We Produce the Future

Air Force Doctrine
At the very heart of warfare lies doctrine. It represents the central beliefs for waging war in order to achieve victory. **Doctrine is of the mind**, a network of faith and knowledge reinforced by experience which lays the pattern for the utilization of men, equipment, and tactics. **It is the building material for strategy.** It is fundamental to sound judgment.

~ General Curtis Emerson LeMay, 1968
Doctrine is …

• How you **organize and employ**
• The **agreed upon**, operationally relevant body of **best practices and principles**
• Supported by:
  • History
  • Debate and analysis
  • Exercises, wargames, contingencies
• **Authoritative, but not directive**
Value of Doctrine

• Guides how to organize, present, deploy and employ
  • Organize based on doctrine, not ad hoc arrangements

• The two key pillars of our doctrine are:
  • Principle of War: Unity of Command
  • Tenet of Airpower: Centralized Control/Decentralized Execution

• Airmen work for Airmen and the senior Airman works for the Joint Force Commander

• Normally, doctrine is the best way to proceed
  • If we must deviate, there should be a clear and compelling operational reason
Why Learn Doctrine?

• Provides **common language** and frame of reference for discussion
  • Essential for communication

• How best to **organize and employ** airpower: operational suitability

• Impacts emerging / future capabilities

• Provides **consistent and “teachable” approach** to warfighting: first step to “think outside the box”
Doctrine is about…

- **Warfighting**…not physics
- **Effects**…not *weapon systems* or platforms
- **Using domains**…not *owning* domains
- **How to organize**…not *organizations*
- **Synergy**…not segregation
- **Integration**…not just synchronization
- **The right force** … not *equal shares* of the force
Terminology

• Military operations are guided by the interplay of
  • Policy
  • Strategy
  • Doctrine
• Important to understand their differences
Policy

- **Directive** guidance stating what is to be accomplished
- Sets overall priorities/direction
  - Defines national interest
  - States political direction/guiding principles
- Sets political limits
  - Bounds the response
- Directive guidance
  - Determined by senior national and military leadership
  - Mandatory compliance
- Policy sets the boundaries for doctrine and strategy
- Examples:
  - Circumstances for use of nuclear weapons
  - Address terrorism in a religion-neutral manner
Strategy

- Is about how to **apply available capabilities**
  - To gain desired ends
  - Using approved means
  - Within the existing environment

- Considers:
  - Objectives
  - Threat, politics, personalities, public opinion
  - Alliances, PVOs, NGOs, government agencies
  - Current capabilities/doctrine

- Example:
  - Campaign strategy devised to target insurgents with minimum necessary forces and reduce collateral effects; attack insurgents’ legitimacy; gain support of population
Doctrine

- Is about how you **organize and employ**
  - Presentation of forces
  - Command and control
  - Command relationships

- The Air Force’s agreed upon, operationally relevant body of best practices and principles supported by:
  - History
  - Debate and analysis
  - Exercises, contingencies

- **Doctrine is not dogma**

- Example:
  - Irregular warfare doctrine developed to provide consistent guidance in any region; emphasis on decentralized planning and decision making
Interplay

- Policy governs the use of force
  - Shapes strategy
  - May affect application of doctrine (e.g., ROE)
    - Commanders should advise policy makers on the potential impacts of deviating from doctrine
- Doctrine provides a knowledge base for making strategy decisions
  - How best to apply and organize forces for a given scenario
- Success or failure of strategy may affect policy and doctrine
Concepts are:

- Used to develop capabilities to meet national strategic goals
- Unproven ideas that should be rigorously tested; *not authoritative*
- A notion or statement expressing how something might be done
- Developed to respond to a range of future challenges
- Concepts should propose a clear alternative to existing doctrine

Doctrine is:

- Based on *extant* capabilities for force employment
- Designed to describe operations conducted with *extant* capabilities
- Subject to policy, treaty, and legal constraints
Doctrine and Concepts

- **Doctrine**: Agreed upon, operationally relevant **best practices**; provides **common, precise terminology** to express ideas
  - **Policy**: directive guidance (AFIs, ROE)
  - **Strategy**: defines operations to accomplish policy objectives
  - **Concepts**: new vision, tactic, or process not yet proven as best practice

- **Doctrine** is the foundation for:
  - Intelligent concept conversation and growth
  - Successful concept integration
  - Use of common language with joint / Service communities

- **LeMay Center** is responsible for terminology as part of doctrine
Levels of Service Doctrine

Develop America's Airmen Today ... for Tomorrow

Basic Doctrine
(CSAF signs)

Operational Doctrine
(LeMay Ctr/CC signs)

Tactical Doctrine
(TTP)
(Various Signators)

ALSA

3-X

561 JTS

423 MTS/MAJCOM/A-Staff

Fly – Fight – Win

Air University: The Intellectual and Leadership Center of the Air Force
Basic Doctrine

• Foundation of airpower doctrine

• Elemental properties of airpower

• Discussion on the nature of war and introduction to the range of military operations

• Slow to change compared to other levels
Operational Doctrine

- Applies principles of basic doctrine to military action
- Guides proper organization and employment in the context of:
  - Distinct objectives
  - Force capabilities
  - Broad functional areas
  - Operational environments
- Provides focus for mission and task development executed at the tactical level of war
- Changes after deliberate internal debate
Tactical Doctrine

- Describes proper employment of specific assets
- Considers:
  - Objectives
  - Conditions
- Closely associated with equipment and therefore changes more rapidly
Doctrine Provides…

- Describes AF operations across all domains to achieve effects throughout the range of military operations
  - Informs the commander of Air Force forces (COMAFFOR) and staff on the best ways to organize, plan, support, and fight with Airpower
  - Must provide guidance from peace through major ops
- Should express Airman’s perspective in terms best suited to Airmen and airpower
  - Airmen have a different view of operations that complements, but does not replace, other military instruments of national power
  - Should integrate with joint team and sister Services without compromising basic tenets of Airpower

*Focusing on the COMAFFOR keeps the discussion at the operational level*
Who is Doctrine For?

• Air Force doctrine should be “COMAFFOR-centric”
  • Focused at the operational level
  • Defines functions and tasks (common terminology)
  • Defines COMAFFOR’s roles and responsibilities
  • Explains roles and responsibilities of the COMAFFOR’s staff
  • Explains command relationships
  • Provides organizational templates

• Because of this operational-level warfighting focus, not everything the Air Force does will be visible in doctrine
  • Not written to highlight the relevancy of career fields or specific organizations
  • Not written to justify programmatic
  • Not written to capture buzzwords or catch-phrases of the moment
“In the current turbulent environment …, doctrine provides an informed starting point for the many decisions Airmen make. Airmen no longer face the challenge of starting with a blank sheet of paper; with doctrine, Airmen now have a good outline that helps answer several basic questions:

- What is my mission? How should I approach it?
- What should my organization look like, and why?
- What are my lines of authority within my organization and within the joint force?
- What degrees of control do I have over my forces?
- How am I supported? Who do I call for more support?
- How should I articulate what the Air Force provides to the joint force?”
“Doctrine should be based in critical analysis and the lessons of operations rather than driven by rapidly changing policies, promising technologies, individual personalities, budget battles, and politically trendy catch-phrases. **Doctrine should not be written to backwards-justify a policy position or codify a uniquely-tailored organization.** As such, doctrine reflects what has worked best with full consideration of what has worked poorly. In those instances in which experience is lacking or difficult to acquire, doctrine may be developed through analysis of exercises, wargames, and experiments. The military experience of other nations and non-defense organizations should also be considered.” [**Bolded in original**]