INTRODUCTION

Last Updated: 27 Feb 2015

> *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.*
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> — General Curtis E. LeMay

Air Force Doctrine Volume 1, *Air Force Basic Doctrine*, is the senior statement of Air Force doctrine. It discusses the fundamental beliefs that underpin the application of Air Force capabilities across the range of military operations. It provides guidance on the proper employment of airpower, sets the foundation for educating Airmen on airpower, guides the development of all other doctrine, and provides insight where personal experience may be lacking.

As a whole, Air Force doctrine describes the various operations and activities that underpin the Service's ability to provide global vigilance, global reach, and global power, which allows us to anticipate threats and provide strategic reach to curb crises with overwhelming power to prevail.

- ✪ **Global Vigilance** is the ability to gain and maintain awareness – to keep an unblinking eye on any entity – anywhere in the world; to provide warning and to determine intent, opportunity, capability, or vulnerability; then to fuse this information with data received from other Services or agencies and use and share relevant information with the joint force commander.

- ✪ **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.

- ✪ **Global Power** is the ability to hold at risk or strike any target anywhere in the world, assert national sovereignty, safeguard joint freedom of action, and achieve swift, decisive, precise effects.

The global context in which Airmen must anticipate and plan will remain ambiguous; unlike the Cold War era, there is no single, clearly defined opponent against which we can design forces and anticipate strategy. Air Force studies of the likely future operating environment, such as the *Air Force Strategic Environment Assessment*, provide a perspective on future trends and implications. Some key points are summarized as follows:

✪ Changes are leading to a shift in the balance of power, a more multi-polar world, and potentially adverse deviations to traditional US alliances and partnerships.

✪ The potential demand for certain types of operations—especially those associated with irregular warfare (IW), humanitarian operations, special operations, information gathering, and urban operations—will likely increase, and effective deterrence will likely become more challenging.

✪ Adversaries are gaining access to potential new and enhanced technologies and their associated capabilities. These capabilities, which will challenge Air Force operations include more lethal and precise weapon systems, enablers, and defenses; improved capabilities in space and cyberspace; weapons of mass destruction; and emerging and disruptive technology.

✪ The proliferation of inexpensive technology enabled by globalization is greatly enhancing the ability of both state and non-state actors to challenge not only US military power and interests, but also international support for the United States, domestic US resolve, and the US economy and homeland security. In some cases, small numbers of sophisticated systems employed by non-state actors may deter US intervention.

✪ US advantages derived from space and cyberspace will decline relative to select potential adversaries who will approach parity with the Unites States in terms of their command and control and situational awareness capabilities. These and other adversaries will also be increasingly able to degrade US strengths in these areas.

✪ As an adversary's capabilities are brought to bear, portions of the operational environment can change from permissive to contested or highly contested.

✪ Strategic planners may need to rethink existing assumptions and force structures and develop new concepts that integrate nuclear, conventional, IW, and non-kinetic capabilities.

✪ There may be regions where many states possess nuclear weapons. These states may have conflicting doctrines and beliefs regarding their use. What may deter one actor may not deter another, and may even result in unintended negative consequences in other areas. Also, traditional deterrence models may not necessarily apply to rogue states and apply even less to non-state actors.

✪ The Cold War notion of controlling escalation may no longer be sufficient.

In summary, the United States will likely remain the world's single largest military power, but its relative advantage may shrink. Additionally, increasingly contested areas may reduce access, not only to the global commons, but to forward operating bases. The Air Force will likely face states and entities that have lower bars to entry to areas that can challenge existing US strengths. The need for IW capabilities will likely also continue, while strategic leverage such as effective deterrence may become more difficult and complex.

Against this backdrop, **doctrine should be flexible enough to adapt and evolve to situations as they arise**. Air Force doctrine should continually strive to provide a better, more relevant baseline for ongoing and future operations.

This volume is arranged around the following fundamental topics.

✪ Doctrine – Because this Volume is the Air Force's senior doctrine statement, this discussion presents a primer on what is and is not doctrine, and the uses, sources, and types of doctrine.

✪ Airpower – This section presents the fundamentals that guide the application of airpower; its historical foundations; the resulting "airmindedness" mindset; and the Airman's perspective.

✪ The Range of Military Operations – a primer on the operational environment in which Airmen perform their missions.

✪ The Principles of Joint Operations – a discussion of the broad principles that commanders generally consider in the conduct of operations.

✪ The Tenets of Airpower – While the principles of joint operations provide general guidance on the application of military forces, the tenets of airpower provide more refined considerations for the employment of air, space, and cyberspace capabilities.

A note on terminology in Air Force doctrine: The Air Force prefers—and in fact, plans and trains—to employ in the joint fight through a commander, Air Force forces (COMAFFOR) who is normally also multi-hatted as joint force air component commander (JFACC), area air defense commander, airspace control authority, space coordinating authority, and electronic warfare control authority; when involved in multinational operations, the JFACC may become a combined force air component commander (CFACC). **To simplify nomenclature, Air Force doctrine simply uses the term "COMAFFOR," with the presumption that the COMAFFOR may also be designated with multiple hats.** Similarly, Air Force doctrine recognizes that the AOC, in joint or combined operations is correctly known as a joint AOC (JAOC) or combined AOC (CAOC). However, doctrine simply uses the term "AOC."

Air Force doctrine is compatible with existing joint doctrine, but expands and elaborates upon it, because joint doctrine does not explicitly describe the philosophical

underpinnings of any one Service, nor does it describe how a Service organizes to support a joint force commander. These are Service, not joint, prerogatives. The ideas presented here should enable Airmen to better describe what the Air Force can provide to the joint effort. This document should influence creation of corresponding joint and North Atlantic Treaty Organization doctrine, and may inform the doctrine of other Services as well.

The principal audience for this doctrine consists of all Airmen, both uniformed and civilian.