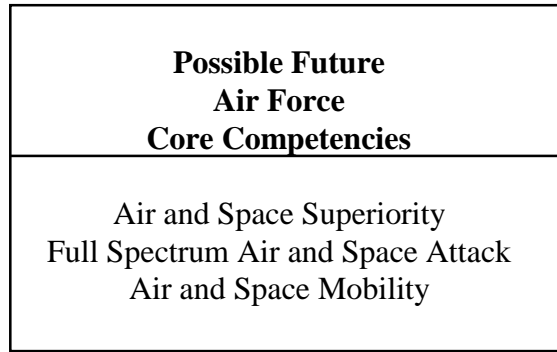
Figure 4. Core Competencies Reflecting a Change in US Policy Toward Weapons In Space

The term Air Mobility appears to more accurately describe the Air Force's capability than does Rapid Global Mobility. First, Air Mobility does not beg a comparison to another medium, leaving the assessment of speed to the judgment of the audience. Admittedly, the Army and Navy have some "airlift" capability, but they have neither the preponderance of the platforms nor the responsibility for development of the capability. This is important because "rapid" is a relative term, and depending on the destination and circumstances, it is sometimes more rapid to go by jeep than to wait for airlift. In addition, the capability the Air Force is directed to provide the Joint community is Air Mobility, and nothing more.

Applying the framework of the alternative approach to core competencies, the Air Force would then create operational concepts for internal use. Examples of these operational concepts could be offensive counter air (OCA), defensive counter air (DCA), suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD), agile combat support, precision munitions, information/intelligence, readiness, logistics, leadership development and training exercises to improve Air Force operations. Figure 5 below lists example Air Force operational concepts.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Air Force "Operational Concepts"│
│                "How?"                │
│·····································│
│             Air Superiority          │
│        OCA, DCA, SEAD                │
│        Full Spectrum Air Attack      │
│   CAS, Interdiction, Global/Deep     │
│                Strike                │
│        Precision Munitions           │
│              Air Mobility            │
│   Inter and Intra–Theater Airlift    │
│     Combat Search and Rescue         │
│          Aerial Refueling            │
│                Support               │
│   Intelligence/Information/Space     │
│          Combat Support              │
│       Enhancement/Preparation        │
│       Leadership Development         │
│          Training Exercises          │
│        Guard/Reserve Forces          │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 5. Proposed Air Force Operational Concepts

Of course the service concepts must fit together with the joint concepts and that relationship is illustrated in Figure 6 below.

85

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Joint "Core Competency" │
│         "What"           │
├─────────────────────────┤
│                          │
│ Full Spectrum Dominance  │
│                          │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
┌─────────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Joint Operational Concepts│       │ Air Force "Core Competencies"│
│          "How"           │◄┄┄┄┄►  │         "What"           │
├─────────────────────────┤        ├─────────────────────────┤
│   Dominant Maneuver      │        │    Air Superiority       │
│  Precision Engagement    │        │  Full Spectrum Air Attack│
│   Full–Dimensional       │        │      Air Mobility        │
│      Protection          │        │                          │
│   Focused Logistics      │        └─────────────────────────┘
└─────────────────────────┘                    │
                                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                                    │ Air Force "Operational Concepts"│
                                    │         "How?"           │
                                    ├─────────────────────────┤
                                    │     Air Superiority      │
                                    │    OCA, DCA, SEAD        │
                                    │  Full Spectrum Air Attack│
                                    │ CAS, Interdiction, Deep Strike│
                                    │   Precision Munitions    │
                                    │      Air Mobility        │
                                    │ Inter and Intra–Theater Airlift│
                                    │ Combat Search and Rescue │
                                    │    Aerial Refueling      │
                                    │        Support           │
                                    │Intelligence/Information/Space│
                                    │    Combat Support        │
                                    │ Enhancement/Preparation  │
                                    │  Leadership Development  │
                                    │    Training Exercises    │
                                    │   Guard/Reserve Forces   │
                                    └─────────────────────────┘
             │                                 │
┌─────────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────────┐
│     Joint Doctrine       │        │    Air Force Doctrine    │
│ Foundation of all Joint Concepts│  │ Foundation of all Service Concepts│
├─────────────────────────┤        ├─────────────────────────┤
│   Air Superiority First  │        │   Air Superiority First  │
│  Attack Vital Centers    │┄┄┄┄┄►  │ Attack Vital Centers (COGs)│
│        (COGs)            │        │ Interdict Massed Formations│
│    Occupy Territory      │        │         etc.             │
│        etc.              │        │                          │
└─────────────────────────┘        └─────────────────────────┘
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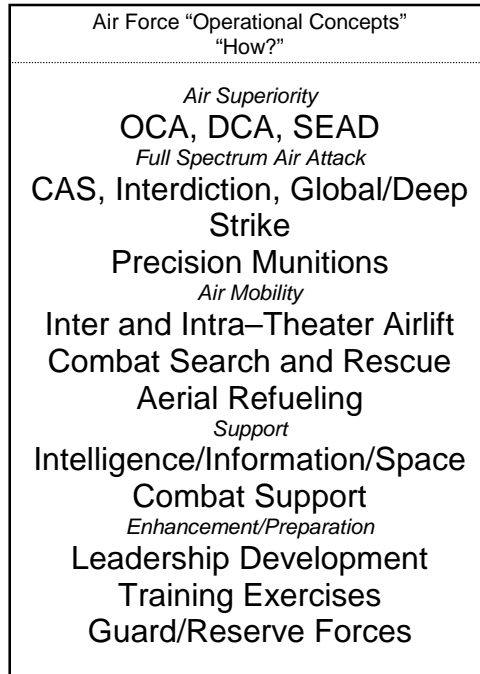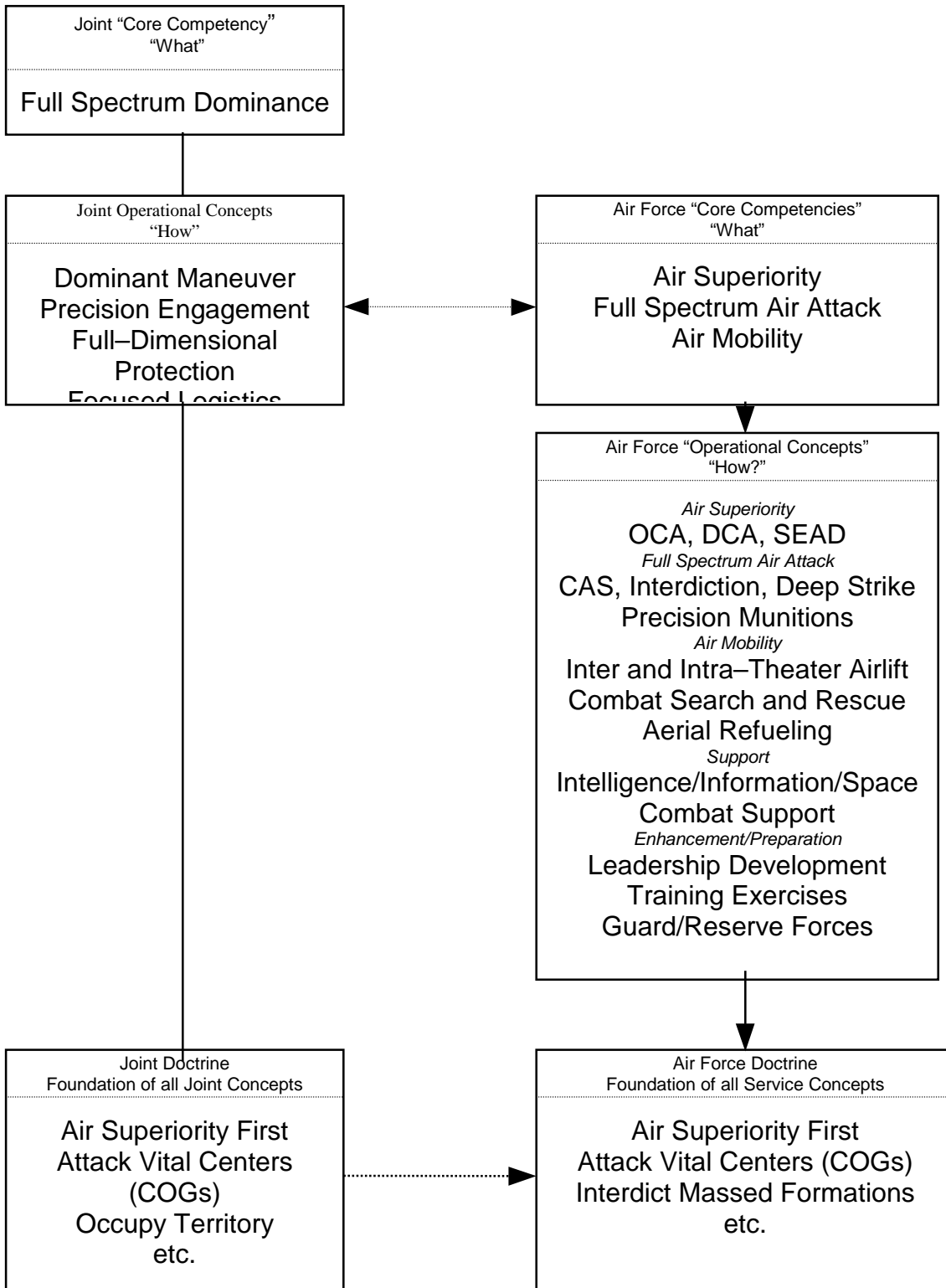
Figure 6. Example of Proposed Alternative Concept

Figure 6 above illustrates the entire concept behind the alternative framework and shows the relationship between the various components. Since the joint framework from National Security Strategy to Joint operational concepts already exists, this discussion focuses on the service portion of the framework. Air Force core competencies are what the Air Force provides to the Joint community. These three sets of capabilities, Air Superiority, Full Spectrum Air Attack, and Air Mobility, are what the unified commanders can expect from the Air Force, and they contribute directly to exploiting the four Joint operational concepts. The focus of the Air Staff then becomes the set of service operational concepts, or the capabilities required to achieve the service's core competencies. In order to provide Air Superiority, for example, the Air Force must be organized, trained and equipped to perform OCA, DCA, and SEAD. These operational concepts directly reflect Air Force doctrine, but it is articulated in a manner that can be applied to Air Force programming, planning and budgeting. If the Air Force changes its doctrine to reflect a better means of conducting operations, the changes will also be reflected in the operational concepts. In this way, doctrine is the foundation of the services capabilities and is accurately reflected in its budgeting process.

Summary

This chapter examined the application of core competencies and found them being applied in ways never intended during their development. This results in confusion over the intended audience, purpose and accuracy of core competencies.

The chapter then established a framework to organize an apply core competencies in a clear and appropriate manner. Core competencies were identified that address the Air

Force's contribution to the Joint community, and operational concepts that identify

processes within the service itself. The framework offered supports the identification of

both—the *product* and *process*. At the foundation of this framework is doctrine—what is

believed to be fundamental truths regarding the application of air and space power. These

fundamental truths influence the development of all *processes* and *products*.

The next chapter will provide a summary of the paper and make recommendations

for the identification and application of core competencies.

Notes
[89] Full Spectrum Air Attack includes both the "effect" and "depth" spectrums. The effect spectrum includes tactical, operational and strategic effects. The depth spectrum includes close, intermediate, deep, and global ranges.
[90] Air Mobility includes inter–theater and intra–theater airlift from the strategic to the tactical level of war.
[91] *Functions of the Armed Forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, sections IV, V, and VI.
[92] Academic year 1997 Air Command and Staff College DEB Syllabus, Operations Structures Lesson Plan OS510 and Operations Structures Final Examination. Interview with Dr Muller, ACSC DEC (War Theory and Campaign Studies) Department Chairman, 4 April 1997.
[93] Air and Space Basic Course proposed syllabus, 1997.
[94] Review of Air War College and Air Command and Staff School Curriculum from 1946–1954.
[95] Curtis Peebles, *High Frontier: The US Air Force and the Military Space Program* (Washington DC, US Government Printing Office), 59–66.
[96] Gen H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Peter Petre, *It Doesn't Take A Hero* (New York, Bantam Books, 1992), 370.
[97] Charter of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (MCM–14–95), 7 February 1995, 4.
[98] Ibid., 1.
[99] Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff, Message 211206Z OCT 96.
[100] CORM, 2–20.
[101] Widnall, 43.
[102] Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff, Speech delivered to the Heritage Foundation, Washington D.C., 13 December 1996.
[103] AFM 1–1, vol.1, vii.
[104] Widnall, 44.
[105] Fogleman message 211206Z OCT 96.

Notes

[106] Actually the term Precision Engagement still escapes comprehension within this context. Unfortunately, that term appears to be the Air Force's contribution to JV 2010.

Chapter 5

Summary and Recommendation

The Military Departments should sharpen their focus on their particular capabilities, or "core competencies." While the CINCs concentrate on planning and training for joint operations in the near term, the Military Departments must have a larger view that embraces long–term force development and material acquisition.

<div align="right">

Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions
of the Armed Forces

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Core competencies have a significant influence in today's Air Force and in shaping the Air Force of tomorrow. Their influence on the Air Staff can be seen in the Air Force's vision, doctrine, and the programming, planning and budgeting process. The Air Force's plans, programs and budgets of today are a reflection of these six sets of capabilities, which will eventually become *the* Air Force of tomorrow. In addition, these capabilities are shaping how the Air Force is viewed by the Joint community. The core competencies are the capabilities the Air Force has stated it can provide to theater commanders. In turn, these expectations influence the Joint requirements process through the JROC and JWCA. Core competencies are a new and emerging concept that has taken the Air Force by storm, and worth looking into further.

This paper has examined where core competencies have come from, why we have them and where they may lead the Air Force. In doing so it first explored where they came from through a historical analysis of their origin. Core competencies do not appear

to be new to the Air Force. Such a list, in one form or another, has existed since the Air Force gained independence from the Army in 1947. These initial functions (roles and missions) have stayed with the Air Force over its fifty year history. From the cornerstone documents of the National Security Act of 1947 to the Goldwater–Nichols Act, Global Reach–Global Power, CORM, 1995 core competencies, and the 1996 core competencies in Global engagement, the functions originally assigned in 1947 and 1948 have endured with only slight modification due to advances in technology. Core competencies are not intended to be specific roles and missions, but to explain a broader concept of what the Air Force brings to the "joint table."

This paper then pursued the "why" part of the equation. It became evident that General Linhard was motivated to pursue core competencies to make the Air Staff function better. His responsibilities spanned a wide range of activities, and he saw core competencies as an opportunity to simultaneously implement the recommendations of the CORM, and get the Air Force's PPBS process to work more efficiently by using the same terminology. Working to improve an Air Force system required the core competencies to address capabilities important to the Air Force as well as issues significant to the Joint community. As a result, he identified a list of core competencies that were a mixture of processes and products of the Air Force.

This paper then examined the implication of applying of core competencies and questioned if they were serving their intended purpose. General Linhard identified Air Force core competencies for internal Air Staff use, while in reality, however, they are being applied in many ways well beyond their intended purpose. Core competencies have made a significant impact on the processes of the Air Staff. They are currently in

use in the Air Force PPBS process, vision, and doctrine. Beyond the Air Staff, core competencies are being taught at every level of officer professional education down to operational units. They are also being identified as the Air Force's contribution to Joint Vision 2010's operational concepts, and for the purpose of justifying requirements to the JROC and JWCA. With such significant decisions resting on them accurately describing the Air Force, it is extremely important that they are correctly defined and applied.

Finally, to address the improper use of the current core competency concept, this paper offered an alternative framework for the application of core competencies. The framework offered was an attempt to establish a structure that clearly presented Air Force capabilities. The alternative core competencies identified within the framework reflected the Air Force's *product* to the Joint community, the law, and are predominantly Air Force capabilities. In addition, the list of alternative core competencies does not address Air Force *processes* or any capabilities the Air Force does not yet have, but would like to have. The framework then offered a category called *operational concepts*, borrowed from Joint Vision 2010, to express the capabilities required to exploit core competencies. These operational concepts address internal processes and are the focus of the Air Staff. At the foundation of framework is doctrine. In this manner the Air Force can achieve the goals of both CORM and General Linhard.

Recommendations:

This paper makes the following recommendations. First, the Air Force should continue to embrace the concept of core competencies. Second, the Air Force should reevaluate its current list of core competencies and include only those that identify the

product the Air Force provides to the Joint community. This list would closely mirror those identified by CORM or those in Chapter 4 of this paper. Third, I recommend that the Air Force adapt the concept initiated by General Linhard and develop a list of operational concepts that would help the Air Staff function better. There would be many unanticipated "spin–offs from an accurate list of Air Force processes. An initial list of operational concepts is also listed in Chapter 4 of this paper.

Core competencies appear to be a positive move toward a more effective distinction of the responsibilities of the services. Using this broad concept prevents disputes over individual missions and focuses attention on larger purposes of the service. For example, each service can maintain air superiority capability to support its operations, but only one service can have the preponderance of the air superiority assets and associated responsibility to the Joint community. CORM appears to have made a move in the right direction for the future of Joint military operations.

CORM also appears to have correctly identified the core competencies the Air Force provides to the Joint community. CORM's approach to core competencies was to identify a service's contribution to the Joint community. This approach was conceptually agreed upon by the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff, but the latter's list does not reflect this agreement. As a result, CORM's list of core competencies most accurately reflects Air Force products to the Joint community, while the Air Force's list reflects a confusing mixture of Air Force *products* with a list of several Air Force internal *processes*. With minor modification, CORM's core competencies should be readily accepted by the Air Force

It appears prudent for the Air Force to retain the list of core competencies identified by CORM, and then, as envisioned by General Linhard, establish a list of *operational concepts* for use by the Air Staff. Drawing a distinction between the lists of Air Force products and its processes provides a clear picture of Air Force capabilities. One list is what the Air Force provides, and the other list is how the Air Force plans to provide them. The first list is of concern to the Joint community, while the second list is of concern to the Air Staff. A list of operational concepts would also provide Air Force people with the opportunity to readily identify with how they contribute to the Air Force mission. Also, a separate list of operational concepts would more thoroughly address Air Force processes than do the three processes included in the 1996 core competencies.

Air Force core competencies are making a major impact on the Air Force of today and tomorrow, it is important that role and function of this concept be clear at all levels from the Joint Staff to our newest Air Force member graduating from Basic Training.

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