

# Air Expeditionary Access

## The African Connection

COL BRIAN K. HALL, USAF\*

*We cannot predict where the next Desert Shield will occur. It could easily be in a place where we have no troops and no infrastructure—no bases or support systems in place. We will have to take with us everything that we need, including shelter, maintenance facilities, hospitals, and food and water.*

—Lt Gen Michael A. Nelson, USAF  
“Aerospace Forces and Power Projection”

Is the strategic access the United States attained in Africa during the 1980s possible today after more than a decade of foreign-policy neglect? Access remains somewhat constant or is increasing on four of the world’s five major continents. The one region at highest risk from reduced US engagement is sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup> The United States has chosen to concentrate in other areas at Africa’s expense. Not only was Operation Desert Shield successful and monumental at leveraging access in the Middle East, but also it validated US airpower doctrine and emerging joint-warfare concepts. Moreover, transformational concepts were reflected in the Air Force’s new concept-of-operations

initiative. The greatest lesson learned from Desert Shield is that no future crisis will be handled successfully without the continued access of the Air Force’s expeditionary forces. The wide access enjoyed during that operation made possible the decisiveness of Operation Desert Storm. The Air Force has mastered most of the intricate facets of major expeditionary warfare; nevertheless, rapid-deployment operations in response to small-scale contingencies, humanitarian-assistance operations, and peace-support operations remain relatively ad hoc because they are more reactionary than deliberate. Much remains to be done to refine our nation’s rapid-deployment capability in support of foreign-policy objectives.

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\*At the time this article was originally published, Colonel Hall (BS, Rutgers University; MS, Marine Corps Command and Staff College; DC, New York Chiropractic College) served as deputy director of Joint Requirements and Integration (J-8), US Joint Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia. He has served as executive officer to the vice-commander, Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, Virginia; chief of Joint Force Requirements, US Atlantic Command, Norfolk, Virginia; director of staff for the 317th Airlift Group, Dyess AFB, Texas; and chief of the Air Force Directorate, Office of Defense Cooperation, Ankara, Turkey. A command pilot with over 2,400 flying hours in three major weapon systems, Colonel Hall is a graduate of Squadron Officer School, Armed Forces Staff College, and Air War College.

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According to *The National Security Strategy* (NSS) of 2002, “The presence of American forces overseas is one of the most profound symbols of the U.S. commitment to allies and friends.”<sup>2</sup> The NSS also emphasizes how US forces must prepare for more such deployments by developing assets and capabilities reflective of expeditionary forces. At the high end of conflict, regional combatant commanders will require forces to bring unique capabilities to the fight and will expect those forces to be combat ready upon arrival in-theater. Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) stands as an example of a nonstandard mix of air and ground assets joining the fight against terrorism without an abundance of doctrinal guidance—thus providing a lucid example of transformation. Henceforth, we will need this type of creativity and innovation to contend with strategic uncertainty and asymmetric engagement worldwide.

Africa may well serve as the proving ground for transformational concepts, methods, and capabilities. That continent provides a great challenge to the ability of the United States to project forces to a region often overlooked because of the magnitude of ongoing crises in the Balkans, Middle East, and Korean Peninsula. The American public has been subjected to unrelenting media attention towards those areas. But Africa has been overlooked as scarce national resources and advocacy were directed to areas of greater vital interest to the United States. Not until cataclysmic tragedy strikes, as occurred in Rwanda during the summer of 1994, does the US public turn its attention to Africa. Just one year earlier, the American media graphically filled television sets with the Somalia disaster, which undoubtedly reduced both subsequent coverage and US direct-assistance programs.

Over the last 10 years, experience has proven that air expeditionary deployment to Africa remains an immature science—one that follows a neglected foreign policy. Oftentimes, innovative Airmen applied artful solutions to contend with the unique challenges posed by what can still be considered the “Dark Continent.” Oddly enough, due to the limited presence of US government agencies in Africa, Airmen became our nation’s ambassadors of goodwill in areas cut off from normal diplomatic channels and limited activities of nongovernmental organizations (NGO). The necessity of perfecting air expeditions to contend with low-end conflicts will not diminish anytime soon. In fact, it is more likely that out-of-area-based forces will see more frequent expeditionary deployments as our nation contends with the pervasive global war on terrorism, a fight that may well take this nation and its allies deep into Africa. The sub-Saharan region has become a proverbial breeding ground of human suffering caused by pandemic HIV/AIDS; ethnic, religious, and political unrest; natural disasters; and failed states—all of which create an environment ripe for terrorist proliferation. Afghanistan and Somalia have shown that where anarchy and radicalism run rampant, so does terrorism. In order to counter the spread of these maladies, the United States must establish access with select, promising African nations.

This article concentrates on access as the enabler of the military, economic, and diplomatic elements of US power projection. It discusses the strategic importance of access as a means of demonstrating soft-power projection;<sup>3</sup> addresses how regional, operational strategies for cooperation create greater access, albeit not without significant challenges; and identifies emerging concepts of assuring access to

show how the United States can best prepare for future air expeditions into Africa.

## The Strategic Importance of Global Access

*In Africa, promise and opportunity sit side by side with disease, war, and desperate poverty. This threatens both a core value of the United States—preserving human dignity—and our strategic priority—combating global terror.*

—National Security Strategy, 2002

The NSS notes that, “together with our European allies, we must help strengthen Africa’s fragile states, help build indigenous capability to secure porous borders, and help build up the law enforcement and intelligence infrastructure to deny havens for terrorists.”<sup>4</sup> We cannot realize these goals without significant power projection and sustainment to a continent of immense size and diversity. The US/African regional-security strategy must respect multilateral alliances while preparing bilateral engagements that build confidence and strengthen assured access.

The administration of Pres. George W. Bush clearly recognizes that it must focus its attention on South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia as anchor states for regional-security cooperation. Yet, other regional players also deserve recognition for maintaining good governance and implementing responsible, democratic political systems—namely Ghana, Gabon, Mali, and Senegal. The administration’s policy towards regional-security cooperation recognizes these states, as it does the entire Sahel. Indeed, the Pan-Sahel Initiative is the most recent cooperative effort spun off from the global war on terrorism.<sup>5</sup> Budding democracies have granted

US requests for access to counter emerging crises. We will need assured access to shore up rapid response once conflict flares, as it has recently in Liberia and numerous times in Africa over the last decade.

Striving to balance global power as it develops new national-security strategies, the United States finds itself in a unique hegemonic position. From a classic political perspective, this is not necessarily bad because if one nation dominates the international arena with overwhelming power, peace and stability reign since there is little point in declaring war against such a state. Political scientist Robert Gilpin has argued that “Pax Britannica and Pax Americana, like Pax Romana, ensured an international system of relative peace and security.”<sup>6</sup> Unlike the Britain of the past, which controlled a global empire, America possesses a large, self-sustaining home economy and has the ability to project great soft power (the art of diplomacy, transparent military cooperation, and economic reform) to all corners of the globe. Thus, the United States is more apt to send food and medical supplies than a man-of-war to Africa.

Power projection and access go hand in hand. In this article, air expedition becomes the means of power projection, and access is its enabler. But one has to peel back the discussion of national power another layer or two to adequately portray the type of power best suited to project towards Africa. Of course, the United States must always be prepared to exercise both military and economic hard power to induce other parties to change their positions. Major force deployments and economic sanctions are two examples of the compelling projection of hard power, which is relatively easy to use when access is predictable and overseas presence extensive. A large, permanent US presence

and investment (military and economic) in Europe, the Pacific, and the Middle East demonstrate America's willingness to use hard power. But one can exercise power indirectly: that is, a country can obtain desired outcomes in world politics because other countries admire its values, emulate its example, aspire to its level of prosperity and openness, and therefore want to follow it.<sup>7</sup>

Soft power is more than persuasion or the ability to move people by argument.<sup>8</sup> The United States would be in dire straits if it lost the ability to shape the international landscape by credibly projecting hard and soft power. America's hegemony comes into play less often when its soft power is strong and associated with the tenets of benevolence and human dignity.

Africa is ripe for soft-power engagement. Great hard-power resources, such as those invested in the Middle East, Europe, and the Pacific, are not needed in Africa. Soft-power projection will go a long way towards securing vital American interests. Credible projectors of soft power include Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, each of which has political clout that vastly exceeds its military and economic weight. All four nations incorporate attractive soft implements such as economic aid and peacekeeping assets into their definition of national interests, thereby negating the necessity for costly hard power. Limited objectives allow for exclusive soft-power foreign policies.

Interestingly, governments are not the only wielders of soft power. US industries and NGOs develop their own soft power, which might either complement or compete with official foreign policy. But there is no room for friction between players when scarce resources are better applied by collaborative efforts that assure widespread access—a classic, symbiotic soft-power relationship. In Africa, competing

unilateral efforts tend not to survive. From the onset, complementary private and public cooperation has a greater impact and longer-lasting effects. For that reason, the US military plays a substantial role in transporting, distributing, and supporting the wares of many NGOs and official government programs.

There are ways to assure that all US interests in Africa are safely supportable and, if necessary, introduced in-theater via expeditionary, global-mobility, and rapid-response task forces. Little difference exists in the planning, executing, and sustaining of air expeditionary task forces for other-than-major conflicts. Although their scope and character are vastly different, the strength of air expeditionary task forces lies in the transformational capabilities of each.

In Africa, the potential for rapid global mobility and agile combat support (ACS), reinforced with distributed command and control capabilities, is perfect for future area operations. Air expeditionary forces (most likely part of a joint task force) will rapidly move, position, and sustain these forces. Rapid global mobility demonstrates an improved ability to support operations with a smaller force and footprint while transiting distances in minimum time. ACS, which begins well before deployment, provides many capabilities crucial to successful beddown and sustainment, including readying the force; assessing, planning, and posturing for employment; tailoring and preparing for movement, deployment, and reception; employing effectively; and sustaining appropriate levels of support for theater operations.<sup>9</sup>

Although these concepts and capabilities sound promising, nonstate entities preparing for conflict with the United States will seek to capitalize on the great distances US forces must travel to engage

them. Those evasive enemies realize all too well the near-absolute reliance of the United States on unimpeded access to and use of airfields and bases in the potential theater of conflict.<sup>10</sup> In today's environment of crisis action, quickly getting in-theater is as important as what one does after forces arrive. The Bush administration's greatest concern for the projection of military power to Africa is establishing select sites that form the greatest foothold once the boots hit the ground.<sup>11</sup>

## The Difficulties of African Access

*For the Armed Forces, troubled states and transnational threats will probably occupy an increasing amount of their time in the future, further complicating existing OPTEMPO problems. The ethnic, tribal, and religious extremism revived by the end of the Cold War gives no indication of abating.*

—Hans Binnendijk  
“A Strategic Assessment  
of the 21st Century”

Globalization is the child of US foreign policy. In the most rudimentary terms, globalization is a worldwide network of interdependence.<sup>12</sup> So intertwined is globalization with world economies, societies, environments, and defense that some members of the world community have become dependent upon the more endowed nations for vital sustenance. Africa is the norm rather than the exception insofar as it receives substantial percentages of official development assistance from developed nations: France (43 percent), Germany (28 percent), Italy (69 percent), United Kingdom (35 percent), and

United States (15.4 percent).<sup>13</sup> As a percentage of total, worldwide foreign assistance, the US contribution is deceptive; actually, it represents more than \$2.1 billion of committed funds in 2003.

The hub-and-spoke metaphor fits military globalism more closely than economic, environmental, or social globalism because American dominance is so much greater in that domain.<sup>14</sup> So globally entrenched is American military dominance that less capable nations lean on bilateral security agreements to fill their own defense gaps. In order to ensure viability, the United States negotiates assured access via these mutual agreements, a process that leads to every possible forward-basing option—from “fortress Europe” installations to remote stations in forgotten corners of the globe. Although significant US forces remain in Europe, the Middle East, and the Western Pacific, force drawdowns over the last 15 years have left significant gaps in overseas presence.

This unequal distribution of military hard and soft power in preindustrial and industrial parts of the world has taken its toll in very short order. What had been a modest US military-cooperation program in strategic locations such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, and Zaire was all but ended by the late 1980s. Over the last decade, US military presence was reduced to nothing more than limited airlift operations supporting diplomatic missions, minor exercises and exercise-related construction, port calls, and sparse special-forces training and familiarization (focused on the Horn of Africa).

As limited Navy and Marine assets become tied down with current and projected hot spots in the eastern Mediterranean, Persian Gulf, and Indian and Pacific littoral, the west, central, and southern parts of Africa become vulnerable due to a gap in rapid US military assistance tradi-

tionally performed by Marine expeditionary units afloat in the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Although strategic- and tactical-airlift assets of the US Air Force have flown extensively in Africa, these missions must contend with the danger of nonstandard operations, limited access, and degraded capabilities.

Today, OEF sets the stage for future deployments of air expeditionary forces. Lessons learned from the expeditionary methods and processes used to bed down air assets at Bagram and Kandahar, Afghanistan, and in Manas, Kyrgyzstan, provided the practical environment to test and standardize the laydown of air expeditionary forces.<sup>15</sup> The deliberate planning, task organization, and ACS necessary to ensure safe, supportable beddown should be captured as the standard for future air expeditions. Combining OEF lessons learned with years of flying air operations in Africa provides a baseline that should set the standard for the beddown and basing of air expeditionary forces in any corner of the globe.

Any contingency operation will entail an inherent amount of uncertainty. However, the fact that the future remains uncertain is no excuse for failing to make adequate preparations.<sup>16</sup> Any major operation begins with thorough strategic-campaign planning, which recognizes that success depends upon bedding down all the implements of warfare in optimal locations. Force beddown is the responsibility of the regional combatant commander, whose staff must account for the specific beddown requirements of its air component once the total number and type of aircraft are known. According to joint doctrine, each service component is responsible for its own deployment and sustainment. The combatant command must approve initial and subsequent beddown, if applicable, to ensure not only

supportability and force protection, but also—and most importantly—the maximum attainable power projection in the least amount of time.

Of equal importance, access is a fundamental facet of combat-support planning because it is inextricably tied to logistics and force protection. If logistics is the lifeblood of airpower, then access to air bases is the skeleton and internal organs through which the blood flows.<sup>17</sup> The need for air bases to employ land-based airpower effectively has been essential since the beginning of forward air operations. Recently, expeditionary air operations have experienced growing pains, the first notable problems inevitably resulting from nonoptimal operations.

Aside from distance, preindustrial Africa is rife with other unique access challenges to the projection of air expeditionary forces. For example, among the 286 larger African airports or airfields currently included in Air Mobility Command's Airfield Suitability and Restrictions Report (ASRR) of May 2000, only 84 percent of major military-surveyed airports can support C-130 aircraft operations (the smallest US Air Force tactical transport).<sup>18</sup> The C-17, designed for better worldwide deployment with greater payload/range and requiring at least 4,000-foot improved runways, can land in less than 65 percent of ASRR-listed major African airfields.<sup>19</sup> The bulk of missions flown into Africa over the last 20 years used C-130 and C-141 airframes—not the strategically valuable C-17, 87 of which were delivered to the US Air Force for global movement of personnel and equipment.<sup>20</sup> In addition to the shortage of suitable runways, limitations concerning such factors as flight safety, available support and fuel on the ground, and airfield security compound to defeat the advantage of the C-17's capability to provide

worldwide response when that asset is already stretched to the limit supporting round-the-clock operations in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Ten significant expeditionary airlift operations have occurred in Africa over the last 10 years, including peacekeeping and enforcement operations, noncombatant evacuation operations, and humanitarian-assistance operations. All of them generated lessons learned that reflected the difficulties of planning for African operations, deployment and employment degradation, and ill-defined exit strategies. National political as well as joint military and service planning all warn of the inherent dangers associated with operating in proximity to or through adversary states and nonstate actors. These groups will use increasingly available weapons and subversion to affect our will and ability to conduct vital African military operations, leaving twenty-first-century Africa with conditions antithetical to US interests. Political unrest, ethnic and religious fighting, pandemic health disasters, and corruption make strategic cooperation tenuous at best. In a continent oozing with porous borders ideal for undetected, transnational terrorist movement, antiaccess operations are not only plausible, but also probable in today's emerging security lexicon.

Add to this volatility unpredictable support, erratic air-traffic control and communications (both ground and airborne), and questionable security, and it is no wonder that US commercial air carriers deliberately stay away from Africa. Nothing disturbs an aviator more than operating in an environment that lacks the staples taken for granted in the rest of the world. Air expeditionary planning, operations, logistics, support, and medical assumptions standard on the other four major continents have been hit-or-miss over the past decade or more in Africa.

Operation Guardian Assistance—the humanitarian-assistance operation conducted in 1996, two years after the atrocities in Rwanda—provides a representative example of problems that plagued US forces attempting to establish airhead operations. Because lack of fuel storage and mobile refuelers limited overall fuel throughput, strategic aircraft sucked so much fuel that the rate of consumption seriously affected other sequential locations along the fuel lines and often cascaded into adjacent countries. Airfield facilities, as well as navigational aids and procedures, did not meet US standards designed to assure flight safety. The lack of current and complete airfield surveys forced last-minute surveys that risked capturing incomplete, critical data that put aircrews, passengers, and cargo in peril. At times aircrews were restricted to daytime visual-flight conditions to conduct operations. Onboard inertial navigation and global positioning systems, as well as aviation-chart visual confirmation, became the directed methods to navigate the vast, blacked-out African distances.

Before undertaking the next inevitable air expedition to Africa, the United States must ensure that properly qualified personnel control the operations. When an attendant air and space operations center (AOC) is task-organized, depending upon the joint task force mission (in Africa most air expeditions are airlift oriented), it must have people with airlift expertise. AOC resident personnel in the air mobility division maintain the qualifications needed for most African missions, but dedicated load planners must be added to the joint manning document. Stripping load planners from overworked tanker airlift-control elements is not the solution.

The US Air Force faces a critical physical challenge—specifically, availability and operability—in basing expeditionary

forces. Availability, as applied to access, refers to using the best possible airfields for operating bases in the employment of airpower. Nations will grant the best physical access to US forces when it is in their best interests to do so, with economic return the predominant consideration and availability a secondary concern. If the price is right, availability becomes a moot point.

To the Airman, operability refers to using an airfield at peak efficiency in support of assigned aircraft. The airfields necessary to sustain modern aircraft employment require tremendous infrastructure to support today's technologically sophisticated weapon systems. The dilemma of modern airpower is that it tends to come with a very large footprint on the ground. Oftentimes, the forward airfield requires significant infrastructure improvements in order to accommodate long-term deployments. Then again, a Desert Storm combat beddown in Africa is unlikely. We are more apt to see force laydowns similar to the OEF model. Certainly cost will be a factor in establishing assured access according to US standards.

Availability and operability access became significant challenges at Ganci Air Base (AB) at the Manas Airport, Kyrgyzstan.<sup>21</sup> Here, need superseded cost as access to air bases in Central Asia became preeminent during the first weeks of OEF, and the physical challenge of availability and operability outweighed other limited options. Manas Airport required significant infrastructure improvements and additional major construction to handle a moderate strategic-airlift throughput (it had enough ramp space to park only four C-17 or C-5 transports).<sup>22</sup> The price of access is high at Manas: the US military is expected to pump more than \$40 million annually into the weak local economy.<sup>23</sup>

We must not overlook opportunities for potential force beddowns and ade-

quate basing in Africa. Understandably, this investment may come in many forms, often costing more than monetary reimbursement to a host nation. The political cost of opening contingency-base access can mark the beginning of a long-term relationship built on the foundation of negotiations. For example, in Turkey, the United States collocated operating-base employment at Incirlik AB, beginning in 1954. It started as a forward refueling and supply base in a remote location, very similar to places from which the United States has operated in Africa. That's 49 years of growing US presence from a single expeditionary base.

This is not to suggest that engagement with Africa should mature to a sub-Saharan Incirlik. But the time for action has arrived. Security cooperation in Africa comes at substantial savings compared to the situations in Europe and Central Asia. The scope of African initiatives is a fraction of those associated with OEF. Waiting until the beginning of hostilities or crisis response to initiate beddown actions will delay the full effectiveness of expeditionary airpower. Preemptive engagement can lead to assured access when we need rapid global-mobility beddown.

This discussion has concentrated on air expeditionary beddown; sustainment of those forces is crucial to prolonged operations. A network of efficient and effective in-theater distribution points must quickly link forward forces to the lifeline attached to the continental United States.<sup>24</sup> Generation and maintenance repair must be secured because they are key to sustained operations.

In a crisis situation, the time spent deploying forces and ACS is the mitigating factor in decision making with regard to basing. Deployment to a robust base significantly improves security options and missions spanning the spectrum of con-

flict. Beddown to an austere location hinders responsiveness because of conflicting resource requirements between making air base improvements and sustaining operations; such a scenario detracts from the expeditionary nature of the emerging global-mobility concept of operations.

## Recommendations

*Prepare for the location to which you are going, take the right people and equipment, get there early to oversee the establishment of base support, build rapport with host nation commanders, work within the theater command structure for personnel issues and sustainment of forces.*

—Maj Gen Roger A. Brady, USAF  
“Building and Commanding  
Expeditionary Units”

Given a joint force commander’s strategic appreciation of the political, economic, military, and social forces affecting access, and assuming that the strategic and operational objectives needed to accomplish the mission are understood by the components, one of the first considerations for concrete planning becomes beddown and basing.<sup>25</sup> Preparing force beddown involves conveying to the supported combatant commander the best estimate of the air-component planning requirements and future operational assessment. Accurately assessing support capabilities and infrastructure is critical to the US Air Force’s agility because it allows planners to determine support requirements and properly tailor force packages.<sup>26</sup> Also, the strategy division of the air component’s AOC must incorporate force beddown and basing information in its concept of operations. Having current data and pre-

approved expeditionary sites is the basis of US Air Forces in Europe’s (USAFE) preapproved expeditionary deployment sites (PEDS) concept.<sup>27</sup>

The United States can ill afford to waste valuable deployment planning on extensive unilateral negotiations as in Central Asia and the Middle East. The need for preplanned, preapproved airfields for US aircraft was identified in the Government Audit Office’s report on Kosovo air operations. Canceling of the collocated operating-base concept in the mid-1990s left a strategic gap in assured US access to potential hot spots in USAFE’s area of responsibility (which includes 41 of the 54 African nations). USAFE had to come up with a concept to rectify the reduction from 25 to eight permanently accessible airfields in-theater—none of which are on the African continent.

The PEDS concept is based upon requirements. Thus, US European Command must use the recent NSS and follow-on foreign-policy guidance to define the soft-power projection requirements of selective sub-Saharan access. Ghana, Gabon, Mali, and Senegal are all credible PEDS candidates because they show relative political stability and an overt willingness to support the United States in the global war on terrorism. The strategic locations of these four nations amply fit the hub-and-spoke requirement for joint US air expeditionary operations.

Upon concept approval by US European Command and the Department of Defense, PEDS preliminary-agreement negotiations would set the ball in motion. Specifically, they would initiate host-nation concept approval for US beddown and operations of a specific airfield for specific types of aircraft and expeditionary support. After host-nation approval, negotiated agreements must include the following:

1. Status-of-forces-agreement permission for deployed US military and US contractors.
2. US contracting practices.
3. Tax relief.
4. Base facilities available for use by expeditionary forces.
5. Host-nation support.
6. US payment for facility use, repairs and upgrades, and services received.<sup>28</sup>

As we learned through OEF negotiations, standing arrangements—such as the memorandum of understanding (MOU) for potential airfield utilization—accelerate force beddown and, more importantly, can activate a host nation's force-protection plan well in advance of reception. This simple consideration hastens the employment of expeditionary forces.

Minimal resource allocation to improve a host nation's facility assures our access partner of US commitment that previously was just a signature on an MOU regarding the joint use of designated air bases. Seeing the implementation of MOU technical arrangements in such areas as personnel and equipment beddown in forward locations, initiation of local contract services, and facility improvement/new construction bolsters good relations that pay big dividends when forces arrive in the host country.

Enough cannot be said about paying attention to details in a noncrisis mode. Timely supply routes and methods can be activated and tested in advance of the deployment of expeditionary forces. In essence, this provides an opportunity for ACS to rehearse critical tasks. Most importantly, force protection can be assessed and deficiencies identified and corrected without risking loss of life or equipment.

## Conclusion

This article has emphasized the transformation of the US Air Force from deploying cumbersome, large-footprint air packages (poorly synchronized with other services' power projection) to rapidly deployable expeditionary airpower tailored to meet overseas rapid response. The Air Force can learn much from the Marine Corps, which has long had a true appreciation for expeditionary-force employment and, indeed, embodies the word *expeditionary*. Marine combat doctrine directly addresses the concept of combined-arms integration to maximize the effects of an air and ground task force—the forebear of today's joint task force. Marine survival depends upon full integration of capabilities, as will the joint forces that join in tomorrow's security challenges.

Another point worth pondering involves taking advantage of time. Why deploy into austere locations if time is available and if robust major operating bases are accessible? Again, preemptive air expeditionary concepts, such as PEDS, provide significant capability to sustain protracted military operations. The decision to commit resources is difficult to recall once initiated. US planners and combatant commanders must realize that power projection is not easily reversible. We must implement the best options because the speed of decisive airpower employment will outrun the ability to reposition a poorly conceived concept of basing.

As Sebastian Mallaby remarked in the *Washington Post*, "The paradox of American power at the end of this millennium is that it is too great to be challenged by any other state, yet not great enough to solve problems such as global terrorism and nuclear proliferation."<sup>29</sup> Although he made this statement prior to 11 September 2001, it

still rings true. Unfortunately, the war against nonstate players will gravitate to a point where the advantage goes to the terrorist. Africa promises to be such a haven, for it overflows with widespread poverty and unemployment that create idle masses attracted to anything that promises financial gain and greater self-esteem. The unfamiliar landscape of sub-Saharan Africa can be bounded only by greater American

presence—and that can occur only with assured access to well-planned and capable airfields that enable hub-and-spoke operations to remote areas ripe for subversion. The plan of access presented here is a step in the right direction. America's door to Africa will remain open as long as US interests remain focused and funded. Soft-power projection is the goal—air expeditionary access is the key. □

#### Notes

1. Henceforth, this article will refer to *sub-Saharan Africa* as *Africa*. North Africa, composed of the littoral Mediterranean nations, does not pose as great a challenge to air expeditionary operations because the United States has fostered long-lasting relations and access to collocated operating bases during contingencies; these bases receive periodic attention during binational and multinational exercises.

2. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, September 2002), 29, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf> (accessed 9 June 2003).

3. Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 8.

4. *National Security Strategy*, 10.

5. Briefing, Steve Metz, subject: Africa and Future US Policies and Strategies, USAF Air War College, 20 February 2003.

6. Quoted in Nye, *Paradox of American Power*, 15.

7. *Ibid.*, 8.

8. *Ibid.*, 9.

9. Draft briefing, Headquarters USAF/XOXS, subject: Air and Space Expeditionary CONOPS, September 2002.

10. US Department of Defense, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, *Final Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Globalization and Security* (Washington, DC: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, December 1999), <http://www.acq.osd.mil/dsb/globalization.pdf> (accessed 9 June 2003).

11. Briefing, Dr. Cindy Courville, deputy assistant national security advisor for African affairs, National Security Council, subject: The NSC and Foreign Policy, USAF Air War College, 23 January 2003.

12. Nye, *Paradox of American Power*, 8.

13. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *Africa: U.S. Foreign Assistance Issues* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 3 December 2002), 9.

14. *Ibid.*

15. "Summary—Ganci AB at Manas, Kyrgyzstan," JULL no. 02403-56195 (unclassified), *Air Force Center for Knowledge Sharing, Lessons Learned*, 4 December 2001, <https://afknowledge.langley.af.mil/afcks/Search/JULLsrch.asp> (accessed 9 June 2003).

16. Lt Col Karen U. Kwiatkowski, *Expeditionary Air Operations in Africa: Challenges and Solutions* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, December 2001), 13.

17. Julian Thompson, *The Lifeblood of War: Logistics in Armed Conflict* (London: Brassey's Ltd., 1991), 3–5.

18. Kwiatkowski, *Expeditionary Air Operations in Africa*, 13.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Boeing Corporation, *C-17 Globemaster III*, 19 March 2003, <http://www.boeing.com/defense-space/military/c17/flash.html> (accessed 9 June 2003).

21. "Summary—Ganci AB."
22. John Hendren, "Beddown in Bishkek," *Air Force Magazine*, July 2002, 58.
23. Ibid.
24. Air Force Doctrine Document 2-4, *Combat Support*, 22 November 1999, 15.
25. Air Force Instruction 13-1AOC, *Operational Procedures—Aerospace Operations Center*, 1 July 2002, 18.
26. Ibid., 11.
27. US Air Forces in Europe, *Pre-Approved Expeditionary Deployment Sites (PEDS) Concept*, 13 January 2003.
28. Ibid.
29. Sebastian Mallaby, "A Mockery in the Eyes of the World," *Washington Post*, 31 January 1999, B5.

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