



Mountain near Kabul, Afghanistan  
(U.S. Air Force/Michael O'Connor)

# Forging a 21<sup>st</sup>-century Military Strategy

## Leveraging Challenges

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As the United States comes to terms with the past decade and faces the future, what will its military strategy be? The answer is not likely to come in briefing slides but rather in shaping both concrete steps forward and responses to new and ongoing crises. Although it will be nationally based, any U.S. military strategy will be dependent on what allies and adversaries do. It will not be forged in a vacuum; instead, it will be highly interactive with the shaping of new operational concepts and approaches.

When the United States deals with a massive challenge such as shaping a strategy for the vast Pacific, and at the same time has limited assets, it is impossible to imagine a strategy that does not build from allies back to the United States and

from the United States back to allies. Critics who point out the shortfalls of U.S. forces often forget that platforms do not fight alone and that the United States will not fight alone in the Pacific. There is always the *reactive enemy*. The term often refers to an asymmetric enemy or strategy. But strategy is usually asymmetric as one seeks to enhance one's advantage to the disadvantage of the other. This occurs the other way as well. America and its allies can shape capabilities that severely disadvantage adversaries.

With financial pressures has come a new pessimism that seeks to confront mainly problems that can be solved using yesterday's force structure. But with the force being remade by technologies that will ripen in the next decade, there are significant possibilities for innovation and reshaping the force. The decade ahead is assuredly not the decade behind. Most notably, it will not be a decade of the type of land wars we have just seen, which are ending without enthusiastic chants of victory. To provide a sense of how U.S. strategy might be shaped, we address four current operational dynamics that could be leveraged to shape the future. These dynamics cross the spectrum of conflict.

The first case is the Afghan transition. We examine an aspect of the transition—the airpower transition—to see how it might be exploited to shape a residual leave-behind capability that will be important to the United States and that could shape a global model for other situations. The second case expands the understanding of the key role of expeditionary logistics in shaping an insertion force that could operate rapidly but also transition effectively. The French operation in Mali is a key expression of this new approach—how landpower could operate in the context of a joint and coalition force structure. The third case examines the emergence of distributed military operations in the Pacific led by the U.S. Marine Corps–U.S. Navy team. Here the maritime force is driving an innovation approach to the challenges. “Jointness” is a quality of 21<sup>st</sup>-century operations, but for innovation to occur there needs to be a lead force whose core competencies can shape the way

ahead for the joint and coalition force. The fourth case examines the challenge of deterring North Korea in the second nuclear age. At the heart of this challenge is enhancing the credibility of American and allied forces facing North Korea. How might reform of the U.S. presence in South Korea be part of a broader redesign of deterrent strategy? Here, the Air Force drives the kind of innovation necessary and leads the way in reshaping the force structure to deal with the threats of the second nuclear age.

### Case 1: Counterinsurgency Air Forces in Shaping Partnership Possibilities

In the debate over the acquisition of the light-attack aircraft for Afghan forces, a key opportunity to shape a 21<sup>st</sup>-century option may be missed. A light-attack aircraft such as the Embraer Air Super Tucano, when combined with several other rugged air assets capable of being maintained in a variety of partner nations, could not only form a core capability crucial to the defense of the partnership nation, but also provide a solid baseline capability for a long-term working relationship with the United States or its allies.

The value of a counterinsurgency (COIN) aircraft versus a more advanced fighter can be lost when the issue is 21<sup>st</sup>-century higher end warfare. A rugged aircraft such as the Super Tucano can operate for longer periods at considerably less cost than advanced fighters. It can be configured with command and control (C2) and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities and links and can dialogue with forces on the ground.

Colonel Bill Buckey, USMC (Ret.), the deputy commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Airbase at Kandahar in 2009, explains:

*One of the things that the special operations forces, who started the idea of the whole Imminent Fury piece, wanted was the ability to have a partner in that light attack platform; a TAC-A [tactical air commander–airborne] or supporting arms coordinator that would be above them in*

*the air and who, if things got ugly, could then marshal in other aircraft. The guys sitting at Creech [Air Force Base, Nevada] can't do that. . . . The individual in the backseat of the aircraft is the one that's going to be communicating to these jets who are still 30 minutes away—15 minutes away, an hour away—and giving them the target brief and the whole situational awareness piece of what's going on while they ingress, which is something that your guy at Creech is not going to be able to do. . . . But now that's the tactical piece. The operational piece is back to the whole COIN environment. Again, [perhaps what] you're trying to do in a COIN environment is drive your cost of doing business down as close as you can to the level of the other guy; right now, UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles] ain't cheap. . . . You've got a tremendous logistics piece; you've got the sophisticated communications infrastructure required to fly them. You've got the whole piece back in [the continental United States] in order to operate them. Your cost of doing business is huge and you also have reliability issues. The accident rates are not great with UAVs right now. . . . And in terms of that ability to act as FAC-A [forward air controller–airborne], that's something that you just can't get with a UAV.<sup>1</sup>*

Even though the acquisition of such aircraft for U.S. forces is not on the table, their use by partners is already prevalent in many parts of the world. Partnerships with allies flying such aircraft provide interesting possibilities. This is not just an abstraction but has been demonstrated by 12<sup>th</sup> U.S. Air Force working with the Dominican Republic air force. The 12<sup>th</sup> provides ISR support to other nations' combat air capabilities. U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) and the Dominican Republic air force have combined—with USSOUTHCOM providing an ISR input and the Dominican Republic flying the Super Tucano—the same planes that will be used by the Afghans. This remarkable and replicable success is made possible by U.S. “hi” ISR technology in partnership with the Dominican Republic “lo” technology, the Super Tucano.



Global Hawk UAV returns after supporting War on Terror (U.S. Air Force/Chad Bellay)

The opportunity to further evolve such a model of cooperation is being forged in the period of transition in Afghanistan. The Air Force, NATO, and other allies have been working for many years to shape an unheralded airpower transition. The core idea has been to provide the Afghans with an integrated air force that can provide for their needs and be robust and easy to maintain, and then partner with this air force. That would allow the United States and its allies to leave a force behind that could provide mobile ground forces supported by correlated ground assets. This sound Western force package would then be able to work effectively with the core Afghan air force as well. A real transition could be forged, one still able to engage in effective combat against the Taliban.

The broad trajectory of change for the Afghan air force has been to move from a Russian-equipped force in disrepair to shaping a mixed fleet of aircraft able to support the various missions that the Afghans need: transport, ground support, counterinsurgency, inverse synthetic aperture radar (ISAR), and strike. The

core fleet of aging Mi-35s and AN-32s will be replaced by a mixed fleet, along with capabilities to replace the battlefield lift provided by the Chinook heavy-lift helicopter.

Shaping the right fleet is crucial to shaping an effective training mission. Putting a reliable and rugged and easily maintainable lift aircraft with the Super Tucano and the Mi-17 fleet along with Cessna trainers is the core force for the Afghan air force going forward. Interviews with American and French military operators in Afghanistan have hit hard on a key theme: airpower is central to today's operations, and there is a clear need to arm the Afghan allies with a functional capability along the same lines. The Afghan military population has come to appreciate air support as a key element of future success and security (in particular, a Medevac ability being part of any operation). As Major General Glenn Walters, USMC, commented when he returned from Afghanistan:

*Our role will be to support the Afghan security forces. You're going to have to*

*support those guys, and they're going to be much more distributed. You're not going to have the battalions out there that you support people on the FABs [forward air bases] have. It's going to have to be from a central location. And the QRF [quick reaction force] is going to have to be good, and it's going to have to be there quickly. In the end, we have to be able to prove to the Afghan security forces that if something happens, this platoon is good enough until we get someone in there. . . . If you ever need more than a platoon's worth of trigger pullers in a district center, the V-22s [Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft] is how you're going to get there quickly and decisively enough to matter. . . . The Afghan National Army and Afghan Security Forces understand, from their perspective, how important air is. We have made them big consumers. They know that the air is there for them; they'll go out and operate. I've had more than one brigade commander tell me that if it wasn't for the medevac, [if] it wasn't for the resupply, and if it wasn't for the aviation fires, he didn't think he could get the battalions out operating like they do. Because they've*

*learned that if they get hurt, we'll fix them. They know if they run out of bullets, we'll get them bullets. And if they're hungry or thirsty, we'll get them food and water. . . . As the U.S. looks forward to work with allies worldwide in the years to come on COIN and related operations, the U.S. will not be bringing the entire gamut of capability to the party. Working with allies in current and projected financial conditions requires a new formula: the U.S. supports allies who can fend for themselves, up to a point.<sup>2</sup>*

Western powers are facing the end-game in Afghanistan. If the Afghans as a nation are going to work together to shape a COIN and defense strategy, airpower is a crucial lynchpin. Working together with an air-enabled Afghan force, Washington could continue to influence the necessary outcomes in the war against terror and at the same time pull out most of its troops. That would be a war-winning formula the Army might want to consider for its global future.

## **Case 2: Expeditionary Logistics in Shaping New Combat Capabilities**

The revolution in logistics seen in air and maritime support for ground forces can reshape how these forces operate. The French experience in Mali provides a case in point.<sup>3</sup> French forces were requested by the Mali government to intervene to defend the capital and the southern part of the country almost at the last moment. Because of a rapid political decisionmaking process, because of French presence in the regional theater linked to ongoing military missions (for example, the Épervier operation in Chad since 1986 and the United Nations Unicorn operation in Côte d'Ivoire since 2002), and because the French have been building an integrated rapid deployment force forged around expeditionary logistics, the French were able to intervene and move rapidly. This allowed French forces to attack the aggregated enemy forces. What is often forgotten is that extremist forces may disperse to avoid destruction, but to have a real political effect they

must aggregate and seize territory. One only has to remember the teachings of Mao Zedong. What this means as well is that an outside force configured and poised to attack aggregated enemy forces moving against definable territorial "prizes" can be attacked as such.

The French entered at the beginning of the operation, first with airpower directly initiated from French air force bases and then more rapidly with massive air-ground forces. As a result, they have been forming a 21<sup>st</sup>-century caravan approach where logistics and operational elements are combined simultaneously into a single force. There is no classic approach to the rear and front. The forces are expeditionary and carry their capabilities with them, adjusting those as they transition to new phases.

In what could be called phase one, France conducted its own version of "shock and awe." A rapid and massive offensive was generated to block the insurgents from reaching Bamako, and the troops were within reach of the capital within a matter of days. The French government mobilized an insertion force on January 11, 2013, after a request for help came from the president of Mali. A month later the commander of French army aviation in Mali explained:

*The enemy has been taken by surprise and is now destabilized. Because of the lightning speed of the maneuver by the Serval [the French name for the operation] force, the insurgents are now fleeing and not willing to fight as they did not expect such concentration and mobility heading their way.*

This effort has been possible due to several factors. The first is the speed of the French forces and their ability to act from the outset in a matter of hours as far as air operations were concerned. For example, on the air force side, the first strikes made by the Rafale fighters taking off from FAB Saint Dizier were done thanks to a 9-hour, 35-minute flight involving five air-to-air refuelings.

On the army side, it took only 2 days for the French army air mobility group (GAM for *Groupe aéromobile*), involving some 300 personnel and 20 helicopters,

to be operational after a strategic airlift from the South of France to the capital of Mali and in autonomous operation with the help of the logistic battalion simultaneously deployed with the strike force. As a French officer involved in the operation noted:

*After leaving Bamako for Sévaré five hundred kilometers further on January 26<sup>th</sup>, then leaving again for Gao on February 6<sup>th</sup> five hundred kilometers further, I have available the support tools of nearly a full regiment ranging from my air control tower . . . to spares allowing me to last for months.*

The rapid surge of the Serval force, which eventually grew to three battalion-size task forces (GTIA for *Groupement tactique interarmes*), has also been facilitated by France's historic presence and defense commitments in this part of the world. France was able to leverage various national assets currently based in other African countries as well as full support from those governments.

Mobility and concentration of forces have also been rendered possible by good C2 and joint training and experience between the French air force (Rafale and Mirage 2000D fighters and N'Djamena-based joint force air component commander), the navy (with the amphibious assault ship BPC *Dixmude* bringing ground elements ashore and with the Atlantique 2 maritime patrol aircraft crucial to coordinate close air support operations between army aviation and ground troops), and the army. This is also true at the joint level, since good C2 and joint training have been key to operating the international transport and refueling fleet which joined in Serval.

While executing phase one, the French were preparing their transition to the next phase, in which regional peacekeepers and the Mali army would become the key force to provide stability. Moreover, France is keeping a modest force in place that can aid in the process and also move rapidly within the country to defend itself and its allies.

From the beginning, the French intervention was not seen as an isolated

event, but rather one designed to clear the path for coalition forces to take over the mission. For France, the North Africa region is as significant as Mexico is for the United States. Ongoing engagement is a reality in a region of close proximity with high strategic consequences and many foreign nationals in residence.

Regional support is absolutely key to prolonging the deterrent effect of the initial French military action and has been made possible by the months of preparation before it occurred ahead of schedule, as is the effort of the international community via the United Nations and/or other organizations. The latter is slowly but surely picking up with a growing number of allied logistic and support assets being gathered to help sustain French and African armed forces in a theater where vast elongations and the ability to hold difficult territory are the key challenges.

Transport aircraft and tankers were sent early on by the United States and European countries, while the Eindhoven-based European Air Transport Command played its role in providing assets. From a French perspective, the goal has been to start reversing the balance between supported and supporting forces as early as April 2014 in order to prevent the “Afghanization” of the conflict feared by many, but in a secure, responsible, and coordinated manner. Indeed, as the commander, General Grégoire de Saint Quentin, has been stressing, Serval not only boosted the Malian armed forces’ confidence to keep on fighting, but also served as a catalyst for the African forces to mobilize themselves and play the regional role to which they have been aspiring.

Phase three could thus be characterized as shaping the postinsurgent Mali, and here, working with the Mali government and African forces is central. In this phase, European support and trainers will be a key part of shaping whatever is possible regarding stability in the country. European military training, which is also kicking in, will be another major factor in ensuring that African ground troops have the best chances to secure the whole country.

In other words, the French experience in Mali is about building a first entry insertion force with expeditionary logistics fully integrated with the maneuver forces. This force is then able to work within the region and become a lead element in its own transition and withdrawal. The French approach is very much about how to intervene and trigger coalition operations to stabilize the situation with regional partners rather than simply staying in place a long time. It is shock and awe as a counteroffensive and deterrent to the enemy, as well as a trigger space for coalition success, and not shock and awe for the sake of staying.

### Case 3: Shaping a Distributed Operations Force for the Pacific

The United States is in the midst of its pivot to the Pacific and the Marine Corps is in many ways the pivoting force for this action. The Service is not only redeploying in the region but enhancing its role as a rotational force as well. As Colonel John Merna, commander of 31<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), put it:

*In one sense, the Marines are going back to the force levels we had in the region prior to 9/11. So it is simply a restoration rather than a build up or build out. But the way the force is being configured is very different. We are emphasizing building out a rotational force, notably in Australia, but elsewhere as well.<sup>4</sup>*

The Corps is itself “pivoting” in this pivot to the Pacific. Marine forces in Okinawa are moving partly to Guam and shaping a new working relationship with the Australians in Western Australia. In fact, they will be the lead force in reshaping the U.S. presence in the Pacific over the next few years. The Marines face myriad challenges in the Pacific. They have been directed through international agreements spanning two administrations to execute force-positioning moves. This is political, but it is not partisan.

The Secretary of Defense has mandated that at least 22,000 Marines in U.S. Pacific Command remain west of the International Date Line in the distributed

Marine Air Ground Task Force Laydown and made it clear that he and Congress and the American people are not interested in a nonfunctional concept for a Marine force. Beyond what is directed, the Marines need to maintain a ready force in the face of existing training area encroachments. They also have that requirement for training areas near the new force laydown locations.

Within the distributed laydown, the Marines must retain the ability to respond rapidly to crises across the range of demands, from major combat operations in Northeast Asia to low-end humanitarian assistance and disaster relief wherever the need arises.

Each location for the Marines is in transition as well. From Okinawa and Iwakuni, the Marines can train locally in Japan, Korea, and the Philippines as well as respond with “fight tonight” capabilities. From Guam, the Marines can train locally in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) to the north, the Federated States of Micronesia to the south, and Palau and the Philippines to the west. Guam and CNMI provide the Marines something they do not have elsewhere in the Pacific: a location on U.S. soil where they can train unilaterally or with partners.

The Marine Corps is focused on shaping a distributed operations force to meet these evolving engagement challenges. For such a force, strike is built in but is not the defining quality. For many, augmenting the precision strike force is Washington’s key area for investment in the Pacific. But the priority ought to be on building up the capabilities for distributed operations within which precision strike is embedded.<sup>5</sup> As Lieutenant General Terry Robling, commander of Marine Forces Pacific, emphasized:

*The key is persistent presence and scalable force. We need to be engaged in the process of reform of the various allied forces as well in the Pacific. We cannot nor should not do it all on our own. And distributed force allows for the kind of security engagement we need to do so, and to be well positioned for escalation if that comes. . . . Distributed operations and disaggregation is a fact of life*

*in the Pacific. Rarely do we send an ARG [Amphibious Ready Group]/MEU out now, especially the 31<sup>st</sup> MEU, into the AOR [area of responsibility], where we don't disaggregate. . . . Until we distribute them to different missions and then re-aggregate to come back to a large exercise or mission, they spread and can cover several missions by distributed operations. . . . And then, with the types of equipment we're buying and we've shown this as well in exercises like Bold Alligator, you can stick a MV-22 on any one of those amphibious ships or any one of those ships, like an MLP [mobile landing platform] . . . and you have just extended your shoreline north and south 300 miles each direction.<sup>6</sup>*

The Marines are at the forefront of operation innovation and have led with the Osprey, creating new opportunities and potentially new strategies. The commanding general of 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Air Wing in Okinawa characterized the leveraging of the Osprey to shape possibilities of a new and more effective distributed or island operational strategy:

*When you add to that the Osprey and its range and speed, you now have a wider selection of landing spots if we needed an intermediate support base. . . . A good case in point would be [that] when we wish to deploy helicopters from Futenma [the Marine Air Base on Okinawa] to the Philippines, there are a couple of places that we must land for fuel. For one leg, there is only one site, which allows us to do this. But when you have an aircraft with greater range, it opens up more possibilities. . . . If, in a time of conflict, we were going someplace and an adversary wanted to deny us the ability to put in a refueling point or intermediate support base, they would have to now take into account a much greater number of islands. With only helicopters, an adversary could draw a 100-mile ring around a base and know where we could operate. . . . Ospreys, particularly when supported by KC-130Js, would significantly complicate an adversary's attempts to predict our movements and operations.<sup>7</sup>*

The Marines brought the Osprey into operation after a CH-46 was struck by a



Joint terminal air controller communicates with F/A-18 Super Hornet supporting Operation *Spartan Shield* in training to provide U.S. and coalition close air support (U.S. Air Force/Jonathan Snyder)

man-portable air-defense system in 2007. They do not wish to see a similar problem with their legacy aircraft and will seek to bring their F-35Bs, currently training at Yuma Air Station, into the Pacific as early as 2015. With the Marines, evolving the strategy of getting the new equipment to warfighters is crucial to shape that strategy. It is not about testing in the abstract; it is about prevailing in combat, and they believe that getting new equipment into the hands of the warfighter—in this case the F-35B to the Pacific—is a crucial part of the “testing” reality. Former Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne underscored the approach: “The current wisdom . . . that testing must conclude before operations can be fully implemented has been turned on its head during the past two decades. But the reality is the opposite. Operational use at crucial points is the real testing of systems.”<sup>8</sup>

The Marines are already experimenting with Harriers and Ospreys to anticipate a new potent flexible combination. Osprey refuelers and weapons resupply reloaders with the Harriers as surrogates for the F-35Bs. Deputy Commandant of Aviation, Lieutenant General Robert Schmidle, USMC, has underscored:

*We are looking at a sixteen-ship F-35B formation flying with a four-ship Osprey*

*formation. The Ospreys could fly with the B5 to provide fuel and munitions for rearming wherever the F-35Bs can land. As you know, the F-35B can land in a wide variety of areas and as a result this gives us a very mobile strike force to operate throughout the battlespace. This kind of flexibility will be crucial in the years ahead.<sup>9</sup>*

An additional advantage to working out a new strategic approach in response to new weapons—in this case the MV-22 and the anticipated arrival of the F-35B—is that the Marines are working with allies to reshape their forces and approaches. Shaping convergent capabilities for future operations is central to a Pacific strategy and will only happen by working the problem at the real-world level. There is no point in playing with yesterday's equipment to reinforce 20<sup>th</sup>-century concepts of operations; we must leverage the new to shape 21<sup>st</sup>-century approaches. As Lieutenant General Robling stated regarding the Australians partnering with the Marines, notably in the new working relationship based in Darwin:

*They want to have a bigger part in the security of the Pacific because they see themselves as major players here. And the only way that they can be major players with an Army that's only 30,000 strong is to give them the capability to have amphibious forces that can project away from*

*Australia and make a difference. And the only way they're going to be able to do that is for us to train them up in amphibious operations, buy the equipment they need to load up those amphibious ships that they bought, and then go out and exercise it.*

#### **Case 4: Deterring North Korea**

For the United States, the deterrence of North Korea is no longer reduced to the defense of South Korea. It is about deterrence of states emerging in the second nuclear age. There is significant global cross-fertilization from the lessons being learned about North Korean behavior and the pressures associated with the possession of a small nuclear force and the ability to gain effects far beyond the position of this force.

The core question is rather simple: how do you deter a nuclear power such as North Korea when it simply will not play by the rules of conventional deterrence? What is the U.S. and allied nuclear and conventional response to the threat of war on the Korean peninsula? Paul Bracken has called this scenario the coming of the second nuclear age. Although his book, *The Second Nuclear Age*, is really about strategy in a world of nuclear proliferation, it is about deterrence in a very different nuclear world than the one shaped by the competition and the rules of the two nuclear superpowers. Bracken has focused on the need to understand escalation and de-escalation in this new nuclear age where the rules have not been established and crises will shape the nature of the rules, not the other way around. As Bracken puts it, "Communication and bargaining, and escalation and de-escalation are at the heart of the use of military force, including nuclear weapons. They are not so unique as to preclude such normal behavior."<sup>10</sup>

The Air Force has struggled to discover its post-Afghan role. Clearly, it can find it by leading the effort to shape a deterrent strategy in the second nuclear age. The prominent thinkers of the first were closely tied to the Air Force and its long period of innovation in the

postwar period. We need the same attention once again, and this must include serious debate; it must also focus both on shaping new conventional options and on introducing nuclear warfighting considerations other than countervalue deterrence.

For a thuggish regime such as the one in North Korea, credible leadership decapitation is the only threat, which is as real as a deterrent. This could come via a reshaped conventional capability, a combined conventional and nuclear capability, or a low-yield and precise nuclear capacity. No option should be off the table when debating options and developing capabilities. The Air Force has a unique position in the American forces and can provide solid leadership for this effort.

In part this could be about shaping new options such as deployment of hypersonic cruise missiles with various warheads including electronic warfare warheads. Mark Lewis, the former chief scientist of the Air Force and now head of the Science and Technology Policy Institute at the Institute for Defense Analyses, is one of the leading hypersonic experts in the world. He has underscored that a hypersonic cruise missile is the low-hanging fruit of the hypersonics revolution.<sup>11</sup> In considering the impact of a high-speed missile with evolutions in warheads carried by such missiles, one can see the breakthrough possibilities. The goal would be to marry the missile with warheads that have the ability to get inside the electronics, fire controls, signals, and sensors of opponents flying at hypersonic speeds. With a forward-deployed stealth fleet doing target identification as well as being available to rapidly prosecute combat advantage from the results of the strike, U.S. and allied forces would not only be more lethal but would be a far more effective deterrent force.

Hypersonic cruise missiles are part of the competitive landscape, with China, India, and Russia all investing in these capabilities. U.S. allies such as Australia and France are core players and partners in shaping future capabilities. This is not a race one wants to lose to the Chinese, notably because the rollout of the stealth fleet could make good use of such a

capability. Investments clearly need to be made in this area, or, more to the point, they should be pooled to shape an effective outcome.

But this is not only about technology. It is about adapting defense strategies and concepts of operations to provide the space for innovation to occur. Recrafting the U.S. posture in the defense of South Korea would provide a great place to start in shaping Pacific perceptions of the impact of fifth-generation aircraft not only on the air element, but also on the joint force and the coming of distributed operations to the deterrence of North Korea.

Secretary Wynne recently suggested that as the Air Force brings its first squadrons of F-35s into being, it should deploy those aircraft along with F-22s into the defense of South Korea. Then, over a relatively short period, all fourth-generation aircraft would be brought back to the United States. This would focus maximum attention on shaping a different concept of operations for the defense of South Korea. Not only would the area covered by the aircraft become radically different with a variety of vectors whereby the attack and defense enterprise could operate, but reshaping the ground element could be facilitated as well. Secretary Wynne has articulated this strategic opportunity:

*This is clearly the theater of highest utility for the emerging F-35 . . . with the F-22 to be the guardian of the Pacific Expanse, and perhaps even used in a partnership with the F-35, and the ROKAF [Republic of Korea Air Force] forces. . . . This would have the highest probability of training as a "1000 Unit Air Fleet" and the ROKAF, equipped as they are with terrific fourth generation fighters, would yearn to be protected and supportive of this Air Battle Management System proposed and promoted for the F-35. . . . One can as well see in the Korean Theater where in lieu of Aegis, Army systems connected via a C2 system as well can be the wingman for the F-35As/Bs or CV Versions. Service identified targets [will] be well within the range of tactical missiles currently fielded and/or well into their design cycle. . . . With the width of the Peninsula inside the range of Naval Missiles, one can see the real need is off-boarding targets and*

... serving them appropriately. Real Time Bomb Damage Assessment and even real time Psych warfare may reduce population losses, as all are aware that Regime Loyalty is strongest at the top. . . . Frankly, the operational concepts born in this crucible for combat: the training, the turnaround for weaponers, training for both a stealth and non-stealth operational elements, and the maintenance construct seem ideal for an early if not the first deployment for this new highly capable fighter. If there remains a belief in peace through strength; this would illustrate it best.<sup>12</sup>

In other words, the Air Force has a real opportunity to show leadership with the North Korean challenge and the South Korean defense effort—not only through studies and briefing slides, but also through introducing new aircraft, reshaping concepts of operations, and working with the Army to reshape how ground-based defense is conducted in such a constricted theater of operation. The distributed operations force reset of the Marine Corps and Navy would be a significant contributor as well because of the diversity of precision strike and missile defense embedded in a sea-based force.

Through the pressure to shape innovation in dealing with South Korean defense and North Korean regional and global deterrence, there is the opportunity to craft what might be called an S-cubed force. Sensors combined with stealth combined with speed can provide a new paradigm for shaping the force necessary for working in the Pacific.<sup>13</sup>

The heart of getting the policy agenda right is understanding that warfare is highly interactive. Buying, building, and deploying yesterday's technologies against evolving threats are sure ways of being on the wrong side of the outcome. In short, innovation can drive change, but only by real-world shifts in concepts of operations through the introduction of new equipment and leveraging older ones in an enhancement of deterrence. Exercises such as the Bold Alligator series, in which the Marine Corps–Navy team led a joint and coalition effort to shape a flexible insertion force, are being used precisely

to determine the kind of command and control and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities that will be needed.<sup>14</sup> The exercise highlighted the core need for the coalition force to be able to craft greater capability to transfer the deconfliction of air tasks to integrated data systems over time. Strike and air deconfliction require significant coordination, and more automation of the data generated will over time assist in the improved flow of force through the deployed ships.<sup>15</sup> As such a force is built, one can determine what kind of nuclear tip it might most effectively be armed with rather than simply being left with a countervalue deterrent structure or a disconnected tactical nuclear option. JFQ

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Bill Buckley, USMC (Ret.), interview with authors, April 2011, available at <[www.sldinfo.com/light-attack-aircraft-can-alter-the-course-of-a-war](http://www.sldinfo.com/light-attack-aircraft-can-alter-the-course-of-a-war)>.

<sup>2</sup> Major General Glenn Walters, USMC, interview with authors, March 2012, available at <[www.sldinfo.com/2nd-maw-forward-the-role-of-airpower-in-the-afghan-operation](http://www.sldinfo.com/2nd-maw-forward-the-role-of-airpower-in-the-afghan-operation)>.

<sup>3</sup> This section is based on interviews with French officers who operated in Mali and in Afghanistan; many were conducted during Murielle Delaporte's embedded reporting from Mali in April 2013. She did the same with French forces in Afghanistan the previous year. Many of the Mali interviews can be found in *Soutien Logistique Défense*, June 2013, available at <[www.sldmag.com](http://www.sldmag.com)>.

<sup>4</sup> Colonel John E. Merna, USMC, interview with authors, April 2013, available at <[www.sldinfo.com/the-osprey-comes-to-the-pacific-the-case-of-the-31st-meu](http://www.sldinfo.com/the-osprey-comes-to-the-pacific-the-case-of-the-31st-meu)>.

<sup>5</sup> Robbin F. Laird and Edward T. Timperlake, "Pivot Point: Reshaping U.S. Maritime Strategy to the Pacific," *Jane's Navy International* (April 2013), 22–29; and Robbin Laird, Ed Timperlake, and Richard Weitz, *Rebuilding American Military Power in the Pacific: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Strategy* (Praeger Publishers, November 2013, forthcoming).

<sup>6</sup> Lieutenant General Terry Robling, USMC, interview with authors, September 2012, available at <[www.sldinfo.com/the-challenge-of-persistent-presence-in-the-pacific-an-interview-with-lt-general-robbling](http://www.sldinfo.com/the-challenge-of-persistent-presence-in-the-pacific-an-interview-with-lt-general-robbling)>.

<sup>7</sup> Brigadier General Christopher Owens, USMC, interview with authors, December 2012, available at <[www.sldinfo.com/shaping-operational-flexibility-an-interview-with-major-general-owens](http://www.sldinfo.com/shaping-operational-flexibility-an-interview-with-major-general-owens)>.

<sup>8</sup> Michael W. Wynne, "The Role of the U.S. Air Force in the Future Fight," *Second Line of Defense*, February 8, 2013, available at <[www.sldinfo.com/the-role-of-the-us-air-force-in-the-future-fight](http://www.sldinfo.com/the-role-of-the-us-air-force-in-the-future-fight)>.

<sup>9</sup> Lieutenant General Robert Schmidle, Jr., USMC, interview with authors, March 2013, available at <[www.sldinfo.com/the-way-ahead-with-the-f-35b-a-discussion-with-the-deputy-commandant-for-aviation](http://www.sldinfo.com/the-way-ahead-with-the-f-35b-a-discussion-with-the-deputy-commandant-for-aviation)>.

<sup>10</sup> "The Challenge of Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age: A Discussion with Paul Bracken," *Second Line of Defense*, January 28, 2013, available at <[www.sldinfo.com/the-challenge-of-deterrence-in-the-second-nuclear-age-a-discussion-with-paul-bracken](http://www.sldinfo.com/the-challenge-of-deterrence-in-the-second-nuclear-age-a-discussion-with-paul-bracken)>.

<sup>11</sup> Robbin F. Laird and Edward T. Timperlake, "The Coming of the Hypersonic Cruise Missile: A Key Element of S Cubed Evolution," *Second Line of Defense*, April 16, 2013, available at <[www.sldinfo.com/the-coming-of-the-hypersonic-cruise-missile-a-key-element-of-s-cubed-evolution](http://www.sldinfo.com/the-coming-of-the-hypersonic-cruise-missile-a-key-element-of-s-cubed-evolution)>.

<sup>12</sup> Michael W. Wynne, "F-35As to Korea: Shaping a Defense Transition," *Second Line of Defense*, November 22, 2011, available at <[www.sldinfo.com/f-35as-to-korea-shaping-a-defense-transition-to-deal-with-real-threats](http://www.sldinfo.com/f-35as-to-korea-shaping-a-defense-transition-to-deal-with-real-threats)>.

<sup>13</sup> Laird and Timperlake, "The Coming of the Hypersonic Cruise Missile."

<sup>14</sup> "Bold Alligator 2013: Crafting a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Insertion Force," *Second Line of Defense*, May 8, 2013, available at <[www.sldinfo.com/bold-alligator-2013-crafting-a-21st-century-insertion-force](http://www.sldinfo.com/bold-alligator-2013-crafting-a-21st-century-insertion-force)>.

<sup>15</sup> "Bold Alligator 2013: Shaping C2 for the Single Naval Battle," *Second Line of Defense*, June 7, 2013, available at <[www.sldinfo.com/bold-alligator-2013-shaping-c2-for-the-single-naval-battle](http://www.sldinfo.com/bold-alligator-2013-shaping-c2-for-the-single-naval-battle)>.