Chapter 1

First In! Expeditionary Air Base Seizure and Operations

Power Projection through Mobility Warriors

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The global strategic environment changed in a massive way when the Cold War ended. Gone is the moderating existence of two superpowers exerting suppressive influence on otherwise explosive regions. There was armed conflict during the Cold War, and it occurred with some regularity. Yet these superpower nations had an implicit understanding that nearly every encounter carried with it the potential to widen into a regional conflict or perhaps even nuclear war. Both knew that neither country would benefit from a global confrontation and the possibility of an Armageddon scenario. However, after the demise of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new states, the stabilizing influence of the superpowers dwindled, leaving the United States as the leading political force on the globe.

The United States no longer finds itself in the arena with another heavyweight power in an all-or-nothing contest for supremacy. America must shed the pounds of that heavyweight boxer and transform into a ninja that lurks in the dark alleys of the world, attacking a myriad of foes. In the early 2000s, the goal of US military transformation became focused on building light, lean, and lethal forces.[1] Attempting to adjust to the new strategic realities, each branch of the US armed services is struggling to determine its relevance in this new setting.

America has withdrawn forces from all over the world and has become a continental United States (CONUS)–based force. The ability to respond to a crisis overseas has led the Air Force to become more expeditionary. These expeditionary forces must be capable of rapid, small-footprint deployments into areas of strategic and operational im-

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portance.[2] This light and lethal deployment capability represents a significant transformation from the Cold War force and is a key enabler for the current expeditionary Air Force.[3]

The air and space expeditionary force (AEF) concept is to rapidly deploy, employ, and sustain aerospace power around the globe from a predominantly in-CONUS force structure. The AEF's requirement to respond swiftly means that force and support packages must be quickly tailored to meet the operational needs of a specific contingency. The deployment and sustainment of resources must be coordinated to arrive at forward operating locations (FOL) so that initial and sustained operations can occur without interruption.[4] These operations have been a challenge for the USAF in permissive environments, but they will face even greater complications in a hostile, nonpermissive, antiaccess environment where a forced-entry seizure of an airfield is required (fig. 1.1).

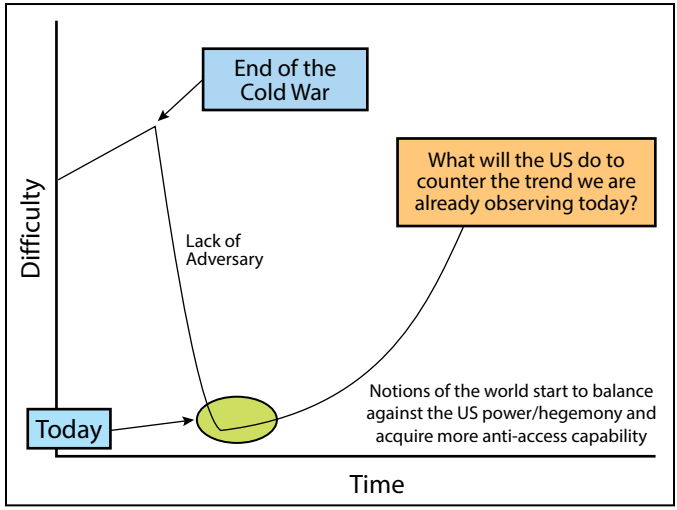

Figure 1.1. The antiaccess dilemma. (Reproduced from Col Thomas P. Ehrhard, PhD, USAF, briefing to the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, 17 May 2004.)

The Vision

As the United States emerges from two nearly simultaneous conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, global airpower trends have clearly

proven the strategic importance of the expeditionary concept and suggest that few opponents will be able to challenge the United States Air Force in the air. However, adversaries of the future are likely to look for alternative means to counter US airpower. One means of doing so is through antiaccess tactics. The United States faced natural, geographical antiaccess issues in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)—the war in Afghanistan. America faced an enemy in a landlocked country with no easy access. Through the initial use of US naval airpower and USAF long-range strike aircraft, combined with a heavy reliance on the tanker fleet, America was nonetheless able to strike the Taliban effectively. Eventually America secured air bases in permissive areas such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan.[5] US forces also seized airfields in hostile environments—at landing zone (LZ) Rhino and Kandahar International Airport in Afghanistan. The post-9/11 world will find the seizing and opening of airfields in distant and unusual places increasingly important.

Significance

This concept of airfield seizure and secure lodgment is essential for the projection of American power. The doctrinal importance of airfield seizure and air base opening to US security strategy is supported by a continuum of key policy documents ranging from the White House to the Department of Defense (DOD), Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), US Air Force, and Air Mobility Command (AMC). The 2017 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* asserts, "We must enable forward-deployed field work beyond the confines of diplomatic facilities, including partnering with military colleagues in conflict-affected states." Further, since "adversaries constantly evolve their methods to threaten the United States and our citizens" our response must be agility and adaptability.[6] Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) guidance in Joint Publication (JP) 3-18, *Forcible Entry Operations*, advocates forcible entry in situations where "securing the lodgment" is needed "to protect the force and ensure the continuous landing of personnel and materiel, . . . support the increasing flow of forces and logistic resource requirements, and . . . support the joint force in preparing for and executing follow-on operations."[7] Air Force doctrine notes, "As the United States moves into a realm of uncertain adversaries, it is the capability of our mobility forces that will ensure the force

projection necessary to protect US national interests."[8] It further describes how "deployable air mobility support forces can expand the GAMSS [global air mobility support system] at existing locations or establish capabilities where none exists," thus establishing an infrastructure for global air mobility operations.[9]

According to retired USAF colonel John Cirafici's research, "A war-fighting commander depends on the airhead to introduce combat forces in the shortest time possible and to sustain them during the initial and probably the most critical phases of the operations." Further, Cirafici states that "where a threat of force is necessary, concerned parties must realize that the means to project force is as credible as the force itself."[10] In short, all US military services must contribute forces capable of rapid, decisive, forced entry operations in support of airfield seizure to enable follow-on forces.

The USAF—and more specifically Air Mobility Command with its vast array of air transports, aerial tankers, and air mobility specialists—is critical to effective power projection. US Army (USA) Field Manual (FM) 3-99, *Airborne and Air Assault Operations*, lists airlift as the number one item the USAF must deliver for such operations.[11] Air mobility capabilities are the key enablers for rapid force-projection forces. Therefore, the robustness of the air mobility system determines the speed at which America can generate forces for power projection. Future contingency operations will require a credible and versatile force tailored to each unique situation. Any force package will require a secure staging area to transition from deployment to employment. This is true whether that package is airpower or ground power. When a secure lodgment is not available, a forced entry into the objective area is required to seize and secure a forward base for the introduction of combat forces.[12]

A forced seizure of an airfield is a complex and difficult operation. The mission is normally performed by airborne troops, air assault forces, and/or ground special operations forces (SOF) and specially trained mobility crews either from Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) or AMC. These units, both Army and Air Force, are lightly equipped and vulnerable to enemy maneuver and firepower. The operation is further complicated by the requirement for firepower via aircraft in a close air support (CAS) or interdiction role. Precision engagement is key in such an operation; destruction of the airfield and its facilities could render the inserted ground forces helpless as follow-on forces will be unable to proceed.

With extended-range air operations becoming increasingly important, is the USAF organizing, training, and equipping the force to handle the antiaccess issues of establishing forward air bases in a denied environment? An analysis of case studies will demonstrate the strategic importance of airfield seizure. We then examine whether the USAF is adequately preparing to execute this critical function in the future. Clearly, strategists find such operations increasingly critical: without airfields, force projection is close to impossible. For this reason, the history of some select operations is pertinent to future USAF operations. While the basic technique of airfield seizure has not changed markedly over the past 50 years, new information and sensor and weapon technologies offer opportunities for future conflicts.[13]

Each historical case study is examined through the lens of *Joint Vision 2020*. It presents the application of four operational concepts that will result in full-spectrum dominance: dominant maneuver, precision engagement, full dimensional protection, and focused logistics (fig. 1.2).

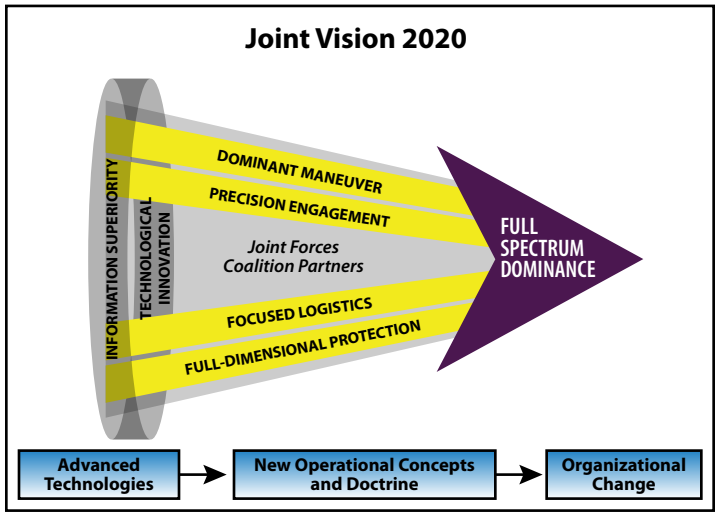

Figure 1.2. Joint Vision 2020. (Reproduced from Gen Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2020* [Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, June 2000], https://permanent.access.gpo.gov/LPS5598/jv2020.pdf.)

This template provides a common direction for US military services in developing their unique capabilities within a joint framework of

doctrine and programs as they prepare to meet an uncertain and challenging future. Furthermore, one of the best analyses of the future is to understand the past. By applying *Joint Vision 2020*'s concepts to the case studies, we can gain a better understanding of how to shape our future capabilities.

Historical Outlook

Airborne forces usually perform the seizure of an airfield when it is to be used as an airhead. Such forces have attacked airfields multiple times since 1940 to secure airfield facilities for the landing of troops, heavy equipment, and supplies.[14] It is critical to review the theory and history of airfield seizure, follow-on air base opening, and the strategic significance of such operations. The Germans were the first to recognize the strategic value of an adversary's airfields as insertion points for their own forces. We also examine the Luftwaffe's operations in northern Europe, where German paratroopers captured airfields at Aalborg, Denmark, and at Sola, Oslo, and Stavanger, Norway. A month later, the Luftwaffe captured three airfields at The Hague and another at Rotterdam in Holland. A year later, in the largest German airborne operation of the war, German paratroopers assaulted the three Commonwealth airfields on Crete.[15]

This chapter also describes the Soviet view of airfield seizure and airhead operations. In 1979 Soviet airborne forces seized the Kabul airport and several other air bases for use by follow-on forces in the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.[16] Another focus is American operations using the experience of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) to demonstrate the criticality of airfield seizure. However, airfield seizures have been a part of US military operations for some time. In 1983 American forces conducted attacks in Grenada during Operation Urgent Fury, capturing the Salinas and Pearls airports.[17] Again in 1989, during Operation Just Cause, US Army Rangers captured Rio Hato and Tocumen airfields in Panama.[18]

As the world emerges from the Cold War and the US armed forces become increasingly expeditionary in nature, such airfield seizure operations will be more frequent. The linear battlefield has disappeared in Afghanistan and Iraq. This change has placed an even greater requirement on the need for airfields to resupply ground forces or forward deploy air assets. LZ Rhino was secured as a foot-

hold in Afghanistan during OEF, leading to the seizure of Kandahar International Airport.[19] In OIF, airfield seizure operations were crucial pieces of the campaign. Iraqi airfields were turned into US operating bases at Tallil, Bashur, Bushmaster, H1, Kirkuk, K1, and Balad (discussed later in greater detail).[20]

In the future, the USAF will encounter scenarios where it must secure lodgment to project power. The United States must develop the forces and organizations now to prepare for such operations. We explore how the USAF is posturing forces today and in the near future to meet this threat. The future of conflict is uncertain, and we consider how best to organize, train, and equip the force of tomorrow to meet a wide spectrum of conflict. Air base seizure and opening are key to US power projection.

Assumptions and Limitations

The USAF found that much of its post–Cold War thought regarding opening air bases did not withstand the reality test after 9/11. In the pre-9/11 world, the Air Force opened bases in locations with a robust infrastructure and a permissive environment. Strategies for those conditions have little to do with post-9/11 air base opening in austere locations with a modicum of or no infrastructure. The US mobility air forces (MAF) and US SOF have a myriad of lessons to study following OEF and OIF.

The topic of base opening received attention at the chief of staff of the Air Force (CSAF) and AMC commander levels in 2003. The Air Force and AMC explored a variety of initiatives to better enable expeditionary base openings, including the expeditionary mobility task force (EMTF) and the contingency response wing (CRW). As CSAF, Gen John Jumper, USAF, retired, stated that base opening and CRW skills are critical to the "modern expeditionary Air Force." He noted, "We will continue to grow these skills and get the people in these groups that we need to be able to do this [air base opening] in any condition, anywhere in the world. And it's going to get people's attention."[21] Since then, the Air Force has implemented initiatives to better enable expeditionary base openings, including the air mobility operations wing (AMOW) and the CRW.[22] Both the 515 AMOW at Hickam AB, Hawaii, and the 521 AMOW at Ramstein AB, Germany, were stood up in 2008.[23] The 621 CRW was activated in 2005 at Joint Base

McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, and at Travis AFB, California. The goal of these organizations is maintaining a rapid air mobility capability to seize and open airfields.

An essential premise for implementing a truly effective airfield seizure and air base opening team, as history will show, is that it must be truly joint. US armed forces must transcend parochial interests to develop the most effective force. Without an airfield to operate from, in many cases, there will be no introduction of combat forces. If the American military is committed to creating an effective, light, and lethal fighting force, it must take action that reaches beyond bureaucratic entanglements and service rigidity. One must understand the Air Force role in airfield seizure and air base opening—how such operations have been performed in the past and whether those methods will translate well into the future of such operations.

Airfield Seizure Case Studies

The practice of capturing airfields dates back to World War II and the Luftwaffe's attacks in Norway. However, the concept of securing lodgment for friendly troops to ensure the capability of follow-on attack is centuries old. Evidence is found in the earliest recorded history, back to 416 BC with Thucydides and the Sicilian Campaign. The argument in favor of the expedition was that by subduing Sicily, which had a large number of Greek colonies, the Athenians would receive an increase in their forces with which to defeat the Peloponnesians. Athenian general Nicias debated fellow countryman and general Alcibiades on the merits of the campaign:

> Against a power of this kind it will not do to have merely a weak naval armament, but we shall want also a large land army to sail with us, if we are to do anything worthy of our ambition, and are not to be shut out from the country by a numerous cavalry. . . . We must therefore start from home with a competent force, seeing that we are going to sail far from our country, and upon an expedition not like any which you may undertaken. . . . We are cutting ourselves off, and going to a land entirely strange.[24]

In 415 BC the Athenians sent out a great fleet and in 414 BC besieged Syracuse, the main Greek city in Sicily. The campaign proved to be a disaster for the Athenians and the beginning of the end for their empire.

Fast-forward to an America that up until World War I had fought most all of its wars on the continent of North America. For two cen-

turies the United States enjoyed near isolation behind two broad oceans. The country's participation in World War I against the Central Powers was the first major break with these traditional isolationist policies. The United States fought in World War I as an associate power, not as an ally. Even after a world war, America attempted to return to being an isolationist country.

The first turning point for US isolationists occurred in 1940. German military triumphs in Europe and the Battle of Britain forced widespread American reconsideration of its relation to the war now raging in Europe. Many worried that if Germany and Italy triumphed in Europe and Africa, and Japan triumphed in East Asia, the Western Hemisphere would be the next target. Even if America withstood assaults, its democracy, freedom, and economy could be traumatized in the "fortress America" it might have to maintain to guard its security. Given that frightening worst-case scenario, by the autumn of 1940, most Americans believed in ensuring the defeat of the Axis—even at the risk of war. The ultimate turning point from isolationist to global power proved to be the December 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

As America emerged from isolation in World War II, force projection became increasingly important. In Europe, the projection was less of a challenge since US forces could secure lodgment in North Africa and England. In the Pacific, the Allies witnessed the birth of airfield seizure—an entire campaign based on acquiring new lodgment after new lodgment.

Thousands of miles separated the United States from ultimate victory in the Pacific during World War II. Lt Col James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle led the famous raid on the Japanese home islands early in the war, but spanning the vast oceans with concentrated air power proved a daunting task. American naval and ground forces had to secure bases in China and wrest far-flung islands from the tenacious grip of the Japanese. From these bases, the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) launched specially designed, very long range bombers against the home islands. The strategic bombing campaign, climaxed by the destruction of enemy cities with conventional and atomic bombs, helped force Japan to surrender and spared the United States a bloody invasion. The US air offensive against Japan is the central story of the Pacific war, a drama of island hopping, airfield seizures, and the truest sense of joint operations.[25] Much of the WWII Pacific

experience in airfield seizure is pertinent to today's expeditionary Air Force.

A RAND corporation study by Alan Vick notes that a broad range of objectives may be gained from attacking an air base. These range from simple harassment of the enemy and its operations to the focus of this paper, capturing an airfield for US operations. Vick further divides the capture of an airfield into two categories: (1) for use as an airhead or support base or (2) for offensive air operations or FOL.[26]

The capture of an airfield for offensive air operations, where attacking air forces sought to capture enemy bases to perform their own offensive air operations, was limited to World War II until recent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.[27] WWII had 23 FOL operations, and, in many of these, the attackers could mount offensive air operations within hours or days after ground forces had secured the airfield. These operations were akin to the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Ground forces captured airfields so that their own air forces could occupy the base and conduct offensive air operations from the airfield, extending the reach of the attacker's air force.[28]

Fighting in the Pacific theater of WWII was noted for its jointness. In particular, the campaign plans of both sides were largely determined by the need to capture and defend air bases.[29] As such, joint operations were launched to capture enemy airfields. Subsequent air operations from these new bases extended the offensive range of airpower, allowing for new naval and ground operations that, in turn, seized new airfields.

Both the Allied and Axis powers had noteworthy FOL operations in World War II. Among these are the Japanese attack on Wake Island and Japanese landings at Singora and Patani, Thailand, and Kota Bharu, Malaya. Japan secured two Thai air bases and three Royal Air Force (RAF) fields, subsequently defeating the British in Malaya on 15 February 1941. The Japanese also captured the RAF airfield at Palembang, Sumatra, in February 1942.[30] The Japanese attack on Midway Island in 1942 was a failed attempt at airfield seizure—changing the tide of the war.[31] Notable Allied efforts include the British assault on the Vichy French airfield at Souk-el-Arba, Algeria, in November 1942 and the US landings on Tinian, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and le Shima in 1944 and 1945.[32] These examples are a few of the operations in an entire campaign bent on the seizure of airfields to attack and counterattack the enemy.

The Soviet and American Cold War following World War II stifled such operations on a grand scale. Airfield seizures occurred in several conflicts but were limited. The Korean War witnessed the United States rapidly opening air bases as land was seized from the North. Operation Chromite (or Inchon) is an excellent historical example of the strategic importance of airfield seizure. The objectives of Operation Chromite were multifaceted: "(1) neutralize the fortified Wolmi Island, which controlled access to Inchon Harbor; (2) land and capture Inchon, 25 miles west of Seoul; (3) seize Kimpo Airfield just south of Seoul; and, finally, (4) capture the city of Seoul."[33] On 24 September 1950, just days after the invasion, Kimpo Airfield opened for 24-hour operations. Cargo aircraft brought in much-needed supplies and air evacuated the wounded and sick back to hospitals in Japan. Nine C-119 transports emergency air-dropped ammunition and rations to the frontline troops as they pushed north out of the Inchon area. Eight C-54s landed at the newly captured airfield at Suwon on 24 September to bring in some 65 tons of ammunition and rations. The Combat Cargo Command lifted the 187th Airborne Regiment into Kimpo on 25 September to guard the offensive's flank as the troops moved forward.[34]

As mentioned, from the end of Korea until the 1980s, the two superpowers had somewhat stabilized the global environment, and the United States faced the USSR along stagnated lines. The static "Iron Curtain" over Europe allowed for the building of forward bases and the deployment of permanently stationed troops in the theater of conflict. The ability and requirement to seize bases significantly decreased in strategic importance. The operations were relegated to a small force of special operations experts.

These infrequent operations included Operation Eagle Claw—the failed rescue attempt of American hostages held in Iran. Eagle Claw planned on the seizure of Manzariyeh AB in Iran. This putative lodgment would have allowed for C-141 Starlifter transports to fly the hostages and rescue teams out of the country.[35]

Operation Urgent Fury—the rescue of American students in Grenada—required the seizure of Salinas and Pearls airports.[36] During Operation Just Cause, US Rangers captured Rio Hato and Tocumen airfields in Panama for insertion of forces to remove dictator Manuel Noriega.[37] These operations differ from those of WWII in that the objective of these seizures was never to sustain forces. The

operations were a bolt out of the blue—a surprise special operations effort for temporary effects.[38]

In essence, the Cold War was the driving factor in diminishing the US military's need for airfield seizure and the requirement to open bases. Europe and the Pacific were fertile ground, littered with bases to support troops in combat with the USSR. If World War III were to occur, a nuclear exchange would end the war quickly. If nuclear weapons were not used, the conventional battle between the United States and USSR would be one of forces already deployed in Europe and fought from fixed bases, with follow-on forces deploying to forward NATO airfields and ports. These forces and forward bases were a requirement of the Cold War and integral to deterrence.

Following the Cold War, America and its allies faced what President George H. W. Bush called a "new world order." In his 11 September 1990 address to a joint session of Congress and the nation, he stated:

> A new world order—can emerge: a new era—freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace. An era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony. A hundred generations have searched for this elusive path to peace, while a thousand wars raged across the span of human endeavor. Today that new world is struggling to be born, a world quite different from the one we've known. A world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle. A world in which nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice. A world where the strong respect the rights of the weak.[39]

Ironically, 11 years later, his son, President George W. Bush, would face a completely different world.

Instead, the "new world order" ushered in a new realm of conflict. America was forced to change from a Cold War force that was deployed forward to a force that was in garrison and home, based in the United States with the ability to deploy rapidly. The US approach to combat in Desert Storm was based on Cold War thought. The United States–led coalition built up forces in the Persian Gulf at allied bases and was afforded the time to meet the Iraqis with overwhelming force.

Conflicts in Somalia and Rwanda stimulated discussion among US strategists regarding the notion of air base opening. The United States needed more open airfields in austere places at the very limit of its logistical reach. US military strategy increasingly stressed force projection and the strategic role of air mobility forces. The pre-9/11 air base opening sequence proved a good start in thought, but a

leaner military structure required the USAF to develop doctrine for the optimum use of forces. The United States no longer enjoyed scores of airlifters and tankers flying to fixed bases. To strengthen and grow this budding expeditionary culture, new strategies would have to emerge.

A regional combatant commander requires his forces to flow into the theater in a timely manner to where they are needed so that they can quickly prepare for employment. The linear battlefield made these objectives a challenge; today's nonlinear battlefield makes them even more difficult. New units in-theater make vulnerable, lucrative targets for the enemy. Whether on an FOL or a support base, the airfield can be exposed and a bottleneck. Because of its critical importance for force insertion and sustainment, it is a likely center of gravity that a competent enemy would be expected to attack. No longer can air mobility alone open bases as we saw in the pre 9/11 world. Today, forces must be integrated.

CONOPS Theory

During the early 2000s the DOD focused its efforts on military transformation. Then secretary of defense (SecDef) Donald H. Rumsfeld defined the goal of transformation: "We need rapidly deployable, fully integrated forces, capable of reaching distant theaters quickly and working with our air and sea forces to strike adversaries swiftly, successfully and devastating effect."[40] Key to this effort was the creation and modernization of forcible entry capabilities. JP 3-18, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations*, states that Army airborne and air assault forces are primary forces in such operations.[41] Such forces cannot project themselves on a global scale and require the USAF to seize airfields. RAND's study *Lightning over Water* cites research that questions whether airborne and air assault assets "have the survivability and killing power for future . . . contingencies." The study indicates that light forces "will need to have much greater survivability and lethality to operate effectively."[42] The Air Force enhances this survivability and lethality of forced entry operations. Air Force forced entry capabilities like airlift, counterair, CAS, tactical air reconnaissance, air interdiction, special air warfare operations, electronic warfare, and suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD) are central to the air component's forced entry missions.[43]

Air Mobility

This forcible entry option of either airborne or air assault requires a delivery method. The preferred method for conveying these forces is via the USAF's air mobility forces. Without the robust capability of the USAF, the airborne unit is a rider without a horse. With an effective and timely USAF response, however, seizure forces can be employed with the maximum probability of success.[44] JP 3-17, *Air Mobility Operations*, states, "Air mobility operations are a rapid means to project and sustain power across the globe in support of US national interests and a critical enabler to the US National Military Strategy."[45]

Air mobility is a system of systems combining airlift, air refueling, and air mobility support assets, processes, and procedures into an integrated whole. Airlift and air refueling can operate independently of one another, but neither can operate without air mobility support.

Current forcible entry forces—airborne and air assault—lack survivability and lethality, especially in a high threat environment.[46] The Air Force's global strike CONOPS package of aircraft can establish air dominance, but troops on the ground are usually required to occupy terrain and secure lodgment. The solution is an integrated force using airborne forces, the USAF global strike CONOPS, and the global mobility (GM) CONOPS.

Lodgment and the Global Mobility CONOPS

A contingency mission requires a secure base of operations where combat power can be introduced, projected, and sustained to conduct joint operations. Seizure of an airfield is one means of securing such a base. Operations to support this goal can be conducted via ground, air, or sea. Once the field is attacked, it must be secured and defended, and subsequent air and/or ground operations must ensue.

The projection and employment of US forces has almost inevitably required the establishment of bases near the area of operations.[47] Today, air base opening is fulfilled in the following steps (fig. 1.3): (1) "Open the Airbase," which first employs the base assessment team (C-BAT), (2) Create a synchronized "Command and Control [C2]," (3) "Establish the Airbase" to achieve initial operating capability and provide sufficient force protection, (4) "Generate the Mission," and, finally, (5) "Operate the Airbase" to bring its full operating capability to bear to meet overarching military objectives.[48]

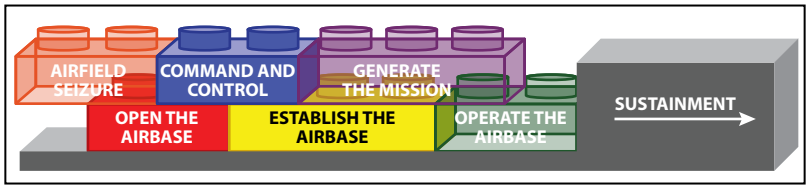

Figure 1.3. Air base opening force model construct. (Reproduced from Curtis E. LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, "Airbase Opening," in "Annex 3-17, Air Mobility Operations," 65, 5 April 2016, https://doctrine.af.mil/download.jsp?filename=3-17-Annex-MOBILITY-OPS.pdf.)

Implementing the GM CONOPS in a hostile environment requires direct, detailed coordination and integration between the GM CONOPS planners and airfield seizure forces. These forces usually consist of SOF or conventional Army or Marine Corps (USMC) forces combined with Air Force forces. Of these roles, the USAF's part in "opening the air base" is the most imperative.

History shows the strategic importance of airfield seizure, and we will examine such operations in context. Case studies start with German operations in Norway, continue with the Soviet concept of airfield seizure and its effects in Afghanistan, and conclude with the US operation in Iraq during OIF. These case studies are offered as reflection prior to further addressing the USAF's concept for air base openings in the wake of OIF and OEF. Finally, future organization, training requirements, and doctrine are amplified as recommendations for future operations.

The German Way: The Luftwaffe in Northern Europe

In World War II the Germans conducted major airfield seizure operations only twice—May 1940 in Holland and May 1941 involving the occupation of Crete. Thus, Germany's experience with airborne operations in this war is derived primarily from these two engagements, "constitut[ing] the first large-scale airborne operations in the history of warfare."[49] Airborne operations during Operation Mercury, the seizure of Crete, were less than impressive. Despite taking the island, Adolph Hitler saw the battle as a fiasco and lost faith in the paratroopers under Gen Kurt Student. He never ordered another

major airborne attack for the remainder of the war. The focus here, however, is the campaign in Norway and the strategic effects caused by forcible entry and subsequent airfield seizures.

Context

Operation Weserübung, the invasion of Norway and Denmark, was a campaign of many firsts.[50] The operation demonstrated the first combat airborne operation and airfield seizure, the first campaign in which air superiority cancelled the opponent's naval superiority, and the first major campaign in which aerial supply through seized airfields became a deciding factor.[51] Hitler first envisioned the invasion of Scandinavia around Christmas 1939 and revisited the concept in early 1940. German motives for the invasion included not only the fear of the British forestalling Germany and seizing Nazi supplies of iron ore but also "a wish to push the British naval blockade as far away from the German coast as possible."[52] Germany also recognized that the Norwegian air bases offered the Luftwaffe the range to strike the northern portion of the British Isles. In turn, if the British were to occupy Norway, they could use the airfields as bases for the RAF and enable bombing missions against German cities at a much shorter range.[53] With the commencement of operations in Scandinavia, Hitler stated that "this operation will prevent British encroachment in Scandinavia and the Baltic; further, it will guarantee our ore base in Sweden and give our navy and air force a wider start-line against Britain."[54]

For Germany to attain its diplomatic, military, and economic objectives in Norway, the Norwegian military had to be defeated. The German military was, at the same time, preparing for the invasion of France and the Low Countries and had few forces to engage in an invasion to the north. Hitler's concern was that the British would occupy Norway as soon as Nazi forces pushed west with their invasion of France, thereby limiting German options. The Germans faced a dilemma. With forces awaiting the campaign in the Low Countries, Hitler could not afford to divert an overwhelming force to a northern front. Yet a force that could strike rapidly, with surprise, and hit centers of gravity decisively could be employed. Any option required the ability to secure lodgments in Norway to support military long-range operations so far from Germany. Hitler chose to use stealth, speed, and precision in his forcible entry of Norway.[55]

Dominant Maneuver

The German planning staff developed the concept of a surprise attack to simultaneously seize all of Norway's major ports and airfields (fig. 1.4). According to *Joint Vision 2020*, forces adept at conducting sustained and synchronized operations from dispersed locations employ dominant maneuver.[56] The Navy would land troops at Oslo, Kristiansand, Bergen, Trondheim, and Narvik.[57] Paratroop followed by airlanded units would seize the Oslo and Stavanger airports.[58] Just outside Stavanger, Sola was the "biggest and best airport in Norway with a perfect position to control the sea approaches to southern Norway." Oslo Airport at Fornebu was still being built but was almost complete.[59]

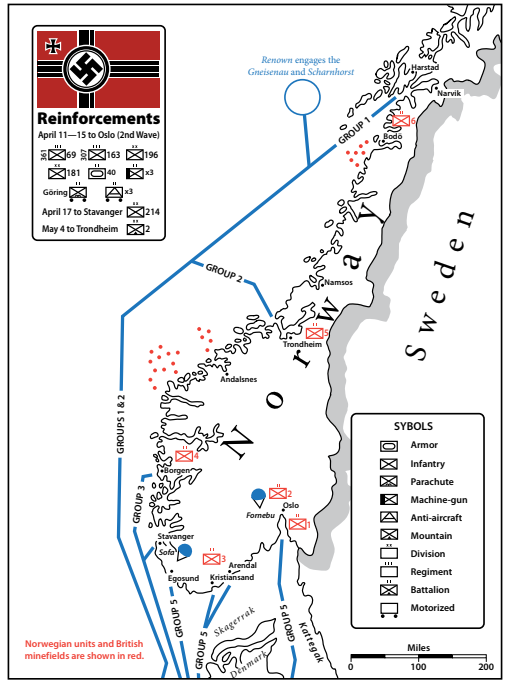

Figure 1.4. The German invasion of Norway, 1940. (Reproduced from "Blitzkrieg in Poland and Norway," PowerPoint presentation, slide 14, UK teaching resources website, accessed 7 July 2017, http://schoolshistory.org.uk/EuropeatWar/invasionofnorway.htm.)

German planners required the seizure and occupation of Denmark as well. The Luftwaffe required the two major airfields at

Aalborg in northern Denmark to conduct operations over Norway. The fields at Aalborg were strategically important as an advanced base with a land connection to Germany and a staging point en route to Norway.[60] The German bomber and transport force had the range to fly from northern Germany and reach southern Norway. However, without a staging airfield within short range of home airfields in Germany, Luftwaffe fighters and short-range reconnaissance aircraft could not fly to Norway and protect the army and navy from British attack. The airfields at Aalborg were ideal for these purposes. German occupation there would extend the range of the Luftwaffe bombers well over the North Sea and central Norway.[61]

As noted, the Germans further anticipated that the British had plans to land troops in Norway to cut off German ore supplies. It was now a race to quickly maneuver forces to occupy Scandinavia first and meet the timing requirements for the planned offensive in the west. The campaign in Norway would require most of the Luftwaffe's transport force—the same transports needed for paratroop operations in the Low Countries. Norway would therefore have to be secured within weeks before the attack in the west began.[62]

Precision Engagement

Joint Vision 2020's definition of *precision engagement* includes "the ability of joint forces to locate, surveil, discern, and track objectives or targets" as well as to "reengage with decisive speed and overwhelming operational tempo as required, throughout the full range of military operations."[63] Today, Air Force doctrine codifies this concept as a key enabler to the Air Force's "global reach" mission. Global reach "is the ability to project military capability responsively—with unrivaled velocity and *precision*—to any point on or above the earth, and provide mobility to rapidly supply, position, or reposition joint forces" (emphasis added).[64]

As with any engagement involving airborne forces and seizure operations, success of the invasion depended heavily on all of the above—especially surprise and stealth. Planners in the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW), or Supreme Command of the Armed Forces, knew that the operation hinged on such theories, and the best way to actualize these two elements was by an overwhelming aerial assault on the first day. It was a visionary but realistic concept considering the

aviation assets that Germany had in 1940.[65] Operations against Scandinavia enjoyed additional surprise as it was the first time that Germany had initiated an airborne operation. However, "once the existence of these special units and the methods of committing them had become known, surprise was possible only through careful selection of the time and place for the attack.[66] For the first time in war, parachute soldiers and airlanded troops were to be used together—the paratroops to seize and subsequently operate airfields and airlanded units to then consolidate and spread out from the seized bases.[67] These tactics were later used in both Holland and Crete.[68]

German High Command designated the 1 Parachute Battalion for the invasion. With the requirement to conduct major airborne operations in the Low Countries in support of the Spring Offensive, the Luftwaffe refused to consider providing two airborne divisions.[69] Instead, it turned over a reinforced paratroop battalion to Weserübung.[70] The full-scale invasion of two separate countries would be conducted with the support of only one battalion. The X Air Corps was tasked with air support for the operation, which would be reinforced with additional bombers and fighters. The Luftwaffe's transport force of over 500 aircraft, consisting mostly of Ju 52s, would be required to airlift troops and vital supplies to Norway.[71] Approximately 1,200 aircraft would support the invasion.[72]

The commanding officer was given four tasks to fulfill, two in Denmark and two in Norway. The first was to secure a road bridge prior to its destruction by Danish defenders. The second was to capture two airfields at Aalborg. In Norway, the battalion was to capture Sola airfield at Stavanger and the main Oslo airfield at Fornebu and hold and operate them while airland troops arrived and built a force large enough to occupy the city.[73]

Focused Logistics and Full-Dimension Protection

One of the main concepts driving the requirement to capture airfields in Denmark and Norway was a logistical one. The Luftwaffe paid close attention to the need for focused logistics. After the initial siege of the two major airfields in Norway by paratroop detachments, the Luftwaffe began flying troops in by air. The Germans would fly in specialist army, navy, and Luftwaffe headquarters and signal units along with their equipment. The Luftwaffe alone would deploy over

3,150 signal troops—the equivalent of nine signal battalions—to support communication requirements.[74]

When the airfields were seized, the Luftwaffe planned to fly in airfield engineers and maintenance units, their equipment, and flak units for airfield protection so that several of the German fighter and bomber units could deploy immediately to Norway. Once situated in Norway, the fighters and bombers would establish air superiority over the North Sea and North Atlantic and press attacks against the Royal Navy.[75] The Luftwaffe placed over 1,000 aircraft under the control of X Air Corps for the Norway operation: four bomber wings, three fighter groups, a Stuka group, as well as two reconnaissance groups.[76]

The air mobility or air transport force was organized into nine wings under the leadership of Col Freiherr von Gablenz, a former senior manager of Lufthansa and one of the Luftwaffe's best air transport specialists.[77] The mobility plan was carefully crafted to ensure infantry reinforcements and support troops such as engineers, signal troops, and airfield support units were on the ground on day one of the operation.[78] One dimension of the plan was the consolidation of the larger seaplanes and flying boats of the naval air arm into a naval air transport wing.[79] These aircraft provided logistical support and reinforcements via direct delivery on the fjords of Narvik and Trondheim.[80] The attention to detail shown by the Luftwaffe in the mobility CONOPS is one of the most impressive aspects of the Scandinavian campaign.

Operations

In Denmark the invasion and occupation were a complete success. On 9 April 1940 at Aalborg, a 30-man platoon dropped without incident; within half an hour, the two airfields were completely under German control. Within two hours, the Luftwaffe was operating from the runways and establishing a forward fighter base. At Sola the operation unfolded in a different manner: the Germans faced opposition. Bad weather combined with heavy defenses led to severe casualties. Just hours after the first wave of jumpers landed, airland troops arrived and secured the surrounding area.[81]

Oslo presented another challenge to the Germans. The Norwegian government refused to surrender and ordered a full mobilization of its forces. Deterioring weather conditions again plagued the mission as two Ju 52s collided, forcing a mission recall. The Junker carrying

the commander of the airland forces received the call just as the Norwegian mountains came in sight and recalled the aircraft. While 26 Ju 52s turned around, three did not receive the recall and continued to Oslo.[82] Eight Messerschmitt Me 110s were engaging ground targets as the Junkers made an approach to the airfield. Three AAA sites at the eastern edge of the field and two sites at the northern end defended the field. A few hundred meters west of the runways, a searchlight platoon of the Oslo air defense was positioned with two AAA guns.[83] The transports sustained severe damage on the approach but managed to abort the approach as the Messerschmitts, low on fuel, landed at Fornebu. The fighters engaged targets while on the ground, clearing the opposition for the Junkers to land. It was at this point the Norwegians retreated to Oslo.[84] The airport was then quickly seized and X Corps Headquarters notified, and several hundred German infantry were immediately flown into Oslo.[85] Norway's capital fell without further resistance to the few infantry who arrived due to the risks and quick decisions of some fighter pilots and a couple of transport crews.[86] Seizure operations at Sola airfield at Stavanger almost failed as well due to poor weather. The Junkers' crews managed to find a break in the clouds and quickly acquire the drop zone. The field was quickly seized, and southern Norway's best and most strategically sited airfield was in German hands.[87]

Scandinavia was won with a great deal of luck. This, combined with the capability of airfield seizure and operations, greatly extended the range of the Luftwaffe. The terror of the airborne forces also struck fear into the defenders. The force was incredibly small—4,000 troops by air and 9,000 by sea.[88] Without the airfields seized by the Luftwaffe, operations in Norway would not have succeeded.[89]

Lessons Learned

The first and perhaps most prominent lesson in terms of airfield seizure and the "open the base" force module is that—from day one—the Luftwaffe flew in highly capable airfield engineers, logistic units, and ground crews. Within days, the Luftwaffe had the ground organization to support a force of three bomber wings, one Me-110 group, one Me-109 group, a long-range reconnaissance squadron, and a naval air group.[90] German air forces at Oslo flew air support for ground forces advancing into central Norway. By all accounts, the support was highly effective—not least because of the pure psychological ef-

fect on not only the Norwegian troops but also the Allies as a whole. The Norwegian troops in central Norway suffered from a total lack of air support.

The main contributions of the newly opened bases in Norway were the heavy bombardment of the ports at Namsos and Andalsnes and the shipping in both ports. The Luftwaffe's bombing efforts devastated the ports and road and rail junctions behind Allied lines.[91]

According to the after action report of Gruppe XXI, the primary lesson for the Germans was that "in future operations the three Wehrmacht branches must have one commander with full authority and a joint personal staff organized toward a fully unified conduct of the campaign." [92] The strategic advantages Germany gained through victory in Norway served the Third Reich in three areas. First, Germany secured its northern flank by rendering a British occupation of Norway impossible. Second, Germany secured the route of the Swedish iron ore so important to the German war effort. Third, Norway offered naval and air bases from which to strike Britain.[93]

The invasion of Norway ushered in new methods of operations to overcome the long distances from supporting German air bases to the theater of operations. In the air, exploitations of technological advances allowed the use of airborne troops and airfield seizure teams. Both of these enabled Germany to reinforce lodgments rapidly via airlift, making it unnecessary to maintain a ground or sea line of supply to selected airheads. Norway, however, would prove to be the high point for German joint operations. The Wehrmacht would never progress beyond the level of competence it displayed in April 1940.[94]

The follow-on airborne assault on the island of Crete was much less of a success. The Germans captured the island in 10 days but at heavy cost: 6,600 German soldiers, including one in four paratroopers, lay dead on the battlefield. Hitler was so shocked by German losses that he never approved a third large airborne operation scheduled against the British on Malta.[95] The Allies learned much from Norway and would incorporate those lessons into future joint operations. Winston Churchill noted of Operation Weserübung that "the superiority of the Germans in design, management and energy [in the 1940 Norwegian Campaign] [was] plain. They put into ruthless execution a carefully prepared plan of action. They comprehended perfectly the use of the air arm on a great scale in all its aspects. . . . We, who had command of the sea and could pounce anywhere on an undefended

coast, were outpaced by the enemy moving by land across very large distances in the face of every obstacle."[96]

The Soviet Way: The Red Air Force in Afghanistan

After World War I, the Soviets, along with the German General Staff, embraced the radical concept of airborne warfare. The Red Army developed thought on deep battle under the sponsorship of Marshal Mikhail Nikolaevich Tukhachevskii. His concepts called for aviation and airborne, mechanized, and motorized formations organized to cooperate with one another but to operate independently of the main force, penetrating to the enemy's "operational depth." This approach translated to infiltration through the line of the enemy's operational reserves, airfields, and headquarters.[97]

Tukhachevskii's concepts and much of the Soviet's prewar thought were made irrelevant in the first hours of Operation Barbarossa in 1941 when Nazi Germany invaded Russia. The Germans managed to destroy virtually all the Red Army's transport aircraft, and the Soviet airborne operations were consequently limited to short-range assaults for the rest of the war.[98] Postwar Soviet airborne forces were organized into three corps but were limited by inadequate air transport. Their principal goal was to achieve shock and surprise, but they were incapable of executing major power projection.[99]

The USSR continued to develop its airlift fleet, airborne corps, and supporting doctrine. This evolution culminated in two operations: the 1968 airborne operation in Czechoslovakia and the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan. In Czechoslovakia, Soviet transports—escorted by MiG-17s—landed at Prague and seized the airfield. Simultaneous airborne operations landed troops to take control of two other airfields in the area. Thus began a massive airlift of supplies and equipment through these airheads. The efficiency of the airlift and subsequent airhead operations were credited with having prevented a logistical debacle when the ground forces outdistanced their supply trains.[100] Landings in Czechoslovakia were unopposed, but airborne forces were credited with a performance in the Czech invasion that was well executed and successful.[101]

The December 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan marked the first time the USSR conducted a full-scale invasion of a country outside Eastern Europe since the assault on Manchuria in August 1945.

Although Afghanistan bordered the Soviet Union, it was a Third World, Muslim country with considerable geostrategic importance.[102] A *New York Times* editorial noted that "the primary lesson for the United States . . . in the Soviet Union's swift airborne movement into Afghanistan is that the Russians have the ability to move significant numbers of troops in a relatively short time into situations they consider critical to their policies."[103] As there is still debate on why Russia invaded, the thrust of our discussion is not the reason for the intrusion. Rather, we touch on some theories for the attack, discuss the invasion, and highlight the unique capabilities the Soviets developed in airborne operations and airfield seizure tactics.

Many political analysts suspect that the Soviet move was a first step motivated by a desire to secure warm-water ports and to control the immense oil wealth of the Gulf States and the sea lanes that transport it to the West. The invasion challenged US policy makers' perceptions of Soviet intentions, calling into question the USSR's interpretation of détente and Soviet strategic ends in the Third World, particularly the vital areas surrounding the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea.[104]

The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan did aim to reverse a deteriorating political situation as evidenced by emboldened and aggressive popular resistance to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) regime in Kabul. Having invested money and influence in Afghanistan for 25 years, the Soviet Union would not watch idly while a client state on its southern border collapsed. A 1956 accord provided for the USSR equipping the Afghan army, and with that, Russia had steadily insinuated its influence into Afghan politics. Afghanistan's 1978 "April Revolution" brought the country's relationship with the USSR to a critical stage. The proclamation of the DRA and signing of a friendship pact with Russia marked an advanced stage of assimilation into Moscow's bloc of socialist states.[105]

The Soviet-Afghan war is divided into four phases. Phase one (December 1979 to February 1980) began with the entry of Soviet forces into Afghanistan, their stationing in garrisons, and their final organization for securing bases and various installations. Phase two (March 1980 to April 1985) was characterized by active combat. The Soviets undertook combat on a wide scale. During phase three (April 1985 to January 1987), the Soviets transitioned from primary active combat to supporting loyal Afghan forces with aviation, artillery, and engineer subunits. Finally, in phase four (January 1987 to February 1989), the Soviets joined the Afghan government's program of national

reconciliation. During this time, Soviet forces conducted virtually no offensive actions and fought only when attacked by the mujahideen or when supporting combat by Afghan forces.[106] The following discussion focuses on phase one and the initial seizing of air bases and lodgment.

The elements of the first phase of the Soviet invasion included the establishment of an in-country Soviet military and KGB element to support the invasion force. These units developed cover or deception operations to divert attention from any future invasion. Under some pretense, a General Staff group toured the country prior to the invasion to assess and fine-tune plans. When the operation began, the in-country Soviet military and KGB element disarmed or disabled the national military forces. Airborne and Spetznaz units then spearheaded the invasion and seized critical airfields, transportation choke points, the capital city, key government buildings, and communications facilities.[107] They apprehended or executed key government officials. Soviet ground forces then crossed into the country and captured major cities and road networks, suppressing any local military resistance. A new government was installed, and it was supported by the armed might of the Soviet forces.[108]

Dominant Maneuver

The Soviets understood the strategic importance of mobility via air, as noted in the previous *New York Times* quote. The Soviets displayed no sudden expansion of airlift capability. It was simply an incremental, sustained growth largely unnoticed by the West, as its attention had been distracted by the launch of the new Soviet fighters, bombers, and ICBMs. When considering the USSR's power projection, most students of Soviet military affairs have generally treated air mobility and even airborne forces as an afterthought. The Russians had developed, prepared, trained, and equipped their airborne troops to perform as a capable intervention force at a considerable distance from the USSR and Warsaw Pact territory. The Soviet forces had developed the strategic ability to open and operate bases to enable strategic force projection.

To many, the invasion of Afghanistan was a landmark shift in Soviet military tactics. The Russians departed from 50 years of slow prodding and smothering their enemies with raw power–type tactics to adopting a lightning strike strategy. Overnight, the USSR struck with speed and precision, capturing the Kabul airfield and surrounding the capital city with tanks.[109]

Early in July 1979, the Soviets crossed a new threshold with the first known movement of a combat unit into Afghanistan—a battalion of airborne troops deployed to Bagram AB near Kabul. Bagram already had become the main Soviet operational base in Afghanistan, with Soviet air transports shuttling in and out with supplies of weapons and military equipment. At the time, US intelligence concluded that the combat troops were to provide security for the air transport units with no commitment to engage in combat operations.[110]

In late summer 1979, the 5th Guards Motorized Rifle Division (MRD) moved out of garrison. Some of its subunits included a battalion of tanks, an antiaircraft artillery battalion, a mortar battery, and several groups of trucks. Components of the 105th Guards Airborne Division (ABN DIV) were also detected in preparations for air movement. The airborne units' activities seemed to involve training in specific techniques for loading equipment on a new and more advanced military transport aircraft (the IL-76). Indications were that the Soviets were preparing to commit airborne troops to Afghanistan. Assessments supposed such an operation would be to defend Kabul in the event of sudden, drastic deterioration in the Soviet-supported regime that threatened to overwhelm the Afghan capital.[111]

In late November, the Soviet 105 ABN DIV was placed on alert and remained at a heightened state of readiness. The Soviet motorized rifle divisions' activities indicated possible deployment as well.[112] On 29 November and continuing over the next few days, Soviet military transports flew into Kabul. Some remained parked at the Kabul airport, but reports from observers there suggested that a portion of the aircraft had discharged whatever cargo or personnel they were carrying and quickly departed. Whatever they brought was expeditiously moved into the city.[113] US intelligence officers in Kabul described an apparent infiltration of special Soviet troops into the city, and numerous reports from the field also indicated that some covert operations appeared to be afoot. An assessment from senior US intelligence officers concluded that some Soviet military operation was being readied.[114]

Reports in mid-December indicated that a Soviet combat battalion was being discreetly stationed around the Afghan capital. This information confirmed the mysterious Soviet military air transport flights into Kabul at the end of November. The US presumption was that these troops were from the Spetznaz.[115]

On 15 December 1979, intelligence disclosed that the Soviet 5th Guards and 108th MRDs had been brought to full strength and the 108th was leaving its garrison. A buildup of transport and combat helicopters had been detected at Kokaty AB in southern Russia, and other military transport aircraft were being marshaled at air bases in this area. A substantial buildup of tactical combat aircraft, fighters, fighter-bombers, and light bombers was also detected at air bases in the region, including some fields that did not routinely serve as bases for such aircraft.[116]

Thus, the brilliantly orchestrated invasion of Afghanistan commenced (fig. 1.5). The nearly perfectly synchronized overland movement of heavy armor and the airland insertion of airborne forces characterized the initial invasion. The Soviet minister of defense gave the time to cross the international border at 1500 hours Moscow time (1630 Kabul time) on the 25th of December.[117]

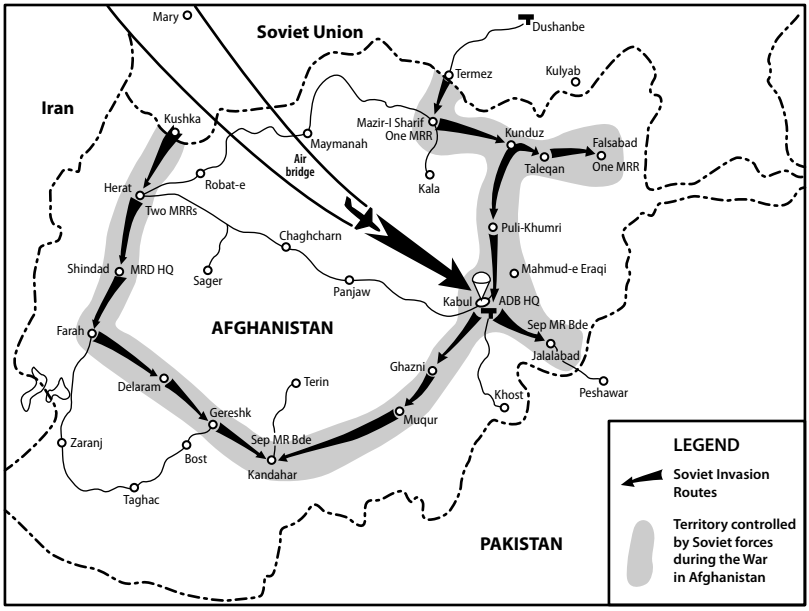

Figure 1.5. The Soviet thrust into Afghanistan. (Reproduced from The Russian General Staff, *The Soviet-Afghan War: How a Superpower Fought and Lost*, translated and edited by Lester W. Grau and Michael A. Gress [Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002], 17. Used by permission of the publisher.)

The crossing of the Amu Darya River commenced in the evening twilight. A BMP-mounted motorized rifle battalion began to cross pontoon bridges.[118] The battalion crossed the river and moved deeper into Afghanistan. Behind it, the 108th MRD followed during the night. On the evening of the 27th, the division was issued new, unexpected orders—to change the direction of its drive and enter Kabul on the following day by 1700 hours.[119]

At the same time in Kabul, the main body of the 103rd Guards ABN DIV had landed at the airfield, and a smaller airborne regiment also landed at Bagram airfield.[120] From the very start of the forcible entry into Afghanistan, the airborne forces had to successfully seize major airfields in the two cities. From 28 to 30 December 1979, paratroopers landed at Kabul and Bagram air bases while air assault forces landed at Kunduz airfield.[121]

Russian veterans of these operations recalled the planning for the first landings. At each of the targeted airfields, a reinforced airborne battalion would parachute onto the field to seize the control tower and runways, to neutralize the security forces (SF), and to support the landing of the main airborne force. However, it turned out that the Afghan forces guarding the airfields were neutralized well in advance. Their resistance did not hold up the operation, and the airborne forces merely disembarked from the aircraft as they landed.[122]

The first to disembark at the airfields were the groups that seized the fields and scouted the area. They occupied key points, conducted reconnaissance, and supported the air landing of the main forces. For several hours, dozens of IL-76, AN-12, and AN-22 transports landed the main body of an airborne division at Kabul and Bagram. At Kunduz, Mi-6 and Mi-8 helicopters arrived with subunits of an air assault brigade. At intervals of one and a half to three minutes, aircraft landed with their rear fuselage loading doors and ramps open and taxied to the end of the runway without shutting down their engines. Paratroopers disembarked from the aircraft quickly and moved to their planned objectives. The empty aircraft taxied for takeoff and departed, leaving the runway free for the next arrival. After the main force of the division was on the ground, subsequent flights brought in the division's vehicles, necessary supplies, support units, and personnel.[123]

The operation further called for a very complex orchestration of air traffic through the Soviet air traffic control (ATC) units. Only a minimum number of aircraft and helicopters could be at the airfields at any one time. However, not all the aircrews worked together precisely.

Several aircraft had to make more than one approach to the field or had to circle the airfield while other aircraft on the ground were unloaded. Such exposure of large transport aircraft would have devastating effects in a high-threat combat scenario. In this case, the Soviets' preparation and training, combined with the ineptitude of the Afghanis, mitigated the dangers. Landings at the three airports proceeded swiftly and successfully, mainly due to multiple training exercises the Soviets previously conducted at their home airfields.[124]

Precision Engagement

According to Lt Col Denny Nelson, "Soviet military doctrine stresses the primacy of offensive operations aimed at stunning and preventing organized resistance by opponents. In Afghanistan, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Soviets used the surprise landing of airborne units at strategic centers, particularly around the capital, in conjunction with the speedy movement of ground units along strategic routes toward vital centers to gain the initiative." The Soviets began their invasion on Christmas night, 1979, with "a massive, single-lift operation involving an estimated 280 transport aircraft packed with troops, munitions, and equipment."[125]

The seizure of the airfields at Kabul, Bagram, Jalalabad, Kandahar, and Shindand enabled the Soviet operations that were to follow. After the parachute units were on the ground, they left part of their force to secure the airfield and their stockpiled material and set out on their assigned missions. It was a well-planned, well-executed operation—one that involved precision engagement as well as several elements of sabotage and deception. Soviet doctrine, training, and capability gave the Russians options that further enabled the USSR to exploit the scenario on a myriad of levels. The airfield seizures were merely the "tip of the spear" in the truest metaphoric sense. As was the case with the Germans in Norway, the Soviets used their tactical ability to seize, open, and operate bases on a much grander strategic level.

The invasion of Afghanistan was launched on Christmas Eve—not a major Muslim holiday but a time when the Western governments were unprepared to react.[126] The Afghan government's central communications complex was occupied and its key officials killed by a Soviet commando team. Without communications, President Hafizullah Amin was initially unaware of the invasion. By the time he was, there was no longer time for effective resistance. Afghan officials believed

that the new troops were coming as a part of an authorized buildup, and there was no opposition. When the Soviet troops finally engaged the Afghans, Red Army numbers and firepower were overwhelming.[127]

H-hour was 1915 Kabul time on 27 December. Two regiments that landed in Kabul secured the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Communications, television center, Soviet embassy, and *microrayon*—the modernized area of the city where Soviet specialists and advisors lived. They seized the army staff building, nearby depots, and President Amin's palace.[128] Paratroopers also established a post on dominant terrain overlooking the city and on bridges across the Kabul River. They established roadblocks on the main roads leading into Kabul. The parachute regiment that landed at Bagram conducted a swift march to Kabul and on the morning of 31 December concentrated in the city center, from there deploying its staff to the army corps headquarters building.[129]

On 27 December, late in the evening Kabul time, the Soviets engaged in another form of precision engagement—regime change. Soviet troops carried out an assault on Amin's new residence that resulted in his death. Versions differ, even from Soviet and Afghan participants, of how Amin was killed—whether his Soviet attackers shot him, or if he shot himself as they burst into his palace. There was no doubt, however, that it was a Soviet operation to install a new regime of its choice. Spetznaz troops attacking Amin's presidential palace were outfitted in Afghan army uniforms and appeared to have been selected by ethnic origin to assist their disguise. It was quickly understood that the purpose of the airlift in the first week of December was the insertion of covert Soviet troops.[130]

Strategic Effects on the World Stage

A new combat zone had now emerged on the Cold War battleground. The world was aware that the Soviets had airlifted major combat forces into Afghanistan. These forces were used to seize control of airfields and eventually the capital, major cities, and transportation nodes throughout the country. They eliminated the existing government and installed a proxy regime used to provide cover for sending in the additional combat divisions.[131] Robert F. Baumann provides an excellent summation of the initial view of Soviet operational effectiveness:

> At first glance, the Soviets' skillfully executed surprise incursion seemed to achieve its objectives: a change of regime, capture of Kabul, and control of the principal lines of communication. Forces inserted by air paralyzed the capital while a conventional column of about 15,000 approached the country along the main road from the Soviet frontier. The strike was complete within hours. In the view of the government of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, this lightning success ought to have stabilized the situation in Afghanistan.[132]

For their part, the Soviet attackers lost several vehicles, with about 25 killed and 225 wounded.[133] By 1 January 1980, 50,000 Soviet troops were in Afghanistan, and more were on the way.

Focused Logistics and Full Dimension Protection

The Soviet airborne forces engaged in seizing and operating air bases in Afghanistan were light, lethal, and highly mobile. The Soviets understood that military transport is, in a sense, the arm that swings the fist, and its Military Transport Aviation (VTA) branch had the benefit of constant attention from Soviet planners to create a balanced system of air transport. The system was fully capable of operating at the intratheater and possibly strategic ranges.[134]

The Soviets gained many strategically important air bases. Seven air bases were built or improved by the Soviets in Afghanistan: Herat, Farah, Kandahar, Kabul International Airport, Bagram, and Jalalabad. All fields were all-weather, jet-capable bases that operated 365 days a year. Each base was capable of handling large numbers of tactical aircraft, and a huge fleet could be operated in Afghanistan or against other southwest Asian countries from these seized and improved air bases.[135]

The two most important Soviet installations in Afghanistan were Bagram and Shindand. Bagram was the local supreme headquarters of the Soviet army in Afghanistan, where the most senior Soviet officers were stationed. Additionally, Bagram was home to the army's satellite communications systems and other major facilities. At Shindand, no Afghans were permitted on the air base, as the Soviets had installation support and maintenance equipment for their naval aviation reconnaissance bombers. Soviet electronic warfare aircraft operated from this installation by the air command of the Soviet navy. Most of the aircraft were not stationed permanently in any one location, so the very sensitive technical support and maintenance capabilities needed for them were available at various forward bases.[136]

The Soviets enjoyed a significant strategic advantage in Afghanistan through air base seizure. Having jet bases in the western and southwestern sections of Afghanistan also placed long-range MiG-27 Flogger fighter-bombers and MiG-25 Foxbat reconnaissance aircraft 200 miles closer to and within the range of the Strait of Hormuz—the strategic choke point at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. The new bases allowed Soviet electronic warfare aircraft more time to trail and monitor US naval activities in the Indian Ocean.[137] The USSR's ability to seize and operate air bases in Afghanistan had effects well beyond the theater. The results caused the United States, NATO, and other Gulf nations to ponder Soviet intentions.

In the initial phases of the USSR advance into Afghanistan, protection was a large concern. The Soviets devoted a large effort to ensure their forces were not hampered. To provide constant protection from guerilla attack, two Soviet air divisions, totaling more than 400 aircraft—mainly MiG-21, MiG-23, and Su-17 fighters and Mi-24 helicopter gunships—thundered back and forth over the main invasion axes.[138] The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan achieved full-spectrum dominance during the initial thrust into the country. However, the course of conflict in Afghanistan would find the Soviets ousted in similar fashion to the British in 1881 almost 100 years earlier.[139]

The seemingly brilliant invasion of Afghanistan is eclipsed by other factors—why the Soviets invaded, political and world opinion and support, and the fact that the USSR left Afghanistan in disgrace. Nonetheless, the initial invasion met the doctrine of forcible entry. JP 3-18 states that a joint force commander (JFC) may launch such operations "to *seize and hold an airhead* . . . to facilitate the continuous landing of troops and materiel and expand the maneuver space needed to conduct follow-on operations" (emphasis in original).[140]

The initial Soviet invasion demonstrated that the USSR was capable of rapid mobilization. It could perform major operations without severe logistical breakdown, had sufficient ground forces to mount a major conventional operation outside of the Warsaw Pact or Chinese border area (albeit still in a contiguous area), and was reliable in "political" operations, such as assassination and disarming unreliable "friendly" forces.[141]

Soviet military analysts wrote extensively on the lessons and knowledge gained from the Afghan fighting—the importance of rapid deployment, the advantages of surprise, and the need for flexibility to meet unforeseen developments. They stressed the coordination of

units and subunits and the particular advantages to be gained by the strategic use of new weapons systems and capabilities.[142] Employing Marshal Tukhachevskii's theories of deep battle, the Soviets did not allow the Afghans to deploy any defense. Airfield seizure and subsequent operations were, again, of strategic importance to the operation.

As noted above, history (and the CIA) proved unkind to the USSR in Afghanistan. Despite the initial success of the invasion, it soon became apparent that Soviet equipment functioned inadequately and force structure was inappropriate for the task at hand.[143] One Joint Forces Staff College research paper summarized the experience: "The operational change from invasion to occupation revealed glaring inadequacies in Soviet doctrine and command and control. . . . With so much momentum and early success, it is difficult to imagine the Soviet Army losing the initiative and forced into a war of attrition with the *mujaheddin*."[144] Thus was the fate of the Soviets.

A nation that possesses such a force—light, lethal, mobile, flexible, and well trained—can grant a strategic key to victory. Airfield seizure and operations did open Afghanistan up for the Soviets, and it enabled the initial successes. Such success must be followed up with a well-conceived strategy. The lesson of the Soviets, in a nutshell, is that strategy is not just about the first move.

The American Way of War: A Comparison of World War II and the US Invasion of Iraq

Airfield seizure and operations are nothing new to the American way of war. Along with the Germans in World War II, the United States and the Allies understood the strategic importance of these operations. As was mentioned, in World War II alone, a myriad of such seizures spanned a vast spectrum of combat operations. In Europe, the Allies captured airfields as Operation Overlord was under way.

Shortly after the D-Day landings and the furious expansion of the American lodgments behind the Utah and Omaha beaches, the USAAF's Ninth Air Force tactical fighter groups began to deploy in Normandy. While the deployment's primary objective was to protect and support the ground forces, it would also help to realize the obvious advantages of operating from airstrips on the continent versus in England. Fighters based in France were not only able to strike deeper into Germany but also could spend more time over targets, especially those in

the immediate area. Fighter sweeps were more effective, and more enemy materiel was destroyed. Interdiction missions became increasingly efficient since more planes could be directed to objectives and could spend more attack time on station owing to the proximity of the frontline airstrips.[145]

Other efforts include the forerunners of today's special operators, the air commandos. The 1st Air Commando Group debut was in Operation Thursday, a disruptive action that successfully stopped the Japanese invasion of India. On the first night, 5 March 1944, the unit successfully delivered over 500 men and 15 tons of supplies behind Japanese lines to LZ Broadway using gliders and C-47 cargo aircraft. Broadway was an airfield seizure in classic SOF manner; air commandos seized a strip of land and quickly created an airfield where there was none. Two nights later, operations reached a high tempo when 92 plane loads—roughly one every four minutes—arrived in the small jungle clearing in a night. This airfield seizure went on to enable a British special operations unit, known as the Chindits, to raid and sabotage Japanese forces in-theater.[146]

Perhaps one of the best known of such operations occurred on the island of Iwo Jima. It is one of the volcanic islands to the east of Okinawa and roughly south of Japan itself. Hilly, rocky, and generally barren, the island did not figure in the grand strategy of the Pacific for the first several years of the war. Formosa was the longtime goal of the Americans' Central Pacific drive once Gen Douglas MacArthur had recaptured the Philippines.[147] Formosa, however, was huge, stoutly defended, and still a long stretch for bombing missions against the empire of Japan. Meanwhile, the Japanese built airstrips for their own bombers and fighters on previously unoccupied Iwo Jima. Planners on both sides could see the strategic importance and geographic reality of the island. Iwo Jima was almost exactly halfway between the Marianas and the Japanese home island of Honshu.[148]

Operational airfields represented valuable rungs on the strategic ladder leading to Tokyo. The American seizure of the Marianas in mid-1944 brought the main Japanese home islands within range of the newly developed Boeing B-29 Superfortress.[149] B-29s based in Saipan and Tinian began striking targets in Japan in late 1944, but the strikes were not yet truly effective. The thorn in the side of US forces was Iwo Jima.[150]

American fighters did not have the range to escort the Superfortresses to and from Japan, and the B-29s were often at the mercy of

fighter interceptors launched from Iwo's airstrips. Japanese bombers based on Iwo were an even graver threat. In fact, the Twentieth Air Force lost more B-29s to enemy bomber raids from Iwo Jima than it did on any of its long-range forays over the Japanese homeland.[151] The absence of an emergency landing or refueling field for B-29s along the return route from Tokyo was yet another problem for strategic planners. In American hands, Iwo Jima would not only provide fighter escorts and a suitable divert base for the B-29s but also erase the threat from Japanese attack aircraft. All were compelling reasons to seize the island.[152]

The seizing of Iwo Jima achieved all the strategic goals desired by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. American B-29s could henceforth fly with less reserve fuel and a greater bomb payload with Iwo Jima available as an emergency field. Iwo-based fighters escorted the Superfortresses to and from Honshu. For the first time, all the Japanese islands were within bomber range, including Hokkaido. The 2,400 USAAF crew members forced to land at Iwo Jima between its capture and V-J Day had no doubt of its importance. Said one, "Whenever I land on this island, I thank God and the men who fought for it."[153]

While these historical notes are probably of interest to the military-minded, they offer stark lessons for military planners now. Contemporary American military thinking on forcible entry operations has been codified in joint guidance. JP 3-18 captures the lessons learned from historical analysis and updates the strategic framework for such operations. It defines *joint forcible entry operations* as those that "seize and hold lodgments against armed opposition." It explains that a "lodgment is a designated area in a hostile or potentially hostile operational area that, when seized and held, makes the continuous landing of troops and materiel possible and provides maneuver space for subsequent operations (a lodgment may be an airhead, a beachhead, or a combination thereof)." The publication lays out three types of joint forcible entry operations—amphibious assault/raid, airborne assault, and air assault—and states that "any combination" of those types can be used to seize objectives depending on the nature of the lodgment target.[154]

Beyond the scope of the case studies discussed, many other historical events illustrate the operational art of forced entry. Examples that readers can study include the WWII operations Merkur (the German attack on Crete), Husky (in Sicily), Overlord, and Detachment (also known as Iwo Jima); the Bay of Pigs operation in Cuba;

Operation Thunderbolt in Entebbe; and Operation Eagle Claw in Iran.

Any forcible entry requires a contingency response group (CRG) or a group with similar capability to operate the air base. There are always exceptions, the most obvious being the third case presented above. In this case, a special operations unit or special tactics team (STT) might be used alone, but in others, a CRG or the like will deploy. Any of the above case studies could demonstrate the historical and strategic significance of the CRG. In examining them, a military planner would have to ask whether the USAF is prepared to provide the required support for such forcible entry operations. In an attempt to be as relevant as possible and to extract the most difficult scenario, it is important to examine the second case above—that of a forcible entry operation using multiple entry points to establish multiple lodgments. The case of OIF is the genesis for the CRG construct and the basis for current thought on the matter.

On 19 March 2003, at 0534 hours in Iraq, US stealth fighters and Tomahawk cruise missiles struck "leadership targets" in and around the Iraqi capital of Baghdad to begin the second major war between a United States–led coalition and Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Soon thereafter, air attacks began against Iraqi targets in southern Iraq, followed by missile attacks from Iraq toward US military positions in the Kuwaiti desert. The stated goals of the coalition were the disarmament of Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and his Baath political party.[155] Three days later, on 22 March, coalition forces seized the H-2 and H-3 airfields in western Iraq and controlled parts of Umm Qasr, Basra, and Nasiriyah (fig. 1.6). Elements of the 3rd Infantry Division (ID) charged 150 miles into Iraq, roughly half the distance from Kuwait to Baghdad. The 3rd Brigade captured the Tallil airfield after its artillery began shelling Iraqi military emplacements there. Meanwhile, the 1-30th Infantry protected its flanks, preventing intervention by forces in Nasiriyah.[156]

On 26 March 2003 and a week into the war, late in the evening, about 1,000 paratroops from the 173rd Airborne Brigade were dropped into a strategic airfield in Kurdish-controlled territory at Bashur. Approximately 160 special forces personnel were in the area around the airfield directing air strikes against Iraqi positions. Within days, Kurdish Peshmerga troops, along with US special forces units, assaulted the stronghold of the Ansar al-Islam group along the Iranian border.[157]

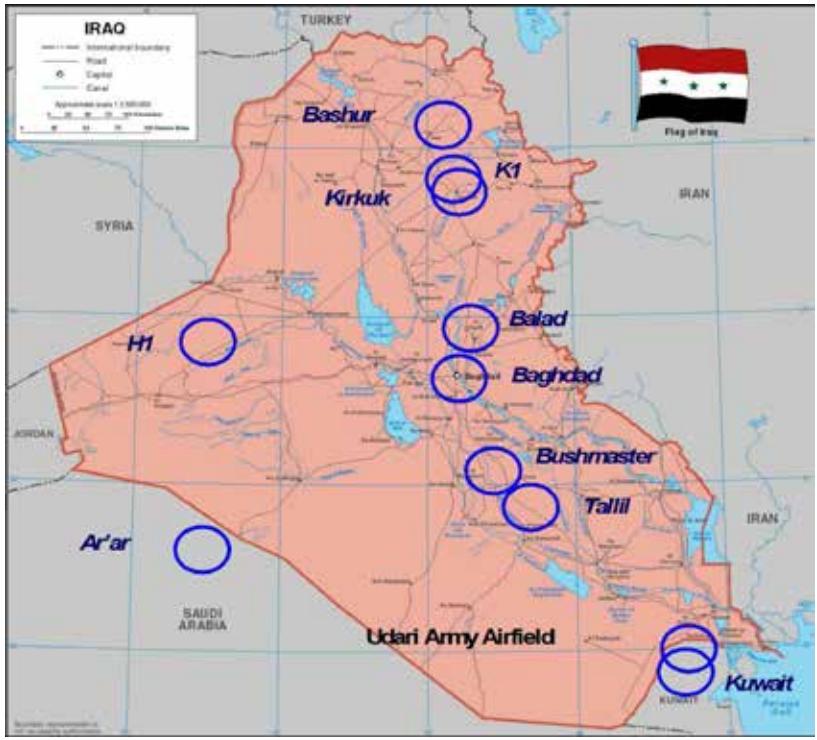

Figure 1.6. Iraqi airfields. (Reproduced from HQ AMC, briefing, "AMC Global Assessment Teams [GATs] Mission Summary," November 2003.)

During the night of 3 April and into the early morning hours of 4 April, elements of the 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 3rd ID (Mechanized) completed the capture of Saddam International Airport. During clearance of the runways and facilities, a large Iraqi force was encountered at approximately 0430 local time. In one engagement, two companies of Task Force 3-69 Armor engaged Iraqi Special Republican Guard (SRG) forces on the east side of the airfield. Fighting continued for three hours, resulting in 250 SRG killed, three tanks destroyed, and other equipment destroyed or captured. Over the 12 hours of the battle for the airport, US forces suffered one killed and eight wounded.[158]

On the 26th day of combat operations, a US Marine Corps task force captured Tikrit, bringing the last major bastion of the Hussein regime under coalition control. Tikrit and the nearby village of Auja

(Saddam Hussein's home village) were heavily fortified and defended by an estimated 2,500 regular and paramilitary fighters. However, air and ground attacks reduced the Iraqi positions, and the Iraqi troops were reportedly leaving their positions, weapons, and uniforms to flee the coalition advance. Four Iraqi tanks were confirmed destroyed in the skirmishes around Tikrit. Through April of 2004, the airhead at Bashur airfield in northern Iraq had received an estimated 3,200 troops and 12 million pounds of supplies and equipment.[159]

OIF occurred at a faster pace than most ever anticipated, and in keeping with that pace, there is a deeper story. In Iraq, seven airfields were captured and opened throughout the initial conflict. Each airfield presented its own unique story and problems. Two of the larger fields with two very different stories were Tallil in the south and Bashur to the north.

Precision Engagement

In the interest of space and time, we focus only on these two airfields of many seized in OIF, which also included Kirkuk, H-1, Bushmaster, Balad Southeast, and Baghdad International. Tallil and Bashur have both become stories of success; each was seized differently and for distinct reasons. Logistics and protections are addressed in the following discussion.

Planning

Prior to the first bombs falling in OIF, there was early planning on how air bases in Iraq would be seized and operated. On 28 February 2003, United States Central Command (USCENTCOM)—the military headquarters charged with planning operations in Iraq—delivered the first planning order to identify airfields to be taken. Shortly thereafter, a multiservice group met at Prince Sultan AB in Saudi Arabia to discuss airfield seizure and air base operations for the war.[160] An ad hoc group of 25 people formed an airfield coordination and planning team (ACPT). The group structured a CONOPS around seize, secure, assess, establish, and sustain. The group initially addressed joint forced entry capabilities and limitations in each phase of the conflict, the capacity of available assets, and how to hand off the air base during each phase. Early on, the group did not select air bases as its main impetus was simply to come up with a way to seize

and operate air bases in Iraq. Once hostilities commenced, the group was disbanded.[161]

The group identified shortfalls in airfield planning actions, and United States Central Command Air Forces (USCENTAF) further identified significant open issues in airfield preparation for the operational plan. The consensus from the group was that no doctrinal structure existed to integrate the requirements for base opening. In the absence of a coordinated airfield plan, CENTCOM requested three conventional air traffic controller teams to provide relief in place (RIP) for special tactics people at recently opened airfields. Planners engaged CENTCOM to ensure that the land and air component commanders synchronized their airfield requirements and plans. Subsequently, a message was released requesting all component airfield plans to deconflict requirements and avoid duplication of effort. At this time, the CFACC realized that "the airfield opening process [was] drifting from the CRG concept." CENTCOM appointed Maj Gen Daniel P. Leaf to lead and oversee the airfield coordination effort.[162] The issue at hand was that nothing was in place to develop and/or deploy units.

During the time leading up to OIF, AMC developed four assessment teams (AT), each led by an O-6 mobility leader with tanker airlift control element (TALCE) experience.[163] Commanders and deputy commanders of the 615th and 621st Air Mobility Operations Groups (AMOG) were selected as AT commanders, and three AT teams were offered up by AMC for contingency operations. The fourth, led by Col Peter W. Gray, deputy commander, 615 AMOG, concentrated on experimentation of the AT concept at exercises in CONUS. In addition to the O-6, AMC designated seven to nine personnel from various backgrounds to be assigned to each team. These Airmen would supply the skills required to make initial field assessments to bring in Air Force assets.[164]

Assessment Team Myers and Tallil

Col A. Ray Myers, deputy commander, 621 AMOG, McGuire AFB, New Jersey, led a group referred to as Assessment Team Three (also called AT Myers) into Iraq to prepare for the arrival of mobility and other aircraft at Tallil.[165] Tallil was an Iraqi air force base located in the southern no-fly zone near An Nasiriyah. The base was nonoperational, but the runway was not cratered and appeared to be in

operational condition. The seizure of Tallil was indeed a joint operation, and the US Army's 3rd ID would conduct the seizure and deployment to the airfield via Army convoy.[166]

Early in the planning for the seizure of Tallil, AT Myers was briefed on the operation. On 22 March 2003, the battle for Tallil AB began with the 1st BCT of the 3rd ID, and on the same day, AT Myers departed Kuwait in an Army convoy bound for Tallil. There was little in the way of organized resistance at the air base after US artillery shelled Iraqi placements in the area. The 1st BCT began clearing the area of unexploded ordnance and putting security patrols out around the perimeter. According to Army brigadier general Jack Stoltz, deputy commanding general of the 377th Theater Support Command, "Almost immediately, we started to get into some light skirmishes around the perimeter with small groups of paramilitary that were trying to get back into this area to get to the weapons that they had stored there. . . . But once we got our active [Army] patrols out and around the perimeter, they quickly realized they could not get in here, and they and fell back into the Nasiriyah area."[167]

On the morning of 23 March, the airfield was under US control, and members from the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron (STS) arrived to assume ATC duties and conduct an LZ assessment.[168] Tallil now transitioned from the seizure phase to the "open the air base" phase. Later that evening, the AT and 621 TALCE/CC arrived, and AT Myers was handed command of the airfield from the seizure force commander. The following day, the official assessment of Tallil was complete.[169]

Airfield security at Tallil was an extremely high priority, and on 25 March the 1st BCT received orders relieving it of security duty so that it could move on; it was to be replaced by another unit. Air Force security teams were delayed due to airlift problems, border clearances, and C-5 maintenance. The handoff of duty was not clean, and questions as to who was responsible for security remained in the minds of many, including Colonel Myers, who realized conflicting orders had been issued. Colonel Myers intervened to ensure that the Army still had security duties at Tallil.[170] Combat engineers started work on the runways and cleared obstructions from runway 30 right while the assessment team cleared obstructions from 30 left. The AT continued to prepare for the arrival and beddown of the 820th Security Forces Group (SFG) and TALCE. Tallil was now ready to handle inbound aircraft. A brutal sandstorm erupted on the 26th, however, delaying aircraft arrival until the following day.[171]

On 27 March 2003, Tallil began the "generate the mission" phase as the TALCE was on the first C-130 flown into the base; this was the beginning of what would be a busy day at the base. With the arrival of the TALCE, Tallil now had a robust C2 capability and the capacity to handle passengers and cargo as well as to maintain aircraft. Later that day, Tallil was able to officially begin aeromedical evacuation missions, enabling injured Soldiers to be flown out of the combat zone and receive required care. The 820 SFG's advance team arrived by convoy and quickly assessed the base for security requirements.[172]

With the AT, TALCE, and security force advance team on base, the group established the initial air expeditionary group (AEG) organizational structure, along with C2 capability. Forces at Tallil further assessed and established initial communication infrastructure with reachback capability to the combined air operations center (CAOC) and AMC's Tanker Airlift Control Center (TACC). The team also established the Tallil Air Force command post, ATC, fire, crash, rescue, medical, and other nodes on the base as well as provided the initial AEG staff.[173] The evening of the 29th, the first combat aircraft arrived. USAF A-10s began to use Tallil as a fueling base for strikes in northern Iraq.[174]

The "establish the base/C2" phase began on 31 March 2003, and the speed of the transition was quite remarkable. On the 30th, Col John Dobbins of the 392 AEG arrived at Tallil, and the base was ready to accept the A-10s from the Whiteman AFB Reserves for beddown. The 820th Force Protection Team assumed security for Tallil. The AT officially transferred command of Tallil to the AEG and redeployed to Kuwait City to regenerate for another mission. Ten days later, Colonel Myers and his team were deployed to Baghdad International to begin the assessment at that field. On 11 April, the 23 STT redeployed, followed by the TALCE departing on 22 April.[175]

Due to the exceptional work of Colonel Myers and his assessment team, Tallil was now able to "provide lethal combat airpower from the coalition's Air Force air component commander to other forces in the coalition. Secondary to that was also being able to provide combat search and rescue support from a forward location—that would extend the legs—and also being able to support the airlift mission for all forces that were in Iraq." Colonel Dobbins stated, "We think we have done that well. . . . [We have] enabled especially A-10 aircraft to get up to an extra hour over most of the target areas."[176]

With the capture and subsequent rehabilitation of the Iraqi air force base at Tallil, the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing and the RAF were able to create a forward arming and refueling point (FARP) for their Harriers 100 miles inside of Iraq. The USAF moved A-10s onto Tallil's tarmac, allowing CAS to remain immediately responsive to the needs of ground forces. Further, the work of AT Myers allowed for refueling, taking pressure off the hard-pressed tanker fleet.[177]

Tallil became an air base of many firsts. It was the first to use an AT to open newly acquired airfields.[178] It was also the first time a TALCE unit traveled via combat convoy to an airfield to begin operations by land route.[179] Moreover, Tallil AB was the first forward air base that coalition forces were able to use for combat operations.[180]

Assessment Team Martin and the 86th CRG

Col Fredrick Martin, commander of the 615th AMOG at Travis AFB, California, led Assessment Team One or AT Martin. Back in December 2002, AMC had received the first indication that it would be conducting airfield assessments in support of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. These assessments would be conducted from Vicenza, Italy. Even before access through Turkey was denied, the 173rd was selected to establish a stabilizing, conventional presence in northern Iraq. In February 2003, the 615 AMOG deployed TALCEs to Batman, Diyarbakir, and Oguzeli, Turkey, to support the northern front of OIF. The 615th also then deployed ATs to Ramstein AB, Germany, to stage and begin determining with United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE), United States European Command (USEUCOM), CENTCOM, and SOF planners several possible northern Iraq bases of operation.

Following the denial of Turkish basing rights and two planning conferences at Vicenza and Doha, it was determined that the 86 CRG at Ramstein would pair up with the 173rd to open Bashur Airfield in the first-ever combat C-17 personnel airdrop. The 86 CRG is a USAFE asset with robust security forces as well as a TALCE—the only AT with the unique ability to air-drop a 21-man assessment team with the 173rd into Iraq. The 86 AT consisted of C2 elements, medics, security forces, intelligence, civil engineers, and communications experts. AT Martin was unable to support the 173rd's combat drop but could assist in the deployment from Italy. AT Martin conducted assessments at Pisa, Villa Franca, and Aviano AB for C-17 airdrop

operations. When the 173rd thought it was deploying to Turkey, it had sent all of its equipment forward to the port at Livorno in preparation for overwater shipment. Unfortunately, AT Martin found that nearby Pisa airport was unsuitable for upload operations and made the final recommendation to use Aviano AB as the initial staging base for the 173rd and the 86th.

Since AT Martin now had no mission in northern Iraq and did not have the required airborne qualifications, it redeployed to Kuwait to stage and await forward movement into Iraq from the south. Meanwhile, Col Steve Weart, commander of the 86 CRG and of Air Force forces at Bashur, began planning for what looked to be the largest airborne assault since D-Day. His AT of 20 Airmen would parachute into northern Iraq with the 173rd Airborne Brigade.[181]

The 86th "went to war on the dark and rainy early morning" of 26 March with 1,000 Soldiers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. A formation of 15 C-17 Globemaster IIIs, with fighter escort, ingressed into Iraq under the cover of darkness and bad weather. The crews flew with all external lights extinguished and used night vision goggles (NVG) for the airdrop. Colonel Weart and his team parachuted into Iraq in a historic jump. The group's security forces commander, Maj Erik Rundquist, said that "the airmen were the first from a conventional Air Force unit to parachute into a combat zone."[182] Despite some issues with drop zone identification, the operation went as planned from the CRG's point of view. However,

> troops jumped into a muddy quagmire. It had rained for days before the jump, and it was raining on jump day. The clay-like mud was knee-deep in places. But not one airman was hurt in the landing, apart from a few scrapes and sprains. They were also the first to assemble—though it took more than an hour.
>
> On the ground, the soldiers became the coalition's largest fighting force in northern Iraq. . . . To sustain the paratroops and other troops in the area would take a big airlift. They'd need millions of tons of food, water, supplies and equipment.[183]

Rundquist, who made the jump, recalled that "there was no other way [except airborne insertion] to get Air Force boots and eyes on the ground to assess the situation and prepare to receive aircraft."[184]

After the drop, paratroopers shed their harnesses and secured the airfield and terrain from which they could defend the airfield. Artillery was set up, and howitzers were prepped to fire. Other Soldiers scrambled through bundles and began moving loads to the airfield.

Elements of the 10th Special Forces Group met the newly arrived Soldiers and Airmen and introduced them to the Peshmerga guerrillas.[185]

The rapid pace of the deployment and the nature of the mission required the teamwork of both Soldiers and Airmen. According to Colonel Weart, "It was important to insert the (group) with the airborne brigade so we could assess the airfield and operating environment as quickly as possible."[186] The 86 CRG immediately went into action, assessing the field and readying the runway for heavy aircraft. An hour after setting up, the group was ready to receive airplanes. The first airland mission, however, would not arrive until the following night. All C-17 operations would be conducted at night in "blacked-out" conditions, both in the air and on the ground.[187] The next evening, C-17s were landing with heavy combat loads and reinforcements. Over five days, the 86th received 62 C-17A missions, 2,000 troops, almost 400 vehicles, and more than 3,000 short tons of equipment.[188] The 86th set up shop on a corner of the aircraft ramp to avoid the mud. The group's 14 security forces troops controlled the runway and ramp. The 173rd secured the area around the airfield and was able to provide protection for the Kurds should the Iraqi army make a major move into northern Iraq.

As the Peshmerga applied pressure on the collapsing Iraqi military in the north, Bashur prepared to receive heavier forces. At the end of April, the field prepped to receive an armored task force from Germany to reinforce the 173rd. The force was small—only a tank and mechanized company of five Abrams battle tanks and five Bradley fighting vehicles, plus a command element. Additional combat forces followed, including an infantry company mounted in lighter M-113 armored personnel carriers.[189]

In the end, Colonel Weart felt that "the group was doing everything it set out to do. And his initial worries that his people—and the group's mission concept—wouldn't meld with the Army and coalition forces disappeared soon after the group parachuted in. The group set up air operations and started receiving and unloading planes. In a few days, it had established a fully functioning forward airfield."[190] He stated, "Bashur was a total validation of the CRG operational concept. . . . From airborne insertion to conducting airfield and aerial-port operations in tactical blackout conditions, to full bare-base expeditionary combat support, we (used) every mission-essential task resident in the CRG—and we did so with astounding success.[191]

The lessons of Iraqi Freedom have been felt throughout the Air Force. The CRG's performance at Bashur has affected the accepted norms for expeditionary airfield operations, and it has not gone unnoticed. "We knew it was big, but we didn't realize how big it would prove to be," said Colonel Weart in describing the fallout from Bashur. "We have fundamentally (affected) the way the Air Force plans to conduct future expeditionary airfield operations."[192]

In August 2002, General Jumper outlined a plan to overhaul the way the Air Force organizes trains and equips. Faced with the unique challenges presented in today's security environment, he recognized that the processes in place were not responsive enough to enable "expeditionary operations." General Jumper outlined task forces charged with developing separate CONOPS (as mentioned earlier) to define the objectives, effects, and capabilities required to accomplish the Air Force mission. Naturally, AMC was designated the lead for GM CONOPS.[193]

The ATs used in OIF were a success, but much of the effort was ad hoc. According to Lt Col Kevin Kreps, chief of the Mobile Command and Control Branch at Headquarters (HQ) AMC, air base openers were tasked at such a high rate that openers deployed as soon as the need was identified. He relayed that "the requirement came so quickly, the teams were out the door before the CONOPS were finalized, so we're simultaneously fielding an operational capability while we are experimenting with the concept."[194]

The 86 CRG was one unit that was rapidly deployable with minimal planning time. It was the only unit capable of meeting the Army's requirements for airborne insertion. Some in the USAF may balk at the 86th's airborne qualifications and figure that the AT could have landed with the C-17s on the second night of the operation. In a worst-case scenario, if the airfield were deemed unusable on night two, what would the fate of the operation be at that time? General Jumper, who developed the CRG at Ramstein during his tenure as the commander of USAFE observed that

> the CRG needs to be the thing that ensures the airfield is like an airfield. It has the ability to go in with whoever goes in first, whether it be special operators, or Rangers, or Army [and this is what demands special qualifications]. And then they need to go in there and hit the ground under any conditions and be able to set up and determine quickly what is going to make the airfield an airfield. It would be lighting, communications, NAVAIDS [navigational aids], obstacle assessments, runway [assessment]. They would be able to assess the

> security needs, so we can take right over, especially if they are special forces that are going to want to get out of there quickly. We can take right over the security responsibilities from them with whatever size forces are needed to secure an airfield.
>
> Now, we are not going to be able to put 1,000 people around an airfield like the Army can, so we are going to have to do it high-tech. And once those guys get on the ground, they can make that assessment, and it is a callback—and the first airplane in on the ground has to have the stuff that it takes to do whatever is required. And that airplane has to be able to land in whatever conditions it finds. I think this leads to a bunch of requirements that we have to get squared away.[195]

The lessons of OIF and other case studies in this chapter should be examined as the Air Force takes steps in future force development enabling global reach for the United States. Enemy capabilities will continue to grow with a focus on denying American airpower from gaining theater air bases from which to launch combat sorties or act as an air bridge for force deployments. Planners must be thoughtful in the continuous analysis and assessment of expeditionary airfields and the capabilities of host-nation and friendly forces to protect them from ground and air attack. Having said this, the evolution of the CRG concept must continue to ensure the right sizing of needed capabilities, including security and force protection. The following outlines some possible configurations.

Putting More Arrows in the Quiver: Developing More Capabilities within the CRG Construct

The operations of the past illustrate that those nations able to project power effectively have an advantage in the early phases of conflict. Granted, without a strong follow-on strategy, the projection of force is not effective—as the Germans and Soviets found out in their respective operations. A relatively small group with a unique ability, trained and equipped to seize and then operate out of foreign air bases, had immediate, strategic impact. As was noted earlier, the United States is increasingly reliant on its ability to project power from the CONUS. So how is the USAF preparing to do this today and into the immediate future? Senior leaders in the USAF understand the mission's importance and are attempting to posture the force of tomorrow for success. The importance of the mission and of the individuals who perform that mission is clear; this chapter's focus is on

the units and the people from the strategic doctrine level down to the tactical individual.

"The time for air mobility is now. . . . It's here, and it's time to take it to the next level," said General Jumper in his opening address to the annual Airlift Tanker Association in 2003.[196] In examining the case studies presented thus far, it is evident that airfield seizure and subsequent airhead operations are major keys to force projection. History illustrates this fact—since the early days of airpower through events in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom. The United States' capability to open airfields, whether via seizure or a permissive environment, has long rested with USAF's mobility forces. Today Air Mobility Command is designated as the lead command to "take it to the next level."[197]

While the USAF currently has several air base opening organizations, they are not standardized in organization or capabilities. Thus, C2 relationships are strained. "Users" of air base opening services do not know what type of organization is working at a particular air base, and core elements of these groups are not the same. Some of these groups have inherent defensive capabilities or have unique employment qualifications, and others do not.[198] All CRGs need to be trained to a high level, and users should be able to anticipate that a USAFE CRG is as capable as an AMC CRG.

CRG Overview

As noted in the historical case studies, the first people on the ground are significant. Participants in the initial air base opening module are security forces and a CRG assessment team, usually accompanied by USAF special tactics (ST) personnel, who will enter the airfield area and work with any seizure force as liaisons until the airfield is assessed and ready for follow-on forces. These security and AT forces may air-drop into the airfield or enter via another method and are small in number. Once the field is judged secure and capable of operations, forces will begin to flow in either via aircraft (airland) or ground convoy (overland). Both the initial security and AT forces as well as TALCE and other forces then begin to establish C2 capability and other airfield functions. These groups may be drawn from trained United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) forces or from theater CRGs if available in the region. The target time to reach the "operate the base" phase is 14 days (fig. 1.7).

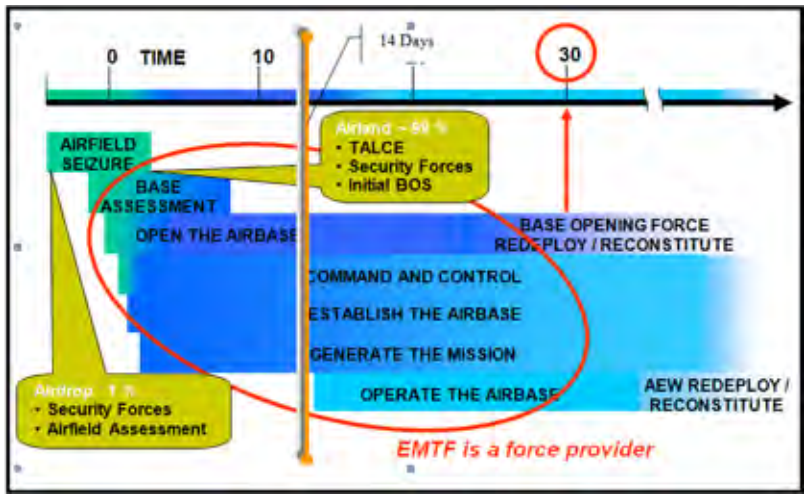

Figure 1.7. Air base opening timeline. (Reproduced from HQ AMC/A3CCE, "Base Opening: How it Works," draft, 12 November 2003.)

The CRG assessment team is a primary focus of this chapter. The Luftwaffe, the Soviet air force, the USAAF, and the US Air Force have all understood the importance of maintaining a light, lethal force capable of speed and surprise in seizing and operating forward air bases. Covering all aspects of the CRG, although worthwhile, is a venture for another work. The tip of the spear for CRG operations is the AT. It is the enabler allowing the USAF to open the base, which in turn will enable the follow-on air or ground forces. Consequently, the United States can project force and achieve national security objectives. The AT usually has eight members but may have up to 20 (as was the case with the 86th CRG for the air base opening at Bashur during OIF.)

Capability

The CRG's main mission is to provide seamless transition from airfield seizure to air base opening to force employment and sustainment in concert with follow-on force modules and theater-assigned mobility forces.[199] The CRG concept will transform the legacy AMOG into a light, lean, quick-to-deploy (and employ) unit. The speed at which such a unit can deploy is strategically important. If the unit is able to get into a theater quickly and open an air base, the adversary

is caught off-balance. This compressed time is used to exploit the forward base, secure it, and establish operations for follow-on forces. A force capable of such rapid mobility enables the United States to operate inside the enemy's decision-making cycle, thus inhibiting an immediate enemy response. This is the lesson learned from the lightning strikes of the Germans in Norway and, more specifically, the Soviets in Afghanistan. Amin, the Afghan president, did not even realize his country was under attack until it was too late.[200] A force of this nature cannot be an ad hoc unit thrown together at the beginning of a conflict as the USAF was forced to do in OIF. It cannot be a smattering of people from around an Air Force base. This unit must live, work, and train together to enjoy the optimal speed and performance the Luftwaffe and Soviet air force ensured prior to operations in Norway and Afghanistan, respectively.

The CRG is composed of versatile personnel who are both war fighters and functional experts. Units must have state-of-the-art equipment to facilitate airfield assessment, C2, force protection, reachback communications, timely intelligence, combat engineering, rapid airfield repair assessment, and rapid redeployment. The CRG may provide the initial FOL leadership and thus be responsible for establishing the preliminary operations tempo until arrival of the designated regional mission leadership. The CRG assessment team must include a senior field grade officer (O-6) to assume this critical role.[201]

In a resource-constrained environment, CRG standby capabilities and configurations are continuously under review and debated.[202] AMC commands the contingency response wing. USAFE commands the 435th Air Ground Operations Wing, a small but highly effective airborne-capable unit. Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) and Air Combat Command (ACC) have pieces and parts of CRGs that possess their own unique capabilities. The question of what these forces should look like has yet to be fully answered. Major commands (MAJCOM) from different theaters have unique visions of what capabilities a CRG should possess. The CSAF has suggested molding the CRGs on the Royal Air Force regiment design. USAFE has developed a capable unit with unique abilities, including airborne insertion and NVG operations. The CSAF's suggested vision for all CRGs may incorporate C2 elements the current AMC AMOG offers, blended with the defensive capabilities of the RAF Regiment (similar to ACC's 820 SFG). The envisioned CRG may also have some of the unique airborne insertion abilities of today's AFSOC STS, as found in USAFE's 86 CRG.[203]

USAF Assessment Team

AT actions serve to validate and determine the suitability of a designated airfield for a future air mission. Assessment teams may obtain airfield information from means such as site surveys, satellite imagery, previous operations, the logistics capability assessment tool (LOGCAT), and GeoReach. An AT conducts a physical investigation by deploying to an airfield and validating preassessment information and/or prior surveys if available.[204] The Soviets enjoyed the luxury of having troops on the ground in Kabul and also deployed Spetznaz forces to survey and observe the fields to be assaulted. One of the biggest challenges facing the USAF is how the AT will get to a forward airfield, and much of this problem is situation dependent. The team should provide leadership with several options; airdrop, airland, and overland strategies have all been used and validated in the past, and a few are highlighted in this book. If airland or overland were the only options for the Luftwaffe, the Germans would have never taken Norway. While the AT is not part of the seizure or forced entry teams, its ability is a critical node to any air base opening. The sooner the AT can be inserted, the quicker operations can begin.

Operations in Iraq illustrated several key events and issues that ATs must contend with to establish forward air bases. ATs must meet with representatives of the initial security airfield seizure and follow-on forces to understand the gaining commander's vision for the airfield and proposed layout. AT Myers faced several of these issues at Tallil; security forces were in question as well as the type of aircraft that would be flown from the field. Once operations have commenced, an AT will deploy to rapidly verify pre-action information and evaluate or obtain any items not known theretofore and report back through secure, dependable, long-range communications.[205] It is essential that these teams be equipped to be self-sufficient and have as minimal an impact as possible on the host forces they are operating with. In Bashur the 86 CRG operated with the 173 ABN DIV, but these forces could have been SOFs, Army, or Marines. Paramount in these operations is the ability to work alongside the ground security forces. These requirements further validate operations at Bashur and the necessity for having jump-qualified ATs. They also demand that ATs carry on their backs everything they need to accomplish their mission. This five- to seven-man team would, normally, not insert

with the kick-down-the-door or seizure forces but would come in with the first wave of follow-on forces.

Team members must all be experts in their specialties and chosen as much for their experience as their specific skills. The team *commander* requires a rated mobility O-6 with TALCE commander or ops officer experience. The commander's focus will primarily be on coordinating with the ground forces, host nation forces, and primary POC for reaching back to the AMC TACC or theater decision makers. The team *leader* is essentially the "ops officer" for this team. This officer is a highly experienced TALCE officer whose focus is the completion of the airfield assessment. The security forces' member is a highly experienced midgrade captain or noncommissioned officer (NCO) whose focus is force protection. The communications element is comprised of two members who can complete two taskings. First and foremost, this midgrade captain and 7-Level NCO must provide secure and reliable communications reachback to the decision makers.[206] They may also be called upon to assess the communications equipment at a larger hub-and-spoke airfield. The airfield manager requires a midgrade captain or senior NCO capable of assessing the ATC facilities and NAVAIDS and determining if the airfield meets minimum requirements for operations. The civil engineering element has at least one midgrade captain and one 7-level NCO and is responsible for assessing airfield pavements and airfield structures and evaluating any unexploded ordnance. Depending on the size and complexity of the airfield, the AT may need to be augmented by additional specialties. Augmentees may include a tactician, a logistics planner, a medical or public health specialist, a logistics and fuels specialist, and contracting and/or finance specialists.[207]

Once the AT is deployed into the area of responsibility (AOR) and arrives at the airfield, it is tasked to gather airfield data. The basic requirements include assessing the runway, taxiways, and ramps and gathering data on any obstacles that may obstruct aircraft operations during takeoff or landing. The team will further evaluate airfield lighting, runway markings, and the pavement on the field. The AT will also investigate airfield operations facilities for areas to deploy TALCEs, ATC, and weather stations. Additionally, the AT will assess aerial port requirements and help establish the maximum number of aircraft that can be on the field at any given time (MOG/maximum on ground). Fuel, power, and maintenance logistic requirements will also be examined, along with base support requirements such as bil-

leting, messing, medical, and bioenvironmental. The AT security representative will further establish a threat assessment, examine airfield security, and set up force protection.[208]

RAF Regiment

The Air Force was "so pleased with the performance of 20 Airmen who parachuted with the Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade into northern Iraq in 2003" that it considered patterning certain aspects of the CRG after the RAF Regiment's model for such operations in the future.[209] General Jumper stated at the time, "Those airmen were responsible for getting down there and making sure that airfield was ready to be used as soon as possible." He added, "Within minutes, they were able to call on the radio and say what airfield lighting was needed, what navigation aids were needed to get that airfield up quickly and into active use."[210]

The RAF Regiment is the Royal Air Force's corps of ground-warfare specialists, often compared to the Royal Marines. The regiment includes approximately 3,000 officers and enlisted personnel organized into squadrons of 100 to 150 troops. One squadron is airborne qualified.[211] The RAF Regiment was created during WWII to defend RAF airfields from attack. It operates surface-to-air missiles to defend against air attack and has infantry and light armored units to protect against ground attack. The unit's mission "includes the ground defense of RAF aircraft and bases. Four of the squadrons—equipped with the Rapier surface-to-air missile system—provide anti-aircraft defenses for RAF facilities."[212]

The idea of using the RAF's Regiment as a roadmap for the future of the USAF CRGs was not a new thought for General Jumper in his role as CSAF. In 1999, as the USAFE/CC, his view was that

> the CRG needs to be able to operate in scenarios across the spectrum of conflict. . . . The Air Force needs to work with the other services to enable the CRG to rapidly assume control of a base captured or secured by ground forces. We must be capable of defending this freshly seized expeditionary air base from both ground- and air-based threats. This will be a large transition from our standard security infrastructure. To defend an air base in such a demanding environment requires that we reexamine the CRG to determine if it is properly organized and trained. The Royal Air Force's Regiment provides us with a standard we should aim toward. The success of the CRG will rest upon its people—people who are as proficient at warrior skills as in their Air Force Specialty Codes [AFSC].[213]

Currently, only ACC's 820th Base Defense Group (BDG) has the capability described by General Jumper. Several years ago, the 820th was tasked to develop the capability to air-drop a small, "first-in" force protection team. These teams can liaise with Army units conducting an airfield seizure and prepare to receive additional forces.[214] USAFE's 86 CRG is the closest unit behind the 820th with such forces organic to its base opening units. All other units must reach across command lines to access the capabilities of the 820th. The dynamics of command lines are discussed later in the doctrine portion of this chapter.

Special Capabilities

Getting an AT to the fight may require special capabilities not organic to most CRGs, such as airborne or air assault qualifications. In a hostile environment after opening an air base, additional force protection is likely to be one of the most critical additions to CRG forces. Other useful additions might include USAF civil engineers, RED HORSE (rapid engineer deployable heavy operational repair squadron engineer) troops, or Prime BEEF (prime base engineer emergency force) assets to conduct rapid runway repair or construction and facilitate the flow of additional "open the air base" forces and follow-on forces. In this role, RED HORSE directly supports combat airpower worldwide by providing air component commanders a "dedicated, flexible airfield and base heavy construction and repair capability, along with many special capabilities." For instance, RED HORSE gives unified combatant commanders access to "approximately 2,200 short-tons [of vehicles and heavy construction and support equipment], which can be tailored to meet specific construction and repair requirements . . . for extended periods of time." This capacity is in addition to the standard capability of 1,000 short-tons.[215]

Special tactics teams or squadrons are an essential part of the force module; they belong to AFSOC and are not organic to any CRG. For a hostile environment, they are highly likely to already be in place as a part of the seizure force, as witnessed at Bashur. The initial force package includes controllers to manage the initial air flow into the air base and ground-to-air radio communications equipment, AN/TRN-45 mobile microwave landing system (MMLS), and the contingency airfield night lighting system (CANLS).[216]

At one time, AMC, and Military Airlift Command before that, owned the predecessors to STTs—the combat control teams (CCT)—

but has since passed STTs on to AFSOC. The history of the STT is noteworthy when pondering why the need for such forces has been rediscovered. We have noted the significance of these units in WWII and how they became "specialized" and reduced during the Cold War. As the USAF becomes increasingly expeditionary, these forces are critical. Such units were required in the expeditionary operations of WWII and are a huge requirement again in today's AEF. The Combat Control School Heritage Foundation (CCSHF) outlines the history of the CCTs:

> After the establishment of the U.S. Air Force as a separate service on 18 September 1947, organizational changes resulted in tactical airlift and aerial port squadrons assuming responsibility for support of the U.S. Army ground forces. Air Force pathfinder teams, later called combat control teams, were activated in January of 1953 to provide navigational aids and air traffic control for the growing airlift forces. They were incorporated into aerial port squadrons and remained there until 1977, when they were assigned to the Director of Operations. In 1984 combat control was restructured into a system of squadrons and detachments reporting directly to numbered Air Forces, and in 1991 they were placed under the control of host wing commanders.[217]

In the mid-1990s, combat control moved under AFSOC, and AMC now must re-create an organization similar to the STS to meet its expeditionary mission.[218]

The CRG AT will never come close to the capability offered by AFSOC's STS units but can serve as a unit to relieve the ever-increasing tasking level of the STS. While an STS has highly skilled warriors, it is a small force of fewer than 400 Airmen.[219] These forces position NAVAIDS and target designation equipment and also control offensive fire systems in permissive and hostile environments. Teams are trained in the use of mission-unique skills involving various parachuting techniques and amphibious as well as aquatic employment methods. Special tactics personnel are skilled in demolitions, weapons, ATC, small unit tactics, trauma medical response, communications, and forward weather observation.[220]

The CRG would not need anything near the STS qualifications. Basic requirements include airborne, ATC, and possible air assault qualifications. A comparison of a special tactics squadron to a CRG AT is akin to that of the Army's 82 ABN DIV to the Rangers.[221] While the 82nd is a highly capable group of Soldiers, the US Rangers are a smaller group with unique training and more varied mission capabilities. The AT should train to be able to open bases in certain scenarios

without the assistance of an STS, but it will never replace STS capability. If the AT could jump into an air base with an STS, it could relieve the STS quickly. The squadron could move on to its other missions, such as directing CAS operations or integrating with other SOF teams. The AT's inability to insert with special tactics delays the STS's ability to move out of the airhead. This delay may hamper the element of surprise that such operations rely upon so heavily. Speed is of the essence, as noted in the Luftwaffe and Red Air Force experiences. The USAF may never fully realize the full potential of the CRG if it is unwilling to take steps to train these units beyond the usual AMOG legacy–type missions.

Reflecting on OIF and OEF, it is clear that the 86th CRG's ability to insert with the Army's 173rd was indeed a force enhancement and should be the new level to which future CRG ATs are trained. General Jumper described his vision for the CRG-STS relationship: "Quite frankly, the STS guys are also going to be out in the field. They are going to be doing other sorts of combat control. . . . But just like with the CRG, if we do this right, you will be able to flow back and forth . . . between those kinds of career fields. . . . [They would have] transferable skills with all of the benefits of having the same equipment and everything else."[222]

Posturing the CRG and the AT for future success requires defining the capability the AT must possess, the doctrine to enable the AT to integrate and function in a joint environment, and the vision for the CRG and the AT in the future. In examining the past, we see that the strategic effects of air base opening capabilities have served their owners well. It is evident that a country that can perform air base opening quickly and effectively will have a strategic advantage over an enemy.[223]

The USAF's challenge remains the creation of units with streamlined command lines incorporating the outstanding RAF Regiment defense capabilities and the tactical mobility and insertion capability of the USAF STS. These tasks must be accomplished to complement the STS mission without duplicating it. The road map is not an easy one to follow and will entail constant communication with senior USAF leadership, integration with USAF and other services, and a willingness for all to examine recent conflicts and the global environment to define requirements for these teams. With this vision as a guide, the Air Force can begin to organize, train, and equip the USAFE CRG, PACAF CRG, ACC CRG, and AMC AMOGs to this standard (fig. 1.8).

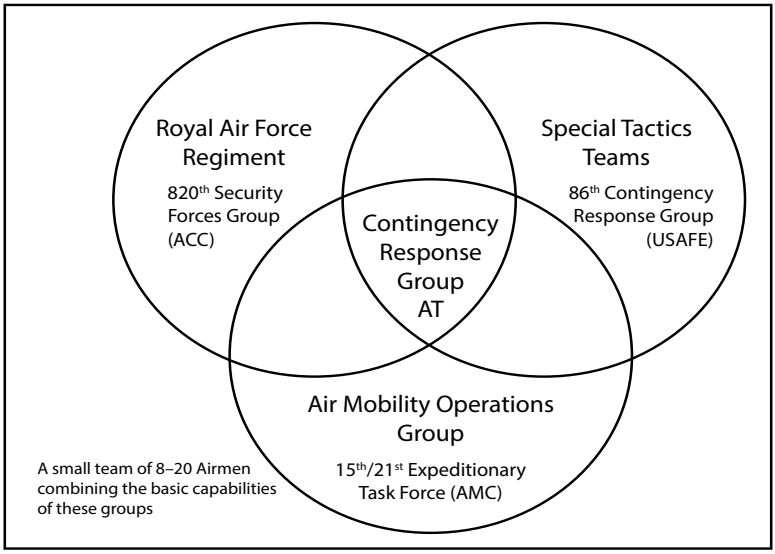

Figure 1.8. The melding of career fields

Doctrine

Doctrine is never an easy subject to broach, especially when the USAF is attempting to develop concepts for a new organization with a distinctive capability. One of the biggest doctrinal issues for such units is that over the previous five years, Air Force MAJCOMs and numbered air forces have developed numerous disparate units. These new units were designed to increase the resolution of information at the forward edge of an operation and improve the USAF's ability to establish and operate from forward airfields. Differing from existing AMC TALCEs, ACC combat communications airfield operations flights, and AFSOC STSs, these units are the

- USAFE Air Ground Operations Wing,
- ACC Base Defense Group,
- Ninth Air Force Contingency Response Wing,
- ACC/ANG airborne RED HORSE squadrons,
- ANG air traffic control squadrons,
- AMC global airfield assessment teams, and
- expeditionary operations support squadrons.

The second large issue facing the USAF is that once the teams are sourced and command lines streamlined, seams remain between the seizure forces and the operating forces. The transition between these phases is crucial to the speed at which these air bases are fully operational and to the delivery of follow-on forces.

Command Lines

These activities suggest a requirement arising at the operational or tactical level that caused the development of a capability by the affected commands. Since these activities are geared toward support of an AEF, it is reasonable to think that the transition from a "forward-based Air Force" to the AEF was the stimulus for this activity. However, command lines of such units remain blurred.[224] What follows is a discussion of the proposed solution of doctrinal command issues.

As noted above, matters are made even more difficult with the myriad of capabilities that cross MAJCOM and theater lines and serve to exacerbate doctrinal issues. While USTRANSCOM and AMC have a unique doctrinal foundation based on their global reach mission, USAFE and PACAF have totally different command relationships as theater-based assets. To date, much has been written on the subject of CRG doctrine and command relationships, but no agreements have been reached within the USAF or joint community. The capabilities of all the CRGs will probably require standardization. This standardization ensures that users will understand and be able to plan airfield seizures and air base operations on a global level, not just in a theater that might have a CRG available. Theater expertise will always be a plus, but to have a unit in Europe more capable than a unit in New Jersey (i.e., airborne or organic security forces) or a Pacific unit that needs augmentation from California for basic missions is not efficient.

Many parallel efforts are under way to use legacy doctrine and organization to standardize this capability.[225] Expeditionary operations are designed to rapidly respond to contingencies. They include opening and protecting airfields, performing initial airfield and air base operations, and smoothly transitioning to subsequent operations. These unique capabilities provide the foundation for CRGs and should be standardized.[226] As noted, the primary functions for opening an air base are assigned to various units across the Air Force. The

Air Force must synchronize these individual efforts and ensure consistency with its GM CONOPS.[227]

AMC CRGs fall under USTRANSCOM in its role as DOD's provider of air, land, and sea transportation during peace and war. USTRANSCOM has a standing support command obligation to provide air base opening functions (through the CRG) while maintaining operational control (OPCON) over its forces. That control enables USTRANSCOM to determine the forces, tactics, methods, procedures, and communications employed to satisfy the supported commander's objectives. Thus, the AMC CRG will "work for" the theater commander, receiving direction via the director of mobility forces (DIRMOBFOR). However, OPCON of the CRG will not be transferred.[228]

Non-AMC CRGs fall within their respective AORs, and theater CRGs will remain under the combatant command (COCOM)/OPCON of their respective theater commanders. If CRGs deploy outside their theaters, SecDef approval is required. Currently, other commands do not have standing SecDef-approved support command relationships. They would either have to establish such a relationship or transfer OPCON of forces to the theater commander prior to deployment or employment. Either option would require SecDef approval.[229]

There are some roadblocks to overcome. The intent of the CRG OPCON is to outline a tasking process responsive to the war fighter's needs, and the group is required to respond in 12 hours. The USAF must be able to task the CRG in minimum time. Notably, the US Air Force Air and Space Expeditionary Center is not a 24/7 operation. New processes need to be implemented to increase the responsiveness of the AEFC, or all CRGs must fall under one command to be tasked through the AMC's 618th TACC.

Under current standing agreements, the tasking process is somewhat different for each MAJCOM CRG. Command relationships play an important role. Ideally, the DIRMOBFOR, through the joint force air component commander (JFACC), will recommend a CRG source to the JFC. Doctrinally, the process works differently for AMC and non-AMC CRGs.

In AMC, the COCOM can request support directly from USTRANSCOM for CRG forces. While seemingly contrary to the normal process, this procedure is doctrinally correct. JP 0-2, *Unified Action Armed Forces*, discusses support command relationships. In short, depending on how the support command relationship is set up be-

tween the war-fighting commanders, the supported commander has the authority to task the support*i*ng commander to provide forces or support—with SecDef approval implicit in the standing support agreement.[230] In AMC's case, USTRANSCOM's role as the "single manager for defense transportation" and responsibility to provide "global transportation management of common-user air, land and sea transportation for the Department of Defense by employing an integrated transportation system across the range of military operations" allows commanders the ability to bypass the request for forces (RFF) process and task USTRANSCOM (and thus AMC) directly.[231]

CRG commanders in USAFE and PACAF do not have a standing support agreement allowing them to request CRG forces through USTRANSCOM. Therefore, to be tasked outside of their assigned commander's AOR, these CRGs would have to be tasked through the normal RFF process, requiring SecDef approval prior to deployment. This process requires an RFF message to the Joint Staff (J-3), which includes a description of the forces, mission, duration, and commander's preference for the source of forces; the resulting SecDef deployment order (DEPORD) or execute order (EXORD) authorizes troops to deploy.[232] This process may delay the deployment of a CRG.

In a structure where AMC possessed organic forces, to include SF, ATC, and jump-qualified ATs, there would be no need to reach across command lines. If the tasking process were streamlined and all CRGs were standardized, there would rarely be a situation that required tasking outside of a theater commander's AOR, resulting in a quicker CRG response time. Europe and the Pacific could respond with organic resources, augmented as required by AMC. AMC could internally handle South America, the Middle East, and any other requirements.

Operational Seams

Joint doctrine does not fully address the transition between initial airfield seizure forces and base opening forces. JP 3-18 addresses "stabilization of the lodgment" and acknowledges that "details concerning the introduction of follow-on forces must be prepared during the planning phase of the operation."[233] However, there is no discussion of the scenarios that frequently occur—airfield security or seizure followed by employment of air mobility forces to establish base operations and sustain the air flow. This gap was evident early on in the planning for OIF and had to be worked out in an ad hoc manner.

JP 3-17, *Air Mobility Operations*, addresses briefly the interrelationship between special operations and air mobility forces. While JP 3-17 provides for some integration of airfield seizure and follow-on forces, it remains narrowly focused on initial airland operations for the purpose of ground combat power in lodgments or austere airfields. Multiservice TTPs, and ultimately joint doctrine, must reflect the Air Force's requirements to expand base operations to accommodate high throughput or beddown of aircraft to project air and ground combat power.[234] Again, lessons from Tallil highlight the need for such doctrine: the operation was a success in huge part due to the intelligence and foresight of leadership involved.

Responsibilities of CRG forces should be specified during planning of seizure and base opening operations. The two transition periods or seams (when control of the airfield passes from one force to another) are vital. First is the transition from seizure force to the base opening force; second is the transition from the base opening force to the follow-on user (not necessarily USAF). AT Myers and its base opening at Tallil is an outstanding model for doctrine. The first transition should be made as soon as security and AT forces are satisfied that the airfield is secure enough for follow-on forces and the seizure force is ready to relinquish control. If AT forces are postured to rapidly employ, this assurance may happen only hours after initiation of seizure. Colonel Myers arrived at the base quickly and assumed command of the field. As the base opening force grows in capability and the follow-on user's forces begin to arrive, a threshold will be reached where the follow-on user is ready to assume control from the base openers. This growth will be in stages, including ATC forces assuming control of air operations from the STS forces, the C2 element for a follow-on air expeditionary wing (AEW)/CC assuming reporting, and the TALCE commencing communications duties.[235] We saw earlier the buildup of Tallil in exactly this manner. The speed of transition can be further expedited if the AT possesses ATC capability, hence allowing the STS to depart sooner for follow-on missions.

Ideally, this transitional threshold would be detailed in the operation order (OPORD) or EXORD, as well as what portions of the airfield and its environment are under Air Force control. Advance agreements between USAF airfield operators and any remaining sister service security personnel on control issues on or near the airfield can preclude detrimental conflicts. They might include issues of storage of hazardous materials, proximity to aircraft operations, commu-

nications usage, and security approaching the airfield in the air or on the ground. Shortly after the formal transfer to the follow-on user, the base opening force (including the TALCE) should redeploy and reconstitute for about 30 days.

The key factor of this effort is the need to close the seam between seizure forces and the CRG. The Air Land Sea Application Center is beginning to develop a working group to address this shortfall and to develop multiservice tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) for joint air lodgment operations. This parallel joint effort is important to employment and execution and is a critical step in the road ahead for CRGs and air base opening operations.[236]

Case studies of the Luftwaffe and Red Air Force illustrate the importance of rapid deployment and the element of surprise. Developing a force that combines the virtues of the CRW, RAF Regiment, and STSs will ensure that the USAF CRG can open an air base anyplace at any time. The United States Air Force in Iraq serves as a reminder of the necessity of strong doctrine and, in the absence of that, strong leadership. The USAF can do better; the key is to develop ideas and concepts of operations now. As General Jumper pointed out in discussing C-17 operations in OIF and OEF, AMC did a good job in adapting to the combat environment. However, most ideas came after OEF/OIF was under way and were developed after the war fighter had an immediate need for them. The CSAF's desired end state was a combat culture that is out in front and on the leading edge, which pushes capabilities anticipating the war fighter's needs.[237] The same can be said of the CRG ATs in OIF. We should not rely on luck and wishful thinking; now is the time to develop the concepts to ensure that we have the capabilities required to confront the threats of the future.

The Future: Combat Structuring

The United States has witnessed many contingency operations recently that were without deliberate plans or an infrastructure in place. The Air Force has responded with changes in organization and technology—the CRG was one example. In the past, Air Force units were committed into a combatant commander's theater through stovepipes: engineers, communicators, medics, airfield managers, security forces, airlift control elements, and so forth. Many times these units outpaced the deployment of commanders and sister services.[238] During such deployments, the units could not function effectively until senior leader-

ship arrived. The CRG was an attempt to guarantee that this does not happen in the future. It is an effort to build a multidisciplinary, cross-functional (and in some cases cross-cultural) team whose mission is to provide first-on-scene Air Force personnel to command, access, and prepare a base for expeditionary operations. To make such a guarantee, the USAF must be positive we are not just putting new wine into old bottles.

In examining the future of US military operations, a few assumptions must be made to adequately posture the CRG for future success. The first key premise is that the terrorism and regional instability, especially in the Middle East and Northern Africa, will continue for the long term. As demonstrated by recent operations in Iraq and Syria, expeditionary operations requiring CRG expertise will only increase in frequency and value.[239] Further, we must assume that a future adversary will recognize that victory over the United States through force-on-force combat is unrealistic. The three case studies presented illustrate that taking that ability away can marginalize a nation projecting forces through air base seizure. If Norway were not taken, the Germans would have had a northern front to deal with. If Kabul and other airfields were not seized, the Soviets would have required more forces and allowed the Afghan leadership time to prepare for the initial assault. Finally, had the United States not been able to seize bases in Iraq, the coalition would have had major issues with power projection and logistical support to friendly forces. Adversaries are designing capabilities and doctrine to deny or limit US forces ability to gain access to a region. Most potential adversaries conclude that developing the ability to limit and/or interrupt access will enable reducing our military capability to manageable and sometimes vulnerable levels.[240]

Organize: Contingency Response Group Combat Culture

Organization of the CRG mission is receiving attention at the highest levels in the USAF (fig. 1.9). This construct will shore up AMC units but will not bring the structure and practices of ACC or overseas units any closer to those of AMC. Currently, AMC has the preponderance of CRGs and ATs, but not of capability. USAFE and ACC have special proficiencies that AMC is referring to as "playbook options." These options include security forces from the 820 SFG, airborne capability from the 86 CRG in USAFE or possibly ACC, and RED HORSE civil engineers from ACC.[241] Any air base opening op-

eration other than an airland or overland insertion in a permissive environment will require forces from outside AMC.

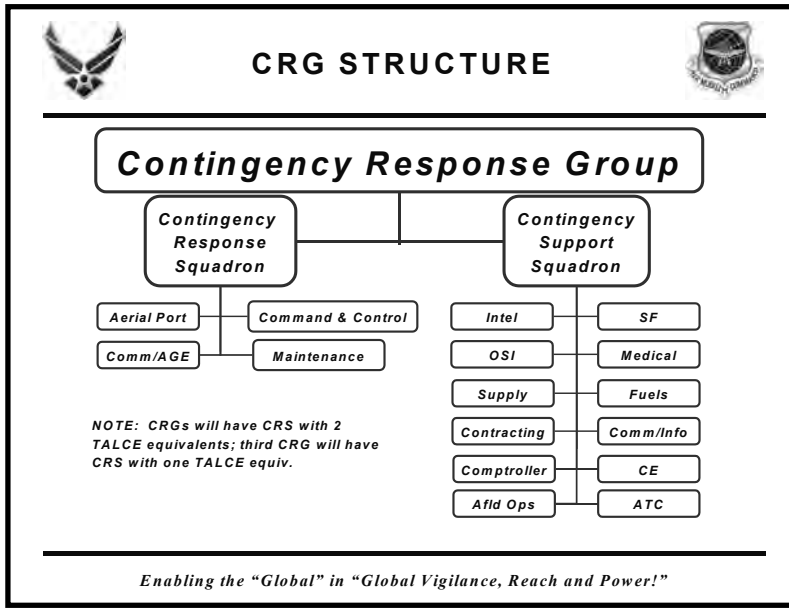

Figure 1.9. EMTF/CRW organizational structure. (Adapted from Brig Gen Kip Self, HQ AMC, CRG conference brief, 2005.)

Organization of the personnel in the CRG is another issue. The group is unique in that it contains AFSCs or career fields from a myriad of Air Force organizations. Airmen from the intelligence, medical, fuels, communications, and operations fields—among many others—come together to work in the CRG. This diversity creates an environment where a cohesive combat culture is difficult to nurture. Airmen may identify more with the AFSC or career field they came from and not the organization to which they are assigned. One concept to alleviate some of these issues is to create an AFSC for the CRGs Air Force–wide. If USAF senior leadership is serious about CRG personnel being key to the future of the Air Force, they should be recognized. Having a CRG AFSC would not only give CRG personnel an organizational identify but also would facilitate their placement in future assignments and leadership positions.

Furthermore, the CRG AT has already undergone numerous name changes in its short history. Names have ranged from the global mo-

bility assessment team (GMAT or GAT) and the contingency base assessment team (C-BAT) to today's AT. The origins of the AT can be traced to the Army Pathfinders, first used to mark drop zones in Sicily during the Italian campaign of World War II. The Army currently has Pathfinders; such a name in the Air Force might find issue with the Army. As mentioned, the CRG is a unit benefiting all armed services. Armed forces must transcend parochial interests in the development of the most effective force. The Pathfinder history is easily traced to the USAF; the title USAF Pathfinders might serve the Air Force well in building a combat heritage. The Air Force might opt to build a new tradition in a name such as the USAF Forerunner Team. A *forerunner* is defined as "one that comes before and indicates the approach of another; a harbinger."[242] The name is seemingly perfect for a group designed to be the first into an airfield to assess its capabilities for follow-on forces.

Train: The Battlefield Airman

Training is a key issue for the CRG, but the Air Force must determine what capabilities it should possess before investing too many resources into this area. A USAF study on air mobility leaders identifies a need not only for just-in-time training supporting mobility deployments but also for a long-term developmental strategy to meet ongoing contingency leadership and mobility capabilities. The study observes that "the resources and emphasis that AMC places on the Phoenix Mobility program indicate how much the command values the EMTF mission in the post-9/11 environment. It also reveals that by deliberately trying to build a cadre of officers who have the contingency-response mission as a core competency, the command continues to develop future mobility leaders who are experts in all aspects of air mobility operations."[243]

In addition to training courses, both physical and on-line, the Expeditionary Warfare Center developed Eagle Flag, an exercise held at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JBMDL), New Jersey. Eagle Flag is used as a predeployment workup for CRGs as they become aligned with the AEF rotations.[244] As noted, lead CRGs will be pre-identified with each AEF pair. Those CRGs will be targeted for Eagle Flag just prior to assuming lead status in conjunction with their respective AEF pair.[245]

CRG forces must further exercise routinely with a variety of joint combat maneuver forces to effectively open air bases across the spectrum of operations. Exercising these CRG forces using a variety of existing training events would greatly facilitate developing joint TTPs and prevent the USAF from having to assemble ad hoc teams. Events that would serve CRGs well include combat training center rotations; joint / service / combatant commander exercises; bilateral training; or piggybacking on exercises AMC is already a part of, such as Large Package Week (LPW) with the 82 ABN DIV.[246] Such training would integrate air base opening capabilities and address deficiencies in the areas of doctrine and force packaging. Today's joint exercise objectives should be refined to include transition from airfield seizure to base opening forces. Improvement in these areas will highlight the changes required to ensure more effective operations.[247]

Such joint exercises also serve to build habitual relationships with sister services that pay dividends in combat operations. They will validate required training, which might include jump qualifications for ATs. A "special capabilities" AT of eight people would have strategic effects if a future conflict required its employment. This AT would be part of one of the CRGs at Travis AFB and one at JBMDL, giving that CRG the designation "special capabilities CRG." AMC has organized flying units in similar ways at Charleston AFB, including the 16th Airlift Squadron that was at one time a special operations low-level II (SOLL II) C-141B outfit. The cost is minimal to train 16 Airmen commandwide for airborne insertion.[248] The concept has already been validated in Iraq (see chap. 5).[249] The capability in such teams would yield increased options for the nation's leaders. However, evaluating the ability such qualifications can offer is difficult until the CRG has the capability.

General Jumper stated in 2003 that "contingency response group capabilities are also emerging within air mobility operations, providing nontraditional skills to base opening. Response group airmen attend Army Ranger School and are jump qualified." His vision for the CRG was clear. "These are skills of the modern expeditionary Air Force," he noted. "We will continue to grow these skills and get the people in these groups that we need to be able to do this in any condition, anywhere in the world. And it's going to get people's attention, because we're going to have jump-qualified engineers, jump-qualified contracting officers, jump-qualified lawyers [and] jump-qualified doctors.[250]

It may be shortsighted to dismiss the capability on the grounds that it may never be employed. If the 86 CRG did not have airborne qualification, who would have opened Bashur? Some would argue that the jump was not required and the CRG could have airlanded in on the first C-17 on the second night. If the field were not capable of handling a large flow of heavy C-17 aircraft, night two would have been a terrible time to find out with 1,000 airborne Soldiers then stranded in northern Iraq.

There is another little-known possibility that never occurred during Operation Allied Force (OAF) because assessment of the field was deemed impossible. As General Jumper tells the story, this may have been the genesis for the 86 CRG airborne qualification. The USAF was unable to stand up a bare base in Kukas, Albania. No roads led to the base, and General Jumper, the USAFE commander, needed an airdrop to get an AT and RED HORSE team on the field to assess and possibly to repair it. He was briefed that insertion was not possible.[251] Lt Gen Mike McDuffie, director of joint staff logistics, briefed reporters on 2 February 1999 that "there is a dirt strip up close at Kukas." He added, "We don't know the usability of that airfield, though, for C-130s. I mean everybody wants to say it's C-130 capable because of the length, but we really don't have that assessment. Our view, it probably is not."[252]

As mentioned above, playbook options such as airborne insertion are farmed out to USAFE. The original Air Force Contingency Response Group Operational Concept, version 1.0, states: "Some situations may require airborne insertion of forces; therefore, several of these METs (Mission Essential Tasks) will also require airborne/airdrop capability. To address this *intermittent* requirement, the 86th CRG in USAFE, 613th CRG in PACAF, and the 820th BDG in ACC will be responsible for maintaining one Assessment Team each that is airborne/airdrop qualified" (emphasis added).[253]

Antiaccess will become more of an issue for the United States in future operations (as mentioned previously and in chap. 2). Issues with Turkey in OIF should alert America that our allies may not always provide us with basing rights in future conflicts. Thus, forced entry options should be examined now, before they are required. Furthermore, the DOD has shifted its collective focus toward the so-called "southern arc that will begin in the Balkans, pass through the Greater Middle East and Persian Gulf, cross South Asia, and continue along the Asian crescent from South East Asia to Taiwan."[254] Even a

quick glance illustrates the requirement for forces beyond USAFE to prepare for operations similar to those in Bashur. The "arc of instability" includes forces not only in the European theater but also in South America, the Middle East, and the Far East (fig. 1.10). Furthermore, the RAND study *A Global Access Strategy for the US Air Force* recommends that the USAF "plan, organize, equip and train itself according to a new set of principles suited to a world that demands frequent, short-notice deployments and employments across a spectrum of conflict that may occur virtually anywhere in the world."[255] Again, AMC has the bulk of CRG assets, and common sense dictates it should have the bulk of capability. The operational concept must be updated to include jump-coded billets for an assessment team at Travis and McGuire AFBs to respond to crisis anywhere on the globe in the 12-hour time frame laid out in the operational concept.

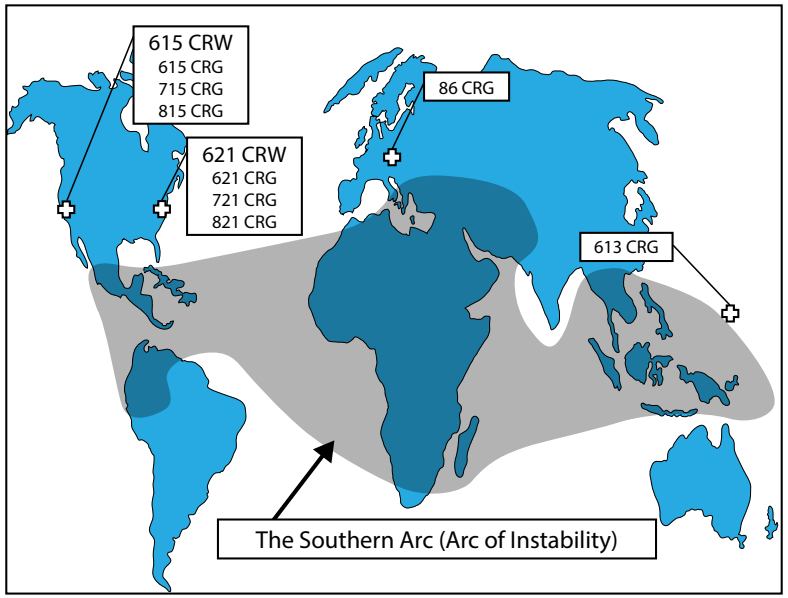

Figure 1.10. CRGs and the arc of instability. (Adapted from US National Intelligence Council (NIC), *GlobalTrends 2025: A Transformed World* [Washington, DC: US NIC, November 2008], 61, https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Reports%20and%20Pubs/2025_Global_Trends_Final_Report.pdf.)

Finally, President Bush observed in the 2002 *National Security Strategy* that "before the war in Afghanistan, that area was low on

the list of major planning contingencies. Yet in a very short time, we had to operate across the length and breadth of that remote nation, using every branch of the armed forces. We must prepare for such deployments."[256]

No one in the world challenges the USAF in air-to-air combat, yet F-15 units continue to thrive. The 82nd ABN DIV has not made a combat jump in years, yet it is the Army's pride. Both the USAF's F-15 Eagle squadrons and the Army's 82nd ABN DIV have a known capability that offers this country's leaders options and a deterrent to potential adversaries. Airborne qualifications for the AT may be the first such capability the USAF requires in the group. Ranger, air assault, and other options should be examined as required.

Another training opportunity for CRGs may be to leverage against the battlefield Airman concept. At the Air Force Association's Symposium in Orlando, Florida, in February 2004, James G. Roche, secretary of the Air Force, "directed special attention to what he termed 'battlefield Airmen'—USAF personnel on the ground who work directly with land forces."[257] The Air Force plans to pull together all battlefield Airmen—including combat controllers, pararescuemen, combat weather specialists, enlisted terminal attack controllers, and tactical air control party (TACP) Airmen—under a common organizational and training structure. Dr. Roche said that will "strengthen the combat power they bring to the battlefield, whether they bring it as part of ACC or part of AFSOC."[258] Now is an excellent time for AMC to bring forward the CRG as an essential capability on the ground for working with land forces. Without the CRG, forces will have a difficult time getting on the ground through newly opened air bases. The CRG could use this opportunity to integrate and train with other USAF battlefield Airmen and build those habitual relationships for the future.

ATC in the CRG is still an item of intense discussion. As far back as Joint Endeavor (December 1995), a lesson learned was that having ATC capability early in the flow when opening a new air base is critical. However, the capability continues to exist primarily with AFSOC STT forces. Although AMC has developed a concept for rapid deployment to provide the required capability, these personnel are not yet in the open-the-air-base force module and thus are not in the proposed CRG.[259]

Training is critical to the future success of these units, and it is all the more tough to accomplish in a unit such as a CRG that has a high

deployment rate. Yet with the predictability of the AEF cycle, the opportunities can be realized to great effect. The learning curve will be steep, especially when the USAF is setting out to create a new organization with new capabilities. As the units are trained, however, this curve will diminish. Leveraging CRG training against training already scheduled will foster the development of working relationships with sister services. Examples include airborne training with LPW at Fort Bragg and working with the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk and the National Training Center at Fort Irwin. Channels of communication must be developed with the Europe-based CRG and CONUS-based STS units.[260] Creative thinking might suggest partnering with the RAF Regiment or using capable contractors that provide robust military training. The Air Force has several options at its disposal to mentor these newer AMC CRGs and to have an eminently capable force for the future.

Equip: For Tomorrow's Conflict

Equipping a CRG for its mission is somewhat intuitive; providing the unit with personnel might require some deeper thought. For the mission, a CRG by its very nature must be light. Everything the AT needs initially should be carried on the individuals' backs. Once the base is open and airlift starts to flow, more equipment can be brought in. In building the habitual relationships with STSs and sister services, the USAF will have the opportunity to examine best practices of other units and adapt its requirements.

Former PACAF commander Gen Patrick K. Gamble noted that "the CRS [contingency response squadron] was born from lessons learned in the Balkans. . . . In Kosovo they found when they had to go into an airfield, a small field never seen before, they didn't know what they were getting into until they looked at it. The lesson is we've got to get eyes on the target. The squadron is the command's eyes. Its job is to fly into contingency operations first and evaluate the situation, surroundings and terrain." Gamble's only direction to the planners was that the team had to fit in one C-130. "Build me one C-130's worth of capability," Gamble said. "Tell me what you need, what the team ought to look like, and what kind of communications and assessment equipment it'll need. You'll get it."[261]

Critical thinking is required as well. Any member involved in creating this future force must reflect beyond the last war to bring out

any combat capability the war fighter might need now, before the next fight. As General Jumper pointed as CSAF, it will not be the command that figures out how best to employ a weapons system. It will be the line captain who lives and breathes combat operations who comes up with innovative ideas. The command's job is to foster and embrace this process, providing an avenue for that "smart" captain's ideas to come to fruition.[262] With today's technology, many available items may be adapted to the mission of the AT. For example, a potential idea worth borrowing is the bomber community's adaptation of a helicopter "smart kneeboard." This smart kneeboard incorporates a GPS data link. A CRG Airman could use this device on the ground and circle the unit position with a stylus. The smart kneeboard simultaneously displays the information entered by the ground personnel to others on the ground or to inbound aircraft.[263] The same kneeboard could display inbound aircraft landing times and parking positions to the CRG, decreasing aircraft turn times and expediting the buildup of forces at the airhead.

Devices such as the backpack remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) should find great use in the CRG. RPAs can be employed by either the AT or security forces, with the CRG manned with the necessary people and equipment to monitor threats in aircraft approach and departure corridors. The information gathered provides the CRG and aircrew with data on threats from shoulder-fired antiaircraft missiles or small arms fire. This capability is available now and is being used by some military units. The RPAs are equipped with miniature cameras that beam video streams to a laptop computer being operated by a SF team overseeing airfield security.[264] General Jumper noted, "Now we are not going to be able to put 1,000 people around an airfield like the Army can, so we are going to have to do it with hi-tech."[265] The backpack RPA is just one example of innovations enabling a small group to provide force protection on a large scale.

While the possibilities for adapting technology for the CRGs are limited only by imagination and funds, equipping the CRG with the appropriate personnel is a more challenging premise. The key is to get the word to people in the Air Force that the CRG is an exciting place to work and a growth industry. When people understand that they can make a difference in a unit, they flock to it. Therefore, AMC must continue to improve its ability to recruit officers into the CRG using programs like Phoenix Horizon. Horizon's goal is to create a large pool of highly competitive mobility officers through leadership de-

velopment programs, increased visibility for the CRG, and increased opportunities for selected officers.[266] One aspect of the program, Phoenix Horizon–Mobility, assigns 11M (mobility pilots), 12M (mobility combat systems officers), 21A (maintenance officers), and 21R (logistics readiness officers) "to CRW and en-route locations to gain extensive experience in mobility leadership and mission planning." The two-year Phoenix Horizon–Torch program pairs "company grade officers with a general office counterpart at HQ AMC, USTRANCOM, or 18th Air Force . . . to expand their leadership abilities and understanding of the global mobility mission."[267]

CRGs need to market themselves at the Airman Leadership School, NCO Academy, and the Senior NCO Academy. Senior leadership in the EMTF should travel to the wings under their purview and deliver "spread the word" briefings on the changes, challenges, and opportunities at the CRG.

Taking care of people in the CRG is key as well. Identifying with the unit and developing culture are integral to any organization. The CRG, as a career field, should have a way to be identified (fig. 1.11). Most career fields in the USAF have career badges that associate individuals with their specialties. The CRG must do the same to build community in the career field. AT uniform "tabs" similar to what AMC Phoenix Ravens wear on their shoulders would identify the AT to sister services.[268] Further, all organizations that identify themselves as battlefield Airmen—the security forces and STTs present during the initial phases of air base opening—wear a beret. Another way for CRG members to identify with their heritage and community is to issue them berets. The color is not important—it could be Air Force blue or dark gray—but the beret would distinguish those responsible for base opening.[269] In an environment where helmets are not required, a distinctive beret would enable both the USAF and sister services to immediately identify those responsible for the expeditionary base, be it the STS, BDG, or CRG.

The Way Forward

There are several areas that need to find closure in the CRG operational concept. The total number of CRGs required across the Air Force has not yet been definitively established. This requirement will drive some overarching organizational changes, such as the CRW, as-

well as manpower and equipment needs for the various CRGs. The current assumption is that nine CRGs will be formed—six for AMC and one each for ACC, USAFE, and PACAF.[270]

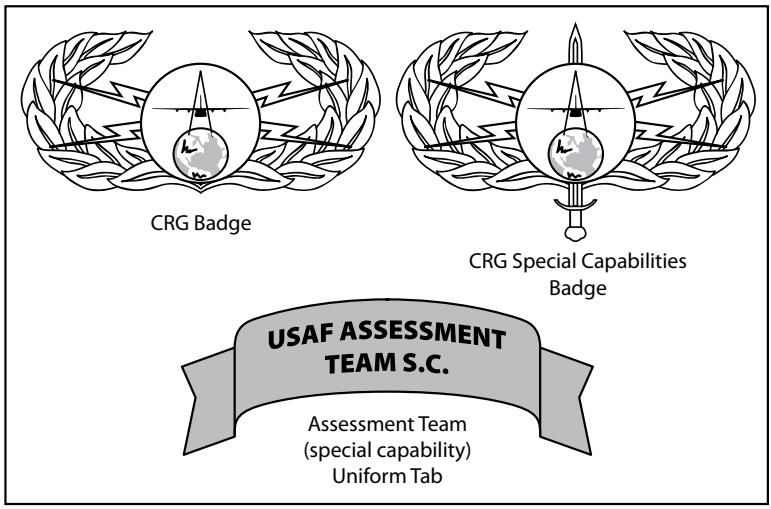

Figure 1.11. CRG badges and tabs

The Air Mobility Warfare Center is working on developing a syllabus to stand up a CRG FTU. Joint training is critical to the success of air base opening / CRG operations. Eagle Flag is but one of the many opportunities to exercise this capability; we must also take advantage of those offered by the JRTC, LPW, "Flag" exercises, and others. These venues will help ensure that CRGs maintain a high level of proficiency not only in their respective AFSC skills but also in expeditionary skills required for air base opening operations.

What must be done now? All of the items listed above must be worked through, but the concept will still take time to initiate. Changing physical artifacts—such as equipment, physical symbols, organizational charts, and AFSCs—as soon as possible is a high priority. Doing so will illustrate to Airmen in the field that the CRG is indeed the way of the future and that senior leadership is serious about its importance. First, the names for units—the CRG, the AT, and CRW—must all be agreed upon quickly. Training must be examined and a course determined. The USAF should send leaders to advanced schools like Air Assault and/or Airborne to improve expeditionary and joint warfare capabilities needed to support the future vision of a

robust CRG capability. It should also schedule exercises with sister services and set up a cross-tell program between CRGs and other organizations, to include STSs. Finally, any of the above suggestions—headgear, uniform tabs, CRG badges—create a sense of community and evidence of CRG membership. Any or all of these actions are low in cost for the USAF yet high in payoff to a new career field. They further illustrate that the new CRG is not just a renaming of an old, stovepiped system.

Conclusion

The United States is standing on the verge of incredible capability on a strategic scale. The USAF is undergoing changes that will impact the organization for years to come: it needs to get this transformation right. As the Air Force contemplates changes to its structure, organizations, and weapons systems, it must remember the basics—how it deploys and supports global reach, including a more dynamic and flexible concept for securing austere and dispersed airfields.

The case studies presented illustrate that speed and surprise are key to enabling successful air base seizures and follow-on air base opening. The Germans, Soviets, and the United States have historically spent much time and thought developing these capabilities. US capability flourished in World War II. Importantly, the case studies underline how vulnerable air bases can be to ground and air assault. However, the United States has struggled after the Cold War in developing and sustaining the capability of units that can rapidly deploy, organize, and open an air base in a hostile or semipermissive environment.

Harkening back to the past, we have seen that the Luftwaffe used a CRG-like organization to enable the seizure of airfields in Norway. The strategic effect of the operation prevented the Allies from developing a northern front, pushed the British naval blockade as far from the German coast as possible, and allowed the Germans the iron ore required for its war effort. The newly seized air bases in Norway allowed the Germans to strike northern portions of the British Isles. The Soviet Air Force used its special forces in a CRG role in Kabul and other cities in Afghanistan to strike quickly and keep the Afghans off balance during the initial phases of their invasion. The United States deployed units in Iraq that were highly successful in rapidly opening bases, but it can do better. Against a smart adversary,

the USAF might not have enjoyed the success it did in OIF. We must organize, train, and equip today for the future.

Air Mobility Command must be ready to transform its legacy CRWs into the light, lean, and lethal organization that future conflicts will demand. Doing so is not an easy feat. The training will be tough, the doctrine will be nontraditional, and leaders will have to think creatively. But those in the CRG will be able to make a difference in future operations. The CRG concept is too important to permit failure; the impact will be felt not only in the way the USAF deploys and how effective it is in combat but also in how personnel perceive their contribution to the fight. The CRG concept is on the leading edge of a service culture change and influencing a new career field mind-set and developmental path. The time for change is now, and the rewards from the change will be felt quickly. Future conflict will depend on how fast the USAF can deploy and employ our air assets to theaters in which the enemy will invest mightily in denying our access. It is incumbent upon today's planners and leaders to ensure investments in capabilities like the CRW and CRG are made to ensure airpower has the needed theater footing to bring its full capability to bear on the enemy.

Notes

(All notes appear in shortened form. For full details, see the appropriate entry in the bibliography.)

1. Tripp et al., *Sense and Respond Logistics* 3.
2. Per Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary*, a *footprint* is the "amount of personnel, spares, resources, and capabilities physically present and occupying space at a deployed location," 90.
3. Weaver and Cain, "Task Force Concepts of Operations," 51.
4. Tripp et al., *Supporting Expeditionary Aerospace Forces*.
5. Dzyubenko, "Coalition Seeks Use of Kyrgyz."
6. Trump, *National Security Strategy*, 8, 33.
7. JP 3-18, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations*, xii.
8. LeMay Center, "Annex 3-17, Air Mobility Operations," 3.
9. Ibid., 63.
10. Cirafici, *Airhead Operations*, xvi, 1. JP 3-17, *Air Mobility Operations*, defines *airhead* as "a designated area in a hostile or potentially hostile operational area that, when seized and held, ensures the continuous air landing of troops and materiel and provides the maneuver space necessary for projected operations. [It is] also called a lodgment area." A second definition is "a designated location in an operational area used as a base for supply and evacuation by air." Ibid., GL-6.
11. FM 3-99, *Airborne and Air Assault Operations*.

12. Bonham, "Airfield Seizure," 4.
13. Vick, *Snakes in the Eagle's Nest*, 2.
14. Ibid, 9.
15. Griess, *Second World War*, 29.
16. Middleton, "Soviet Display of Flexibility," A1, A13.
17. Adkin, *Urgent Fury*, 200–214.
18. McConnell, *Just Cause*, 73, 99.
19. Maj (now Brig Gen) Robert A. Armfield (director of operations, 24th Special Tactics Squadron, Pope AFB, NC), interview by the author, 1 December 2003.
20. Headquarters (HQ) AMC, briefing.
21. Bauer, "CSAF."
22. Wilkes et al., "Expeditionary Mobility Task Force."
23. Bowyer, "Consolidating AMC's Contingency Response," iii.
24. Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, The Sixth Book, chap. XVIII.
25. Haulman, *U.S. Army Air Forces*, 5.
26. Vick, *Snakes in the Eagle's Nest,* 11–12.
27. Ibid., 13.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Royal Air Force, "RAF Timeline 1942."
31. US aircraft discovered the Japanese fleet and sank four carriers, turning back the invasion force before it could land. RAND analyst David Shlapak has observed that this may be the most significant airfield attack in history. The resulting battle, and the destruction of the Japanese attack force, was a turning point in the war. Noted in Vick, *Snakes in the Eagle's Nest*, 13.
32. Ibid.; and Craven and Cate, *Army Air Forces in World War II*, 81.
33. "Operation Chromite," fact sheet.
34. Davis, "Combat Cargo Command," in *Air War over Korea*, 161.
35. Valliere, "Disaster at Desert One," 70.
36. Adkin, *Urgent Fury*, 200–214.
37. McConnell, *Just Cause*, 73, 99.
38. Ibid.
39. Bush, "Persian Gulf Crisis."
40. Rumsfeld, "21st Century Transformation."
41. JP 3-18, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations*, A-4.
42. Matsumura et al., *Lightning over Water*, 6.
43. JP 3-18, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations*, A-2, B-1–B-2, I-3, I-7, II-4, IV-5.
44. White, "Airborne Forces," 7.
45. JP 3-17, *Air Mobility Operations*, vii.
46. RAND, *Lightning over Water*, 6.
47. HQ AMC/A35, "Airbase Opening Operational Concept," 1.
48. Ibid., 2–3.
49. US Army, Center of Military History Publication 104-13, *Airborne Operations*, 1.
50. Hooker and Coglianese, "Operation Weserübung," 100–111.
51. Corum, "German Campaign in Norway," 50.
52. Weeks, *Assault from the Sky*, 18.

53. Knauss, "Der Feldzug im Norwegen 1940" ["The Campaign in Norway in 1940"], 8. General der Flieger Knauss was one of the senior planners for Norway who wrote a detailed memoir of the event.

54. Derry, *Campaign in Norway*, 18.

55. Weeks, *Assault from the Sky*, 19.

56. Shelton, *Joint Vision 2020*, 20.

57. Ottmer, "Das Unternehmen Weserübung" ["Weserübung Land Invasion"], translated by Corum, "German Campaign in Norway," 57. Hereafter page number cited refers to Corum.

58. Ibid., 58.

59. Mårtensson, "German Assault on Fornebu." Mårtensson's website notes that "the text relies heavily on the splendid Norwegian book *Fornebu 9.April* by Cato Guhnfeldt."

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Corum, "German Campaign in Norway," 60.

63. Shelton, *Joint Vision 2020*, 22.

64. LeMay Center, *Volume I, Basic Doctrine*, 4.

65. Knauss, "Der Feldzug im Norwegen 1940," 60.

66. US Army, *Airborne Operations*, 3.

67. Weeks, *Assault from the Sky*, 19.

68. US Army, *Airborne Operations*, 5.

69. Of note, airborne troops are organic to the Luftwaffe as opposed to Army ownership of airborne assets in the United States.

70. Corum, "German Campaign in Norway," 61.

71. According to the National Museum of the US Air Force,

> The Ju 52 trimotor was first built in the 1930s and remained in service for more than a quarter century. This transport made its maiden flight in April 1931, and three years later a heavy bomber version appeared. The latter aircraft formed the nucleus of the Luftwaffe's infant bomber force in the mid-1930s and was used during the Spanish Civil War.
>
> The Ju 52 was obsolete as a bomber by 1939, but because of its durability, simplicity of design, and handling characteristics, it continued to serve throughout WWII as a versatile workhorse of the German transport fleet. Ju 52s delivered the attacking forces and their supplies during the German invasions of Norway, Denmark, France, and the Low Countries in 1940. Almost 500 Ju 52s participated in the historic airborne assault on the island of Crete in May 1941, and Junkers later supplied Rommel's armored forces in North Africa.

72. Ibid. Comparison of Ju 52 capability with current-day C-17 capability:

Characteristic	*Ju 52*	*C-17*
Weight empty	12,610 lbs	277,000 lbs
Max takeoff	24,250 lbs	585,000 lbs
Speed	178 mph	517 mph
Ceiling (mean sea level [msl]	19,360 msl	45,000 msl
Range	810 miles w/ auxiliary tanks	unlimited w/ air refueling

National Museum of the US Air Force, "Junkers Ju 52"; and US Air Force, "C-17 Globemaster III."

73. Weeks, *Assault from the Sky*, 20.
74. Durr, "Luftnachrichten-Truppe" [Signals Troops], 76.
75. Corum, "German Campaign in Norway," 64.
76. Ottmer, "Das Unternehmen Weserübung," 49.
77. Oberbefehlshaber der Luftwaffe, Führungsstab 1.c. (Office of the Supreme Commander, Luftwaffe), "Einstaz der Fallschirm und Lufttransportverbande" ["Use of Parachute and Air Transport Associations"], in Corum, "German Campaign in Norway," 65.
78. Ottmer, "Das Unternehmen Weserübung," 96.
79. Ibid.
80. Corum, "German Campaign in Norway," 65.
81. Ibid.
82. Mårtensson, "German Assault on Fornebu," 1.
83. Ibid., 2.
84. Weeks, *Assault from the Sky*, 22.
85. For a full account of the airdrop and airland mission, see Mårtensson, "German Assault on Fornebu."
86. Vasco and Cornwell, *Zerstörer* [Destroyer]: 11–15.
87. Corum, "German Campaign in Norway," 66.
88. Ibid., 63.
89. Weeks, *Assault from the Sky*, 23.
90. General Speidel, ed., "Der Feldzug in Norwegen," in AFHRA file K113.305, 2, in Corum, "German Campaign in Norway."
91. Corum, "German Campaign in Norway," 71.
92. Gruppe XXI, Erfahrungsbericht (7 Oct 1940), in BA/MA 24-21/50, 4, in Corum, "German Campaign in Norway," 75.
93. Richardson, "Forcible Entry," 2.
94. Corum, "German Campaign in Norway," 74.
95. Blau, *German Campaigns in the Balkans*, pt. 1, "The Seizure of Crete."
96. Churchill, *Gathering Storm*, 648–49.
97. Simpkin with Erickson, *Deep Battle*, 40.
98. Allard, "Soviet Airborne Forces, 42.
99. Ibid., 43.
100. Ibid.
101. Heiman, "Soviet Invasion Weaknesses," 39.
102. Aspaturian, Dallin, and Valenta, *Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan*, 1.
103. Middleton, "Soviet Display of Flexibility," A1.
104. Ibid.
105. Public Broadcasting Service, "Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan."
106. Russian General Staff, *Soviet-Afghan War*, 12–13.
107. Spetznaz Soviet military units are roughly comparable to US special forces.
108. Grau, "Artillery and Counterinsurgency," 36–41.
109. Luttwak, Block, and Carus, *Grand Strategy of the Soviet Union*, 6.
110. Central Intelligence Agency, interagency intelligence memorandum, 7.

111. Aspaturian, Dallin, and Valenta, *Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan*, 18, 21, quoting *National Intelligence Daily*, 7 September 1979.

112. Ibid., 23–24, 29, 47.

113. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union*, 176. Bradsher is referring to the flights into Afghanistan beginning on 29 November 1979, although he describes them as going into Bagram. He may have drawn this conclusion, quite logically, from the fact that newly arrived Soviet units were discovered at Bagram a few days later, indicating that some flights had indeed gone there. But there is no question that there also were flights into Kabul. Defense attachés at the US Embassy saw the aircraft there.

114. Ibid.

115. The fact that the embassy reported these sightings is described in Bradsher's book (ibid.). Bradsher notes that this was reported in the *Washington Star* on 13 December 1979, A10.

116. Aspaturian, Dallin, and Valenta, *Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan*, 29, 33.

117. Russian General Staff, *Soviet-Afghan War*, 17.

118. A BMP is an amphibious infantry combat vehicle.

119. Russian General Staff, *Soviet-Afghan War,* 17.

120. Ibid.

121. Ibid., 197.

122. Ibid.

123. Ibid., 198.

124. Ibid.

125. Nelson, "Soviet Air Power."

126. Grau, "Artillery and Counterinsurgency."

127. Arnold, *Afghanistan*, 94.

128. The presidential palace was guarded by Afghan troops and "the Muslim Battalion"—a Soviet Spetsnaz battalion of central Asian soldiers in DRA uniforms. When the paratroops arrived, the Spetsnaz and airborne forces accidentally became engaged in a firefight that killed half a battalion of Soviets. Russian General Staff, *Soviet-Afghan War*, 339.

129. Ibid., 199.

130. Aspaturian, Dallin, and Valenta, *Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan*, 16.

131. Ibid.

132. Baumann, "Compound War Case Study," 288–89.

133. Noorani, "Afghanistan and the Rule of Law," 43.

134. Allard, "Soviet Airborne Forces," 46.

135. Bodansky, "Bear on the Chessboard," 291.

136. Ibid.

137. Ibid., 280.

138. Girardet, *Afghanistan*, 17.

139. In a replay of 1841, the British managed to have their Kabul garrison annihilated. By 1881 the British had had enough; despite the victorious slaughter at the Battle of Maiwand in July 1880, they left. The British gained some territory and retained a little influence. *Encyclopedia: The Free Dictionary*, s.v. "European Influence in Afghanistan," accessed 23 February 2016, http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Dost%20Mohammad%20and%20the%20British%20in%20Afghanistan.

140. JP 3-18, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations*, I-8.
141. Collins, *Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan*, 81.
142. Bodansky, "Bear on the Chessboard," 282–83.
143. Nawroz and Grau, "Soviet War in Afghanistan?"
144. Lyons, McDuffie, and Webb, "Soviet Campaign in Afghanistan," 11.
145. Belmont, "USAAF Airfields in the ETO."
146. Kelly, *From a Dark Sky*, 23.
147. Levine, *Pacific War*, 124.
148. Haulman, *U.S. Army Air Forces*, 17.
149. Levine, *Pacific War*, 150.
150. Haulman, *U.S. Army Air Forces*, 17.
151. Ibid.
152. Ibid.
153. Ibid.
154. JP 3-18, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations*, vii–viii.
155. Lee, "Third Persian Gulf War."
156. Perry et al., *Operation IRAQI FREEDOM*, 5.
157. "Operation Iraqi Freedom—March 26."
158. "Operation Iraqi Freedom—April 4."
159. Ibid.
160. Schuldheiss, briefing, subject: Airfield Planning and Coordination.
161. Ibid.
162. Ibid. General Leaf was the JFACC's representative to the land component commander. He worked with the coalition forces' air component commander to develop the air and space strategy and coordinated CAS missions with the Army. General Leaf acted as the coordinating authority between the land and air commanders.
163. The CRG operational concept suggested that this O-6 (colonel) be a rated officer, which would require him/her to be a pilot or navigator. HQ AMC/A3A, "Contingency Response Group Operational Concept."
164. Tomczak et al., briefing, subject: Global Mobility CONOPS in Action.
165. Ibid.
166. Ibid.
167. Stoltz and Dobbins, briefing.
168. Cichowski, Perraut, and Self, briefing, subject: AMC's Transformation, 4.
169. Briefing, subject: Air Base Opening—Lessons Learned.
170. Ibid.
171. Cichowski, Perraut, and Self, briefing, subject: AMC's Transformation.
172. Briefing, subject: Air Base Opening—Lessons Learned.
173. Cichowski, Perraut, and Self, briefing, subject: AMC's Transformation.
174. Briefing, subject: Air Base Opening—Lessons Learned.
175. Ibid.
176. Stoltz and Dobbins, briefing.
177. Murray and Scales, *Iraq War*, 193–94.
178. US Central Air Forces (CENTAF), "Operation Iraqi Freedom," 15.
179. Ibid.
180. Stoltz and Dobbins, briefing.
181. Ulmer, "Airmen Jump In."

182. Arana-Barradas, "Bashur or Bust," 31–32.
183. Ibid., 32.
184. Ibid.
185. Murray and Scales, *Iraq War*, 193–94.
186. Ulmer, "Airmen Jump In."
187. Allardice, briefing.
188. Bauer, "Commander Recounts Historic C-17 Airdrop."
189. Murray and Scales, *Iraq War*, 193–94.
190. Arana-Barradas, "Bashur or Bust," 35.
191. Lowe, "Group Reflects on OIF Mission."
192. Ibid.
193. Cichowski, Perraut, and Self, briefing, subject: AMC's Transformation.
194. Lt Col Kevin Kreps (chief, Mobile Command and Control Branch, Headquarters (HQ) AMC, Scott AFB, IL), telecon with the author, 15 April 2004.
195. Gen John P. Jumper (CSAF), interview by the author, Atlanta, GA, 19 April 2004.
196. Quoted in Bauer, "CSAF."
197. Ibid.
198. Air Staff/XOOS, "USAF Ground Warriors," 2.
199. HQ AMC/A3A, "Contingency Response Group Operational Concept," 3.
200. Public Broadcasting Service, "Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan."
201. HQ AMC/A3A, "Contingency Response Group Operational Concept," 4.
202. Bowyer, "Consolidating AMC's Contingency Response," iii.
203. The 820th Base Defense Group provides force protection and contingency response for expeditionary air forces. The unit specializes in bare-base, semi-/non-permissive, airland-denied scenarios.
204. HQ AMC/A3A, "Contingency Response Group Operational Concept," 5.
205. Ibid.
206. A 7-level NCO is a craftsman, a professional whose work is consistently of high quality and who is technically proficient and trained to perform duties in a chosen career field. Civilian craftsman are highly skilled technicians whether they are workers performing hands-on tasks such as plumbing, road construction, or building construction; IT professionals maintaining computer networks; or human resource (HR) managers running an HR division in a medium-sized company of 200 to 1,000 employees. White to DeMarco, e-mail.
207. HQ AMC, briefing, subject: AMC Global Assessment Team.
208. Ibid.
209. Kennedy, "Jumper Eyeing New Unit."
210. Ibid.
211. Ibid.
212. Ibid.
213. Jumper, "Rapidly Deploying Aerospace Power," 10.
214. Volcheff and DeCuir, briefing, subject: Air Base Opening.
215. Air Force Instruction (AFI) 10-209, *Red Horse Program*, 10.
216. AFI 13-217, *Space, Missile, Command, and Control*, 46.
217. ShadowSpear Special Operations, "Combat Control Team."
218. A CCT history notes that AFSOC "was established [in 1990] at Hurlburt Field as the Air Force component of US Special Operations Command. In 1992 the

USAF reorganized, and combat control forces were split among seven separate commands creating severe challenges. Training, tactics and equipment began to vary widely. Manning suffered, with seven separate staff functions draining experienced controllers from the field. In 1996 all operational combat controllers were realigned under AFSOC." "If You Ain't First . . . You're Last," Facebook.

219. Callander, "Controllers," 52–56.

220. 720th Special Tactics Group, "First There."

221. The 82 ABN DIV mission is to "within 18 hours of notification, strategically deploy, conduct forcible entry parachute assault and secure key objectives for follow-on military operations in support of U.S. national interests." US Army, Fort Bragg, "82nd Airborne Division." Also a rapidly deployable force, the 75th Ranger Regiment "plan[s] and conduct[s] special missions in support of U.S. policy and objectives," with a primary mission "to conduct large-scale joint forcible entry operations . . . across the globe." "Army Rangers," Military.com; and US Army, "75th Ranger Regiment."

222. Jumper, interview.

223. HQ AMC/DOX, "Air Force Operational Concept," 10.

224. Air Staff/XOO, "Airfield Seizure to Airfield Opening," 3–4.

225. Air Staff/XOOS, "USAF Ground Warriors," 2.

226. HQ AMC/DOX, "Air Force Operational Concept," 7–8.

227. Ibid.

228. Volcheff and DeCuir, briefing, subject: Air Base Opening.

229. Ibid.

230. JP 0-2, *Unified Action Armed Forces*, III-8–III-10.

231. Ibid., II-15; and Detwiler, Bullet Background Paper.

232. Volcheff and DeCuir, briefing, subject: Air Base Opening.

233. JP 3-18, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations*, IV-7.

234. JP 3-17, *Air Mobility Operations*.

235. HQ AMC/A3CCE, "Base Opening," 1.

236. Volcheff and DeCuir, briefing, subject: Air Base Opening.

237. Cook, "USAF After Action Report for CSAF."

238. Jumper, "Rapidly Deploying Aerospace Power," 4–10.

239. Bush, "435th AGOW [Air Ground Operations Wing] Deploys Team."

240. Ibid.

241. There is some debate as to when or if ACC will have the organic ability to open air bases; the 820 SFG can provide security forces to enhance the "open the base." HQ AMC/A3A, "Contingency Response Group Operational Concept," 3; Brig Gen Kip Self (AMC/A3, HQ AMC, Scott AFB, IL), interview by the author, 30 January 2004; and Maj Ted Detwiler, interview by the author, 10 January 2004.

242. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 5th ed., s.v. "forerunner,"* https://ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=forerunner.

243. Lenderman, *Rise of Air Mobility*, 51.

244. Schanz, "Eagle Flag," 69.

245. Ibid., 15.

246. "Large Package Week," *GlobalSecurity.org*. LPW is a "joint Army and Air Force preparation exercise for the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, NC. The exercise culminates the 82nd Airborne's intensive training cycle, which prepares one brigade, designated the division-ready brigade, to go on 24-hour standby for deploy-

ment." LPW is "held several times a year to practice large-scale airdrop missions for personnel and equipment" and is "designed to build cohesiveness between the 82nd Airborne and Air Mobility Command units." Ibid.

247. HQ AMC/A3A, "Contingency Response Group Operational Concept," 14.

248. Sending a service member to the Basic Airborne Course at the US Army Airborne School requires paying only travel and per diem costs (per discussion with Mr. Steve Crumley [Training and Integration Branch, XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, NC], 2004). Recurring training costs should be minimal as AMC owns all assets that participate in LPW, National Training Center, Joint Readiness Training Center, and other airborne training events. LPW alone trains thousands of jumpers at a rate of one week every 90 days; AMC would require just 16–20 of those training slots. Thus, an increased strategic capability would come at a small price. Basic jump currency requires one jump every 90 days.

249. Along with the Luftwaffe in Norway and Soviets in Afghanistan, airborne insertion was planned but not utilized.

250. Bauer, "CSAF."

251. Cook, "After Action Report."

252. General McDuffie stated that

> the report out of Kukas, which is the tough area there in Albania, was that we had about ten days of food. . . . When people come across the border, they usually are eating something and clothed. The one issue that we're working on right now is the health issue. The initial refugees as they came across were actually pretty healthy. But if you remember, they weren't moving too far because they were in the southern part of Kosovo. Now, the refugees that are starting to come across the border have come from quite a ways. And we're starting to see a little bit more of a deterioration in health. (DOD, News Brief, 2 April 1999)

253. HQ AMC/A3A, "Contingency Response Group Operational Concept," 8.

254. Bennendij et al., *Strategic Assessment 1999*, xvii.

255. Shlapak et al., *Global Access Strategy*, xiv–xv.

256. Bush, *National Security Strategy*, 29.

257. Tirpak and Herbert, "Battlefield Airmen," 26–32.

258. Ibid., 28.

259. Volcheff and DeCuir, briefing, subject: Airbase Opening.

260. Bowyer, "Consolidating AMC's Contingency Response," 18.

261. Greeley, "Wave of Change," 40–43.

262. Cook, "After Action Report."

263. Ibid.

264. Lunsford, "Bird-Size Spy Planes."

265. Jumper, interview.

266. Knight to DeMarco, e-mail. *See also* Clements, "AMC Pushes Boundaries."

267. Clements, "AMC Pushes Boundaries."

268. Phoenix Ravens are specially trained security force teams that travel with AMC aircrews and protect the aircraft while the crew is in crew rest. These teams are used when an AMC asset is forced to remain overnight at a field where security is in question.

269. Wear of the beret in the Air Force began in 1979, when

> enlisted personnel in the TACP AFSC were authorized to wear the black beret. In 1984, two Airmen from Pope Air Force Base . . . submitted a design for the flash and crest design, which was approved for all TACP Airmen in 1985. Air liaison officers (ALO) were also authorized to wear the black beret after they graduated from the Joint Firepower Control Course . . . at Nellis AFB, Nevada. Instead of the crest, they wear their rank insignia on the beret. Air mobility liaison officers (AMLO) were authorized to wear the black beret in the Air Force as well.

In addition to the black beret worn by the TACP/ALOs/AMLOs, colored berets in the Air Force are worn in the pararescue, combat controller, security forces, and combat weather AFSCs. Powers, "Beret."

270. HQ AMC/A3A, "Contingency Group Operational Concept," 12.