Unclassified Paper

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.

AIR EXPEDITIONARY FORCES: FORWARD BASE ACCESS

by

Tom Goffus

Major, USAF

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The Contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

Directed by Colonel D.A. Dellavolpe, USAF

13 February 1998

19980709 032

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A
Approved for public release;
Distribution Unlimited

Security Classification This Page

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. Report Security Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

2. Security Classification Authority:

3. Declassification/Downgrading Schedule:

4. Distribution/Availability of Report: DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED.

5. Name of Performing Organization: JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

6. Office Symbol: NWC Code 1C

7. Address: NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
686 CUSHING ROAD
NEWPORT, RI 02841-1207

8. Title (Include Security Classification):
Air Expeditionary Force: Forward Base Access (U)

9. Personal Authors:
Major Thomas W. Goffus, USAF

10. Type of Report: FINAL

11. Date of Report: 13 February 1998

12. Page Count: 21

13. Supplementary Notation: A paper submitted to the Faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the JMO Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.

14. Ten key words that relate to your paper:
air expeditionary force forward base access political logistic preposition crisis

15. Abstract: The Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) is a new Air Force operational concept and a new way of presenting forces to an operatinal commander. The historically unique characteristics include: operating at forward locations that maintain minimal infrastructure, launching combat missions 24 to 48 hours after execute order from anywhere in the world, and tailoring the force using sub-squadron size modules of aircraft. The biggest risk factor associated with the use of the AEF is forward base access. Regional commanders need to begin now to make the AEF a viable option by exercising the concept in host nations prior to a time of crisis and by prepositioning equipment. Exercising the AEF in targeted host nations prior to times of crisis offers the U.S. government and regional commanders the opportunity to further policy objectives by engaging selected countries. Logistic constraints:fuel&munitions.

16. Distribution / Availability of Abstract:	Unclassified	Same As Rpt	DTIC Users
	X		

17. Abstract Security Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

18. Name of Responsible Individual: CHAIRMAN, JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

19. Telephone: 841-6461

20. Office Symbol: C

Security Classification of This Page Unclassified

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 1

ABSTRACT

The Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) is a new Air Force operational concept and a new way of presenting forces to an operational commander. The historically unique characteristics of an AEF include: operating at forward locations that maintain minimal infrastructure, launching combat missions 24 to 48 hours after execute order from anywhere in the world, and tailoring the force down to sub-squadron size "slices" of aircraft. The AEF allows power projection overseas at a time when domestic and international politics force CONUS basing of most Air Force assets. In addition to simply adapting to today's current basing realities, it offers the operational commander a way to preserve options by inserting significant firepower anywhere in the world in minimum time.

The biggest risk factor associated with the use of the AEF is forward base access. The regional commanders need to begin now to make the AEF a viable option by exercising the concept in host nations prior to a time of crisis and by prepositioning equipment. At this point in time, munitions, billeting equipment, fuel requirements, and support vehicles drive the AEF timeline and airlift requirements. A combination of prepositioning at Regional Contingency Centers (RCCs) and at specific forward base locations greatly facilitates the ability of an AEF to meet its timeline constraints without overtaxing strategic airlift.

Exercising the AEF in targeted host nations prior to times of crisis offers the U.S. government and regional commanders the opportunity to further policy objectives by engaging selected countries. Other than the obvious benefit of providing defense for the host nation against external aggression, the AEF can provide military training, cultural exchange, and lucrative contracts. The periodic visits of AEF combat capability to specific countries can help shape the military and political climate of any region in the world.

INTRODUCTION

The Air Force is aggressively pursuing a new way of doing business. For the Commander in Chief of a Unified Command (CINC), this new way of business could be a highly effective Flexible Deterrent Option. The words Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) attempt to describe the new concept. The AEF will go to any airfield in the world with minimal infrastructure, get there quickly, and be precisely tailored to meet situational need. This concept exploits existing capability and synthesizes future technology while expanding operational options for the combatant commander, but only if the proper foundation is built to facilitate its utilization.

While U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) has embraced the AEF concept, other regional commands have been slow to adopt it. The biggest risk factor associated with use of the AEF as an operational concept is base access. To mitigate that risk, regional commanders must lay the proper political and logistical groundwork for future access. This groundwork consists of prepositioning equipment and sending trial AEFs to host nations well before crisis develops. By placing such AEFs in targeted host nations, a CINC can simultaneously help shape the current regional situation and expand his range of options during times of crisis.

In order to explore the overall concept it is necessary to delineate the new capabilities that an AEF provides. Using a 30 fighter package as a baseline model, major logistical constraints which tend to drive base selection requirements will be explained. Finally, the process of gaining base access is described with particular emphasis on those aspects that a CINC can control.

NEW CAPABILITIES

The Air Expeditionary Force is a new way of presenting Air Force assets and capabilities to an operational commander. As an efficient fusion of existing and developing capabilities, it is in fact a new way of employing air power -- a new operational concept.

> Rapid Response Air Expeditionary Forces (RAEFs) provide regional Commander in Chiefs (CINCs) with rapid and responsive air and space power, tailored to meet theater specific needs across the spectrum of response options from humanitarian relief to combat operations.[1]

The term "Rapid Response" tacked on to the front of AEF is the first nomenclature change in the natural progression of the concept and highlights some of its key features.

Shrinking financial means have necessarily reduced permanent overseas presence. Overseas military personnel went from 540,000 in 1988 to 240,000 in 1996, a reduction of about 55%.[2] Although fiscal pressure demanded the reduction of forces stationed overseas, policy still requires engagement and the ability to exert influence abroad. As a direct result of financial pressure combined with the desire to remain influential abroad, Air Force concepts have slowly evolved towards the AEF. To meet a defined threat in a bipolar world, the United States stationed forces forward on a permanent basis. As budgets decreased following the fall of the wall, the forward forces were decreased to be supplemented by assets that would deploy from the Continental U.S. (CONUS) in times of crisis -- rapid reaction forces. When the ability and will to maintain even those limited permanent forward forces declined, the concept of the rapidly deployable force became an operational necessity. The situation has progressed to where before long 90% of U.S. air combat power will be based in CONUS.[3] For the CINC to exert influence overseas, it must for the most part be projected from the United States. The AEF is the answer to the situation. In the evolution of operational concepts, it is the next logical step beyond rapid reaction forces.

Although still evolving, the basic concept revolves around taking aircraft, people, and support equipment from their permanent operating bases and deploying them rapidly to a minimally prepared forward location from which they can operate. In terms of time, an AEF is designed to be in place and conducting operational missions not later than 48 hours after the

execute order, or 72 hours after the warning order. This timeline has already been proven by AEF deployments to Southwest Asia. The current operational readiness standard for fighter squadron deployment is almost 3 days longer than the 48 hour requirement of the AEF.[4] A Scientific Advisory Board study indicates most AEF scenarios could go from execute order to delivery of effect anywhere in the world in only 24 hours by improving logistics capabilities.[5] The delivered effect could be anything from precision guided bombs to tailored relief packages.

The key word in the force structure of an AEF is "tailored." The term used to describe preselected modules that make up an AEF are called "slices." A slice is the smallest incremental portion of a squadron that could be efficiently deployed and efficiently supported. A squadron of F-15s is made up of 24 aircraft - a slice is six aircraft. The slice includes the aircrew, maintenance and support requirements. A slice of bombers is three aircraft, and a slice of rescue consists of three rotary wing aircraft, and one fixed wing aircraft. As the concept is further developed, each type of asset will have its "slice" defined. Thus, like Lego building blocks, an operational commander can put together as many or as few of the appropriate slices to form an effective force for a given situation. Initially, the AEF package will be designed around combat capabilities, but the concept will be expanded in the future to cover Operations Other Than War (OOTW) including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

As an operational concept, the AEF is different from the way the Air Force has operated in the past. Previously, most plans called for deployment of entire squadrons and their extended support network forward. With the increased firepower effectiveness and precision engagement capability of today's weapon systems, deployment of sub-squadron slices makes sense. In CONUS, squadrons benefit from economy of size, while at the point of application the combatant commander benefits from economy of force. Being able to operate at forward

locations that maintain minimal infrastructure, within 24 to 48 hours, with a "tailored" force composed of either squadron or sub-squadron slices, is a historically unique capability.

The AEF will help an operational commander to shape the battlefield. Reducing the time it takes to have an effective force in place expands options. The AEF will allow a commander to preserve options by inserting a credible force between the indications of an imminent enemy action and the execution of that action. The presence of American forces in theater may be enough to deter aggression. If not, the aggression may be immediately blunted or even halted. By getting firepower to a region quickly, a commander can effectively shrink distance and alter force ratios. Thus, the AEF allows manipulation in the commander's favor of three battlefield factors -- time, space and force.

Two primary hurdles for this concept are to reduce the deployment time and the logistics footprint of a given AEF. Studies by RAND and the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board suggest solutions to these problems and are looking at the force mix that might be required for situations ranging from humanitarian assistance to actual combat operations. The AEF Battlelab is using a 30 fighter package as an initial assumption. The baseline capability is 30 fighters launching for combat in 48 hours from a forward base that contains some prepositioned equipment. This baseline establishes realistic parameters for initial AEF planning. In general, it consists of 12 air superiority aircraft (two slices of F-15Cs), 12 precision guided munitions capable aircraft (two slices of F-16s or F-15Es), and six Suppression of Enemy Air Defense aircraft (one slice of F-16HTS). It takes approximately one thousand people including aircrew to support this effort at the deployed location. For the immediate future, this model does assume that there is some prepositioned equipment such as support vehicles and tent city materials.

Since the Gulf war, CENTCOM has led the AEF effort and pushed the evolution of the AEF concept. Major AEF's have deployed to Bahrain, Jordan, and Qatar. While EUCOM has used the AEF nomenclature, it is only using the command and control concepts of the AEF by standing up the 16th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force at Aviano AB, Italy. Unfortunately, most regional commanders have not even embraced this much of the concept. The United States now imports more oil from South America than it does from the Middle East.[6] If military attention follows this shift in vital interest from CENTCOM to SOUTHCOM, forward basing will be found woefully lacking. Even in PACOM and EUCOM where there are forces permanently stationed forward, the number of bases is shrinking, and those forces may have to deploy to locations further forward to be effective. For example, in EUCOM humanitarian packages may need to be deployed to Africa and in PACOM the need for projection into Southeast Asia is a foreseeable contingency. The main problem is that

> The Air Force needs agreements with host countries to use air bases and fly over territory. But permission granted during peacetime might be withdrawn during a political crisis...Because of the uncertainty over base availability and over flights, expeditionary forces cannot be included in a war plan...[7]

It is assumed that the forward location will be used temporarily and perhaps returned to in the future -- again on a temporary basis. CINCs must be proactive in establishing bases now for two primary reasons. First, exercising the AEF under non-crisis conditions allows the CINC to shape a region by engaging host nations he chooses to visit. Second, it helps him prepare for future contingencies. As in CENTCOM, the selection and development of four or five core bases with at least minimal infrastructure is the first step in assuring forward base access. Two primary factors limit and direct the selection of an AEF site as a regional asset: logistical considerations and political considerations.

LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The logistical constraints associated with the AEF will eliminate a large number of possible bases. In addition to the physical characteristics of the site itself, the geographic location of the base within the country or region can be critical. To accommodate both fighters and the heavy airlift (C-5, C-141, or C-17), the runway should be at least 10,000 feet long and the ramps must be able to bear the weight of a fully loaded heavy aircraft. Additionally, there must be an instrument landing system that can be certified by U.S. agencies to support all-weather and 24 hour operations. The 10,000 foot runway requirement alone will eliminate many potential sites.

The requirement for billeting of one thousand people is a primary constraint. There must be a location at or near the base large enough to construct a tent city. Two Harvest Falcon kits have enough assets to house about one thousand one hundred people and contain everything needed to field a tent city as well as equipment for flight line operations. There are currently enough Harvest Falcon kits to support 20 AEFs about the size of the 30 fighter package.[8] Without prepositioning, tent city materials are a primary driver of airlift requirements and can prohibit an AEF from meeting timeline constraints.

In addition to physical characteristics, there are minimum supply requirements that the proposed location must be able to support. These include water, fuel and munitions storage capability. While sufficient water is usually available locally, fuel and munitions capabilities are more difficult problems.

For a the expected flying schedule of combat operations, the AEF fighters and heavy airlift will require 100,000 gallons of fuel per day.[9] Although JP-8 is preferred, other fuels may be acceptable. If Navy aircraft are incorporated into the package, fuel requirements may get slightly more complicated. However, in general, interoperability with respect to fuels is good,

and in practice the limitation is predominantly quantity and not quality. If not present at the site already, fuel storage and fuel transfer trucks become driving factors for airlift requirements.

Another significant logistical limitation is the problem of munitions. Although the AEF package deploys with munitions loaded, (and so has the first round of required missiles and bombs) any additional munitions must be airlifted to the location. In a shooting war, the required airlift can be considerable:

> For example, 12 fighters, each dropping 8000 pounds of ordnance per sortie, in a two-a-day operation, require 96 short tons of bomb bodies per day; that translates to 10 C-130, 5 C-141, or 2 C-17 sorties...Advanced munitions like the Small Smart Bomb (SSB) offer both lower tare weight per weapon and more kills per sortie. Replacing 2000-pound warheads with 250-pound SSBs instantly reduces the lift requirement by a factor of eight...Smaller munitions are inherently easier to handle, transport, and load. There is no other single technology with comparable leverage on the logistics dimension of the AEF concept.[10]

Until the SSB is fielded, there are other options. The greatest benefit comes with prepositioning at the proposed site or in theater. "The key, of course, is moving the munitions from in-theater locations rather than from CONUS...."[11]

From a logistical standpoint, the geographic location of a site can be as important as what is at the location. The further a site is from a port facility, the more tenuous the supply line for long term deployments. Proximity to the American Embassy, while not the primary driving factor, can also enhance operations by increasing coordination, visibility and communication. Site selection will be simplified if the location is not a major commercial air terminal. In a busy international terminal, fighter traffic is difficult to sequence and force protection becomes a major issue. Disruption of host nation commercial air traffic may also greatly increase the political footprint of the AEF by frustrating host nation commercial operations. Another primary consideration is the distance between a given base and the

expected area of operations. As in Desert Storm: "Sites close enough to the battlefield to ensure the timely entrance into the fight without unnecessarily jeopardizing the security of the assets were of primary concern."[12] Distance increases operational complexity and risk. If the distances are too great, tankers are required and either time over target or payload is potentially reduced. In addition, diplomatic requirements can increase due to the potential of having to over fly additional nations en route to the battlefield.

To help reduce the logistical burden of an AEF, prepositioning of equipment is required. Prepositioning at four to five specific AEF sites in each regional command is the concept currently envisioned by the AEF Battlelab and currently employed by CENTCOM. Other options being studied include using only a few Regional Contingency Centers, putting equipment on prepositioned supply ships, or moving everything from CONUS. Total CONUS positioning of resources risks overburdening strategic airlift due to fuel, billeting, and munitions requirements. The equipment afloat option risks denial of port access and could have prohibitive time costs if the forward base is far from the desired equipment afloat.

The Air Force Scientific Advisory Board believes that Regional Contingency Centers (RCCs) could be established within 1500 to 2000 nautical miles (C-130 to C-17 range) of any potential trouble spots.[13] A total of eight would provide worldwide coverage. "The bases provide prenegotiated diplomatic clearance agreements, support facilities, and stocks of relatively low cost, heavy items such as fuel, water, and bomb bodies. "[14] Although it increases airlift requirements as opposed to prepositioning at the operating site, it can reduce resistance of host nations who may not want to store material permanently on their territory. While the tradeoffs of time, cost and risk continue to be studied, it appears that some combination of forward base prepositioning and RCCs will work best. RCCs would be especially useful for storage of politically sensitive material such as munitions.

Both the Army and the Marines have used prepositioning extensively in the past. The concept has already been employed by AEFs in Bahrain, Jordan and Qatar.[15] Due to the necessity of prepositioning, the military is getting smarter about how to do it. In Europe, under a concept called STOWS (Standard Packages of War Reserve Materiel Support), Air Force squadron support packages have been organized and designed for specific types of units.[16] Prepositioning is an imbedded cost of the AEF concept. In addition to setup cost, prepositioned assets are tied up and cannot be used for non-AEF operations. Although it can complicate the political and logistical equation, it has been done historically and is a surmountable problem.

POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Just as logistical constraints have limited the number of sites under consideration, the CINC must also address political constraints. The inability to get political clearance to use forward operating bases could cripple an AEF.

> First and foremost, an AEF would require access to the host country and/or clearance into airspace that requires transit to get to the fight. This access will always be an operational constraint for an AEF and one that diplomatic and military officials must successfully deal with in order to make the AEF a viable option....[17]

While acknowledging that the process of acquiring access can dominate the response time of an AEF, it is dismissed as "largely beyond Air Force control, [even though] this problem has consistently and banefully limited virtually every operation of the past few decades."[18] The CINC is led to believe that obtaining base access is beyond his span of influence, but fortunately there are factors the CINC can control.

Gaining forward base access, which is synonymous with making the AEF a viable concept, requires laying political groundwork. The primary way of laying this facilitating foundation is through the use of the AEF during non-crisis situations -- while time is not in short supply.

Before a crisis dictates the need, AEF visits should be planned and executed to targeted regions or countries. Through this method, the diplomatic channels are sounded out, dialogue established, and procedural quirks mapped, without the crush of time which can often short circuit the international political process. When a CINC demands short notice, high priority base access, the U.S. government often needs to spend an inordinately large amount of political capital to achieve that goal. By anticipating the need for access, and initiating dialogue without the pressure of time, a CINC can simultaneously assess and improve chances for success during a crisis.

In the process of obtaining forward base access, it is necessary to distinguish between "*political clearance*" and "*diplomatic clearance*".[19] *Political clearance* is high-level (usually at least Minister-level) approval given for a force deployment. It is host nation approval "in principle" and usually involves the use of formal channels that include the American Embassy in the host nation. *Diplomatic clearance* is a separate issue -- required by Department of Defense (DoD) Foreign Clearance Guide for all deployments, regardless of whether political clearance is required. The operating unit or command is responsible for determining what foreign clearances are required including over flight and landing clearances. It is generally a much lower level issue worked through normal bureaucratic channels. Usually, *diplomatic clearances* would be one of the details worked out after *political clearance* has been obtained. Forward base access is most directly tied with *political clearance*.

Accepting the logistical limitations affecting base selection, the crucial next step in obtaining political clearance should be based on a CINC's regional assessment. Militarily a CINC probably knows the optimal locations for AEF bases. Unfortunately, military requirements might not match political reality. Coordinating military with political concerns recommends itself to interagency exchanges prior to crisis situations. The CINC has several

avenues of approach to the problem. The CINC staff has either a Political Advisor (POLAD) or Foreign Policy Advisor (FPA) attached from the State Department to provide diplomatic considerations. For expert opinion on a region of concern there are numerous sources of consultation. In DoD there is the regional division of J-5 on the joint staff, and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense there is a regional desk. More directly, he could go to the appropriate Regional Bureau in the Department of State (DoS).

Unfortunately, the geographic regions of DoS and DoD are not aligned and this may complicate the process by including additional agendas. Even greater than differences in geographical alignment are the differences in perspective and thought process at DoS and DoD. As the DoS will eventually be the agency that pursues the political clearance through diplomatic channels, it is critical to have a dialogue with them (while keeping the military chain of command informed). In this dialogue, military requirements and goals must be accurately communicated to DoS while political constraints are communicated to DoD. The State Department Regional Bureau can bring to bear political initiatives and implications that impact site selection. Consideration of issues such as political stability, human rights status, and economic impact will ensure an AEF is not counterproductive within the framework of overall U.S. government policy. The end result is that the CINC will better understand the political realities of site selection, where his concerns are not the only U.S. government considerations. Before negotiating formally, the country team is a low cost, low visibility and valuable source of information on potential basing problems. Through inclusion of the country team the CINC gains insight into the local political climate and allows the embassy to position itself favorably to coordinate a base access request. He may find out that the State Department is working other issues that do not function well with an AEF exercise in a particular country. On the other hand, the CINC's AEF plans may dovetail nicely with other

U.S. policy objectives in the region. Only through coordination at all stages and levels can the impact of an AEF deployment be accomplished to the maximum advantage of the U.S. government.

When asking for help in obtaining base access, the CINC does not go empty handed. The Military Assistance Programs can improve the chances of a base access request being approved. Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), International Military Education and Training (IMET), and Excess Defense Articles (EDA) can all provide leverage for obtaining access. For each of FY 1996 and FY 1997 these programs accounted for over 13 billion dollars.[20] If it is advantageous to the United States these programs can be tied to base access for AEFs either subtly or overtly depending on the situation. The AEF itself can also provide incentives. The Bahrain and Jordan Air Forces received useful training by flying with the U.S. Air Force during their AEF deployments -- an opportunity they would not have had otherwise. (U.S. pilots in turn received valuable dissimilar air combat training.) The CINC can also negotiate host nation support contracts. The more supplies that are locally contracted, the more economically beneficial an AEF is to the host nation. Finally, the presence of American armed forces can have a legitimizing effect on the host nation's government.

The CINC can help his situation by developing good military to military ties. Generally, military leaders have direct access to civilian leadership and their host nation counterparts and can influence host nation decisions directly. By cultivating good inter-military relationships, the CINC helps his position after initial access has been granted. Although the formal agreement is worked out through high level diplomatic channels over which the CINC has little control, the ensuing details are generally worked out in the military to military channels.

Having laid the political groundwork, the CINC can formally request base access for the AEFs that he wants to exercise with increased confidence of success. The request from the CINC goes to the Joint Staff through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs to the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF). The SECDEF signs a Force Deployment Order, which is presented to the State Department for coordination. When approved, it then is forwarded to the American Embassy in the host nation with official instructions, and the host nation is formally approached with the issue. To have a reasonable chance for success, there are a few basic rules that should be followed when the formal request is submitted to the Joint Staff.

First, and most importantly, the types of missions should be clearly spelled out. Obviously, an operation such as humanitarian relief will be received in a different light than a strike directed against a neighboring country. The host nation needs to know what kinds of missions the AEF will execute.

Second, the diplomatic process takes time. On the AEF to Jordan, even when agreement had already been informally approved, a minimum of 3 months was required to work out the details. The time it takes to reach agreement will depend, in part, on factors such as the costs and benefits perceived by the host nation, the cultural differences between the host nation and the United States, and the status of other U.S. policy initiatives in the region. While the process will vary from host nation to host nation, a minimum of 6 months is a realistic general guideline. Timing, as much as time, is important to the process.

There were some cases in CENTCOM's exercise of the AEF when public affairs for the U.S. military released news of an AEF deployment site before the host nation could properly position itself in its own media. Because the accommodating country released the news to the world second, the United States looked like it had infringed on the sovereignty of that host

nation. Besides the reduction in chances of returning to that site in a time of crisis, large amounts of political capital were spent as a result of a miscue in timing.

Pursuing AEF sites before a crisis allows equipment to be left behind for future use. Prepositioning of equipment is only one benefit -- and it is not the most important. The ability to work through the political process of obtaining access is of primary importance. The proper contacts are made to the proper agencies in the process of obtaining initial access. In a crisis situation, these contacts will save both time and effort. Host nation sensitivities are brought to light that might not otherwise be known. Exercising and training with the host nation generally improves host nation self defense capabilities, enhances interoperability, and lets both the host nation and the United States understand each other's strengths and weaknesses. After three major AEFs to CENTCOM's AOR, General Looney remarked:

> An inherent advantage of any land-based deployment is the opportunity to develop and enhance working relationships with the host country. The AEF deployments have been no exception; and in the Bahrain, Jordan, and Qatar experiences, U.S. airmen interacted with their host counterparts in a professional and social setting for three months.[21]

That concept dovetails nicely with advice on improving coalition fighting potential: "The United States should increase the number of multinational training exercises in each theater with potential coalition partners.... they create a spirit of cooperation and enhance awareness of interoperability."[22] Given a comfortable timeframe and sufficient coordination, the AEF can be integrated into the U.S. government's overall foreign policy strategy. A visit by the U.S. armed forces can be a sign of commitment as well as add prestige to the host nation government if the proper diplomatic foundation is laid before an AEF. A best case scenario might result in a new bilateral agreement. The extra time allows details to be fleshed out to the satisfaction of both countries. In particular, Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) take time to negotiate and are critical to effective military operations in a foreign country. Pursuing

AEF access prior to crisis enhances operational capability. It improves chances for access in times of crisis and gives the State Department a useful negotiating tool in the pursuit of national policy objectives.

Laying the political groundwork and obtaining initial approval is the first half of the process. Another key is to conduct the AEF in such a way that it will be invited back. Cultural and political awareness is crucial. Flying at night or during local observances might disturb the host nation population to such an extent that future AEF operations will not be invited back. Other less obvious cultural concerns should be addressed by consulting with the country team and actively educating AEF participants.

If AEFs are exercised under non-crisis conditions, crisis response options expand. One of the primary concerns is that "permission granted during peacetime might be withdrawn during a political crisis...."[23] An AEF visit prior to the crisis is nevertheless a giant step towards crisis cooperation. At the time of crisis, the military can improve chances of access further by helping to "sell" the threat to the host nation through military to military discussions. When the threat is perceived to be large enough by the host nation, "most countries in crisis situations tend to grant access readily."[24] For example, in the Persian Gulf, prior to Desert Shield/Storm and prior to having any groundwork laid:

> Rapid and often intense negotiations resulted in international agreements providing access to airfields. In many cases, any similarity between our assumed basing locations and where the host nations agreed to let us operate were purely coincidental. Direct and often high-level dialogue was required to ensure that final locations were compatible with aircraft mission and capabilities.[25]

This example points out the benefit of pursuing base access in a peacetime or non-crisis environment. Desired basing locations are then much more likely to coincide with what is actually obtained. However, given that locations might have to be altered for political reasons,

with the addition of tanker aircraft almost any airfield within a moderate sized country might be used for operations if minimum logistic requirements can be met.

Although portions of the base access process are controlled by political and not military issues, there is a lot the CINC can do to improve the operational capability of an AEF. Use of Department of State channels both in Washington and abroad will enhance chances for success. Military aid, host nation contracting, and the potential for invaluable military training are carrots that a CINC largely controls. By using all available avenues of approach and accurately specifying what operations will be conducted, a CINC can greatly reduce the risk associated with AEF base access.

CONCLUSION

The AEF is a new way of employing Air Force assets. Compared to past deployments, it is quicker, more self-sustaining, and precisely task tailored. Whether it is viewed as a risk factor or simply a surmountable problem in execution, base access is a primary AEF issue. The CINC needs to begin now to make the AEF a viable option by exercising the concept in host nations prior to a time of crisis. After assessing logistical and political constraints, a CINC can use assets at his disposal in conjunction with close interagency coordination to get required base access. While CENTCOM has aggressively pursued the AEF, other regional commanders have not adopted the operational concept. Regional commanders must overcome the perception of the AEF as a threat to permanently forward stationed forces. The AEF is intended to complement and not replace those forces. Without laying the required AEF groundwork of prepositioning and forward base access now, the other regional commanders will not be able to exploit this new capability without excessive risks in the future.

NOTES

[1] Secretary of the Air Force, Rapid Response Air Expeditionary Force Planning, AFI 10-XXX Draft (Washington: 7 November 1997), 1.

[2] "New Routes to Overseas Presence," Air Force Magazine, October 1997, 50.

[3] James W. Canan, "Expeditionary Force," Air Force Magazine, June 1993, 20.

[4] Donald H. Campbell and others, "Leveraging Logistics to Enhance the Effectiveness of Air Expeditionary Forces," (Unpublished Project Memorandum, RAND, Santa Monica CA: April 1997), 12.

[5] Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, Report on United States Air Force Expeditionary Forces Volume 1 (Washington, D.C.: November 1997), p vii.

[6] Alexei Barrionuevo, "Gulf Roils, But U.S. Buys Oil Elsewhere," Christian Science Monitor, 9 February 1998, 1.

[7] William Matthews, "New Units Might Add to Strain of High Tempo," Air Force Times, 7 July 1997, 38.

[8] Joseph Davis, TSgt, USAF, AEF Battlelab Logistics Advisor, telephone conversation with author, 5 January 1997.

[9] Robert Tripp and Tim Ramey, "The Importance of Agile Combat Support to the Effectiveness of Air Expeditionary Forces," (Unpublished Project Memorandum, RAND, Santa Monica CA: May 1997), 11.

[10] Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, Report on United States Air Force Expeditionary Forces Volume 1 (Washington, D.C.: November 1997), 41.

[11] William R. Looney, III, Brig Gen USAF; "The Air Expeditionary Force, Taking the Air Force into the Twenty-first Century," Air Power Journal, Winter 1996 (http://www.cdsar.af.mil/apj/win96/looney.html), 3.

[12] Charles A. Horner, Lt Gen USAF; "The Air Campaign," Military Review, September 1991, 19.

[13] Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, Volume 1, 5.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Brian E. Wages, Col USAF-Ret; "The First With the Most, USAF's Air Expeditionary Force Takes the Offensive on Power Projection," Armed Forces Journal International, September 1996, 71.

[16] James Kitfield, "The New Way of Logistics in Europe," Air Force Magazine, August 1994, 62.

[17] Looney, 3.

[18] Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, Volume 1, 12.

[19] Mike Quinn, Lt Col USAF, Middle East J-5, telephone conversation with author, 5 January 1997 and draft letter "Deployment Clearances," 1 December 1997.

[20] Department of Defense, Annual Report to the President and Congress (Washington: March 1997), (http://www.dtic.mil/execsec/adr97/appj.html#top), Appendix J, 3.

[21] Looney, 4.

[22] Terry J. Pudas, "Preparing Future Coalition Commanders," Joint Force Quarterly, Winter 1993-94, 43.

[23] Matthews, 38.

[24] Looney, 3.

[25] Horner, 19.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barrionuevo, Alexei. "Gulf Roils, But U.S. Buys Oil Elsewhere." Christian Science Monitor, 9 February 1998, 1,7.

Campbell, Donald H., Tim Ramey, and Robert Tripp, "Leveraging Logistics to Enhance the Effectiveness of Air Expeditionary Forces," Unpublished Project Memorandum, RAND, Santa Monica, CA: April 1997.

Canan, James W. "Expeditionary Force." Air Force Magazine, June 1993, 20-25.

Horner, Charles A., Lt Gen USAF; "The Air Campaign." Military Review, September 1991, 17-27.

Kitfield, James. "The New Way of Logistics in Europe." Air Force Magazine, August 1994, 60-63.

Looney, William R. III, Brig Gen USAF. "The Air Expeditionary Force, Taking the Air Force into the Twenty-first Century." Air Power Journal, Winter 96, (http://www.cdsar.af.mil/apj/win96/looney.html).

Matthews, William. "New Units Might Add to Strain of High Tempo." Air Force Times, 38.

"New routes to Overseas Presence." Air Force Magazine, October 1997, 50-51.

Pudas, Terry J. "Preparing Future Coalition Commanders." Joint Force Quarterly, Winter 1993-94, 40-46.

Ramey, Tim and Robert Tripp. "The Importance of Agile combat Support to the Effectiveness of Air Expeditionary Forces." Unpublished Project Memorandum, RAND, Santa Monica, CA: May 1997.

U.S. Air Force Scientific Advisory board. Report on United States Air Force Expeditionary Forces Volume 1. Washington D.C.: November 1997.

U.S. Air Force Scientific Advisory board. Report on United States Air Force Expeditionary Forces Volume 2(Draft). Washington D.C.: 30 December 1997.

U.S. Department of Defense, Annual Report to the President and Congress. Washington D.C.: March 1997, (http://www.dtic.mil/execsec/adr97/appj.html#top), Appendix J.

U.S. Secretary of the Air Force, Rapid Response Air Expeditionary Force Planning. AFI 10-XXX Draft. Washington D.C.: 7 November 1997.

Wages, Brian E. Col, USAF-Ret, "The First With the Most, USAF's Air Expeditionary Force Takes the Offensive on Power Projection." Armed Forces Journal International, September 1996, 66-71.