

AIR FORCE FELLOWS

AIR UNIVERSITY

THE AIR FORCE'S  
PRODUCTION/PRODUCTION CAPABILITY BALANCE:

RE-EVALUATING THE QUESTION  
OF "MISSION FIRST OR PEOPLE FIRST?"

by

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A Research Report Submitted to the CADRE/AR  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

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## About The Author



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Lieutenant Colonel Purdham entered the Air Force in 1987 with a regular commission as a distinguished graduate from the University of Virginia AFROTC program. Since completing intelligence officer training as a distinguished graduate in 1988, his broad intelligence career has included a variety of roles at squadron, wing, MAJCOM, HQ Air Force, unified command, and national agency levels.

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Lieutenant Colonel Purdham is a distinguished graduate of Squadron Officer School as well as a graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College and the US Air Force School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, where his thesis earned the Air Force Armament Museum's Award for best thesis and was published by Air University. He also was selected for a year of study as a National Defense Fellow at the Institute for Defense Analyses in Washington D.C. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in foreign affairs from the University of Virginia as well as Master of Science degrees in education from Kansas State University and military operational art from Air University.

Lieutenant Colonel Purdham is married to the former Lauralyn Micke of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and they have four children, Jordan, Delaney, Lindsey, and Sydney.

## Preface

“Mission first or people first?” I have heard this question throughout my career. In fact, the dilemma posed by this question has confronted military leaders throughout history. In its simplest form, the question suggests that a leader must place the mission before the people or place the people before the mission. However, I’ve often wondered if this question omitted a third option – a balance between mission and people.

Such balance has been tested by a reduction of almost half of the military personnel since 1986 and a dramatic increase in the number and variety of threats facing the US over that same time. I examine this balance using Stephen Covey’s Production (P)/Production Capability (PC) Balance principle, in which Covey contends that effectiveness is achieved through a balance of production and production capability. In this study, the Air Force mission represents “P,” while airmen represent “PC.”

The mission that airmen support today is not expected to decrease any time soon, given the expected longevity of the Air Force’s GWOT role. Thus, I hope this study will assist Air Force planners in optimally matching Air Force manpower to current and future mission demands. This study is dedicated to the airmen who selflessly and tirelessly fulfill these demands.

I am very grateful to the Institute for Defense Analyses and its staff members for their tremendous support during my year as an Air Force Fellow. I especially appreciate the opportunities that LT GEN Pete Kind (USA, retired) and RADM Rick Porterfield (USN, retired) provided me to contribute to various DoD and DHS projects. I’m also deeply indebted to Roger Mason and Priscilla Guthrie, who served as division directors of IDA’s Information Technology and Systems Division (ITSD) during my tenure, as well as Greg Larsen, the Assistant Director of ITSD’s Information Assurance sub-division. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. David Mets, my advisor at Air University, whose recommendations greatly improved this research paper.

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Most importantly, I can’t thank my wife, Lauralyn, and children, Jordan, Delaney, Lindsey, and Sydney, enough for their tireless support and understanding during my fellowship this year and throughout my Air Force career. I am truly blessed to have such a wonderful family encouraging and inspiring me through my every endeavor.

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## **Abstract**

Stephen Covey contends that an organization achieves effectiveness through adherence to what he calls the Production (P)/Production Capability (PC) Balance principle. He argues that most people view effectiveness incorrectly – the more you produce, the more you do, the more effective you are. Instead, he opines that effectiveness is a function of two things – what is produced and the capability to produce.

This principle is an ideal one with which to examine the classic military question of “mission first or people first,” with mission and people representing “P” and “PC” respectively. Much scrutiny has been placed over the last couple of years on the Army and Marine Corps’ P/PC Balance in light of the sizable mission requirements inherent in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). However, the P/PC balance of the Air Force has received far less scrutiny. The intent of this study is to fill this void. It seeks to answer the following question: Does the Air Force need to operate with P/PC balance to achieve effectiveness in the GWOT? The answer to this question requires an assessment of the Air Force’s P/PC balance as well as the degree of effectiveness that is achieved from that balance.

These assessments, which are based on data from 1986-2006 (with particular focus on the last ten years), involve a four-step process. In the first step, the study assesses which aspect (mission, people, or both) the Air Force emphasized during this timeframe. Step two addresses the implications of the above assessment on the Air Force’s mission, retention, morale, values, and priorities. The third step discusses ongoing efforts in the Air Force to mitigate the implications discussed in the second step. Finally, step four offers recommendations the Air Force can initiate to best achieve effectiveness through P/PC Balance.

The findings from this study indicate that the Air Force has failed to achieve P/PC balance since 9-11, but it has still performed its operational mission effectively. However, after operating in such a state of P/PC imbalance since the GWOT began, the Air Force is showing indications that it will struggle to maintain its mission effectiveness if it has to continue to operate in such a state for the long-term. Thus, the study concludes that Stephen Covey is only partially correct in his assertion that effectiveness is achieved through P/PC balance. While mission effectiveness can be maintained in a state of P/PC imbalance over the short-term, it becomes more difficult to do so in such a state over the long-term.

The reduction of Air Force manpower by another 11% over the next five years coupled with the expectation that the Air Force will remain heavily engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan even when the ground role in OIF and OEF decreases suggests that this P/PC imbalance will remain for the foreseeable future. Based on such a future, it will be crucial that the Air Force stay committed to its efforts and follow the recommendations offered in this study to mitigate the current P/PC imbalance. Thus, the question of “mission first or people first?” appears poorly suited for the long term nature of a conflict such as the GWOT. Instead, this study suggests that the Air Force should improve the balance between its mission and people if both are to remain effective in this conflict for years, and perhaps, generations of airmen to come.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

*Though we're currently capable of fully supporting global Combatant Commander requirements and GWOT, we are being forced to assume significant risk in force structure, infrastructure and readiness for the future.*

- General T. Michael Moseley  
Chief of Staff of the Air Force  
Testimony to the House Appropriations Committee  
18 January 2007

Stephen Covey contends that an organization achieves effectiveness through adherence to what he calls the Production (P)/Production Capability (PC) Balance principle. He argues that within the fable of the goose who laid the golden eggs is this basic principle of effectiveness. In his view, most people consider effectiveness incorrectly from the golden egg paradigm – “the more you produce, the more you do, the more effective you are.”<sup>1</sup> Instead, he opines that effectiveness is a function of two things – what is produced (golden eggs) and the capability to produce (the goose). Covey concludes that the balance between these two facets – the P/PC Balance – is the essence of effectiveness.<sup>2</sup> If one focuses too heavily on golden eggs and neglects the goose, he will soon be without the asset that produces the golden eggs. Inversely, if one focuses too heavily on the goose at the expense of the golden eggs, he soon won't have the ability to feed himself or the goose. Thus, effectiveness stems from the balance between production of desired results (golden eggs) and production capability (golden goose).

This principle is an ideal one with which to examine the classic military question of “mission first or people first?,” with mission and people representing “P” and “PC” respectively. While Covey's P/PC Balance principle argues that equal emphasis should be placed on these two factors, the question of “mission first or people first?” suggests

that one of the two comes before the other. Much scrutiny has been placed over the last couple of years on the Army and Marine Corps' P/PC Balance in light of the sizable mission requirements inherent in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). In fact, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' request in January 2007 for an increase of 92,000 more soldiers and marines indicates the Department of Defense has concluded the Army and Marine Corps' "P" and "PC" are out of balance.<sup>3</sup> Determining that the mission is too great for the Army and Marine Corps's current personnel strength, Secretary Gates plans to correct this imbalance with increased manning.

Meanwhile, the P/PC balance of the Air Force has received far less scrutiny until very recently. During hearings held by the House Armed Services Committee on 28 February 2007, congressmen questioned for the first time the Air Force's plans to cut 40,000 airmen by 2009 at the same time that the Army and Marine Corps are planning to add to their manpower scrolls.<sup>4</sup> The intent of this study is to fill this void by examining whether Covey's P/PC Balance principle holds true for the Air Force. The findings from this study should assist Air Force planners in optimally matching the Air Force's manpower to today and tomorrow's mission requirements. Thus, this study seeks to answer the following question: Does the Air Force need to operate with P/PC balance to achieve effectiveness in the GWOT? The answer to this question requires an assessment of the Air Force's P/PC balance as well as the degree of effectiveness that is achieved from that balance.

These assessments will be achieved through a four-step process based on data from 1986-2005 (with particular focus on the last ten years) and results from a survey – the "P/PC Balance" survey – completed by former squadron commanders now attending

senior developmental education at Air War College and Air Force Fellowships. In the first step, the study assesses which aspect (mission, people, or both) the Air Force has emphasized during the GWOT. To make such a determination, this step includes an examination of the Air Force's mission, manpower, operations tempo (OPTEMPO), and efforts to develop and care for its airmen.

The second step addresses the implications of the above assessment on the Air Force's mission, retention, and morale. This step also explores the relationship between the above assessment and the Air Force's values and priorities. Specifically, it examines if the assessed balance is consistent with those values and priorities. Additionally, the second step addresses the impact of the assessed P/PC balance not only on today's airmen and mission, but on those of tomorrow, as well.

The third step addresses ongoing efforts in the Air Force to mitigate the implications discussed in the second step. These efforts include implementing Air Force Smart Operations 21 (AFSO 21) to improve Air Force processes; identifying tasks that the Air Force should stop doing; consolidating career fields, or Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSCs), to optimize manpower; restructuring major command (MAJCOM) headquarters staffs to improve personnel employment; deploying personnel through the Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF) cycle; and conducting the Total Force Initiative to synergize Air Force active duty, reserve, and guard personnel.

Finally, step four offers three sets of recommendations the Air Force can initiate to best achieve effectiveness. The first set of recommendations involves improving Air Force business practices by ceasing to perform duties that offer little, or no, return; improving time management practices; fully implementing the process improvements

advocated by AFSO 21; and adopting more team approaches to make “the whole greater than the sum of its parts.” The second set of recommendations is intended to further develop a servant leader ethos that parallels the Air Force’s second core value of service before self. This ethos can be fostered through professional military education (PME), enhanced training resources, mentorship programs, and more effective feedback efforts. Lastly, the third set of recommendation addresses a system of accountability that helps foster greater P/PC balance. Such a system entails the Air Force promotion and EPR/OPR processes as well as personal development programs.

#### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People – Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 54.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Jim Garamone, “Gates Calls for 92,000 More Soldiers, Marines,” *American Forces Press Service News*, 11 January 2007. On-Line. Internet. Available at [www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=2651](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=2651).

<sup>4</sup> Bruce Rolfsen, “Lawmakers Question Depth of Force Cuts,” *Air Force Times*, 12 March 2007, 15.

## Chapter 2

### **Assessment of the Air Force's P/PC Balance**

*How much can a man take?*

- Question posed by Colonel Davenport, outgoing Wing Commander, to Brigadier General Savage, incoming Wing Commander, in the movie, *Twelve O'clock High*

### **The Air Force Mission**

To examine the Air Force's P/PC balance in which "P" represents the mission, one must first have a clear understanding of the Air Force mission. For this reason, this study begins by defining the nature and scope of that mission. The National Defense Strategy and the National Military Strategy influence the Air Force mission. However, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) probably has the greatest influence. The Department of Defense produces the QDR every four years to guide the planning for the force structure of the military services.

The first QDR in 1997 based force structure on a strategy that required the United States to be able to fight and quickly win two nearly simultaneous wars of scale approaching that of Desert Storm.<sup>1</sup> Given the magnitude of operations and quantity of forces required for Desert Storm, one can immediately extrapolate the enormity of the task of the US military simultaneously engaging in two Desert Storm-size conflicts. Nevertheless, the next QDR, which was released in 2001 following the 9-11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington D.C., established a force structure standard based on an even more daunting military strategy that would become known as "1-4-2-1."<sup>2</sup> Such a strategy involved the following goals: defend the homeland, deter aggression in four critical theaters (Europe, Northeast Asia, the East Asian littoral, Middle

East/Southwest Asia), swiftly defeat aggression in any two theater conflicts at the same time, and preserve the option for decisive victory in one of those theater conflicts.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, the strategy called for the US military to be able to conduct numerous smaller-scale contingencies. Four years later, the 2005 QDR continued to advocate these very same strategies.

In light of these strategies and the corresponding world changes that shaped them, the Air Force released the following mission statement on 7 December 2005: “Deliver sovereign options for the defense of the United States of America and its global interests – to fly and fight in air, space, and cyberspace.”<sup>4</sup> Secretary Michael Wynne and General T. Michael Moseley, the Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) and Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF) respectively, further explained the mission in stating,

Our task is to provide the president, the combatant commanders, and our nation with an array of options...options that are not limited by the tyranny of distance, the urgency of time, or the strength of our enemy’s defenses. With one hand the Air Force can deliver humanitarian assistance to the farthest reaches of the globe, while with the other hand we can destroy a target anywhere in the world.<sup>5</sup>

Secretary Wynne and General Moseley have also identified the Air Force’s top three priorities, which provide insight into the mission of the Air Force. These priorities are winning the GWOT, developing and caring for Airmen, and recapitalizing and modernizing our aging aircraft and equipment.<sup>6</sup> Three factors may soon result in expanding the first priority of winning the GWOT. These include increasing close-air support missions in support of ground forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan;<sup>7</sup> transporting additional soldiers, ammunition, and supplies associated with the 20,000-troop surge in Iraq;<sup>8</sup> and initiating potentially aggressive new tactics designed to deter Iranian assistance to Iraqi militants.<sup>9</sup>

## **Manpower**

The Air Force is reliant on a capable force of airmen to carry out the above mission. However, between 1986 and 1996 that force decreased by 36% from 608,199 to 389,001.<sup>10</sup> Officer manning dropped by 30% from 109,048 to 71,892, and enlisted manning similarly decreased by 37% from 499,151 to 312,613.<sup>11</sup> Further, Air Force manpower decreased an additional 9% from 389,001 to 353,696 between 1996 and 2005,<sup>12</sup> and it is expected to decrease by an additional 11%, or 40,000, between 2006 and 2011.<sup>13</sup> The resulting Air Force end strength will be 319,000 in 2011, which is a decrease of nearly half (48%) that of 1986. These reductions will be achieved through Force Shaping Boards (FSBs), Reduction In Force (RIFs), Selective Early Retirement Boards (SERBs), and Voluntary Separation Pay (VSP). While VSP is intended to be an incentive to persuade Air Force officers to separate voluntarily, the three former processes all involve involuntary separation from the Air Force.

The FSB convened on 12 Mar 07 to balance career fields and reduce junior officers in overage AFSCs. Eligible officers included those having a Total Federal Commissioned Service Date (TFCSD) in 2004 or those in the 2003 TFCSD year group in AFSCs that were not considered in last year's FSB. The RIF convenes on 11 Jun 07 and will consider those meeting the following criteria: be VSP eligible (Total Active Federal Military Service Date (TAFMSD) between 1 March 1995 – 28 January 2002), have a TFCSD in 1995-1998 or 2000-2001, have at least one year Time-In-Grade (TIG), have a date of rank of 11 Jun or earlier, be in an overage AFSC and year group, and not be on a promotion list or already have an approved separation date of 29 September 2007 or earlier.<sup>14</sup> Lastly, the SERB convened on 8-11 January 2007 to select officers to retire

prior to their mandatory retirement date. Eligible officers included line and chaplain colonels with at least four years TIG as of 8 January 2007 and line and chaplain colonels who have twice been deferred for promotion.

While the study thus far has examined quantitative data, input from airmen is also helpful in addressing the question of “mission first or people first?” To gain such a perspective, this study relied on the “P/PC Balance” survey, which was distributed to in-residence Air Force Senior Developmental Education students at Air War College and the Air Force Fellows program. Students who had previously held squadron command were asked to complete the survey, which included more than thirty questions related to this subject. Because the answers to these questions are opinions of the respondents, they should not be viewed as authoritative. However, when considered in their entirety, they do provide important insight on Air Force members’ perceptions on this subject.

One of the survey questions inquired if commanders had the authorized number of (1) personnel in their unit’s primary AFSCs, (2) training managers, (3) personnelists, and (4) information managers. The percentages of positive responses for the four categories were 51%, 69%, 51%, and 57% respectively.<sup>15</sup> In a related question, the word “authorized” was replaced by the word “adequate.” Thus, while the first question asked commanders if they had the number of personnel they were *allowed* to fulfill the mission, the second question asked if they had the number of personnel they *needed* to fulfill the mission. The percentages of positive responses for the four categories were 55%, 65%, 61%, and 60% respectively, which were very close to those for the previous question.<sup>16</sup>

In fact, the answers for the first, second, and fourth categories in each question are within four percentage points of each other, while the answers for the third category are

less than ten percentage points different. This suggests that the number of personnel the Air Force authorized for each squadron is fairly accurate. However, the problem lies in the inability to fill the authorized billets. In particular, these airmen include support personnel, training managers, and those in squadrons' primary AFSCs. Because these are all critical personnel, these shortfalls exacerbate squadrons' ability to support, train, and, ultimately, enable their airmen to effectively perform the mission. However, despite these shortfalls, it should be noted that none of the respondents indicated they were unable to achieve their squadron's mission. Thus, as the caption from *Twelve O'clock High* states at the beginning of this chapter, the difficulty lies in determining "how much can a man take" before the mission suffers. The next section addresses a key factor that influences that very determination.

## **OPTEMPO**

While manpower changes are certainly significant, they become that much more so when considered in conjunction with changes in OPTEMPO. OPTEMPO is defined as "the rate of military operations as measured by deployments, training, exercises, temporary duty assignments, and work hours."<sup>17</sup> As was discussed earlier in this chapter, the 2001 QDR first delineated the "1-4-2-1" strategy, which posed a considerable increase in mission demands over the previous QDR that advocated only the "2" portion of the "1-4-2-1" strategy – simultaneously winning two regional conflicts. This increase has been particularly evident with Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF), and other demands associated with the GWOT. To fully appreciate the magnitude of the increased tasking associated with the "1-4-2-1" strategy

of the 2001 QDR, one must first have an understanding of the demands associated with the less ambitious “2” strategy that existed prior to that time.

### **Pre 9-11 OPTEMPO**

Secretary of Defense William Cohen succinctly described the severity of the demands facing the overall military in 1998 when he stated, “We are deploying to more places than ten years ago, and we are doing that with a military that is 36% smaller than at the end of the Cold War.”<sup>18</sup> On 11 May 1999, he added to this assessment in his testimony to the Senate Appropriations Committee, in stating:

We cannot carry out the missions we have with the budget that we have; there is a mismatch. We have more to do and less to do it with, and so that is starting to show in wear and tear on people...We’re either going to have to have fewer missions or more people, but we cannot continue the kind of pace that we have.<sup>19</sup>

One year later in September 2000, the CSAF, General Michael Ryan, told Congress that the overall USAF readiness was down 23% since 1996 and that stateside readiness was down 29% since 1996.<sup>20</sup>

### **Post 9-11 to Current OPTEMPO**

Other service leaders continued to echo a similar refrain after 9-11; most notably was the testimony on the condition of troops offered by Army General William Kernan of the US Joint Forces Command. In his testimony to the House Armed Services Committee in March 2002, General Kernan stated, “They’re tired, sir. We are busy. We are busier than we have ever been.”<sup>21</sup> Additionally, two theater commanders – Admiral Dennis Blair of the US Pacific Command and General Joseph Ralston of US European Command – informed the House Armed Services Committee that same month that they did not have enough forces to fulfill their assigned missions.<sup>22</sup> The Air Force

experienced the same burden expressed by these combatant commanders. In 2002, a “Dynamic Commitment” war game in the Pentagon determined that the full wartime demand for air and space power under the “1-4-2-1” standard was twice that of the requirement in Operation ALLIED FORCE. Such an assessment appeared to be supported by the SECAF, James Roche, when he argued in January 2002 that the Air Force required 10,000 additional airmen.<sup>23</sup>

The deployment activity of Air Force personnel substantiates the OPTEMPO demands cited by these officials. The Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) is the Department of Defense’s authority for such deployment activity. Because DMDC is limited to deployment operations beginning in 2001, a direct comparison of pre- and post-9-11 deployment activity is not available. However, the data available from DMDC still offers insight into the increase of deployment activity since 9-11.<sup>24</sup> DMDC reported that deployments by Air Force personnel in 2001 totaled 46,990, with 46,396 of those involving personnel who deployed only once and 594 of those involving personnel who deployed twice.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, between 2001-2006 deployments by Air Force personnel averaged 93,258 – more than double that of 2001 – with an average of 84,543 of those involving personnel who deployed only once and an average of 7,353 of those involved personnel on their second deployment – a 12-fold increase from 2001.<sup>26</sup> Further, an average of 1082, 246, and 33 of those deployments involved personnel on their third, fourth, and fifth deployments respectively.<sup>27</sup>

The role of airmen in Afghanistan and Iraq has also expanded since combat operations began in those countries after 9-11. In his testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2006, Secretary Wynne stated, ‘Airmen today are

contributing to combat operations in ways never before envisioned – as convoy drivers and escorts, detainee guards and translators to give a few examples. Other airmen routinely serve “outside the wire” as Special Tactics operators, Joint Terminal Attack Controllers and Special Operations Weather personnel.’<sup>28</sup> *The Air Force Key Talking Points* for February 2007 added that “readiness has declined 17% since 2001 due to OPTEMPO and operating a smaller, older fleet.”<sup>29</sup> The combination of increased OPTEMPO and a reduced fleet of aircraft has increased the burden placed on Air Force pilots. Based on the number of pilots and flying hours reported by Headquarters Air Force/Operations Directorate (AF/A3), flying hours per pilot increased by 8% between the periods of 1996-2001 and 2002-2005.<sup>30</sup>

In his testimony to the House Appropriations Committee on 18 January 2007, General Moseley addressed the impact that reduced manpower and increased OPTEMPO is having across the Air Force. He stated the following:

Since 2001 the Air Force has reduced its end-strength by 7% but our deployments have increased by 30% - primarily in support of the GWOT. Some of those deployments are in-lieu-of (ILO) tasks requiring our airmen to perform roles or missions outside Air Force core competencies, jobs for combatant commanders that they were not originally trained to do. Because ILO-tasked units and airmen are no longer available for core Air Force or home-station missions, the workload shifts to other airmen at home and abroad.<sup>31</sup>

Two AFSCs that have been particularly impacted by the demands described by General Moseley are security and intelligence. Brigadier General Hertog, Director of Air Force Security Forces, stated that security personnel are in a one-to-one dwell, meaning that her airmen are deployed a month for every month they’re at home.<sup>32</sup> As a result, security personnel are no longer part of the Air Expeditionary Force cycle, in which airmen deploy four out of every 20 months. Rather, they are usually deployed for 179 days in

addition to two months training for a total of eight months.<sup>33</sup> Brig Gen Hertog said that this deployment frequency, coupled with the fact that training for Army ILO missions can extend even further the time that security personnel are away from home station, has taken a toll on the force and has begun to hurt retention.<sup>34</sup> This has especially been seen with first term re-enlistment, which has dropped to 32%.

Due to these factors, Headquarters Air Force released a policy letter in January 2007 declaring that ‘GWOT demands continue to stress our security forces. Increased home station security and combatant command requirements have exceeded “design limits” in terms of personnel, training, and equipment.’<sup>35</sup> Despite implementing several actions to mitigate this situation, such as implementing rotations and increasing security forces authorizations, stress levels have continued to build. In anticipation of further security requirements in support of OEF and OIF, the Air Force has directed base commanders to waive protection level 2 and 3 security criteria.<sup>36</sup> Such security concessions illustrate the severity of the disparity between security requirements and the security personnel available to fulfill those requirements.

The Air Force Intelligence community is also struggling to absorb an increase in operational requirements. According to the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Center (AEFC), “The deployable Air Force Intelligence community has been at max surge for more than one year and cannot meet operational requirements.”<sup>37</sup> This surge is evident in the number of intelligence requirements sourced through the AEFC, which have increased 121% in just over a year from 326 in September 2005 to 720 in January 2007.<sup>38</sup> As a result of this increase, several intelligence key specialties have reached the same one-to-one dwell status as the security personnel above. In an effort to meet this demand,

the AEFC, with the approval of the Air Force Operations Directorate (AF/A3), has tasked all available Unit Training Codes, pulled resources from future AEF rotations, and lengthened deployments to 179 days. Despite these efforts, intelligence demands continue to exceed available intelligence personnel.

The dramatic increase in ILO tasks is especially being felt by intelligence units in Air Combat Command (ACC). According to ACC's Intelligence Directorate, Requirements Division (ACC/A2R), "ILO taskings are having a significant impact because of the cumulative effect of supporting them in addition to supporting required USAF service deployments. Most significantly, intelligence training within units is stretched to the breaking point."<sup>39</sup> The lack of experienced personnel has hampered intelligence units' ability to conduct internal training, thereby, prolonging the time required for young lieutenants and airmen to become mission ready.<sup>40</sup> In addition to negatively impacting training internal to intelligence units, these demands have made it difficult for intelligence units to send airmen to advanced intelligence specialty courses such as targeteering and collection management.<sup>41</sup>

Lastly, some units have had to disband their targeting and collection management sections for the aforementioned reasons. Such limitations are impacting the quality and quantity of support that intelligence personnel can provide to the flying units throughout ACC, to include the 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing, which is the first Air Force wing to receive the F-22. ACC/A2R continues to pursue strategies to lessen the impact of ILO taskings on intelligence units. However, as ACC/A2R states, "unless the pace of deployments lessens or ACC's intelligence manning is increased, ACC will face increased risk to its intelligence mission due to cutbacks in mission support to critical operational areas."<sup>42</sup> It

should be noted that, despite these shortfalls, to date there has been no observed degradation to the Air Force's operational mission. However, if high OPTEMPO and reduced manning continue to degrade support missions, the question becomes "how long before these degradations negatively impact the operational mission?"

To further determine the degree to which mission tasking has changed for airmen, a question in the "P/PC Balance" survey asked if mission demands decreased, increased, or stayed the same during respondents' command. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents stated that mission demands increased.<sup>43</sup> Of the remaining 22% of the respondents, 18% stated that their mission demands remained the same.<sup>44</sup> The commanders voicing these answers were from various squadrons, to include flying, operations support, Office of Special Investigation, intelligence, missile, and mission support squadrons. Thus, an increase in mission tasking was not unique to a certain type of squadron.

The "P/PC Balance" survey also asked former squadron commanders if their squadron was asked to do more with less. An overwhelming 87% of the commanders responded "yes."<sup>45</sup> Some of the respondents' comments suggested the degree to which they were asked to do more with less was extensive. As stated earlier, these survey responses reflect opinions – not quantifiable measurements. Additionally, one could argue that every commander wants to surpass his predecessor in terms of mission accomplishment, so he may be inclined to embellish his mission demands. However, the fact that almost 90% of respondents stated that they were asked to do more with less is hard to dismiss. Almost all of these respondents also commented on specific ways in which their workload had increased, thereby, adding further credibility to their claims

## **Projected OPTEMPO**

As mentioned earlier, Air Force manpower will decrease by 40,000 airmen by 2011, thereby, shrinking the already stressed personnel pool that must fulfill existing demands. Further, additional demands in support of OIF and OEF are expected to be tasked to airmen in the near future. The first of these demands is associated with the surge of troops that President Bush recently authorized for Iraq. An increase of this number of troops will require additional logistics support from Air Force aircrews, especially those of C17s and C-130s, which are already working at an exhausting pace.<sup>46</sup> Medics and civil engineers are as likely as mobility crews to shoulder additional taskings from the surge.

In addition to the above surge, Air Force personnel, particularly pilots, can anticipate an increased role in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan based on current trends. Since the start of 2007, the Air Force has forward deployed A-10s to a Marine Corps base in Iraq and F-15Es into Afghanistan. Teams of fighter aircraft and B-1B bombers have also stepped up their attacks against insurgents in both countries. According to Secretary Wynne, “Ground commanders have come to understand the facets of air power and its value to them.”<sup>47</sup> Evidence of this assertion is seen in the fact that last year in Afghanistan there was a 42% increase over 2005 in close-air support sorties and a 37% increase in surveillance flights.<sup>48</sup>

The *Los Angeles Times* also reported in January 2007 that “The Air Force is preparing for an expanded role in Iraq that could include aggressive new tactics designed to deter Iranian assistance to Iraqi militants.”<sup>49</sup> Based on comments by a senior Pentagon official, this report further stated that these efforts may involve more forceful patrols by

Air Force and navy fighter planes along the Iran-Iraq border in an effort to counter smuggling of military supplies from Iran to insurgents in Iraq. Such actions would reinforce the Administration's increasingly tough stance against Iran.

Regardless of the above increased role of the Air Force in Iraq in the near term, the Air Force will likely remain in the Middle East in support of the Iraq mission in the long term. It is well known that Air Force fighter aircraft flew over Iraq for more than a decade following Desert Storm in 1992, enforcing no-fly zones and essentially conducting an air occupation.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, the Air Force will likely need to provide similar firepower and surveillance support to Iraqi forces once the Iraq war comes to an end. Lieutenant General Howie Chandler, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans, and Requirements, made such an assertion when he recently stated, "We do know we have been there for sixteen years, and we will be there as long as we can see into the future."<sup>51</sup> Given that, airmen can anticipate considerable OPTEMPO for some time to come.

### **Comparison to Army, Marine Corps, and Navy OPTEMPO**

As stated in the introduction of the study, the Air Force's sister services are also experiencing heavy OPTEMPO. In fact, a comparison of the services' OPTEMPO reveals that 55.9%, 56.2%, and 47.2%, of those on active duty in the Army, Marine Corps, and Navy respectively deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq from 11 September 2001 to 31 October 2004.<sup>52</sup> In comparison, 39.8% of active duty airmen deployed to those countries during that same time frame.<sup>53</sup> Further, 36.6%, 40.7%, and 35.8% of active duty soldiers, marines, and sailors respectively deployed a single time to Afghanistan or Iraq, while 19.3%, 15.5%, and 11.4% of those same servicemen respectively deployed

multiple times.<sup>54</sup> Once again, in comparison, 27.4% of airmen deployed a single time to either of these two countries, while 12.4% did so multiple times.<sup>55</sup>

Based on these statistics, a smaller percentage of airmen deployed in support of OEF or OIF than did soldiers, marines, and sailors during this timeframe. The same can be said for the percentage of airmen who deployed a single time. However, in terms of multiple deployments, the difference in the percentage of those who did so across the four services was much smaller. In fact, the Navy had a smaller percentage of its personnel deploy multiple times than did the Air Force.

The comparison between the services OPTEMPO demands continues to be similar today. Based on the Air Force's deployment cycle, airmen deploy on average for four months out of every twenty months. Meanwhile, the Army's deployment rotation calls for soldiers to deploy for a year every other year. However, Defense Secretary Gates announced on 11 April 2007 that the twelve-month tours of all active duty Army soldiers will be extended to fifteen months in order to accommodate the new "surge" strategy.<sup>56</sup> This will undoubtedly only compound the OPTEMPO burden of the 12-month tours, which was recently addressed in a 26 November 2006 article in *The Washington Post* entitled, "Long Stints in Iraq Fracture Families." This article covered the burden on the soldiers and families of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, which at the time was preparing to depart for its third tour to Iraq in four years.<sup>57</sup> This burden explains Secretary of Defense Gates' request for 92,000 additional soldiers and marines over the next five years. Thus, while the Air Force is burdened by its OPTEMPO demands, that burden has not yet reached the severity of that of the Army.

### **Efforts to Develop and Care for Airmen**

In the midst of this demanding OPTEMPO, the Air Force has initiated numerous efforts to fulfill its priority of developing and caring for airmen. The Air Force does not expect these initiatives to overcome the current OPTEMPO demands or manpower reductions. Rather, the Air Force's intent is for these initiatives to better posture airmen for mission and deployment success as well as improve the quality of life for airmen and their families. These initiatives include the following:

- Finalize distance learning opportunities at all levels
- Finalize plans for language/regional studies at Air University
- Finalize plans for Basic Military Training combat skills enhancement
- Finalize plans for Battlefield Airmen training location and course content
- Finalize and implement the revised Continuum of Learning force-wide
- Ensure continued Development Education at all levels
- Ensure advanced educational opportunities for all Airmen
- Ensure continued voluntary educational opportunities at all levels
- Include Air Force heritage in all Developmental Education
- Prioritize Intermediate/Senior Developmental Education schools for airmen
- Strengthen preparation for Joint/Combined Forces Air Component Commander (J/CFACC), Air Component Coordination Element (ACCE), and Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) Staff
- Strengthen preparation for joint assignments, Capstone, joint schools, command
- Strengthen all pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment member and family wellness programs
- Execute programmed Military Family Housing Military Construction (MILCON)/Privatization
- Execute programmed Family Support Center enhancements<sup>58</sup>

As is evident from the fifteen above initiatives, the Air Force is focusing its “develop and care for airmen” efforts on education (Air Force, joint, and civilian), training, housing, and family support. Through these efforts, the Air Force intends to best prepare its airmen for their deployable missions and to provide optimum living conditions and support for Air Force families while airmen are both deployed and at home.

## **Assessment**

The combination of the Air Force reducing its personnel strength nearly in half since 1986 while operating in a much higher OPTEMPO has resulted in a P/PC imbalance in which “P” has superseded “PC.” However, the severity of this P/PC imbalance has not reached that of the Army or Marine Corps’ imbalance. One of the reasons for this is that the Air Force’s OPTEMPO demands have remained lower than those of its two sister services. A second reason is that the Air Force has made a concerted effort to develop and care for its airmen through ongoing and planned initiatives involving education, training, and housing improvements. While these initiatives haven’t mitigated the manpower reductions and OPTEMPO increases that are fueling “P” demands, they have illustrated the importance the Air Force places on its “PC” and the quality of life of its airmen.

These Air Force efforts to improve airmen’s quality of life were apparently not enough to sway 80% of “P/PC Balance” survey respondents from perceiving that the Air Force practices a mission-first (P) philosophy.<sup>59</sup> The following survey results revealed the reason for such a perception. Eighty-seven percent of respondents claimed their squadrons were directed to do more with less, 78% were repeatedly tasked with more mission demands, and 55% were provided with an inadequate number of personnel to perform the mission.<sup>60</sup> Yet despite these statistics, none of these commanders indicated they were unable to complete their mission. This suggests that the Air Force’s P/PC imbalance has not been severe enough in the short term to deter mission effectiveness. This assessment will be more closely scrutinized in the next chapter, which addresses the short and long term implications of this imbalance.

## Notes

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<sup>2</sup> John T. Correll, *In the Wake of the QDR – The Quadrennial Defense Review and Its Consequences*, Air Force Association Special Report, September 2006.

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<sup>4</sup> Master Sergeant Mitch Gettle, "Air Force Releases new Mission Statement," *Air Force Print News*, 8 December 2005. On-Line. Internet. Available at [www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123013440](http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123013440).

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<sup>6</sup> Lieutenant General Roger Brady, Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower and Personnel, "Building the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Air Force" briefing, 27 January 2006.

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<sup>14</sup> Rod Hafemeister, "Ready for RIF? – Officials Expect to Hold Board Regardless of Voluntary Separations," *Air Force Times*, 19 February 2007, 8.

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<sup>22</sup> Associated Press, "Top Brass: Military Spread Too Thin," *Washington Times*, 21 March 2002.

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- <sup>58</sup> "67 Initiatives – The Report Card" briefing, (Headquarters United States Air Force, Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff of the Air Force's Action Group (HAF/CX)), slide 23.
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## Chapter 3

### **Implications of the Air Force's P/PC Imbalance**

*Leaders who tend only to business often end up losing the people and the business. But leaders who tend to the people usually build up the people – and the business.*

- John C. Maxwell  
Leadership Author and Speaker

To answer the question “Does the Air Force need to operate with P/PC balance to achieve optimum effectiveness in the GWOT?” posed in the introduction to this study, two assessments are required. The first, an assessment of the Air Force's P/PC balance, was provided in the previous chapter. The second, an assessment of the degree of effectiveness that is achieved from that balance, is provided in this chapter. This will be done by examining the impact of the Air Force's P/PC Imbalance on several factors.

### **Mission Impact**

The employment of airpower in the GWOT has been vastly different from past major conventional conflicts in which the US military has been involved. In comparison to such conflicts, the GWOT has involved less of the Air Force's conventional missions, such as combat air support; and other than the initial combat phase of OIF, it has involved virtually no air superiority or air interdiction missions. Instead, due to the counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency tactics required in the GWOT, today's air operations consist primarily of airlift, refueling, air evacuation, reconnaissance, time sensitive targeting, and very localized combat air support. The effectiveness of these missions against the adversary is harder to measure in quantifiable terms than that of the Air Force's conventional missions. This makes assessing the military impact of the Air

Force's P/PC imbalance more difficult. However, to date, all evidence indicates the Air Force is effectively performing its operational mission.

The latest *Air Force Key Talking Points* reveal that the Air Force continues to perform over 300 daily sorties in support of OEF and OIF. These include eighty strike, electronic warfare, or non-traditional ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) sorties; slightly less than ten special operations and search and rescue sorties; 250 airlift sorties transporting passengers, equipment, and supplies; thirty tanker missions; and just more than ten air evacuation missions with patients. The Air Force also continues to perform its global space, satellite, inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM), airborne warning and control system (AWACS), and alert activities.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, General Moseley stated in January 2007 that 'each day the readiness of both our Airmen and our equipment is eroding. The number of our units reporting "green," or fully mission capable, has declined from 68% in 2004 to 56% today.'<sup>2</sup> He added, "The bottom line is that the combination of...manpower reductions, increased GWOT OPTEMPO, and additional non-core ILO taskings are certainly stressing our airmen."<sup>3</sup>

The previous chapter addressed how these three challenges are having particular consequence on airlift, security, and intelligence AFSCs. C-17 and C-130 aircrews have among the highest OPTEMPO in the Air Force due to the criticality of their role in transporting supplies to troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is estimated that 8,000 people per month are kept off the roads in Iraq convoy duty because of the intra-theater lift these aircrews provide.<sup>4</sup> Undoubtedly, these aircrews will be stressed even further to meet the logistical demands of additional ground forces. In fact, General Moseley has stated, "Any significant growth planned for active duty ground units would inherently drive a

commensurate need to increase Air Force strength, [particularly] our airlift units [that] are intrinsically tied to our Army and Marine teammates.”<sup>5</sup>

As discussed earlier, security personnel are also having difficulty keeping pace with their high OPTEMPO. Because of their heavy ILO responsibility, one-to-one dwell, and low retention, they have been diverted from some of their primary security missions. The previous chapter stated that protection level 2 and 3 security criteria have been waved at Air Force bases, because deployment demands have resulted in an unavailability of security personnel to enforce these criteria.<sup>6</sup> Intelligence is another career field that has been heavily tasked with ILO missions and one-to-one dwells. In some cases, intelligence responsibilities are being completely eliminated due to OPTEMPO. This is the case with the targeting and collection management sections in some intelligence units in ACC.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, while none of the Air Force’s operational missions have been degraded, transport aircrews are straining to keep pace with the logistical demands of OIF and OEF. Security and intelligence are also two key support missions that have already experienced mission degradation or reduction of standards. This combination of factors will likely degrade the mission if allowed to continue. While degradation of the flying mission has not yet been identified in quantifiable terms, the possibility of such an outcome increases the longer certain flying missions, such as airlift, are heavily stressed and key support missions, such as security and intelligence, are unable to perform at their optimum level.

## **Retention**

Retention is often viewed as the key factor in judging an employee’s satisfaction with his workload and other aspects of his job. It’s naturally assumed that if one is

content with these aspects, he will remain in his job. Meanwhile, if he's not, he will leave his job. The same applies to airmen. Given the assessment that the Air Force has been operating since 9-11 in a state of P/PC imbalance with greater emphasis on "P," one might expect retention in the Air Force to have decreased during this time frame. The study will now examine if that has proven true. The below tables reflect the retention data for a cross section of first-term airmen in Air Combat Command (ACC), Air Mobility Command (AMC), and Air Education and Training Command (AETC) from 1996 – 2006.

These three commands were chosen since they represent a range of OPTEMPO requirements. Six AFSCs are examined at ACC, to include airborne battle management (1A4X1), intelligence applications (1N0X1), ground radar systems (2E0X1), maintenance data systems analyst (2R0X1), information management (3A0X1), and security forces (3P0X1). Five AFSCs are examined at AMC, to include loadmasters (1A2X1), which replaced 1A4X1s from the ACC data because of their greater representation at AMC; 1N0X1; 2R0X1; 3A0X1; and 3P0X1. Lastly, AETC included the 1N0X1, 3A0X1, and 3P0X1 AFSCs. The remaining AFSCs from the ACC and AMC data were omitted because there were too few at AETC for the purpose of this study.

ACC First Term Airmen Retention Rates<sup>8</sup>

|      | 1A4X1 | 1N0X1 | 2E0X1 | 2R0X1 | 3A0X1 | 3P0X1 |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1996 | 78.1% | 69.6% | 59.8% | 63.3% | 77.7% | 26.4% |
| 1997 | 61.4% | 43.6% | 49.4% | 47.6% | 53.6% | 41.8% |
| 1998 | 34.1% | 40.4% | 28.9% | 75.0% | 67.9% | 31.4% |
| 1999 | 50.8% | 53.9% | 8.3%  | 40.0% | 64.8% | 32.8% |
| 2000 | 28.6% | 46.1% | 45.5% | 50.0% | 68.5% | 50.2% |
| 2001 | 42.9% | 67.9% | 66.7% | 75.0% | 61.8% | 52.7% |
| AVG  | 49.3% | 53.6% | 43.1% | 58.5% | 65.7% | 39.2% |

|      |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 2002 | 68.2% | 83.3% | 70.0% | 69.2% | 71.0% | 78.4% |
| 2003 | 77.8% | 54.9% | 75.9% | 69.6% | 77.8% | 32.2% |
| 2004 | 69.4% | 57.4% | 27.3% | 66.7% | 72.6% | 44.3% |
| 2005 | 54.6% | 58.9% | 22.9% | 52.0% | 71.5% | 81.8% |
| 2006 | 57.4% | 56.9% | 29.1% | 70.4% | 74.2% | 27.3% |
| AVG  | 65.5% | 62.3% | 45.0% | 65.6% | 73.4% | 52.8% |

AMC First Term Airmen Retention Rates<sup>9</sup>

|      | 1A2X1 | 1N0X1 | 2E0X1 | 2R0X1 | 3A0X1 | 3P0X1 |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1996 | 66.7% | 63.6% |       | 66.7% | 75.2% | 21.9% |
| 1997 | 69.2% | 70.0% |       | 83.3% | 52.4% | 43.5% |
| 1998 | 70.5% | 42.9% |       | 47.6% | 60.7% | 17.3% |
| 1999 | 70.3% | 75.0% |       | 45.5% | 64.5% | 26.8% |
| 2000 | 44.9% | 60.0% |       | 57.1% | 71.3% | 45.3% |
| 2001 | 45.3% | 55.6% |       | 0/0   | 62.5% | 50.8% |
| AVG  | 61.2% | 61.2% |       | 60.0% | 64.4% | 34.3% |
| 2002 | 76.3% | 90.9% |       | 80.0% | 75.3% | 87.2% |
| 2003 | 52.2% | 37.5% |       | 72.7% | 70.8% | 35.1% |
| 2004 | 48.5% | 50.0% |       | 50.0% | 76.6% | 60.0% |
| 2005 | 62.8% | 84.6% |       | 68.4% | 68.5% | 46.6% |
| 2006 | 42.6% | 93.6% |       | 66.7% | 70.6% | 25.6% |
| AVG  | 56.5% | 71.3% |       | 67.6% | 72.4% | 50.9% |

AETC First Term Airmen Retention Rates<sup>10</sup>

|      | 1A4X1 | 1N0X1 | 2E0X1 | 2R0X1 | 3A0X1 | 3P0X1 |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1996 |       | 60.0% |       |       | 78.4% | 26.2% |
| 1997 |       | 81.8% |       |       | 62.8% | 47.5% |
| 1998 |       | 50.0% |       |       | 66.7% | 41.6% |
| 1999 |       | 37.5% |       |       | 79.6% | 30.8% |
| 2000 |       | 66.7% |       |       | 76.2% | 66.7% |
| 2001 |       | 85.7% |       |       | 70.5% | 52.0% |
| AVG  |       | 63.6% |       |       | 72.4% | 44.1% |
| 2002 |       | 87.5% |       |       | 72.2% | 89.4% |
| 2003 |       | 71.4% |       |       | 75.8% | 75.0% |
| 2004 |       | 80.0% |       |       | 80.5% | 70.5% |
| 2005 |       | 80.0% |       |       | 74.1% | 44.1% |
| 2006 |       | 56.3% |       |       | 79.1% | 40.5% |
| AVG  |       | 75.0% |       |       | 76.3% | 63.9% |

This data leads to several conclusions. First, a clear increase in retention was observed between 2001 and 2002, suggesting that airmen were compelled to support the GWOT when it was launched following 9-11. Across all three commands, the retention rate increased in every AFSC, with the exception of only 2R0X1 in ACC, between these two years. The average increase in retention across AFSCs between 2001 and 2002 was 11.5%, 31.4%, and 13.6% in ACC, AMC, and AETC respectively.<sup>11</sup> Second, between the periods of 1996-2001 and 2002-2006, the retention rate also increased in each AFSC across all three commands, with the exception of 1A2X1 in AMC. The average increase in retention between these periods was 9.1%, 7.9%, and 11.7% in ACC, AMC, and AETC respectively.<sup>12</sup>

Third, these increases in retention rates have not been sustained. In terms of post-9-11 comparisons, the average rate for each AFSC from 2002-2006 is lower than that for 2002 alone. Further, when the average rates in 2006 are compared with the pre-9-11 rates in 2001, an even more discernable decrease is evident in two of the three commands. In ACC, the retention rate of three of six AFSCs was lower in 2006 than in 2001, and the average rate in 2006 for all six AFSCs decreased by 9.8% compared to that for 2001.<sup>13</sup> This same trend was evident in AETC where the retention rate of two of three AFSCs was lower in 2006 than in 2001, and the average rate in 2006 for all three AFSCs decreased by 5.2% compared to that for 2001.<sup>14</sup> In AMC, the retention rate of two of four AFSCs was also lower in 2006 than in 2001, but the average rate in 2006 for all four AFSCs still increased by 4.1% compared to that for 2001.<sup>15</sup>

General Moseley stated in his testimony before the House Appropriations Committee in January 2007 that “For every one Air Force enlistee we turn 99 others

away, so we continue to be able to choose the cream of America's crop."<sup>16</sup> He added in that same testimony that "Tuition assistance also continues to be a strong incentive that helps ensure we meet our recruiting and retention goals."<sup>17</sup> Based on those statements, the Air Force continues to meet its enlistment and retention goals. However, the ACC, AMC, and AETC retention data suggests that the increased retention rates following 9-11 are not as evident today. Thus, while the Air Force may be able to choose the best one out of 100 people to join the Air Force, it is important that it recognize the impact the GWOT may have on retaining those people.

### **Mixed Message**

The "P/PC Balance" survey asked respondents to provide their perception of the Air Force's P/PC balance. Specifically, survey participants were asked: (1) Does the Air Force espouse mission first, people first, or a balance of the two? and (2) Which does it practice – mission first, people first, or a balance of the two?

Regarding the first question, 36% of respondents answered "mission," 13% answered "people," 44% answered "balance," and 7% replied with an answer other than the three options presented.<sup>18</sup> As for the second question, the responses changed dramatically. Eighty percent answered "mission," 2% answered "people," 13% answered "balance," and 4% replied with an answer other than the three options presented.<sup>19</sup> These responses reveal that commanders viewed the Air Force as espousing a philosophy that emphasizes people and balance, yet practicing a philosophy that emphasizes mission. Of the respondents who answered "mission" for the first question, all answered the same for the second question.<sup>20</sup> As for those who answered "people" for the first question, 83% changed their answer to "mission" for the second question.<sup>21</sup> Finally, of the respondents

who answered “balance” for the first question, 70% changed their answer to “mission” for the second question.<sup>22</sup>

The respondents equally perceived a mixed message from the grass roots level. When asked if their group and wing commanders espoused mission first, people first, or a balance of the two, 25% responded “mission first,” 7% responded “people first,” 64% responded “balance of the two,” and 5% responded with an answer other than those provided.<sup>23</sup> Yet, when asked which of these three options did their group and wing commanders practice, 57% responded “mission first” – a sizable increase from the 25% who replied that the group and wing commanders espoused such a philosophy.<sup>24</sup>

Such a disparity between what squadron commanders perceive the Air Force espousing and practicing from the senior-most level to the grass-roots level is noteworthy. This inconsistency can begin to raise doubt among airmen as to the genuineness of the Air Force’s declarations regarding the importance of “people.” This doubt was reflected in the responses to two additional survey questions. The first was, “Do you view the Air Force’s mission-people balance (as you perceive it) as consistent with the CSAF’s three priorities of win the GWOT, recapitalize and modernize, and develop and care for Airmen?” Fifty percent of the respondents answered “no” to this question. Of those who did so, 91% commented that the level of priority the Air Force placed on its people was not consistent with the CSAF’s priority of “develop and care for Airmen.”<sup>25</sup>

The second survey question that expressed similar doubt among the respondents was, “Do you view the Air Force’s mission-people balance (as you perceive it) as consistent with the Air Force’s core values of integrity first, service before self, and

excellence in all we do?” Thirty-one percent of the respondents replied “no” to this question.<sup>26</sup> Of those, 67% sighted that the degree to which people are being over tasked is inconsistent with these values.<sup>27</sup>

These responses are not just unique to the Air Force. A poll conducted in 2006 by the *Military Times* yielded similar results regarding views of the military chain of command. The *Times* provided its poll to a mix of military personnel across all services. Its respondents averaged thirty-six years of age and fifteen years of military service, thereby, representing career servicemen with the associated loyalty to their respective services. When asked if the senior military leadership has their best interests at heart, 63% of respondents replied “strongly agree” or “agree.”<sup>28</sup> This compares with 64% and 70% of the respondents who answered in a similar fashion in 2005 and 2004 respectively.<sup>29</sup> When asked if President Bush has their best interests at heart, the percentage who responded “strongly agree” or “agree” dropped to 48%.<sup>30</sup> This, too, represented a decline from the 58% and 69% of those who responded with the same answers in 2005 and 2004 respectively.<sup>31</sup>

Lastly, when asked if the civilian leadership of the Department of Defense has their best interests at heart, those who responded “strongly agree” or “agree” was an alarming 32%.<sup>32</sup> This compared to answers of 49% and 48% in 2005 and 2004 respectively.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, rightly or wrongly so, these responses reveal a downward trend in servicemen’s perception of their leadership having their best interest at heart. While the survey did not identify reasons for this, the trend has continued and even worsened as the GWOT has progressed

## **Morale**

While one might have expected morale to have dropped given the above findings, responses to the “P/PC Balance” survey suggest otherwise. When former squadron commanders were asked to judge their morale as high, average, or low during their command, 86% answered “high.”<sup>34</sup> Similarly, when these same commanders were asked to judge their squadron members’ morale in the same categories, 74% of them answered “high.”<sup>35</sup> These responses raise an obvious question: What accounts for morale being at this level in spite of the P/PC imbalance? The privilege of command itself was the reason most respondents cited for maintaining a positive morale, and they attributed their squadron members’ morale to a sense of contributing to a rewarding mission.

Additionally, studies conducted by the Army have revealed that the relation between OPTEMPO and morale may be curvilinear. This suggests that morale is low at very low and very high levels of OPTEMPO, while it is high at moderate levels of OPTEMPO.<sup>36</sup> As other findings suggest in this study, airmen are experiencing some of the negative aspects of this OPTEMPO. However, the above survey responses may indicate that the level of OPTEMPO has not yet reached the point at which it is negatively impacting morale. Thus, the question then becomes, at what point will it?

### **Next Generation of Leaders**

Squadron commanders were also asked in the “P/PC Balance” survey if they espouse and practice mission first, people first, or a balance of the two. Twenty six percent responded “mission first,” 4% responded “people first,” 62% responded “balance of the two,” and 7% responded with some combination of the three.<sup>37</sup> In contrast, 57% of the survey respondents viewed group/wing commanders as advocating a mission-first

philosophy and 80% viewed the Air Force as an institution doing so.<sup>38</sup> This may indicate a changing philosophy among the next generation of leaders and those they supervise.

These responses may also indicate the upcoming generation of leaders views balance not just at work, but in their lives, as a more important factor than did their predecessors. When asked in the survey if they had a healthy balance of work and family while they were in command, 50% of the former squadron commanders responded “no.”<sup>39</sup> These respondents expected their leadership position to cause their lives to be imbalanced at times. However, they were frustrated that such an imbalance has become the norm – not the exception.

### **Assessment**

The findings in this chapter reveal that the Air Force is still effectively performing its operational mission despite its P/PC imbalance caused by reduced manpower and increased OPTEMPO. However, at least one element of that operational mission – airlift – is stressed beyond other elements due to the critical role it serves in support of ground forces in OIF and OEF. Security and intelligence are also two key support elements that have suffered varying degrees of mission degradation. Thus, while the Air Force’s operational missions have not yet suffered a similar fate, the longer key support missions are unable to perform at their optimum level, the more likely such a fate will be realized.

Based on this study’s findings, therefore, Stephen Covey is only partially correct in his assertion that effectiveness is achieved through P/PC balance. These findings reveal that the Air Force has achieved effectiveness despite its current state of P/PC imbalance. However, after operating in that state of imbalance since the GWOT began, there are growing indications that the Air Force will struggle to maintain its mission

effectiveness if it has to continue to operate in such a state for the long term. Thus, Stephen Covey's P/PC Balance principle appears most applicable to long term effectiveness. As for the short term, this study has revealed that mission effectiveness *can* – and in some cases *must* – be achieved with greater focus on “P” due to the critical nature of the mission. One could argue that OEF and OIF are such missions. The key, then, lies in knowing the point at which the P/PC imbalance begins to degrade rather than enhance mission success. This study has revealed that the Air Force is approaching that point.

P/PC imbalance also has several second and third order effects associated with it. The findings from this study have shown that P/PC imbalance can negatively impact retention. However, as was the case with the mission, this negative impact appears to occur in the long term as opposed to the short term. A review of first term retention data of several AFSCs in ACC, AMC, and AETC suggests that retention rates increased immediately following 9-11 compared to prior to 9-11.<sup>40</sup> Yet those rates have been less evident in 2006.<sup>41</sup> In fact, in some AFSCs, rates are lower in 2006 than they were prior to 9-11.<sup>42</sup> Fortunately, the Air Force continues to be able to be very selective in who it recruits. However, as the duration of OIF and OEF grows, it is important that the Air Force recognize the impact the GWOT may have on retaining those very people.

Responses from the “P/PC Balance” survey indicated that most squadron commanders view the Air Force as practicing a more mission-focused philosophy while espousing a philosophy of balance between mission and people.<sup>43</sup> These respondents view this inconsistency as undermining the PC aspect of the P/PC balance. As a result, approximately one half of the respondents consider what they perceive as the Air Force's

mission-first philosophy to be in conflict with the Air Force's priorities and nearly a third viewed this philosophy to be in conflict with the Air Force's core values.<sup>44</sup> Thus, these findings illustrate how P/PC imbalance can potentially undermine Air Force values if allowed to continue for the long term.

While one might have expected morale to have dropped given the other findings in this study, responses from the "P/PC Balance" survey suggested otherwise. The overwhelming majority of respondents stated that they and their squadron members maintained "high" morale.<sup>45</sup> The privilege of command was the reason most respondents cited for maintaining a positive morale, and the pride of contributing to a rewarding mission was the reason they most cited for their squadron members' morale.

Other studies conducted by the Army have revealed that the relation between OPTEMPO and morale may be curvilinear. This suggests that morale is low at very low and very high levels of OPTEMPO, while it is high at moderate levels of OPTEMPO.<sup>46</sup> The "P/PC Balance" survey responses may indicate that the level of OPTEMPO has not yet reached the point at which it is negatively impacting morale. While at face value this appears to be a positive revelation, it then demands the question, how close is the OPTEMPO to reaching such a point? The following two chapters address efforts that are underway, planned, and recommended to prevent P/PC imbalance from continuing throughout the duration of the GWOT and negatively impacting today and tomorrow's Air Force personnel and mission.

#### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> *Air Force Key Talking Points*. February 2007, Vol 2, Edition 2.

<sup>2</sup> General T. Michael Moseley, Chief of Staff of the Air Force. *HAC-D Readiness Hearing Written Testimony*, 18 January 2007, 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 9

<sup>4</sup> *Air For Key Talking Points*.

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- <sup>5</sup> General T. Michael Moseley, 9.
- <sup>6</sup> Major Jairam, Shashi J., "Security Forces Posture," *Headquarters United States Air Force Message*, January 2007.
- <sup>7</sup> "Bullet Background Paper on Impact of In-Lieu-Of Taskings on ACC Intelligence Units.," Air Combat Command, Intelligence Directorate, Requirements Division (ACC/A2R), November 2006.
- <sup>8</sup> Master Sergeant Luis Reyes-Agosto, 70 IW Career Assistance Advisor, to Lt Col Aldon Purdham, National Defense Fellow, Institute for Defense Analyses, E-mail, Subject: ACC Retention Data 1996-2006, 6 December 2006.
- <sup>9</sup> Master Sergeant Luis Reyes-Agosto, 70 IW Career Assistance Advisor, to Lt Col Aldon Purdham, National Defense Fellow, Institute for Defense Analyses, E-mail, Subject: AMC Retention Data 1996-2006, 6 December 2006.
- <sup>10</sup> Master Sergeant Luis Reyes-Agosto, 70 IW Career Assistance Advisor, to Lt Col Aldon Purdham, National Defense Fellow, Institute for Defense Analyses, E-mail, Subject: AETC Retention Data 1996-2006, 6 December 2006.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., Master Sergeant Reyes-Agosto E-mails on ACC, AMC, and AETC (Endnotes 8-10).
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Master Sergeant Luis Reyes-Agosto, 70 IW Career Assistance Advisor, to Lt Col Aldon Purdham, National Defense Fellow, Institute for Defense Analyses, E-mail, Subject: ACC Retention Data 1996-2006, 6 December 2006.
- <sup>14</sup> Master Sergeant Luis Reyes-Agosto, 70 IW Career Assistance Advisor, to Lt Col Aldon Purdham, National Defense Fellow, Institute for Defense Analyses, E-mail, Subject: AETC Retention Data 1996-2006, 6 December 2006.
- <sup>15</sup> Master Sergeant Luis Reyes-Agosto, 70 IW Career Assistance Advisor, to Lt Col Aldon Purdham, National Defense Fellow, Institute for Defense Analyses, E-mail, Subject: AMC Retention Data 1996-2006, 6 December 2006.
- <sup>16</sup> General T. Michael Moseley, 8.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Aldon E. Purdham, Jr., "P/PC Balance" Survey, (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University/CADRE, 2006).
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> *Military Times* Poll, On-Line. Internet. Available at [www.militarycity.com/polls/2006poll\\_morale.php](http://www.militarycity.com/polls/2006poll_morale.php).
- <sup>29</sup> *Military Times* Poll, On-Line. Internet. Available at [www.militarycity.com/polls/2005\\_chart1.php](http://www.militarycity.com/polls/2005_chart1.php); [www.militarycity.com/polls/2004\\_chart1.php](http://www.militarycity.com/polls/2004_chart1.php).
- <sup>30</sup> *Military Times* Poll, On-Line. Internet. Available at [www.militarycity.com/polls/2006poll\\_morale.php](http://www.militarycity.com/polls/2006poll_morale.php).
- <sup>31</sup> *Military Times* Poll, On-Line. Internet. Available at [www.militarycity.com/polls/2005\\_chart1.php](http://www.militarycity.com/polls/2005_chart1.php); [www.militarycity.com/polls/2004\\_chart1.php](http://www.militarycity.com/polls/2004_chart1.php).
- <sup>32</sup> *Military Times* Poll, On-Line. Internet. Available at [www.militarycity.com/polls/2006poll\\_morale.php](http://www.militarycity.com/polls/2006poll_morale.php).
- <sup>33</sup> *Military Times* Poll, On-Line. Internet. Available at [www.militarycity.com/polls/2005\\_chart1.php](http://www.militarycity.com/polls/2005_chart1.php); [www.militarycity.com/polls/2004\\_chart1.php](http://www.militarycity.com/polls/2004_chart1.php).
- <sup>34</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Purdham, Jr., "P/PC Balance" Survey.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>36</sup> Ann Huffman, Amy Adler, Carol Dolan, and Carl Andre; Castro, "The Impact of Operations Tempo on Turnover Intentions of Army Personnel;" *Military Psychology*; 2005, 196.
- <sup>37</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Purdham, Jr., "P/PC Balance" Survey.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>40</sup> MSgt Luis Reyes-Agosto, 70 IW Career Assistance Advisor, to Lt Col Aldon Purdham, National Defense Fellow, Institute for Defense Analyses. E-mails – Subject: ACC Retention Data 1996-2006, Subject: AMC Retention Data 1996-2006, and Subject: AETC Retention Data 1996-2006. All 6 December 2006.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Purdham, Jr., “P/PC Balance” Survey.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Huffman, Adler, Dolan, and Castro, 196.

## Chapter 4

### **Air Force Efforts to Mitigate P/PC Imbalance**

*In a world where downsizing forces us to do more with less, we must empower the team.*

- Captain Charles Plumb (US Navy, Retired)  
Motivational Speaker and Vietnam War POW

The Air Force has initiated numerous efforts to mitigate the P/PC imbalance addressed in the two previous chapters. This chapter addresses six such efforts, with particular emphasis placed on the Air Force's primary effort – AFSO 21.

### **AFSO 21**

Through AFSO 21's process improvement efforts, the Air Force intends to develop a standardized method and mindset for reducing waste in all of the processes used to execute its mission. AFSO 21 is a combination of process improvement methodology and tools, with approximately 80% of that combination involving Lean principles and the remaining 20% involving Six Sigma principles.<sup>1</sup>

Lean, the foundation of AFSO 21, divides all processes into three primary categories – value-added, necessary waste, and unnecessary waste. “Valued-added” are key processes that must be continued, but may require improvements. Necessary waste, such as towing aircraft, should also be continued, while unnecessary waste should be eliminated. Lean has five guiding principles that should be applied in improving a given process. These include “specify value,” “identify the value stream,” flow, pull, and perfection.<sup>2</sup> Each of these is addressed below.

The specification of value can only be performed by the customer. Once that is determined, any action taken or time spent that doesn't add value to a product can be

identified as waste. Next, “identifying the value stream” involves examining every aspect associated with creating and delivering value to the end customer. “Flow,” in turn, is the sequencing of value-creating activities resulting in seamless rhythm with minimal delays. The more times work starts and stops along a given value stream, the less flow one has in that process. “Pull” entails pulling products from the customer end, not pushing them from the production end without regard for actual demand.<sup>3</sup> Finally, perfection involves the pursuit of completely eliminating waste so that all activities along the value stream create value. By applying these five principles, Lean seeks to eliminate the following seven types of waste: defects, over production, excess inventory, motion, over processing, transportation, waiting, and injuries.<sup>4</sup>

Six Sigma, meanwhile, has six underlying principles, to include sort, straighten, scrub, standardize, sustain, and safety.<sup>5</sup> “Sort” entails reviewing everything in one’s area and removing anything that is unnecessary. “Straighten” calls for remaining items to be arranged for ease of use. “Scrub” ensures that everything is clean and well maintained. “Standardize” involves creating standards and keeping them within view. “Sustain” ensures all people know their assigned tasks and what is expected. Finally, “safety” entails identifying and eliminating unsafe conditions.

The AFSO 21 Program Office has organized the key Air Force processes into three categories – governing, core, and enabling.<sup>6</sup> Governing is divided into two key processes – “plan/execute strategic initiatives” and “manage programs and processes.” Core has four key processes, to include “develop warfighters,” “develop and sustain warfighting systems,” “deployment and distribution chain,” and “conduct air, space, cyber operations.” Lastly, enabling processes consist of “care for people,” “provide IT

support,” “provide infrastructure,” and “manage financial resources.” An Air Force four-star general and three-star general is serving as the lead and co-lead respectively for each of these ten key processes.

AFSO 21 is still in its infancy as it has not yet been fully introduced to the mainstream Air Force. Undoubtedly, AFSO 21 will be compared to other former management initiatives that were also intended to improve the Air Force’s business practices, most notably TQM. The AFSO 21 Program Office contends that AFSO 21 will prove to be far more successful than TQM. It argues that that TQM failed for a variety of reasons, most notably because it was a “huge set of tools with very generic and vague definitions as to who and how to apply it.”<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, Lean techniques, which are the benchmark of AFSO 21, are very specific and well-defined. For that reason, in particular, the Air Force expects AFSO 21 to achieve what previous programs never did – eliminate waste.<sup>8</sup>

### **What Can The Air Force Stop Doing?**

The magnitude of the personnel reductions and increased OPTEMPO suggests that not only do processes need to be improved, but unnecessary processes need to be identified and eliminated, as well. General Moseley initiated this latter effort in 2006 by tasking MAJCOM Commanders to answer the question, “What can we stop doing?”<sup>9</sup> In response to this tasking, Headquarters Air Force Personnel Directorate (AF/A1) received over 250 inputs, which were grouped into three main categories, to include process improvement, divestiture items, and money savers.<sup>10</sup>

Process improvement involves identifying new ways of accomplishing the mission through improved technology and eliminating a “we’ve always done it this way”

mindset. MAJCOMs included evaluations, awards, decorations, and additional duties in this category as well as the recommendation to make more processes electronic as opposed to manual. Divestiture items entail eliminating redundant and labor intensive jobs. MAJCOMS proposed numerous initiatives, to include removing training requirements that do not increase or preserve combat capability; allowing real-world deployments to count as Operational Readiness Exercises (ORE), Operational Readiness Inspections (ORI), and Unit Compliance Inspections (UCI); and eliminating various additional duties.<sup>11</sup>

Lastly, money savers provide room for reducing economic impacts. Among the money savers recommended by the MAJCOMs were eliminating the three-year PCS requirement; implementing a vehicle decal that reduces the need for gate guards; discontinuing air shows, open houses, and base newspapers; and allowing bases to decide which support programs to offer.<sup>12</sup> As of this writing, AF/A1 is conducting a functional review of the above inputs by coordinating with Air Staff directorates and the AFSO 21 Team. In particular, it is closely examining the worthiness of the Air Force's ancillary training and additional duties.<sup>13</sup>

### **AFSC Consolidation**

The third effort to mitigate the P/PC imbalance in the Air Force is AFSC consolidation. This effort includes the six following objectives: align common and complementary tasks and competencies for future missions, look across functional boundaries, consider "over specialized" AFSCs, design for a smaller and leaner force, maximize force utilization flexibility, and challenge officer and enlisted parallelism.<sup>14</sup> Among the candidates for AFSC consolidation are personnel/manpower and services

officers; fighter/unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) enlisted realignments and mergers, which include life support, avionics, structures, and crew chief AFSCs; and the communications/information career field.<sup>15</sup> The latter AFSC includes numerous converging and complementary skills sets that will likely be clustered around four key categories, to include network operations, radio frequency/terrestrial systems, airfield/command and control radar systems, and multimedia services.<sup>16</sup> In an effort to achieve these consolidation objectives, AF/A1 is in the process of applying constrained manpower against operational competencies in accordance with the priorities of the SECAF and CSAF.<sup>17</sup>

### **MAJCOM Restructuring**

While primarily intended to allow the Air Force to better train as it would fight, the transformation of the Air Force's MAJCOMs into Warfighting Headquarters (WFHQs) is the fourth effort to mitigate the personnel reductions and increased OPTEMPO. This effort was described by the Secretary Wynne in his testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee on 2 March 2006, when he stated the following:

These [WFHQs] will be positioned globally, replacing our old Cold War structures and providing the Joint Force Commander (JFC) with the most effective means to lead air and space forces in support of the National Security objectives. These forces will be organized and resourced to plan and deliver air and space power in support of the Combatant Commanders, enabling a seamless transition from peacetime to wartime operations.<sup>18</sup>

This WFHQ concept will consist of two commands in the continental United States (CONUS) – Air Mobility Command and Air Combat Command – that will provide forces and base operating support, policy, and advice to worldwide customers.<sup>19</sup> These commands will also centralize the Program Objective Memorandum (POM) at Headquarters Air Force. Some MAJCOMs will become functional headquarters, without

Base Operating Support (BOS) as well as installation and infrastructure responsibilities. Such MAJCOMs include Air Force Space Command, Air Force Special Operations Command, Air Force Material Command, and Air Education and Training Command.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, commanders of Outside CONUS (OCONUS) MAJCOMs will be responsible for alliance and coalition issues, engagement, security assistance, and senior officer management. These MAJCOMS include Pacific Air Forces and US Air Forces Europe.<sup>21</sup> As for the OCONUS WFHQs, they will be responsible for their respective CAOCs, which plan and prosecute combat operations. Their Air Force Forces (AFF) staff will “reach back” for base and policy support. Through such MAJCOM restructuring, the Air Force intends to find the “sweet spot” between warfighting capability, skill set sustainment, and command and control (C2) management structure.

### **Aerospace Expeditionary Forces (AEFs)**

The fifth effort to mitigate the P/PC imbalance in the Air Force is AEFs. The Air Force implemented the AEF concept in January 2000 to respond to the increasing number of contingencies that call for worldwide deployments. In particular, this concept is intended to bring predictability to deployment rotations by reducing OPTEMPO and enhancing readiness. It seeks to do so by managing Air Force resources in a way that spreads the OPTEMPO more evenly and achieves more predictability in deployments. Except for a major surge operation, airmen are deployed for 120 days every twenty months, and they are made aware of such a deployment well in advance.<sup>22</sup> They spend the remaining sixteen months of the AEF cycle completing routine tasks, such as conducting training and exercises.

All Air Force personnel, to include active, Reserve, and Guard – otherwise known as the Total Force – participate in the AEF cycle. AEF is divided into ten force packages, each with a broad complement of Air Force weapon systems drawn from geographically separated units.<sup>23</sup> Each AEF has approximately 150-175 aircraft and 15,000 airmen.<sup>24</sup> These packages are able to respond within 72 hours of any unexpected contingency. The personnel comprising these packages are also trained and tailored to meet commanders' needs in a wide a range of contingency operations.

While the AEF concept has been successful in providing greater predictability and equitability to the Air Force deployment process, there are still some inequities among airmen regarding deployment frequency and duration. As stated earlier in the study, C-17 crews were the most frequently deployed aircrews in the Air Force in 2006, and C-130 crews followed close behind them.<sup>25</sup> General Moseley added to this claim in his testimony to the House Appropriations Committee in January 2007 when he stated that “one of AMC’s aircraft depart an airfield somewhere on the globe every 90 seconds, every day, 365 days a year.”<sup>26</sup> Further, the study also previously addressed the increased deployment activity of other career fields, particularly security and intelligence. In these two cases, OPTEMPO has placed some of their personnel in a one-to-one dwell status.

### **Total Force Initiative**

To offset the demands being placed on active duty airmen, the Air Force has initiated a sixth effort known as the Total Force Initiative, which synergizes all Air Force components for maximum proficiency. As part of this effort, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members support the Air Force’s global commitments and conduct vital homeland defense and security missions. Secretary Wynne, in his testimony to the

Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2006, stated the following about the Air Force's Total Force initiatives:

Total Force initiatives will integrate Air Force components into missions critical to future warfighting: Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR); Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) operations; and space operations. These missions are ideally suited for the Guard and Reserve since many provide direct support to the Joint warfighter from US locations. Using this approach will improve our operational effectiveness, reduce our overseas footprint, reduce reliance on involuntary mobilization and provide more suitability for our Airmen and their civilian employers.<sup>27</sup>

While this approach has helped to absorb some of the OPTEMPO burden on active duty airmen, Air Force reservists are experiencing the same OPTEMPO stress as their active duty counterparts. In fact, this situation became evident as early as 2005. In its 28 November 2005 issue, the *Air Force Times* reported "There's a lot of talk lately on Capitol Hill about how reserve units are overextended and suffering retention shortfalls."<sup>28</sup> This same article added, "With the war in Iraq and the deployment of reserve forces for relief efforts and other tasks, our reserve forces will spend more time away from their workplaces in defense of the nation, supporting a demanding OPTEMPO and training to maintain readiness."<sup>29</sup>

The impact of reservists' deployments on their civilian employers has also become a growing concern. In its 29 January 2007 edition, *Air Force Times* reported that, while discriminating against someone because of his military obligations is illegal, 51% of employers who responded to an informal, on-line poll by *Workforce Management* magazine said 'they would not hire an employee who is a citizen-soldier "if they knew that a military reservist or National Guard member could be called up and taken away from their job for an indeterminate amount of time."<sup>30</sup> This situation may not improve any time soon based on a recent announcement by Defense Secretary Gates. In January

2007, he stated that involuntary mobilizations would be limited to no more than twelve months, but he also rescinded a policy that capped at 24 months the cumulative amount of time an individual could be involuntarily mobilized.<sup>31</sup> Thus, while each involuntary mobilization will be shorter, the number of times a reservist could be mobilized no longer has a limit. This policy could have negative long term effects on the Total Force Initiative.

### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> “Air Force Smart Operations for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Awareness Training” briefing (Air Education and Training Command, United States Air Force, 2006), slide 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., slide 13.

<sup>3</sup> “Lean Manufacturing,” On-Line. Internet. Available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lean\\_manufacturing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lean_manufacturing).

<sup>4</sup> “Air Force Smart Operations for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Awareness Training” briefing, slide 29.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., slides 20-25.

<sup>6</sup> “Air Force Smart Operations 21” briefing, (Air Education and Training Command, United States Air Force), “Key AF Processes” slide.

<sup>7</sup> “Air Force Smart Operations for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Awareness Training” briefing, slide 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> General T. Michael Moseley, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, ‘CORONA Fall ’06 Discussion Topics – Priorities and Focus Areas, “What Can We Stop Doing?,” and “Road Show” Plan of Attack’ briefing, CORONA Fall 2006 Conference, slide 4.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., slide 5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., slide 6.

<sup>14</sup> Lieutenant General Roger Brady, Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower and Personnel, “AFSC Utilization and Emerging Missions” briefing, 10 Oct 2006, slide 4.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., slide 11.

<sup>18</sup> Michael W. Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force, and General T. Michael Moseley, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, *Testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 2 March 2006, 78.

<sup>19</sup> Lieutenant General Roger Brady, Air Force Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower and Personnel, “Building the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Air Force” briefing, 27 January 2006, slide 18.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., slide 19.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., slide 30.

<sup>22</sup> “Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF), Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force (ASETf), Formerly Air Expeditionary Force.” On-Line. Internet. Available at [www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/usaf/aef-intro.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/usaf/aef-intro.htm).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Bryant Jordan, “Airlift’s Wild Ride – Already Stressed Crews Face a Stern New Test,” *Air Force Times*, 22 January 2007, 8.

<sup>26</sup> General T. Michael Moseley, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, *HAC-D Readiness Hearing Written Testimony*, 18 January 2007, 4.

<sup>27</sup> Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force, and General Moseley, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, *Testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee*, 2 March 2006, 68.

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<sup>28</sup> Alex Keenan, "Reservists Deserve Chance to Take Retired Pay Earlier," *Air Force Times*, 28 November 2005. On-line. Internet. Available at [www.airforcetimes.com/story.php?f=1-292260-1390157.php](http://www.airforcetimes.com/story.php?f=1-292260-1390157.php).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Karen Jowers, "Employers Reluctant to Hire Reservists – Deployment Policy Hurts Job Prospects, Experts Say," *Air Force Times*, 29 January 2007, 29.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 5

### **Recommendations to Restore and Maintain P/PC Balance**

*I began with the idea that there is always a better way to do things, and that, contrary to tradition, the crew's insights might be more profound than even the captain's.*

- Captain D. Michael Abrashoff (US Navy, Retired)  
Leadership Author and Speaker and  
Former Commander, USS Benfold

### **Business Practices**

The previous chapter addressed numerous Air Force efforts to mitigate P/PC imbalance and the personnel reductions and OPTEMPO increases that are largely responsible for that imbalance. This chapter offers additional recommendations to assist in doing the same, beginning with those pertaining to the Air Force's business practices.

#### **Stop Doing Things That Should No Longer Be Done**

Jim Collins makes the below assertion in his book, *Good to Great – Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't*.

Most of us lead busy but undisciplined lives. We have ever-expanding “to do” lists, trying to build momentum by doing, doing, doing – and doing more. And it rarely works. Those who built the good-to-great companies, however, made as much use of “stop doing” lists as “to do” lists. They displayed a remarkable discipline to unplug all sorts of extraneous junk.<sup>1</sup>

This assertion applies not only to companies, but to military services, as well. As stated in the previous chapter, General Moseley has initiated an effort to identify those things that the Air Force should stop doing. Judging from the responses on the “P/PC Balance” survey, this initiative certainly has merit. On the survey, respondents were asked if their squadrons had time to effectively train for mission requirements and if additional duties took away from their units' ability to meet mission requirements. While 33% of the respondents replied that they did not have time to effectively train, 56% stated that

additional duties take away from their unit's ability to meet mission requirements. This latter response speaks directly to the above assertion from Jim Collins, since it implies that "busy" work is keeping airmen from their mission-critical work.

In his book, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork*, John Maxwell shares the following account:

You have probably seen teams led by people who don't understand this truth. For example, they have million-dollar salespeople spending half of their time bogged down in paperwork rather than making calls on potential clients. If the organization would hire someone who enjoyed administrative tasks, not only would the salespeople be happier and more productive, but the gains in sales would more than make up for the cost of that support person.<sup>2</sup>

This account is similar to that described in many of the survey responses, particularly with regard to the myriad additional and non-mission-essential duties respondents claimed detracted from their ability to perform their mission. As the Air Force decreases its manpower by an additional 40,000 personnel in the next five years, the situation described by John Maxwell is only more likely to be experienced by squadron commanders unless the very duties they stated in their comments are eliminated or significantly reduced.

### **Time Management**

Given the above findings, it is crucial that airmen optimize their time management in an effort to fulfill their mission requirements. Stephen Covey argues that two factors – urgent and important – define activities that involve our time. He describes urgent as something that "requires immediate attention and acts on us."<sup>3</sup> While urgent activities "press on us and insist on action...they are unimportant!"<sup>4</sup> Important activities, on the other hand, are related to results. Covey contends that "if something is important, it contributes to your mission, your values, and your high priority goals."<sup>5</sup> Given these

descriptions, urgent matters involve a reactive response, while important matters – that are not urgent – are those requiring more initiative and proactivity.<sup>6</sup> Thus, without a clear delineation of what is important, one will easily be diverted to responding to the urgent.

Covey further breaks down time management into four quadrants. Quadrant I entails both urgent and important. It involves significant results that warrant immediate attention. Quadrant I activities are normally referred to as “crises” or “problems.” Quadrant I often consumes people, relegating them to crises managers. If one allows himself to focus on Quadrant I, those activities – crises, problems, deadlines – will soon dominate him. Quadrant III involves urgent, but not important activities. People in this quadrant spend a lot of time reacting to things that are urgent, assuming they are also important, when, in fact, the urgency of the matters are usually based on someone else’s priorities that are not in concert with one’s own.<sup>7</sup> Quadrant IV is the worst quadrant of all regarding time management, because it entails activities that are not urgent and not important.<sup>8</sup>

That leaves Quadrant II, which is the most productive quadrant of time management. It involves activities that are not urgent but are important. Such activities “deal with things like building relationships, writing a personal mission statement, long-range planning, preventive maintenance, preparation – all those things we know we need to do, but somehow seldom get around to doing, because they aren’t urgent.”<sup>9</sup> People in this quadrant still have Quadrant I crises that demand immediate attention, but their time is not preoccupied on such activities. Rather, “they keep P and PC in balance by focusing on the important, but not urgent, high-leverage, capacity-building activities of Quadrant II.”<sup>10</sup> Ultimately, Covey addresses the true significance of Quadrant II management

when he opines that its objective “...is to manage our lives effectively – from a center of sound principles, from a knowledge of our personal mission, with a focus on the important as well as the urgent, and within the framework of maintaining a balance between increasing our production and increasing our production capability.”<sup>11</sup>

In light of the importance of time management, four questions on this issue were included on the “P/PC Balance” survey completed by the former squadron commanders. The questions were intended to determine the percentage of time that respondents spend in each quadrant. Below are those questions.

1. What percentage of your time did you spend working on important-urgent activities (crises, pressing problems, deadline-driven projects)? – Quadrant I
2. What percentage of your time did you spend working on important-not urgent activities (relationship building, new opportunities, planning, production)? – Quadrant II
3. What percentage of your time did you spend working on unimportant-urgent activities (certain additional duties, non essential tasks, calls, e-mails, meetings)? – Quadrant III
4. What percentage of your time did you spend working on unimportant-not urgent activities (certain additional duties, busy work, time wasters, trivia)? – Quadrant IV

The responses indicated that squadron commanders spent an average of 37%, 25%, 27%, and 11% of their time in Quadrants I, II, III, and IV respectively.<sup>12</sup> These results reveal some troubling implications. First, squadron commanders spent more time on Quadrant I (important-urgent) activities, such as crises and pressing problems, than they did on Quadrant II (important-not urgent) activities. This implies that squadron commanders are reacting to crises and pressing problems more so than they are preventing problems from occurring in the first place. Further, their preoccupation with

problems is degrading their ability to build relationships with their airmen, identify new opportunities, and plan for the future. Second, and worse yet, commanders spend more time on Quadrant III unimportant-not urgent activities, such as calls and meetings, than they do on Quadrant II activities. In fact, when the responses from Quadrant III and IV are added together, commanders spent 38% on activities in these two quadrants. Thus, more than a third of commanders' time is spent on activities that Covey describes as "ineffective." Covey states, "Effective people stay out of Quadrants III and IV, because, urgent or not, they aren't important. They also shrink Quadrant I down by spending more time in Quadrant II."<sup>13</sup>

Given the degree to which airmen today are being tasked to do more with less, the Air Force can ill afford to have its airmen's time used so inefficiently. For this reason, it's paramount that airmen at all levels, particularly leaders who are tasking other airmen, recognize and differentiate between tasks that are mission-critical and those that are not. Ultimately, all airmen need to more closely scrutinize tasks to ensure the investment of time required to complete them results in a sufficient return of that investment. Long term solutions are unlikely to be reached if airmen, especially commanders, aren't able to spend more time in Quadrant II activities. Otherwise, they will spend more time responding to the challenges addressed in this study than they will trying to solve them.

### **Process Improvements**

The above discussion illustrates the importance of AFSO 21 and the need for the Air Force to fully institute and facilitate that program throughout the Air Force. As stated previously in this study, AFSO 21 is being initiated to eliminate and improve business processes in an effort to mitigate the personnel reductions and increased OPTEMPO

facing today's airmen. In order for AFSO 21 to be effective, the Air Force must correctly answer the following question posed by John Maxwell, "Will you do what you have always done, or will you try to do more of what you think you should do?"<sup>14</sup> Ultimately, the success of AFSO 21 will hinge on two key factors. First, airmen at junior and mid levels, who are actively engaged in their respective processes, will have to be proactive in identifying process shortfalls and developing process improvements. Second, mid- and senior-level decision makers in the Air Force will need to be receptive to new processes that may be inconsistent with historical paradigms and practices. Based on the natural tendency to resist change, the latter may be more challenging than the former.

### **Team Concept**

In light of on-going manpower reductions and high OPTEMPO, it's more important than ever that the Air Force leverage the ability of its airmen to the fullest. One way of enhancing that effort is through greater development and employment of the team concept. As Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith point out in their book, *The Wisdom of Teams – Creating the High-Performance Organization*, "real team performance [achieves an] impact beyond the sum of individual parts."<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the best example of this practice today is found in a CAOC. The CAOC is comprised of individuals of multiple backgrounds who form various teams, such as strategy, plans, operations, and ISR. Individuals on these teams work together to achieve a common goal and, in turn, the teams work together in order for the CAOC to successfully achieve its airpower mission.

Katzenbach and Smith also contend that "in any situation requiring the real-time combination of multiple skills, experiences, and judgments, a team inevitably gets better

results than a collection of individuals operating within confined job roles and responsibilities.”<sup>16</sup> Given this, the Air Force should continue to optimize the team concept in its pursuit of the third core value – excellence in all we do. Since the reduction of personnel to date is hardest felt at the local area, it is especially important that the Air Force expand its use of the virtual domain to create teams of geographically-separated experts who can leverage their skills by working together on given projects. Video Teleconferences (VTC), information work space (IWS) conferences, and wikipedia.com sessions are among the best means of doing this. At the USAF CHECKMATE conference in March 2007 in Alexandria, Virginia, the latter approach was addressed as the means of having Air Force strategists assigned across the globe work together to formulate Air Force strategies on various employment options. This is just one example of efforts that should be mirrored throughout the Air Force.

### **Servant Leader Ethos**

The Air Force has long emphasized its second core value of service before self. This core value has carried with it the expectation that airmen should place the mission and others before themselves. However, the expectation that leaders should place their subordinates before themselves – a concept known as servant leadership – has been less emphasized. Authors Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges describe the importance of this responsibility in stating the following:

Once people have a picture of where you want to take them and why, the leadership emphasis switches to the second role of leadership – implementation. The leader now becomes a servant of the vision, by serving the people who are being asked to act according to the vision and accomplish the goals. When that occurs, the traditional pyramid hierarchy must be turned upside down. In this scenario, leaders serve and respond to the needs of their people, training and developing them to soar like eagles so they can accomplish established goals...<sup>17</sup>

While this expectation may have been intended to be inherent in the Air Force's second core value, the fact that few squadron commanders are familiar with servant leadership indicates that this intent has not been achieved. In the "P/PC Balance" survey, respondents were asked if they were familiar with the concept of servant leadership. Despite the fact that "service before self" is an Air Force core value, only 58% responded that they were familiar with this concept and many of them acknowledged learning of this concept from outside the Air Force.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps even more striking is the fact that only 35% of the respondents who indicated they were familiar with servant leadership felt that the Air Force practices this concept.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, 58% of these same respondents replied that their group and wing commanders practiced servant leadership and 96% stated that they personally practiced this concept.<sup>20</sup>

According to these findings, respondents believe that leaders at the "grass roots level" of the Air Force are better practitioners of servant leadership than is the Air Force as an institution. These results closely correspond with those addressed earlier in the study regarding the practice of a "mission first," "people first," or balanced philosophy by the Air Force, group/wing commanders, and respondents themselves. Eighty percent stated that the Air Force practiced "mission first," while 67% and 62% of these same respondents expressed that they and their group/wing commanders practiced a balance of mission and people respectively.<sup>21</sup> Thus, while squadron commanders see themselves and their immediate chain of command practicing philosophies of mission-people balance and servant leadership, they do not perceive the Air Force as an institution doing so. The discussion that follows offers several recommendations to facilitate such a culture change within the Air Force.

## **Professional Military Education (PME)**

While many aspects impact the Air Force's culture, perhaps one of those with the greatest impact is PME. This study sought to determine this impact by examining responses to the "P/PC Balance" survey question that asked whether Air Force PME advocates a philosophy of "mission first," "people first," or a balance of the two. Thirty-one percent responded "mission first," 9% responded "people first," and 40% responded "balance of the two."<sup>22</sup> As for the remaining twenty percent, 11% replied "not sure" and 9% replied that PME doesn't address this issue.<sup>23</sup> Of note, these replies are similar to those provided by the respondents when asked if the Air Force espouses "mission first," "people first," or a balance of the two. The responses to this question were 36%, 13%, and 44% respectively.<sup>24</sup> The similarity of the responses to these two questions indicates that respondents lack clear guidance from both PME and the Air Force on these critical leadership philosophies.

The following may provide some explanation for this confusion. "Service before self" is addressed in PME as a core value. *Air Force Doctrine Document 1-1 (AFDD 1-1) – Leadership and Force Development*, which is a part of the curriculum for Air and Space Basic Course and Squadron Officer School, states that service before self "represents an abiding dedication to the age-old military virtue of selfless dedication to duty at all times and in all circumstances – including putting one's life at risk if called to do so."<sup>25</sup> AFDD 1-1 also describes people as "the Air Force's most critical asset."<sup>26</sup> Thus, both of these references communicate the important – and selfless – role of people. However, they do so only in the context of their criticality to the fulfillment of the Air Force mission. Neither addresses the important – and selfless – role a leader is to play in

overseeing the well-being of the very people performing the mission. This responsibility ensures people are properly cared for, trained, and resourced.

Air Command and Staff College (ACSC), meanwhile, has elements in its curriculum, such as mentoring seminars and commander panels, that peripherally address these issues.<sup>27</sup> These elements provide ACSC students with a tremendous opportunity to hear first-hand from one who has served or is currently serving as a commander.

However, they are not specifically dedicated to a leader's role in "serving" his people and their needs. Lastly, due to the strategic leadership context of Air War College, its curriculum does not focus specifically on this element of leadership. Nonetheless, it should be noted that its Leadership and Ethics curriculum does address the importance of taking care of people.

One article in that curriculum, entitled "Toxic Leadership," effectively points out the damage that can be inflicted on an organization by a leader who fails to care for his people appropriately. In fact, this article also offers recommendations on how the military can better recognize and weed out such leaders. Additionally, a section from John Maxwell's book, *The 360 Degree Leader*, is incorporated in that same curriculum.

It states:

Most top leaders focus on two things: the vision and the bottom line. The vision is what usually excites us most, and taking care of the bottom line keeps us in business. But between the vision and the bottom line are all the people in the organization. What's ironic is that if you ignore the people and only pay attention to these other two things, you will lose the people and the vision (and probably the bottom line). But if you focus on the people, you have the potential to win the people, the vision, and the bottom line.<sup>28</sup>

This reference discusses people in the context of the P/PC Balance principle, but no such association is made in the curriculum. PME can be modified, however, to address the

important relationship between and balance of mission and people. Further, it can also educate airmen on the critical role that servant leadership plays in both of these factors. As Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges state, “From a practical point of view, servant leadership best serves the dual objectives of effective leadership – results and relationships.”<sup>29</sup> Greater focus in PME on servant leadership should, therefore, help to foster that very successful combination of objectives in the Air Force.

## **Training**

“In [servant leadership], leaders serve and are responsive to the needs of their people, training and developing them.”<sup>30</sup> With these words, Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges express the criticality of providing people with the resources, particularly training, that they need to accomplish a given mission. Yet, the data presented earlier in this study indicates that elements of the Air Force are suffering from insufficient training because of inadequate manning, high OPTEMPO, and miscellaneous tasks that detract from the primary mission. Almost half of the survey respondents stated they do not have an adequate number of personnel in their units’ primary career field. Slightly more than one third of the respondents stated that they don’t have an adequate number of training managers to meet training requirements. And one third of the respondents replied they don’t have time to effectively train.

In their book *Gung Ho!*, which explains how to release the energy and enthusiasm of one’s employees, Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles describe a conversation between a division manager and a plant manager in which the division manager points out the impact of insufficient training. The division manager states, ‘Every time you expect work from people who aren’t trained for it, you sabotage “Gung Ho.”’ Take a look at

your training budget! I spend more on groceries in a month than the whole plant does on skill training in a year.’<sup>31</sup> While airmen have been reluctant to allow the training shortfall described in the above paragraph to negatively impact their “Gung Ho,” it is imperative that the Air Force address this training situation before it not only further impacts morale, but the Air Force mission, as well.

### **Mentorship**

“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.”<sup>32</sup> In his statement, Jack Welch, the former Chief Executive Officer of General Electric, conveys the importance of mentorship. Mentorship is another means of fostering servant leadership in the Air Force culture. However, based on responses in the “P/PC Balance” survey, only 51% of former squadron commanders stated they had a mentor after nearly twenty years in the Air Force.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, 47% stated that they initiated a mentorship program in their squadron, while only 11% indicated that their group or wing commander had a mentorship program that included them. Such results suggest that the Air Force can and should improve in making mentorship a more common practice across all ranks. As stated above, only through mentorship can leaders train and develop their people “to soar like eagles so they can accomplish established goals.”<sup>34</sup>

### **Bottom-Up Feedback**

In his book, *Good to Great – Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don’t*, Jim Collins concludes that great companies have leaders who assemble teams whose members are encouraged and willing to ferociously debate issues eyeball-to-eyeball in search of the best answers. They are also expected to raise concerns and offer

solutions. He illustrates how Wells Fargo outperformed its competition by several fold in practicing this approach, while Bank of America fell behind its competition by surrounding its CEO with “yes” men, who were reluctant to offer ideas or identify problems.<sup>35</sup> Captain D. Michael Abrashoff, in his book *It’s Your Ship – Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy*, also reiterates the importance of letting his crew members feel free to speak up when they had a problem.<sup>36</sup>

The “P/PC Balance” survey results suggest that the Air Force would benefit from making such practices more commonplace. In the survey, respondents who expressed that they had inadequate manpower or equipment were asked if they informed their group commander about these limitations and, if so, did they recommended to their commanders process improvements or tasks that should be stopped. If they did so, they were then asked about the group commander’s reaction to this feedback. One hundred percent of the respondents replied that they informed their group commanders of such limitations, and most recommended process improvements and tasks that should be stopped (87% and 74% respectively).<sup>37</sup> Thus, it appears that squadron commanders were comfortable providing such feedback to their bosses. However, the answers regarding the group commanders’ reactions indicate that group and wing commanders were less comfortable elevating the same feedback up the chain of command.

Of the respondents who stated they proposed process improvements, all stated that their group commanders were supportive of their recommendation as long as the improvements could be made internally to the organization and did not involve a request for more personnel.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, of the respondents who replied that they recommended to their group commander tasks that should be stopped, 75% indicated their group

commanders were empathetic but did not always support the cessation of given tasks and very rarely raised such recommendations up the chain of command.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, group and wing commanders often were willing to support the concerns of their squadron commanders, but their willingness to do so was usually contingent on the ability to correct the problem internally without raising the issue to the next level. Such a practice of solving problems at the lowest possible level is admirable. However, when such a practice prevents superiors from being informed of the demands being placed on airmen and the recommendations that can help mitigate those demands, it can be potentially detrimental to the greater Air Force. General Moseley's initiative to identify what the Air Force can stop doing should help to alleviate this apparent reluctance to air such information up the chain. At the same token, the very fact that the CSAF had to initiate such an effort – as opposed to such an effort originating from the grass-roots level – illustrates the pervasiveness of this practice.

### **System of Accountability**

This study contends that a more robust system of accountability is needed to mitigate the P/PC imbalance. Such a system can be achieved through modification of the Air Force's promotion system and performance report process as well as greater emphasis on personal development programs.

#### **Promotion System**

Today's promotion system largely, if not entirely, rewards an individual based on the mission results one – or one's organization – achieves. For instance, the success of a squadron, group, or wing commander is largely judged by the mission results achieved while that commander was in his respective position of command. Certainly, the

consideration of such a performance factor for promotion is of utmost importance. However, this approach does not ensure if such success benefited the airmen in the unit or if the success was achieved at the expense of those airmen. Thus, mission success alone does not guarantee that a commander's service to, mentorship and training of, and improvement of life for his airmen are considered for his promotion. After all, in a strategic context, these accomplishments will likely have a broader impact on the Air Force, since they involve shaping, growing, and developing the Air Force's future leaders. This ensures today's leaders are not only achieving current success, but that tomorrow's leaders are being prepared to achieve even greater success in the future

### **Officer Performance Report (OPR) Process**

Perhaps the best way to modify the promotion system as discussed above is by also adjusting the most significant factor influencing the promotion system – performance reports. This section focuses on OPRs, although the following recommendations could be incorporated into Enlisted Performance Reports (EPRs), as well, albeit with some modifications. Currently, OPRs are divided into four primary sections – “Impact on Mission Accomplishment,” “Performance Factors,” “Rater Overall Assessment,” and “Additional Rater Overall Assessment.” By definition, the first section, “Impact on Mission Accomplishment,” focuses on the mission.

The second section, “Performance Factors,” is subdivided into six categories – job knowledge, leadership skills, professional qualities, organizational skills, judgment and decisions, and communication skills. Of these, the category that most relates to the factors mentioned above is “leadership skills.” However, while this category consists of many qualities of leadership, it does not include the factors mentioned above, to include

mentorship, process improvement, and training. Further, this section does not involve input. Rather, the rater merely annotates whether the ratee meets standards. While a supervisor may address the above factors in the latter two sections of the OPR, such factors are rarely, if ever, cited. A new OPR format is currently in development. Having been reduced from two pages to one, it is a streamlined version of the existing format. While this change should make the OPR more succinct and hard-hitting, it, too, does not specifically address the aforementioned leadership qualities.

One way in which to overcome this omission for commanders, in particular, is for OPRs to include Unit Climate Assessment (UCA) feedback, which provides unit members' assessment of a commander's mentorship efforts, training programs, influence on morale, and overall impact on the mission, health, and welfare of the unit and its members. As mentioned earlier, Colonel George E. Reed authored an article entitled, "Toxic Leadership," which is included in the Air War College Department of Leadership and Ethics' curriculum for academic year 2007. In his article, he advocates the incorporation of such feedback in the OPR process. As the title suggests, his article focuses on toxic leaders. Such leaders are described as "destructive leaders, focused on visible short-term mission accomplishment, and contributing to an unhealthy command climate with ramifications extending far beyond their tenure."<sup>40</sup>

In his article he contends that raters can be fooled by toxic leaders. In a study he conducted on this subject, one study participant stated, "We have a system that is totally supervisor-centric in terms of incentives, rewards, and punishments."<sup>41</sup> Another participant added, "What we don't know is what the subordinates and peers think. I would submit to you, and most would agree, that people we have worked for who are

toxic leaders – the subordinates know and the superiors do not. The challenge is to get that input.”<sup>42</sup> An obvious means of doing so is the UCA.

This study is not suggesting that the Air Force’s mission-people imbalance should be associated with toxic leadership in the Air Force. Rather, the above information is meant to highlight the fact that if toxic leaders cannot be identified through the existing OPR process, it is only reasonable to conclude that leaders that constantly maintain a P/PC imbalance are that much harder to identify. Thus, this study recommends the aforementioned OPR change. However, as Colonel Reed points out, there are some concerns in doing so. He references the following: not all subordinates are necessarily competent to evaluate their boss, subordinates may not have the perspective necessary to evaluate the whole person, leaders may pander to subordinates to gain their favor, and such a multi-rater or 360-degree evaluation program would be difficult to implement.<sup>43</sup> To overcome this obstacle, such a change to the OPR system would have to be implemented from the top down, beginning at the general officer level and proceeding down to field and company grades.

### **Personal Development Program**

The two above proposals are intended to add accountability at the Air Force level to help ensure P/PC balance. The following proposal, meanwhile, is intended to do so at the individual level. It stems from responses to the following three-fold question in the “P/PC Balance” survey. Former squadron commanders were asked in the “P/PC Balance” survey if their group or wing commander had a personal development program for them and if they had such a program for their squadrons and themselves. Thirty-one percent, 58%, and 54% of the respondents answered “yes” to the three questions

respectively. Thus, slightly less than a third of the group and wing commanders had such programs for their squadron commanders and just more than half of the squadron commanders had such programs for their squadron members and themselves.

Given these responses, opportunities have been lost to educate airmen on a monthly, weekly, and daily basis on mission-people balance and other related issues on leadership. Such programs will likely only be initiated if commanders are involved in personal reading programs themselves that foster their own leadership and personal development. They can then apply their personal programs to their respective units. The CSAF Reading List is an excellent resource for selecting a book for such a purpose. The following five books, which discuss balancing mission and people in leading an organization to success, are also excellent candidates for such a program: *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen R. Covey, *The Servant Leader* by Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork* by John C. Maxwell, *The Leadership Challenge* by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, and *It's Your Ship – Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy* by Captain D. Michael Abrashoff (USN, retired).

### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Collins, *Good to Great – Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't* (New York, NY; Harper Collins Publishers, 2001), 139.

<sup>2</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork – Embrace Them and Empower Your Team* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2001), 166.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People – Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 150.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

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- <sup>12</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Aldon E. Purdham, Jr., “P/PC Balance” Survey (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University/CADRE, 2006).
- <sup>13</sup> Covey, 153.
- <sup>14</sup> Maxwell, 156.
- <sup>15</sup> Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams – Creating the High-Performance Organization* (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 2005), 131.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., 15.
- <sup>17</sup> Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, *Lead Like Jesus – Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2005), 99.
- <sup>18</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Purdham, Jr., “P/PC Balance” Survey.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> *Air Force Doctrine Document 1-1: Leadership and Force Development*, (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 18 February 2006), 6.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., 13.
- <sup>27</sup> “Air Command and Staff College AY07 Practice of Command Course Syllabus (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2006); “Air Command and Staff College Leadership and the Staff Environment Syllabus (AY-2007)” (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2006); and “Air Command and Staff College Leadership and the Staff Environment II Syllabus (AY-2007)” (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2006).
- <sup>28</sup> *Air War College Department of Leadership and Ethics: Academic Year 2007*. Air University Press, Maxwell AFB, AL, 2006, 411.
- <sup>29</sup> Blanchard and Hodges, 197.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., 99.
- <sup>31</sup> Ken Blanchard and Sheldon Bowles, *Gung Ho! – Turn on the People in Any Organization* (New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1998), 89.
- <sup>32</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 360 Degree Leader – Developing Your Influence From Anywhere in the Organization*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2005), 156.
- <sup>33</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Purdham, Jr., “P/PC Balance” Survey.
- <sup>34</sup> Blanchard and Hodges, 99.
- <sup>35</sup> Collins, 43.
- <sup>36</sup> Captain D. Michael Abroshaff, *It’s Your Ship – Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy* (New York, NY: Warner Books, 2002), 89.
- <sup>37</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Purdham, Jr., “P/PC Balance” Survey.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>40</sup> Colonel George E. Reed, “Toxic Leadership,” *Air War College Department of Leadership and Ethics, Academic Year 2007* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2006), 383.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid.

## Conclusion

*The tyranny of the “or” suggests that you, as a leader, have to choose results or people. Yet... the growth and development of people to the status of an end goal [is] as important as achieving other results.*

- Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges  
Leadership Authors and Speakers

Personnel strength in the Air Force has decreased by approximately 48% since 1986. During that same time, the threat environment facing the US has evolved from a single hegemon, the Soviet Union, to multiple threats, including rogue nations, non-state actors, and terrorist organizations. In particular, the GWOT, consisting primarily of OIF and OEF, has placed considerable OPTEMPO demands on today's airmen. This combination of reduced manpower and increased OPTEMPO poses a challenge to maintaining the P/PC balance that Stephen Covey contends is required for effectiveness.

The findings from this study indicate that the Air Force has failed to achieve P/PC balance since 9-11, but it has still effectively achieved its operational mission. However, after operating in such a state of P/PC imbalance since the GWOT began, the Air Force is showing indications that it will struggle to maintain its mission effectiveness if it has to continue to operate in such a state for the long term. Therefore, this study concludes that Stephen Covey is only partially correct in his assertion that effectiveness is achieved through P/PC balance. While mission effectiveness can be maintained in a state of P/PC imbalance over the short term, it becomes more difficult to do so in such a state over the long term.

There are already indications of mission degradation within some support career fields in the Air Force. Such degradation was observed in intelligence and security, in particular. To date, such degradation among these fields has not yet impacted the Air

Force's operational mission. However, one must question how long these support efforts can continue to experience such degradation before aspects of the Air Force's operational mission realize the same outcome.

Retention is also an important factor in determining mission effectiveness, since the Air Force is heavily reliant on the experience and expertise of its airmen to achieve that effectiveness. While retention rates increased for the first few years following 9-11, the rates for all AFSCs have not been sustained and in various career fields the rates in 2006 are below those prior to 9-11. Certainly, numerous factors can be attributed to a change in these rates, but the fact that some retention rates are declining as the duration of OIF and OEF grow longer cannot be overlooked.

General Moseley stated in his testimony to the House Appropriations Committee in January 2007 that 'despite any future reduction in the "footprint" of our ground components, we still expect that air, space, and cyber power will remain heavily engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan. Even after sixteen years of combat in the region, we see little likelihood of significantly reduced Air Force OPTEMPO.'<sup>1</sup> This projection suggests that the Air Force may face a P/PC imbalance for the foreseeable future even if the ground role in OIF and OEF decreases. This imbalance could be made even more pronounced as the Air Force reduces its manpower by another 11% over the next five years.

Based on such a future, it is crucial that the Air Force continue its ongoing efforts and implement the new proposals in this study to mitigate the current P/PC imbalance. In particular, the Air Force should strive to eliminate non mission-essential tasks that detract from the mission, utilize tasking practices that optimize time management, and improve processes to maximize the efficiency of its airmen. While the Air Force has continued to

achieve mission effectiveness to date, the above factors suggest it will become more difficult for the Air Force to do so in the future with 40,000 fewer personnel potentially facing the same OPTEMPO demands of today. Thus, the very question addressed at the beginning of the study of “mission first or people first?” appears poorly suited for the long-term nature of a conflict such as the GWOT. Instead, this study suggests that the Air Force should improve the balance between its mission and people if both are to remain effective in this conflict for years, and perhaps, generations of airmen to come.

#### **Notes**

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<sup>1</sup> General T. Michael Moseley, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, *HAC-D Readiness Hearing Written Testimony*, 18 January 2007, 6.

## Appendix

### **“Production/Production Capability” Survey For Former Squadron Commanders in SDE**

**Guidelines:** Please answer all “yes” or “no” questions accordingly. Please answer all open-ended (why) questions as you see fit. Type your answers in the space immediately following the question. The survey will expand to allow you more space as necessary.

The study, which will include responses from this survey, will be available for viewing upon completion either in soft copy or in hard copy through Air University.

#### **GENERAL:**

|    |                                                                                           |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | What type of unit did you command - flying, missile/space, maintenance, intel, support?   |
| 2. | Did your chain of command identify and prioritize your unit’s missions, goals, and tasks? |
| 3. | Did you know what was expected of you?                                                    |

#### **MORALE:**

|    |                                                                                                                                        |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4. | Would you judge your morale as high, average, or low during your command?<br><br>What factor(s) contributed to your answer?            |
| 5. | Would you judge your squadron’s morale as high, average, or low during your command?<br><br>What factor(s) contributed to your answer? |
| 6. | Did you have a healthy balance of work and family?<br><br>Did your people have a healthy balance of work and family?                   |

**TIME:** For the next 4 questions, please provide the appropriate percentage, keeping in mind that the 4 percentages you provide should not exceed 100%.

|    |                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7. | What percentage of your time did you spend working on important-not urgent activities (relationship building, recognizing new opportunities, planning, production)? |
| 8. | What percentage of your time did you spend working on important-urgent activities (crises, pressing problems, deadline-driven projects)?                            |
| 9. | What percentage of your time did you spend working on unimportant-urgent                                                                                            |

|     |                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | activities (non essential taskings, interruptions, calls, e-mails, reports, meetings, pressing matters)?                                                     |
| 10. | What percentage of your time did you spend working on unimportant-not urgent activities (certain additional duties, busy work, time wasters, trivia?)        |
| 11. | Did your unit have time to effectively train for its mission requirements?                                                                                   |
| 12. | Did additional duties take away from your unit's ability to meet mission requirements?<br><br>If "yes," which duties or types of duties would you eliminate? |

### RESOURCES:

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13. | Was your squadron asked to do "more with less?"                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 14. | During your command, did the mission demands decrease, increase, or stay the same?                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 15. | Did you have the <u>authorized</u> number of the following personnel?<br><br>Primary AFSC's in your unit<br>Training managers<br>Personnelists<br>Information managers                                                                                       |
| 16. | Did you have an <u>adequate</u> number of the following personnel?<br><br>Primary AFSC's in your unit<br>Training managers<br>Personnelists<br>Information managers                                                                                          |
| 17. | Did you have adequate equipment and technology to perform the tasks assigned to you?                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 18. | If you answered "no" to question 15, 16, or 17 . . .<br><br>Did you tell your Gp/CC about your situation?<br><br>If "yes," what was his/her response?<br><br>Did you propose process improvements to your Gp/CC?<br><br>If "yes," what was his/her response? |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | <p>Did you recommend to your Gp/CC what tasks your squadron should stop doing?</p> <p>If “yes,” what was his/her response?</p>                                    |
| 19. | Are you familiar with Air Force Smart Operations 21’s (AFSO 21) effort to help mitigate resource shortfalls by identifying and implementing process improvements? |
| 20. | Do you think process improvements alone will resolve AF resource shortfalls?                                                                                      |

#### **MISSION-PEOPLE BALANCE:**

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 21. | <p>Does the AF espouse mission first, people first, or a balance of the two?</p> <p>Which does it practice - mission first, people first, or a balance of the two?</p>                               |
| 22. | <p>Do you view the AF’s mission-people balance as consistent with the CSAF’s 3 priorities of win the GWOT, recapitalize &amp; modernize, and develop &amp; care for Airmen?</p> <p>If “no,” why?</p> |
| 23. | <p>Do you view the AF’s mission-people balance as consistent with the AF’s core values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do?</p> <p>If “no,” why?</p>                |
| 24. | <p>Did your Gp/CC &amp; Wg/CC espouse mission first, people first, or a balance of the two?</p> <p>Which did they practice - mission first, people first, or a balance of the two?</p>               |
| 25. | <p>Do you espouse &amp; practice mission first, people first, or a balance of the two?</p> <p>Are there exceptions to your answer? If “yes,” what are they or when do they apply?</p>                |

#### **INFLUENCE ON MISSION-PEOPLE BALANCE:**

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 26. | Does PME teach mission first, people first, or a balance of the two?                                                                                                                                               |
| 27. | <p>Do you have a personal leadership development program?</p> <p>Did your squadron have a leadership development program?</p> <p>Did your Gp/CC or Wg/CC have a leadership development program for the Sq/CCs?</p> |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 28. | If “yes” to a part of #27, was mission first, people first, or a balance of the two addressed?                                                                                                               |
| 29. | Are you a mentor?      Do you have a mentor?<br><br>Did your squadron have a mentorship program?<br><br>Did your Gp/CC or Wg/CC have a mentorship program for the Sq/CCs?                                    |
| 30. | Are you familiar with the concept of servant leadership?<br><br>If “yes,” ...<br><br>From whom/where did you learn of this concept?<br>Does the AF practice this concept?<br>Did your Gp & Wg/CC?<br>Do you? |
| 31. | Were you empowered to solve problems on your own?<br><br>Were your people?                                                                                                                                   |

## **Glossary of Acronyms**

|         |                                                                    |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AFF     | Air Force Forces                                                   |
| AF/A1   | Air Force Manpower and Personnel Directorate                       |
| AF/A3   | Air Force Air, Space, and Information Operations Directorate       |
| ACC     | Air Combat Command                                                 |
| ACC/A2R | Air Combat Command Intelligence Directorate, Requirements Division |
| ACCE    | Air Component Coordination Element                                 |
| ACSC    | Air Command and Staff College                                      |
| AEF     | Aerospace Expeditionary Forces                                     |
| AEFC    | Aerospace Expeditionary Forces Center                              |
| AETC    | Air Education and Training Command                                 |
| AFDD    | Air Force Doctrine Document                                        |
| AFSO 21 | Air Force Smart Operations 21                                      |
| AFSC    | Air Force Specialty Code                                           |
| AMC     | Air Mobility Command                                               |
| AWACS   | Airborne Warning and Control System                                |
| BOS     | Base Operating Support                                             |
| CAOC    | Combined Air Operations Center                                     |
| CEO     | Chief Executive Officer                                            |
| COCOM   | Combatant Command                                                  |
| CONUS   | Continental United States                                          |
| CSAF    | Chief of Staff of the Air Force                                    |
| C2      | Command and Control                                                |
| DMDC    | Defense Manpower Data Center                                       |
| EPR     | Enlisted Performance Report                                        |

|         |                                                |
|---------|------------------------------------------------|
| FSB     | Force Shaping Board                            |
| GWOT    | Global War on Terrorism                        |
| ICBM    | Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile            |
| ILO     | In-Lieu-Of                                     |
| ISR     | Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance |
| IWS     | Information Work Space                         |
| J/CFACC | Joint/Combined Forces Air Component Commander  |
| JFC     | Joint Force Commander                          |
| MAJCOM  | Major Command                                  |
| MILCON  | Military Construction                          |
| OCONUS  | Outside (the) Continental United States        |
| OEF     | Operation ENDURING FREEDOM                     |
| OIF     | Operation IRAQI FREEDOM                        |
| OPR     | Officer Performance Report                     |
| OPTEMPO | Operations Tempo                               |
| ORE     | Operational Readiness Exercise                 |
| ORI     | Operational Readiness Inspection               |
| PME     | Professional Military Education                |
| POM     | Program Objective Memorandum                   |
| P/PC    | Production/Production Capability               |
| QDR     | Quadrennial Defense Review                     |
| RIF     | Reduction in Force                             |
| SECAF   | Secretary of the Air Force                     |
| SERB    | Selective Early Retirement Board               |
| TAFMSD  | Total Active Federal Military Service Date     |
| TFCSD   | Total Federal Commissioned Service Date        |
| TFI     | Total Force Initiative                         |

|      |                            |
|------|----------------------------|
| TIG  | Time in Grade              |
| UAV  | Unmanned Aerial Vehicle    |
| UCA  | Unit Climate Assessment    |
| UCI  | Unit Compliance Inspection |
| VSP  | Voluntary Separation Pay   |
| VTC  | Video Teleconference       |
| WFHQ | War Fighting Headquarters  |

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