STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

GLOBAL CHANGE: THE AIR FORCE'S SUCCESSFUL TRANSFORMATION TO THE EXPEDITIONARY AEROSPACE FORCE

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL KENNETH M. KONICKI
United States Air Force

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:
Approved for Public Release.
Distribution is Unlimited.

USAWC CLASS OF 2001

U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050

20010430 115

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

GLOBAL CHANGE: THE AIR FORCE'S SUCCESSFUL TRANSFORMATION TO THE EXPEDITIONARY AEROSPACE FORCE

by

LIEUTENANT COLONEL KENNETH M. KONICKI
United States Air Force

Dr. Earl H. Tilford, Jr.
Project Advisor

The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:
Approved for public release.
Distribution is unlimited.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Kenneth M. Konicki, Lt Col, USAF

TITLE: Global Change: The Air Force's Successful Transformation to the Expeditionary Aerospace Force

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 26 February 2000 PAGES: 28 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

In an era of globalization, shrinking defense dollars and costly weapon systems, the services and defense agencies must increasingly transform into more cost-effective, versatile or lethal organizations. Unfortunately, most organizational transformation efforts are unproductive and abandoned before any appreciable change occurs. Against this pessimistic backdrop, the Air Force's successful transformation to the Expeditionary Aerospace Force (EAF) warrants examination. This study analyzes the EAF development process to distill seven factors that help explain why the transformation succeeded. It discusses the defense environment that pressed for change, the EAF visioning process, the role played by senior Air Force leaders, the influence of organizational culture, and the way EAF was permanently embedded in the service. By focusing on the success factors, the study offers the EAF transformation as a potential template to manage future organizational change.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT III

GLOBAL CHANGE: THE AIR FORCE'S SUCCESSFUL TRANSFORMATION TO THE EXPEDITIONARY AEROSPACE FORCE 1

AIR FORCE UNDERSTOOD THAT IT HAD TO ADAPT TO REMAIN VIABLE IN A CHANGING DEFENSE ENVIRONMENT 2

EAF WAS BASED ON A CLEAR, CONCISE AND COMPREHENSIVE VISION 4

GENERAL RYAN INSTILLED A SENSE OF URGENCY THROUGHOUT THE TRANSFORMATION 5

EAF VISION WAS BROAD ENOUGH TO APPEAL TO ALL MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS 6

VISION BUILT UPON DEMONSTRATED SUCCESS OF AIR EXPEDITIONARY FORCES IN SOUTHWEST ASIA 8

EAF WAS ACCEPTABLE TO THE EXISTING CULTURE 9

EAF WAS SUCCESSFULLY INSTITUTIONALIZED INTO THE AIR FORCE BEFORE BACKSLIDING COULD OCCUR 11

CONCLUSION 12

ENDNOTES 15

BIBLIOGRAPHY 21

GLOBAL CHANGE: THE AIR FORCE'S SUCCESSFUL TRANSFORMATION TO THE EXPEDITIONARY AEROSPACE FORCE

> I have heard the lament that, "the Air Force is not what it used to be during the Cold War," and I must tell you that is absolutely true; this "ain't" our fathers' Air Force.
>
> — General Michael E. Ryan

Organizational transformation is difficult. Even when transformation is the obvious solution to preserve the vitality, if not the very existence, of the organization, entrenched parochial interests, inflexible processes, institutional complacency, and a skeptical workforce often combine to thwart the effort. Cases of failed corporate makeovers are common. Despite the best intentions—and consultants—most organizational transformations are simply unable to adequately adjust to a rapidly changing marketplace. In fact, a recent review of corporate reengineering efforts of *Fortune 1000* companies placed the success rates at well below 50%.[1] Unfortunately, this lack of success is not confined to the private sector. Transformation programs in government organizations have also come up against resistance, and have met with similar disappointing results. For example, the U.S. Army has tried to achieve its vision of the future with its "Army After Next" and "Force XXI" transformation programs. The Army has now "pulled the plug" on both attempts before any appreciable changes to the organization have occurred.[2]

In February 1998, the Air Force embarked on a process to transform itself from a Cold War, in-garrison force to a lighter, leaner and more lethal Expeditionary Aerospace Force (EAF) capable of rapid deployment throughout the world. In contrast to the examples above, the EAF redesign has successfully taken root and has fundamentally changed the way the AF manages its mission to provide aerospace forces to the theater commanders. Commenting on "the largest transformation in fundamental Air Force processes since before the Cold War,"[3] observers have noted that "Few changes introduced by a chief of staff have flowed as smoothly through the corporate process as did the EAF."[4]

Why was the transformation to the EAF successful, when most similar efforts either fail or are discarded? This study examines the Air Force transformation under the lens of contemporary organizational change theory. It draws upon the work of management scholars to distill seven factors that help explain the success of the EAF. The study begins with a review of the changing defense environment that mandated the change to a more expeditionary stature. It then explores the vision senior Air Force leaders developed to guide the reforms. The

analysis emphasizes the qualities of the vision and the sense of urgency that the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Michael E. Ryan, has brought to the process. Next, it explores the manner in which the service communicated this vision of the future to all the stakeholders involved, both within and outside the Air Force. Finally, the study concludes by examining the process used to embed the new expeditionary systems and methods throughout the Air Force.

AIR FORCE UNDERSTOOD THAT IT HAD TO ADAPT TO REMAIN VIABLE IN A CHANGING DEFENSE ENVIRONMENT

Reengineering pioneers Hammer and Champy showed that an organizational awareness of the need to change was the common denominator of successful transformations.[5] This is a vital requirement, as members who aren't convinced of the necessity to change will exhibit a low tolerance for the sacrifices required, and may actively take action to oppose the reforms.[6] The organization must state the "Case for Action,"[7] clearly pointing out the nature of the changing environment, why the usual response of incremental improvement will not suffice and the consequences of inaction.[8] In short, successful, lasting change occurs only when the organization comes to realize that "the status quo is more dangerous than launching into the unknown."[9]

The Air Force was facing a dangerous status quo. The demise of the Soviet Union and the public's ensuing desire for a "peace dividend' set off a chain of events that would permanently alter the service's operating paradigm. The effects were seen in a significant reduction in both force structure and operating budget of the Air Force. Since 1989, active-duty manpower has been reduced by over 36%; likewise, total force strength, which factors in the Air National Guard and AF Reserve, had declined 30%.[10] During this period, force structure dropped from 24 active duty and 12 reserve fighter wings to 13 active duty and 7 reserve fighter wings.[11] Other weapon systems have been equally affected with a 50% decline in bombers, a 40% drop in aerial refueling tankers and a 25% reduction in cargo transport aircraft.[12] The impact on the AF budget has been no less significant. Budget Authority in constant FY01 dollars fell from $112.1B in 1991 to $86.1B in FY98, a total drop of over 23%.[13] With this smaller defense force, the nation found itself with excess military infrastructure, and sought to eliminate it. The politically charged Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process closed or downsized several installations. Nowhere was this more prominent than in the AF's overseas infrastructure, with permanent overseas basing dropping from 50 to 17 bases[14] and long-term overseas assignment of manpower and equipment reduced by 60%[15]

The downsized Air Force would also feel the strains of changing political policy. In Washington, the National Security Strategy was evolving to address the changing defense

environment. Under the Clinton administration's strategy of "Selective Engagement", the U.S. actively engaged abroad to maintain international order and shape the international environment.[16] Fulfilling this strategy called for forward deployment of a significant portion of U.S. military forces throughout the world, and small-scale contingencies soon became common. Since 1992, the Air Force has averaged six to seven "pop-up" crises per year requiring deployments of about 25 aircraft.[17] All the while, the service's commitments to larger operations has continued, with an average of another 250 aircraft deployed to various protracted contingencies.[18]

This unstable combination of substantial increases in continuous overseas deployments combined with significant reductions in resources overstressed the Air Force in three ways. First, readiness of the overstressed force began to decline. Stateside readiness indicators, normally a lead indicator for forward deployed forces, showed a 7% decline in mission capability rates from 1992 to 1997, and then in 1998, the rates further dropped by 9%.[19] Along with the readiness decline, the pace of service deployments as measured by operations tempo (OPSTEMPO) soared. Throughout the 70s and 80s, the AF averaged about 3000-4000 people per day deployed in support of contingencies. By 1997, that figure had skyrocketed to more that 13,000 per day.[20] The final stress came in the form of rapidly dropping retention rates for service members. The Air Force was having problems retaining its costly pilot force. Retention bonus acceptance rates dropped from a 1994 high of 81% to 32% in 1997.[21] A senior military planner and veteran combat pilot aptly summarized the problem: "It's not a reasonable career choice right now, the way we are pushing our crews."[22] The retention problem was not just limited to the pilot community, as the service struggled to deal with equally stressed support forces. To fill a significant portion of the support positions in a deployment, individuals were generally selected on an ad hoc basis. For example, instead of sending an established 13-member civil engineering team from a single base, the Air Force increasingly relied on the practice of deploying one or two airman from several teams across multiple bases.[23] The intent was to prevent the degrading of capability at any one particular base. In reality, it fostered an atmosphere of uncertainty in deployment selection, and continued to stress the home units trying to fill the void left by deployed members.

Overall, the Air Force quickly came to realize that "the structure for the Cold War really doesn't meet the needs of the service for the future from a day-to-day standpoint."[24] Leaders acknowledged that the cost of business as usual was too high to pay. Faced with the pressing problems of readiness, operations tempo and retention, General Ryan announced that the Air Force must transform to operate effectively in an environment that required "rapid and tailored

engagement in many regions and many situations."[25] The Expeditionary Aerospace Force concept would be the solution. Quite simply, EAF was "an idea whose time had come."[26]

EAF WAS BASED ON A CLEAR, CONCISE AND COMPREHENSIVE VISION

Successful transformations begin with a vision statement, a picture of the desired end state that guides the reform process. Kotter lists three critical functions of the vision: First, it orchestrates the direction for change, coordinating the efforts of an organization struggling with what is often a chaotic, ambiguous and frustrating process. "One simple question—is this in line with the vision?—can help eliminate hours, days, or even months of torturous discussions."[27] Another benefit comes from the vision's ability to motivate action not necessarily in the member's short-term self-interest.[28] It works to overcome natural resistance to change and provides reassurance that the future end state is well worth immediate, short-term sacrifices. Finally, the vision provides an appealing cause for which to fight.[29] It is a call to arms, a concept around which the organization can intellectually rally. In the absence of a viable vision, a transformation effort can easily devolve into a list of confusing and incompatible projects that can take the organization in the wrong direction or nowhere at all.[30]

The success of the EAF can be traced back to its vision. It was exceptionally effective because it was concise to the point of being easily communicated as well as comprehensive in the way it addressed the service's situation. In speeches, press releases and interviews by the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force, the vision came across as a concise and straightforward message that lost little in the transmission. As it was passed through the media or service at large, there was little confusion concerning the direction General Ryan and the Air Force were heading. Kotter's research has shown that an effective vision must be fully communicated in less than 5 minutes.[31] Clearly, the EAF vision met this requirement. Note the concise, clearly articulated vision of the EAF concept by the Chief:

> The Air Force must be able to rapidly deploy powerful aerospace forces anywhere on the globe. To meet this challenge, we divided deployable Air Force personnel and assets from Active, Guard, and Reserve units into ten Aerospace Expeditionary Forces (AEFs) and two crisis-response Aerospace Expeditionary Wings (AEWs). Each AEF is scheduled to deploy, or be on-call, for one 90-day period every 15 months. The AEWs will rotate on-call status every 90 days, ensuring one AEW is always ready to respond to pop-up contingencies. When not deployed or on-call, AEFs and AEWs will remain mostly at home station, focusing on training for their next deployment or on-call window. Additionally, we created five mobility lead wings, one for each AEF rotation period, to respond to humanitarian crises around the globe.[32]

Besides this communicability, the vision is noteworthy for the comprehensive nature with

which it simultaneously addressed the three major problems the Air Force faced: readiness, operations tempo, and retention. This is not to say that the service did not try to deal with the problems prior to EAF; indeed they had. But the efforts primarily dealt with each problem independently. For example, to address the tempo burden, the Air Force significantly streamlined the inspection and exercise schedule, attempted to limit time away from home station to 120 days per person per year, and tried to grant time off to those members returning from deployments. Similar effort was directed at the retention issue, relying on financial retention incentives and increased service commitments. The readiness situation posed a particularly difficult problem. Tiered readiness was not a viable option because the Air Force can expect to be called upon to be the first force in theater during a conflict.[33] The EAF vision understood the interrelated nature of the service's problems, and the synergy with which EAF was designed to deal with all three simultaneously made it particularly appealing.

GENERAL RYAN INSTILLED A SENSE OF URGENCY THROUGHOUT THE TRANSFORMATION

Kotter identified that successful transformation leaders infuse a sense of urgency throughout the organization by applying enough pressure to focus the staff on the reform process and overcome the inevitable roadblocks that arise. He estimates that well over 50% of corporate transformation failures can be associated with a lack of urgency.[34] There are several reasons that an atmosphere of urgency is a critical component of effective reform. First, it drives members out of their comfort zones and overcomes the natural tendency to focus on the comfortable and the routine.[35] In addition, a climate of urgency overcomes the natural concern with downside risk, alleviating the anxiety that the transformation will seriously influence morale, spin out of control, or negatively impact the organization's ability to perform the mission.[36] Finally, a sense of urgency overcomes the "risk of playing it too safe: When the urgency rate is not pumped up enough, the transformation process cannot succeed and the long-term future of the organization is put in jeopardy."[37]

General Ryan successfully created this mindset of urgency in the EAF transformation. He began by setting an aggressive 1 October 1999 deadline for EAF implementation. This was significant in that it guaranteed that EAF would be in place before the expiration of his two-year appointment. Quite simply, EAF would happen on his watch.[38] The transformation was also accelerated by General Ryan's desire to advance the process whenever the opportunity presented itself. His decision to move EAF out of the planning phase and implement it Air Force-wide exemplifies this positive pressure: "At best the USAF has achieved an 80 percent answer. But rather than delay implementation for months in order to arrive at a complete

answer, and in the process possibly miss the opportunity to implement EAF at all, the service chose to continue institutionalizing its new reforms."[39]

The Chief also generated momentum for the EAF process through structural and process reforms on his staff. To marshal the implementation, he established a new staff organization, the Directorate of Expeditionary Aerospace Force Implementation, handpicking Major General Donald G. Cook as its leader. Major General Cook was granted the exceptional privilege of direct access to the Chief on all EAF matters. By streamlining coordination, the Chief bypassed several layers of bureaucracy, and thus significantly reduced decision times on vital EAF issues, and avoided unnecessary conflicts and delays.[40]

Nowhere was the Chief's drive for urgency more apparent than in his decision to remain committed to the EAF implementation schedule despite the influence of the Operation ALLIED FORCE air campaign conducted in Kosovo. The NATO air campaign was easily the most serious roadblock to EAF implementation. Warned by the air staff that AEF implementation might be delayed 180 days from the end of surge operations in Kosovo, General Ryan held firm to the implementation plan. He understood that "Loss of momentum could damage the process; delay could kill It."[41], so he declared the implementation schedule "inviolate."[42] The ten AEFs and the initial 15-month cycle would stand up as planned. General Ryan's steadfastness at this critical juncture erased all doubts within his staff,[43] and kept the transformation on track.

EAF VISION WAS BROAD ENOUGH TO APPEAL TO ALL MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS

One of the foremost hurdles any successful transformation must overcome is the resistance of individuals or groups that stand to lose from the reform effort. To avoid the loss of position, power, or prestige, these disenfranchised stakeholders often try to derail the process or roll back recent changes. These "powerful forces associated with tradition"[44] are a primary reason many transformations are categorized as 'noble failures' and abandoned. Interestingly, the EAF concept was not subject to this reactionary dynamic. "It did not directly threaten entrenched service interests,"[45] and "individual service bureaucrats and their organizations were not threatened by reorganization or reduction of authority."[46] Moreover, EAF had something positive to offer all stakeholders involved, both internal and external to the service. The breadth of the concept allowed EAF to appeal to the range of diverse constituencies for a variety of different reasons. Major General Cook best summed up this universality of appeal when he remarked "What the EAF will do depends on where you sit."[47]

The EAF's primary customer, the warfighting Commanders in Chief (CINCs), had every reason to welcome the concept. EAF would provide the CINCs with an additional force

management tool, supplying lighter, more rapidly deployable force elements. General Ryan stressed this point: "We will be structured to be more responsive to the needs of the warfighting [commanders-in-chief]. We'll have the packages ready to go that are trained to task and know what he wants them to do."[48] Providing forces to the CINCs was General Ryan's "number one priority"[49] for the EAF. In addition, the AEFs closely resembled the expeditionary force units of the Navy's carrier battle group and Marine Corp's marine expeditionary force, concepts with which the CINCs were already comfortable.[50] Finally, previous success with Air Expeditionary Forces in Southwest Asia, which will be discussed later, demonstrated the utility of the concept.

At the Department of Defense level, EAF was supported for reasons relating to resourcing and inter-service harmony. Since General Ryan had pledged to implement the concept without changing manpower end strength,[51] the EAF transformation would not require a reshuffling of the relatively constant service shares of the defense budget and thus was not perceived as a threat to the Air Force's sister services. Concerning the equally threatening possibility of a roles and missions conflict, the Air Force pointed out that the use of AEFs should be viewed by other services as a cooperative, not a competitive, initiative.[52] To the Navy, the Air Force had stressed as early as June 1997 that the use of air expeditionary forces was not a substitute for naval carriers.[53] To alleviate the Army's concern for competition over scarce strategic airlift,[54] the Air Force was optimistic that the efficient management of EAF assets might actually decrease the need for airlift. This point was later verified in the 22% reduction in airlift requirements over the first year of rotations.[55]

EAF appealed to the Air Force's major commands because it offered inclusion. General Ryan stressed that Air Mobility Command (AMC), an organization consisting of the service's cargo and transport assets, would not be overshadowed by the combat aircraft community and would be a full participant in the EAF.[56] AMC would provide significant portions of the AEF's theater airlift and aerial refueling capability, along with lead mobility wings for use in humanitarian and non-combatant evacuation operations. The EAF would not have a "first team". Because EAF did not "pit the MAJCOMs against one another,"[57] it "made it easier for all the MAJCOMs and service communities to cooperate and engage in the relatively modest compromises needed to change."[58]

EAF also allowed the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve to participate on a more equal footing with their regular counterparts. A significant portion of Air Force's combat capability is located in the reserve forces. In 1999, reserve forces manned 35% of the Air Force's fighter wings and had even larger roles in the airlift and tanker force.[59] Unfortunately, the short notice requirements that existed prior to EAF made it difficult for reservists to

coordinate with their employers for the extended absences needed to deploy. EAF would change that. With increased notification lead times, in some cases 15 months, EAF enabled the reserve components to assume a significant role in ongoing operations, while offering more time for their civilian employers to plan for their workers' absences.

EAF would reach beyond warfighting capability improvements to directly impact the quality of life for each individual service member. EAF added nearly 6000 expeditionary combat support positions through FY02,[60] and increased the number of Air Force members eligible to participate in overseas deployments from 89,000 to over 144,000.[61] With the length and frequency of deployments directly dependent on the number of AEF eligible members, the increase promised to significantly ease the tempo. Also, EAF offered the member another benefit. By letting personnel know which AEF they are in, who they will deploy with, and when their AEF rotation is scheduled to deploy, the concept finally provided sorely needed stability and predictability and allowed the member to plan for training, education, and family activities.[62] Finally, EAF lent credibility to the service goal of a maximum 120 days deployed per year.

VISION BUILT UPON DEMONSTRATED SUCCESS OF AIR EXPEDITIONARY FORCES IN SOUTHWEST ASIA

Hall, Rosenthal, and Wade highlight the benefits of comprehensive pilot testing of the proposed transformation concept as an enabler of organizational redesign.[63] The pilot project serves as a working model of the concept, allowing the organization to test the overall feasibility of the changes, to increase their understanding of the concept, and to identify shortcomings that must be addressed before full-scale implementation. Like most corporate reengineering efforts, the Air Force transformation to EAF relied heavily on a pilot program phase. What was truly unique, however, was that the service relied upon its expertise with multiple air expeditionary force deployments to Southwest Asia, conducted between Oct 1995 and March 1998, to fulfill this function. This prototype *Air* Expeditionary Force (AEF) would evolve into General Ryan's *Aerospace* Expeditionary Force. By building the EAF concept upon the foundation of these initial Air Expeditionary Forces, the service was able to leverage its understanding of expeditionary operations into a feasible and realistic solution to the larger problems it was facing.

While it can be argued that the Air Force has been developing quick reaction air power packages for the past 40 years, the origins of the current EAF concept can be traced back to a 1994 idea of Lieutenant General John P. Jumper.[64] As the air component commander of USCENTCOM, he was wrestling with the problem of replacing the loss of theater airpower when its assigned aircraft carrier would have to leave the region for normal maintenance and

replenishment. To fill this "carrier gap", Lieutenant General Jumper proposed the deployment of a mixed force of combat capability (air-to-air fighters, precision munitions multi-role fighters, defense suppression aircraft and bombers) into the theater, and the Air Expeditionary Force was born. The first AEF would deploy to Bahrain on 28 Oct 1995. It proved an economical and practical way to rapidly project sustainable air power.[65] The Air Force would utilize the AEF model again in deployments to Jordan (March 1996), Qatar (June 1996) and again to Bahrain (February 1997 and March 1998).

The experience with AEFs in the Gulf proved invaluable. Foremost, it validated the idea that AEFs could serve as the bridge between the old system of fighting from overseas bases and the current reliance on direct deployments from the U.S.[66] In addition, the AEF experience would serve as a test bed of expeditionary operations, identifying areas requiring further consideration. Studying the lessons learned from these 1990s deployments, the service increased its understanding of the suitability of deployed locations, command and host nation relationships, composition of deployed units, and the unique requirements of expeditionary command.[67] In addition, the interface with USTRANSCOM for scheduling strategic airlift was streamlined.[68] AEF would also encourage the support community to refine logistical concepts for expeditionary forces. Logisticians worked to increase the deployed force's capability to "reachback", the process of exploiting a fully transparent, factory-to-flight line, on-time inventory and delivery system.[69] When a robust "reachback" capability was realized, the deployed force could then reduce extensive storage and inventory infrastructure systems,[70] known as the "footprint" of the deployed force. In short, a learning curve emerged from expeditionary operations. The Air Force was significantly progressing along this curve when the need for EAF arose.

EAF WAS ACCEPTABLE TO THE EXISTING CULTURE

Just as individuals have unique personalities that influence their ability to adapt to a changing environment, organizations have a unique culture that plays a similar role in their orientation to change. Smith defines organizational culture as a patterned way of thinking by the members, focusing on the organization's core tasks and key interrelationships.[71] Culture is passed on by generations; it is slow to change.[72] Its nearly invisible nature[73] often makes it difficult to address directly, tempting some change agents to ignore it. But the fact remains that the influence of culture must be considered in transformation. Unless the changes are compatible with the organization's existing culture, reform efforts will, at best, be in constant jeopardy of regression.[74] At worst, they will be totally rejected outright.[75]

The EAF transformation was successful because it was fully compatible with the current Air Force culture. Several reasons account for this harmony. EAF was implemented in a service culture that had already undergone several major cultural shifts in its relatively short history. As a result, it had developed a degree of elasticity and an openness to change. Smith's review highlights this dynamic.[76] The first predominant service culture grew out of its quest for independence, revolving around the supremacy of manned strategic bombardment. This initial culture would evolve to accommodate the challenge of the intercontinental ballistic missile community into a shared strategic culture focused on nuclear deterrence. With the rise of precision munitions technology, the dominance would again shift, as the service witnessed the demise of the Strategic Air Command and the resultant ascendancy of the fighter community. Because the changes happened gradually and deliberately, this cultural progression had limited disruptive effects.[77] The changes brought about by EAF were once again accepted by a culture that had a tradition of cultural evolution.

EAF may also have been acceptable to the culture because it offered coherence and shared purpose to a fragmented group of subcultures searching for unification under a single vision for the Air Force. Smith noted this extensive fragmentation into several subcultures along fault lines of specialty (pilot, navigator, engineer), subspecialty (fighter pilot, transport pilot) or even weapon system (F-15 pilot, A-10 pilot).[78] Given this "confederation of subcultures"[79], he proposed that organizational change would be possible only when unified, senior leadership took the initiative to reshape the service through a clear vision disseminated across the diverse subcultures and isolated specialties.[80] The key was to create an inclusive team focus around which these subcultures would willingly coalesce.[81] EAF certainly appears to fit this description.

The final, and perhaps most significant, reason that the Air Force culture accepted EAF was because it was completely non-threatening to the core mission of the service. This core mission lies at the heart of the organization, and bestows exalted status on an elite group at the center.[82] Any attempt to alter the core mission will generate resistance from the elite center, commensurate with the threat. Organizations fight hardest whenever a reform effort directly challenges their core mission.[83] The EAF vision respected this dynamic. With its continued emphasis on conventional projection of air power and precision attack against regional threats, it neither threatened the basic "Global Power, Global Reach" identity, nor the dominant fighter community. By attempting to improve the method by which the core mission was conducted, it simply "grafted new processes onto the old roots while killing off the inconsistent pieces."[84] This complementary quality of EAF enabled it to align with the culture and be readily assimilated.

EAF WAS SUCCESSFULLY INSTITUTIONALIZED INTO THE AIR FORCE BEFORE BACKSLIDING COULD OCCUR

Collins and Porras point out that successful reengineering efforts must avoid the pitfalls of the "We've Arrived Syndrome", the complacent lethargy that arises once the organization begins to achieve its transformation goals.[85] As the process nears completion, the cadre of change agents inevitably move on, then new challenges to the organization appear. During this critical phase, the organization must resist the tendency to regress and roll back the reforms. The recently implemented, fragile processes of the transformation must somehow be woven into the fabric of the organization if desired changes are to endure. The Air Force understood that "shallow roots require constant watering"[86] and institutionalized the changes brought about by EAF by quickly implementing permanent structural changes in the deployment packages, improving oversight of the deployment process, and embedding EAF innovators throughout the service.

The single most influential factor in the institutionalization of the EAF throughout the service was the restructuring of the basic building blocks of deployment, the Unit Type Codes (UTC). EAF moved the service away from ad hoc tasking of individual airmen by creating a new series of UTCs in the deployment database. This vastly increased the size and composition of the deployable elements to fill the requirements of the ten AEFs; it represented a fundamental change in the way of doing business. General Ryan described the benefits of UTC restructuring: "Each deployable Airman is assigned to one UTC team, and each UTC team is assigned to one AEF...Additionally, Airmen will benefit from deploying with team members from their home station—preparing together, deploying together, and then bringing their shared experiences back to the home base as a team."[87]

In addition to a revamped, more robust UTC structure, EAF was further ingrained in the service with the stand up of the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Center at Langley AFB in Virginia. The Center performs a central management role for the deploying AEFs by conducting planning conferences and managing the action items generated by them, scheduling both combat support and aviation forces of the AEFs, providing performance metrics and maintaining the archive of after-action reports and lessons learned. In short, the Center institutionalizes EAF by providing one-stop shopping for deploying units. It serves as the focal point for continuous AEF improvement. Brigadier General Dennis R. Larson, Director of the Center, observed the process of continuous improvement: "If there's a problem for AEF 5, I ought to be able to fix it for AEF 7."[88] In this progressive learning atmosphere, backsliding is much less likely to occur.

Capitalizing on the power of information technology, the service has established "EAF On-Line", an internet site to reach out to deploying members.[89] "EAF On-line" streamlines predeployment preparation by providing information on prerequisite training, inoculations, and qualifications for each individual AEF and location. In addition, it describes the tasks and equipment members will be working on once they arrive in theater. The site gives individual members a good idea of what to expect at the deployed location, and helps them become more comfortable with the deployment process and the EAF transformation in general.

Another way the service has attempted to solidify the expeditionary concept in the mindset of its members is through recent changes to the operational readiness inspection program. Subscribing to the notion that the things an organization measures are the things it holds most important, the service's inspection community has turned its focus to the unit' s ability to depart on AEF or training deployments. As such, inspection teams will observe and evaluate units as they prepare to deploy, and give Operational Readiness Inspection credit for successful completion.[90] The goal is simple: foster an expeditionary attitude by removing the upcoming inspection as a primary concern of the unit, and allow them to concentrate on the primary mission of expeditionary air power.[91]

Finally, some have suggested that the service may have solidified the EAF concept through a series of personnel changes.[92] In February 2000, General John P. Jumper, the architect of air expeditionary forces in Southwest Asia and an outspoken proponent for light, lean, and lethal deployable forces, assumed command of the Air Combat Command, the largest supplier of service members to the EAF. Lieutenant General Donald G. Cook, the Air Staff's Director for Expeditionary Aerospace Implementation and a key voice in the development of the EAF concept, assumed the office of Vice-Commander of Air Combat Command in June 2000. The reassignment of other EAF pioneers throughout the service should serve to further strengthen the concept.

CONCLUSION

As the EAF completed its first full cycle in December 2000, the transformation had by most accounts been successfully completed. The stability and predictability General Ryan had sought was being realized, and the number of days of notification prior to a deployment had increased from "a couple of days" to "about 180 days."[93] In addition, 94% of support specialties were being deployed as UTC teams, instead of the ad hoc assignments of the past.[94] Inclusion had been achieved with all fighter and bomber squadrons aligned with specific AEFs, with the exception of those in Korea and some airlift units. Reserve forces were actively participating in

the EAF, fulfilling approximately 11% of expeditionary combat support and about 25% of the AEF aviation packages.[95] Even the normally cautious Government Accounting Office (GAO) agreed that the expeditionary concept represented "a significant departure from the past"[96] and was "likely to achieve its objective of spreading the deployment burden over a larger part of the Air Force's combat forces."[97] It was equally optimistic about CONUS operations tempo, noting that "Active combat units based in the United States will experience a considerable drop in contingency deployments."[98]

Why was EAF successful when so many organizational transformation efforts end in failure or are abandoned along the way? Consider these reasons: The EAF transformation grew out of a realization that the Air Force had to change to adapt to an environment characterized by a series of small-scale contingencies. Failure to transform would risk organizational dysfunction, in part because of problems with readiness, operations tempo, and retention. EAF was built on a solid vision of the future expeditionary force. Its straightforward, communicable vision was a logical solution to the problems facing the Air Force. To keep the process on track, General Ryan infused the process with a sense of urgency, insisting that timelines be met when inevitable obstacles appeared. Next, the vision did not create winners and losers, but appealed to all the primary stakeholders, although not necessarily for the same reasons. This far-reaching vision also enjoyed instant credibility by building on the Air Force's previously successful experience with rapidly deployable force packages in Southwest Asia. Next, because the concept called for extending, rather than changing, the Air Force's core mission, it was accepted by the prevailing culture. Finally, the service took the initiative to incorporate the new components of EAF into the Air Force before the inevitable forces of regression could undo them.

In this era of globalization, shrinking defense dollars, and increasingly costly weapon systems, the services and defense agencies will increasingly face challenges to transform into more cost-effective, versatile, and lethal organizations. The Air Force transformation to EAF offers one possible template to manage such change. All that remains is "the will to succeed and the courage to begin".[99]

WORD COUNT=5729

ENDNOTES

[1]Paul Strebel, "Why Do Employees Resist Change?," Harvard Business Review 74 (May/June 1996): 86.

[2]John T. Correll, "Visions," Air Force Magazine, September 2000, 38.

[3]General Accounting Office, Force Structure: Air Force Expeditionary Concept Offers Benefits but Effects Should Be Assessed (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, August 2000), 35.

[4]Richard G. Davis, Draft of Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force (Washington D.C.: USAF History and Museums Program, 2000), 120.

[5]Michael Hammer and James Champy, Reengineering the Corporation (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 148.

[6]Ibid., 149.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., 151.

[9]John P. Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," Harvard Business Review 73 (March/April 1995): 60.

[10]Glenn W. Goodman, Jr., "An Expeditionary Air Force: USAF Plans Fundamental Shift In How It Responds To Global Contingencies," Armed Forces Journal International 136 (August 1998): 18.

[11]Draft of Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force, 17.

[12]Ibid., 17.

[13]"Budgets," Air Force Magazine, May 2000, 58.

[14]Goodman, 18.

[15]Harold Kennedy, "Air Force Realigns for Quick Response," National Defense, April 1999, 25.

[16]Davis, Draft of Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force, 22.

[17]Kennedy, 25.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Brian Bender, "Interview (With) Gen Michael E. Ryan, U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff," Jane's Defence Weekly, 4 November 1998, 32.

[20]David A. Fulghum, "Tough Schedules Thin USAF Ranks," Aviation Week and Space Technology, 15 September 1997, 78.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Davis, Draft of Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force, 32.

[24]Bender, 32.

[25]Goodman, 18.

[26]Davis, Draft of Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force, 119.

[27]John P. Kotter, Leading Change (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 69.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid., 70.

[30]Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," 63.

[31]Kotter, Leading Change, 78.

[32]Michael E. Ryan, "Expeditionary Aerospace Force Update," Commanders Notice to Airman (NOTAM) 00-1, 1 May 2000.

[33]Bender, 32.

[34]Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," 60.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," 60-62.

[38]Davis, Draft of Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force, 77.

[39]Ibid., 78.

[40]Ibid., 81.

[41]Ibid., 110.

[42]Ibid., 111.

[43]Col Don Gemeinhardt, USAF, interviewed by author, 22 Jan 2001, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

[44]Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," 66.

[45]Davis, Draft of Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force, 120.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Jim Katzaman, "EAF Rolls Closer to Reality," AF News, 18 Dec 98; available from <http://www.af.mil/news/Dec 1998>; Internet; accessed 18 December 2000.

[48]Bender, 32.

[49]Michael E. Ryan, "EAF Update," Commanders Notice to Airman (NOTAM) 00-8, 21 November 2000.

[50]Col David Aldrich, USAF, telephone interview by author, 19 January 2001.

[51]Davis, Draft of Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force, 95.

[52]John A. Tirpak, "The Expeditionary Air Force Takes Shape," Air Force Magazine, June 1997, 33.

[53]Ibid., 30.

[54]Sandra I. Erwin, "Air Force Realignment Aimed At Boosting Retention, Morale," National Defense, October 1998, 22-23.

[55]Ryan, Commanders Notice to Airman (NOTAM) 00-8.

[56]Davis, Draft of Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force, 75.

[57]Ibid., 120.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid., 36

[60]Ryan, Commanders Notice to Airman (NOTAM) 00-8.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Ryan, Commanders Notice to Airman (NOTAM) 00-1.

[63]Gene Hall, Jim Rosenthal and Judy Wade, "How to make Reengineering Really Work," Harvard Business Review 71 (November/December 1993): 128.

[64]Richard G. Davis, Immediate Reach, Immediate Power: The Air Expeditionary Force and American Power Projection in the Post Cold War Era (Washington D.C.: USAF History and Museums Program, 1998), 21.

[65]Ibid., 22.

[66]Tirpak, "The Expeditionary Air Force Takes Shape," 28.

[67]Roger A. Brady, "Building and Commanding Expeditionary Units," Aerospace Power Journal 14 (Spring 2000): 20-21.

[68]Davis, Draft of Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force, 47.

[69]Ibid., 49

[70]Ibid.

[71]James M. Smith, USAF Culture and Cohesion: Building An Air and Space Force For the 21st Century, INSS Occasional Paper 19, (USAF Academy: Institute for National Security Studies, June 1998), 2.

[72]Ibid.

[73]Kotter, Leading Change, 148.

[74]Ibid.

[75]Smith, 9.

[76]Ibid., 12-13.

[77]Ibid., 15.

[78]Ibid., 1.

[79]Ibid., 23.

[80]Ibid., 50.

[81]Ibid., 51.

[82]Ibid., 2.

[83]Ibid., 9.

[84]Kotter, Leading Change, 151.

[85]James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, "Building Your Company's Vision," Harvard Business Review 74 (September/October 1996): 76.

[86]Kotter, Leading Change, 147.

[87]Ryan, Commanders Notice to Airman (NOTAM) 00-1.

[88]John A. Tirpak, "The EAF Turns One," Air Force Magazine, October 2000, 25.

[89]Wilson Camelo, "EAF Online Preps Troops for AEF Deployments," Airman, June 2000, 16.

[90]Bentley B. Rayburn, "New ACC Inspection System focuses on Basics of Mission Accomplishment," TIG Brief--The Inspector General, March/April 2000, 6.

[91]"EORI: AMC's Bold New Construct," TIG Brief--The Inspector General, May/June 2000, 10.

[92]Col David Aldrich, USAF, telephone interview by author, 19 January 2000.

[93]Tirpak, "The EAF Turns One," 22.

[94]"NOTAM: EAF Update," TIG Brief--The Inspector General, July/August 2000, 24.

[95]Nicholas B. Kehoe, "Expeditionary Air Force," TIG Brief--The Inspector General, September/October 2000, 3.

[96]General Accounting Office, 27.

[97]Ibid., 5.

[98]Ibid., 5.

[99]Hammer and Champy, 216.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aldrich, David, USAF Colonel. Telephone interview by author, 19 January 2001.

Bender, Brian. "Interview (With) Gen Michael E. Ryan, US Air Force Chief of Staff." Jane's Defence Weekly, 4 November 1998, 32.

"Budgets." Air Force Magazine, May 2000, 58-64.

Brady, Roger A. "Building and Commanding Expeditionary Units." Aerospace Power Journal 14 (Spring 2000): 12-21.

Camelo, Wilson. "EAF Online Preps Troops for AEF Deployments." Airman, June 2000, 16-17.

Collins, James C. and Jerry I. Porras. "Building Your Company's Vision." Harvard Business Review 74 (September/October 1996): 65-77.

Correll, John T. "Visions." Air Force Magazine, September 2000, 35-39.

Davis, Richard G. Draft of Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force. Washington D.C.: USAF History and Museums Program, 2000.

Davis, Richard G. Immediate Reach, Immediate Power: The Air Expeditionary Force and American Power Projection in the Post Cold War Era. Washington D.C.: USAF History and Museums Program, 1998.

"EORI: AMC's Bold New Construct." TIG Brief—The Inspector General, May/June 2000, 10-11.

Erwin, Sandra I. "Air Force Realignment Aimed At Boosting Retention, Morale." National Defense, October 1998, 22-23.

Fulghum, David A. "Tough Schedules Thin USAF Ranks." Aviation Week and Space Technology, 15 September 1997, 78-79.

Gemeinhardt, Donald, USAF Colonel. Interviewed by author, 22 Jan 2001, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

Goodman, Glenn W., Jr. "An Expeditionary Air Force: USAF Plans Fundamental Shift In How It Responds To Global Contingencies." Armed Forces Journal International 136 (August 1998): 18-19.

Hall, Gene, Jim Rosenthal and Judy Wade. "How to make Reengineering Really Work." Harvard Business Review 71 (November/December 1993): 119-131.

Hammer, Michael and James Champy. Reengineering the Corporation. New York: HarperCollins, 1994.

Katzaman, Jim. "EAF Rolls Closer to Reality." AF News, 18 Dec 98. Available from http://www.af.mil/news/Dec 1998. Internet. Accessed 18 December 2000.

Kehoe, Nicholas B. "Expeditionary Air Force." TIG Brief—The Inspector General, September/October 2000, 3.

Kennedy, Harold. "Air Force Realigns for Quick Response." National Defense, April 1999, 25-26.

Kotter, John P. Leading Change. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.

Kotter, John P. "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail." Harvard Business Review 73 (March/April 1995): 59-67.

"NOTAM: EAF Update." TIG Brief—The Inspector General, July/August 2000, 23-24.

Nowak, Michael J. The Air Expeditionary Force: A Strategy for an Uncertain Future? Maxwell AFB: Air War College, September 1999.

Rayburn, Bentley B. "New ACC Inspection System focuses on Basics of Mission Accomplishment." TIG Brief—The Inspector General, March/April 2000, 6-7.

Ryan, Michael E. "EAF Update." Commanders Notice to Airman (NOTAM) 00-8, 21 November 2000.

Ryan, Michael E. "Expeditionary Aerospace Force Update." Commanders Notice to Airman (NOTAM) 00-1, 1 May 2000.

Smith, James M. USAF Culture and Cohesion: Building An Air and Space Force For the 21st Century. USAF Academy: Institute for National Security Studies, June 1998.

Strebel, Paul. "Why Do Employees Resist Change?" Harvard Business Review 74 (May/June 1996): 86-92.

Sull, Donald B. "Why Good Companies Go Bad." Harvard Business Review 77 (July/August 1999): 42-52.

Tirpak, John A. "The Expeditionary Air Force Takes Shape." Air Force Magazine, June 1997, 28-33.

Tirpak, John A. "The EAF Turns One." Air Force Magazine, October 2000, 20-25.

U.S. General Accounting Office. Force Structure: Air Force Expeditionary Concept Offers Benefits but Effects Should Be Assessed. Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, August 2000.