

Keeping the Organizational Engine in Tune

Professionalism, competition, efficiency of management—
these are the basic advantages stemming from our
triservice approach to national security . . .

NOT long after V-J Day, General Tooey Spaatz surveyed the shambles of the once-great World War II Air Forces. At peak strength they had numbered the equivalent of 243 wings. A few months later, this great fighting force which had contributed so much to our victories both in Europe and the Pacific had been demobilized into near impotence and General Spaatz was warning that he could no longer muster a single fully effective squadron.

Many concerned Americans—of whom a considerable number are in this audience today—recognized that the helter-skelter dismantling of our newly forged airpower was becoming a tragic repetition of the events which followed the first World War.

They decided to wake up the American people. They were determined to alert the nation to the danger of abandoning the great new weapon of war which we had built and which had won such great victories in the skies over Europe, Africa, and the Pacific. They banded together and became the Air Force Association. And they did the job! I'm proud of every one of you who took part in the good fight, and I'm proud that I had an opportunity to participate in it.

In high station or in low, in uniform or civvies, whatever our rank or position, we entered the battle with fervor and with facts. We explained, again and again, to the Congress and to all who would listen, the compelling lessons of World War II. Our basic "text book" was the *U. S. Strategic Bombing Survey*. You will recall that this impartial group of experts appointed by President Roosevelt had concluded that: "Even a first-class military power . . . cannot live under full-scale and free exploitation of air weapons over the heart of its territory."

Our collective efforts met with a good measure of success. The National Security Act which created

a separate Air Force became law in 1947, significantly, the same year that the Air Force Association held its first annual Convention.

Today, as we start our eighteenth year, the march of technology has changed a lot of things. But, in some important respects, it's still the same world. And most significantly, we are still confronted with the threat of Communist aggression.

Since 1947, we have successfully met repeated Communist challenges all along the periphery of the Sino-Soviet borders and elsewhere throughout the world. Our success is the result of the tangible and intangible values of a free society; the support of our allies, our great scientific, economic, and industrial strength; and American determination to oppose any dogma which robs men of their freedom. Behind all of these has been the great, responsive military strength of the United States.

Military power is more than just men and machines, as you all know. Military men and the machines of war represent *potential* power. *Actual* military power is determined by the efficiency with which this potential is organized and controlled. The effectiveness of military organization in turn depends on many things. Important among these is a carefully calculated balance between centralization and decentralization of authority and functions.

Now, in what areas and to what extent should our defense structure be centralized in order to get the best defense at the lowest cost? These are always issues as we strive for the most efficient use of our resources. I want to examine these questions and draw some conclusions as to whether separate Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force are necessary today and in the future.

The question of better defense at lower cost also has been raised among some of our closest friends

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SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE



and allies who have moved in the direction of more centralization in their defense structures. Only last spring, the British reorganized their armed forces along lines very similar to those we have followed. The Canadians have recently established a single Commander in Chief for Army, Navy, and Air Force. We shall watch closely and profit by their experience, keeping in mind the substantial differences in size and global responsibilities between their armed forces and ours.

All of you are familiar with organization problems. You all know that there is no perfect organization. The only perfect one is the one you don't have. And what looks good in theory doesn't always work out in real life. The purists in organization sometimes want to carry their work to extremes which appear logical on paper but which in practice may lose more than is gained.

A good crew chief will tell you that you can tune an engine too fine. We have to beware of that. But we do have to keep the organizational engine in tune with military technology, national strategy, tactics, force levels, and doctrine. Since these things change, organization is always a new problem, and always one which is worth thinking about.

In any analysis of the defense organization best suited to our requirement, three facts seem to me fundamental:

First, there is no indication that the weapons we now have or those which can be foreseen will destroy the identity of any of the three general categories of warfare—land, sea, and aerospace.

Second, it is almost impossible to conceive of substantial military action carried out by one service alone. Any war of the future will be a joint action. Hence, we must deter or fight war jointly, as a thoroughly coordinated action, with all the forces—

aerospace, land, and sea—acting under unified control.

Third, many of the weapons of war will continue to increase in complexity, sophistication, and cost. The proper allocation of defense resources will remain a central problem.

These facts have been recognized by the National Security Act of 1947 as amended in 1949, 1953, and 1958. Today, we have a single Department of Defense presided over by Secretary McNamara who has made major contributions to our defense effort. He has increased efficiency through organizational, administrative, and procedural changes. All of us who work for him—at every level—have been forced to examine a great many premises which had come to be taken for granted. This kind of analysis frequently is uncomfortable, but it has had a salutary effect. Above all, the Secretary has made decisions. We don't always like them, but without decisions there can be no improvement—no progress. Decisions which please all of the people all of the time are not likely to solve very many substantive problems.

Under the Secretary are his principal advisers—the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Service Secretaries. Planning of strategy and force levels has been centralized within the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Many of the aspects of defense budgeting are centralized in the Secretary's office. Our combat commands are organized on a joint or unified basis reporting to the Secretary of Defense through the JCS and with a single commander in the field controlling aerospace, land, and sea elements.

The authority of the three military departments has been diminished during the last seventeen years. There is no doubt about that. Their functions have changed. To take the Air Force as an example, General LeMay—when he wears his Chief of Staff hat—does

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not command any combat forces. I am not responsible for the combat operations of Air Force units. As we function today, a principal job of the Air Force—and of the other services as well—is to *create* combat-ready forces for use by the unified commanders in the field. That's an important job. Without it, nothing goes. And it's still a big job. For the Air Force, it's a \$20-billion-a-year job. There's plenty of room in it for creativeness, independent thinking, and autonomous functions—not only in the operational field but also in logistics and research and development.

The pattern of organization which I have described in very broad outline is working well. I doubt that any future Congress or Secretary of Defense or Service Secretary or Chief of Staff would want to go back to the pre-1947 methods of doing business. A loose confederation of forces such as we had seventeen years ago simply is not adapted to the defense needs of this nation.

Since centralization has been successful in the areas of planning, budgeting, and operational command, should we go all the way to a single service? The answer is clear to me—an emphatic “No.” We have achieved the objectives of centralized planning and operational control—we have achieved a balance of forces appropriate to the threat—without destroying the identities of the three services.

There are many valid reasons for *continuing* to maintain separate Departments of Army, Navy, and Air Force. Of these reasons, four stand out as paramount:

- First, the constantly increasing need for military professionalism;
- Second, the values of competition and a system of checks and balances in a free society;
- Third, efficiency of management; and
- Fourth, the intangible but real value of *esprit de corps*.

Let's look first at the question of professionalism. There was a time—and not too long ago at that—when a soldier could move from infantry to artillery to cavalry or even to aviation with a minimum of training. In our own day, an airman could transfer from pursuit to observation to bombardment quite readily. The machines of war were relatively simple, peacetime forces were small, and wide oceans provided time for mobilization in the event of an emergency.

Now, all that has changed. We have to maintain large and instantly ready combat forces which can be moved swiftly to any trouble spot on the globe and which can meet an attack against this country with no more than a few minutes' warning. This requirement applies not only to our Regular units, but increasingly to those of the Reserve and National Guard. In the aerospace operations for which the Guard and Reserves are responsible, we expect—and get—a level of professionalism comparable to that of our Regulars.

Professionalism also has been affected by our weapon systems which are fantastically complicated—the stuff of which science fiction was made twenty-five years ago. You have seen some of these systems or compo-

nents to them on display here at AFA's Convention.

These weapons are the result of a great many years of specialized thinking and experience. They have been designed and developed under Air Force guidance to meet the needs of a particular type of warfare—warfare in the aerospace medium. The requirements for these weapons were established by professional airmen. The doctrine under which they may be used is a product of long study and experience in conducting independent air action and in providing to the other services the aerospace support which is indispensable to their operations. It has been tested on peaceful proving grounds and in battle, restudied, refined, and perfected.

The Army, the Navy, and the Marines also apply their professional knowledge and experience to producing weapons, doctrine, and combat-ready troops trained to operate in their respective media and to support the other services. All of us, together, funnel our specialized products—our ready elements of a joint fighting team—to the unified commander in the field as essential parts of his coordinated effort.

The professionals produced by the services are just as essential at the level of the Joint Staff and Department of Defense Staff as they are in the field. Their expert advice is indispensable in planning strategy, forces, and weapons requirements.

To sum it up, military professionals, military equipment, military doctrine, and their ultimate expression—effective military forces—must be developed for each of these media of warfare—*aerospace, land, and sea*. This is the job of the military departments. If we did not have them, we would have to invent a substitute for this purpose.

Military professionalism in *aerospace, land, and sea warfare* must be pulled together into integrated combat teams by the unified commanders. Professional military experience in each of the three media must be brought into focus at the top level of planning by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. Today, we are organized to meet these requirements.

Now, it's obvious that the Air Force people who serve at the Department of Defense level, on the Joint Staff, the staffs of the unified commanders and in the Joint Agencies—such as the Defense Supply, Defense Intelligence, and Defense Communications Agencies—need more than a professional knowledge of the Air Force. They also must have a broad understanding of how the other services function. This understanding is created in our professional schools, through exchange assignments and in day-to-day working relations with officers of our sister services.

Providing Air Force personnel for joint positions creates some tough personnel problems. First, we must send to the joint staffs and agencies only top-flight Air Force professionals. This sometimes is hard to do because we need their talents in our own organization, but it's essential if joint planning and operations are to be effective. Next, we have to maintain in the Air Force enough of the functions of the Joint Agencies—Intelligence, for example—to



Fritz M. Awe, right, Arctic construction specialist from Alaskan Air Command, receives Citation of Honor from AFA President W. Randolph Lovelace, II, as one of three outstanding USAF Civil Service employees.



Weldon Worth, propulsion specialist at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, who shares top civilian employee honors with Dr. Blanch and Mr. Awe, accepts AFA Citation from Dr. Lovelace.



MSgt. Ewing E. Bodine of 3d Mobile Communications Group, Tinker AFB, Okla., was cited for skill in supervising complex air-traffic control procedures during huge Exercise Swift Strike III.



Dr. Gertrude Blanch, senior scientist in applied mathematics lab at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, whose civil service rating is equivalent to major general, receives citation as one of top USAF civilians.



MSgt. Calvin M. Chappell of Air Force Flight Test Center, Edwards AFB, Calif., won AFA Citation of Honor for work on flight-simulation equipment employed in aerospace research.



Rev. Edward A. Conway, S. J., Director of Center for Peace Research, Creighton University, Omaha, Neb., was honored for two decades of leadership in the field of arms control and disarmament.

assure that we send qualified Air Force people to these agencies. Finally, we have to remember that our people are Air Force professionals with Air Force careers to which they will return with the advantage of joint experience when their tours of duty in joint activities are completed.

The military departments have lost some measure of authority since 1947 but, as I suggested earlier, their critical task of producing ready forces for the unified commanders has in fact gained in importance. Creating the professionals, the weapons components of the team, and the doctrine which governs the use of these weapons is the key to military effectiveness in this age of advanced technology. It is a fixed point in the defense constellation.

While the degree of direction exercised by the Department of Defense may ebb or flow, depending on who heads the Department, the need for specialized military professionalism remains constant from the bottom to the top of the defense structure. The professionalism of the three services is the balance

wheel which provides a steady drive forward to a constantly higher level of combat effectiveness.

Competition—the second reason for the existence of three services—has been the lifeblood of America. Wherever competition has been stifled, it generally has followed that the rate of progress declined. In the military profession, competition engenders new ideas and forces us all to examine critically the old and accepted ways of doing things. We would not suggest that Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors be merged into a noncompetitive giant in order to produce a better and cheaper automobile. It is just as unlikely that the merger of three military services into a single service would produce better military thought and performance.

There is only one qualification here. Competition must be controlled so that it creates positive contributions to the nation's defense. I believe there are adequate controls on interservice competition which can be exercised by the Department of Defense if

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necessary. Another highly effective control lies in the belief shared by all our military professionals that service to the nation transcends personal considerations or the individual interests of any one military service.

Our competitive triservice organizational pattern also provides an effective system of checks and balances which is in keeping with the American concept of limiting the power of government, of any agency of government, or of any individual in government. The specialized professionalism which is created in each of the services assures that a full range of alternatives and new ideas will be examined before major decisions are taken. This is particularly important in those areas where deliberation is essential—in the conception of strategy, planning for contingencies, and constructing force and weapons programs.

Sometimes—less frequently than in the past—our triservice organization has been criticized for generating “interservice bickering.” We should remind ourselves that what is called “bickering” among the services is referred to as “discussion” on university campuses, “debate” in Congress, and “deliberation” in the Supreme Court. The great issues of defense must be discussed, debated, and deliberated in the broad context of land, sea, and aerospace warfare if sound decisions are to be reached.

The third reason for retaining three services is efficiency of management.

The business community has found that sophisticated communications and data processing have made possible a broadening of the span of control in many types of large-scale activity. In the military field, however, this potential for controlling an ever-larger array of activities is offset to some extent by the growing complexity of military equipment and operations. There certainly is a point of diminishing returns which we have to keep an eye on.

The personnel strength of our armed forces is 2,600,000 people in uniform and somewhat more than one million civilians. It is by far the largest organization in the country, exceeding General Motors by a factor of five. Yet General Motors, like most very large corporations, has found it desirable to organize semi-autonomous—even competitive—divisions for effective management and greater profit. Military administration, training, logistic support, and research and development can be managed most effectively on the basis of three military departments, each of which is relatively homogeneous in terms of the type of warfare on which it focuses. We should not disturb this arrangement.

Finally, there is the intangible element of *esprit de corps*. All of you here today recognize its value. You know that throughout history the majority of men have functioned most effectively as members of an identifiable group. This is particularly true of the military profession in which certain values are held superior to life itself. The spirit of unity—of brotherhood—is enhanced by tradition, pride in one's organization, and by a distinctive uniform which is a mark of membership.

The value of *esprit* cannot be measured with precision. No price tag can be placed on it, yet we all recognize its intrinsic contribution in the quality of our armed forces. It is the heart of the true fighting force.

Let's take an example which this group will remember well. A little over twenty years ago, the men of the Eighth Air Force in England were ordered to destroy two targets—Schweinfurt and Regensburg—deep in the enemy's industrial complex and vital to his war effort. If a robot had calculated the odds, it might very well have predicted that this mission was impossible to accomplish. But a robot does not comprehend *esprit*.

So we turned the problem over to a highly motivated group of airmen who knew the great dangers to be faced, but also were aware of the key importance of the mission. That job, and many other tough ones like it, was tackled. The cost was very high, but the job was done.

Now, let me give you an example of the day-to-day value of *esprit*. Our Strategic Air Command is the most complex, sophisticated military organization known to history. You all know how SAC operates—on constant alert and with its forces widely dispersed. Its weapon systems are the most complicated in our Air Force inventory.

The SAC operation depends on a guaranteed and rapid supply of fuel, spares, parts, and all the items which keep it combat ready. It gets guaranteed and rapid logistic support. The people who operate and maintain SAC's weapons and the people of the Logistics Command who supply them are all in the same uniform. They speak the same language, they have a common understanding of the problems of aerospace operations, and they share a determination to keep SAC's combat edge razor-sharp. They are part of a team and their working relations are quite different from the impersonal relations that might exist between loosely related organizations which worked for different bosses.

We should not tamper with that precious *esprit de corps*, that sense of identification, by immersing it in the vast agglomeration of a single service.

Our present organizational structure centralizes over-all planning, budgeting, and operational control within the Office of the Secretary of Defense. It decentralizes the development and support of combat forces and doctrine along environmental lines. This careful weaving of functional unification and environmental division permits both to be effectively exploited.

That which is wise, natural, and efficient is not likely to disappear in the continuing process of evolving the best possible defense organization. The three separate military departments of Army, Navy (with its Marine Corps), and Air Force make an indispensable contribution to the defense of this nation and will continue to do so. I predict that they are here to stay. I'm confident that, when you meet in 1974, a Secretary of the Air Force will be with you as an enthusiastic supporter of the Air Force Association.—END