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A Conference was held on 6 March 1946 for
the Staff and Faculty of the Command and Staff Course
and members of the Army Air Forces School Staff.

The attached lectures were given.

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General Fairchild's speech, 6 March 1946

I want to try to give you my views on the Air University, its overall policy with regard to the educational approach, its purpose, its mission and the approach that it should make to the educational problems of the AAF. What I am going to say is more or less generalized. I am going to attempt to deal with the Air University and all the various schools and colleges which go to make it up, and not specifically with the Command and General Staff School itself. However, I believe that it will be beneficial to all of us to have an exchange of viewpoints at this time. It might save us time and difficulties in the end if we understand what it is we are driving toward and everyone drives toward the same goal. My remarks do not apply specifically to any single course or any of the individual schools. They are quite generalized, perhaps because of my experience, all of us being conditioned by their own experience, you even as I. I spent the bulk of the war with the Joint Strategic Survey Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, where I was dealing with matters of global strategy and overall policy which came before the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I have therefore had a rather unique view of the forest but I haven't gotten close enough to most of the trees to even know just what trees go to make up the forest.

I would like to speak briefly on the matter of nomenclature. It has become a habit to speak of this school system we are setting up here as the AAF post-war educational system.

I would like to advance the idea that this is not a post-war educational system. It is a pre-war system. I know you all accept that and it sounds right but I want you to believe it and think it all the time. It is a pre-war system. We are not turning our eyes backward just to find out what it is we found out during this war and teach it to our younger officers. We are trying to prepare our younger officers for the next war and not for the past war.

I am going to go on and try to emphasize that point and try to burn it into your minds because I know you all accept it and say, "sure, that's right", but I want you to be so conscious of it that you have it in the back of your minds as you approach each problem. As you examine each part of your various courses, you should have in your minds that this is a pre-war school. If we should be so fortunate as not to have another war then of course this school system is wasted in the same way that an insurance premium is wasted if you don't die or your house does not burn down.

The slogan of the Air University should therefore be: Preparation for future war, not preparation to fight past wars over again. This is going to be a constant battle. It never has been to the AAF previously but it will from now on.

The older arms have gone through this. We have been a very young arm. We have had no traditions of accomplishment behind us. We have not been able to point back with pride and say that this is the way we did a certain thing. The older arms have had that and until now we haven't. Now, we do have a

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tradition. Most of you people know all about wars because you have just been out and won one. This course, however, must not be a history of the past war. To do that, I think, would be fatal to the Air University, extremely dangerous for the AAF, and perhaps for the very future of our nation. The course that we give in the Air University must be forward looking. We must look forward to the next war, but this is not to say that another war is necessarily going to be fought.

You all are fully aware that no war is ever like its predecessors and this fact has gotten increasingly true as we have gone into the scientific age. Weapons formerly changed very slowly and the lessons of the past war were more or less directly applicable to the next war. This is not true since we have gotten into the scientific age. Fundamental weapons and capabilities are now changing with tremendous rapidity. It is now a matter of being forward looking. Not holding on unduly to the traditions, weapons and methods of the past is very important. Citing an illustration - - I have heard that General Marshall in 1937 or 1938, looking around for an arm to take over the new mechanization to create what is now the Armored Forces, approached the then Chief of Cavalry with the idea that the Cavalry should take over this field of mechanization and that the Cavalry was ideally suited for this new role. I have heard that the Chief of Cavalry said he was willing to do this but it was quite unthinkable to do it as the War Department General Staff proposed - to convert a horse regiment into a

mechanized regiment and make it into an armored regiment. The results of that decision are quite apparent. If that decision had become the War Department decision our whole approach to this war would have been quite different; perhaps the victories that were won in France would have been impossible. This is an example for the AAF for the future. We must not cling so closely to old traditions, aims and methods that we follow the Cavalry into a minor role. The AAF tradition has been and it should continue to be forward thinking. Thinking for the future and not thinking of the past.

By what I have said I do not mean that we should ignore the past and particularly the lessons of the past war. It is my thought however that we should not primarily teach of the past war but that we should rather seek through our studies to derive principles which will be applicable in a future war and that those principles are what we should teach rather than what has been done in the past war.

In connection with the matter of principles, I should like to advance the thought that our schools here should restudy the phrasing of the currently accepted principles of war. Those principles have often been said to be immutable and no doubt they are. However, they are phrased in the language of ground warfare. This is perfectly natural, since they were phrased by people who had experience with ground warfare. They are directly applicable to ground warfare, but as an aid to the thinking of AAF commanders they are rather obscurely worded, to say the least. I would like to hope that in the future we

could come out with statements of the principles of war phrased from the air viewpoint that will be of some real assistance to the commanders of the future.

To go back to the matter of the derivation of principles. It seems to me we should go back to the past war to try to find historical examples to illustrate the points we wish to make, rather than going back to teach primarily the way a certain thing was done during this past war. We should and must be constantly alive to the trends of the future. I think Colonel Glantzberg is going to sketch for you some of those possible trends this morning. As you listen to what he has to say I believe that you should be keenly alive to what I have just said and try to apply those things to your own particular course, your own particular problems. The rapidity of scientific progress today is greater than it has ever been before. I think it would be worthwhile to remember for a moment that right here on Maxwell Field the Wright Brothers made some of their first flights. There are plenty of people around Montgomery who remember very well when the Wright Brothers flew here. It is worth remembering that the first hangar that was ever built is still there at Fairfield. Remember ^{that} back in 1927 Billy Mitchell, who was then regarded as highly visionary wrote a book called "Winged Victory". Nobody paid very much attention to him. He tried his best in that book to paint the picture of the future. He sketched what the bomber of the future should be, calling upon his imagination as much as he could. He wrote that the bomber of the future must go

at least 180 mph with a 500-mile radius. I was in the engineering school that year when his book was printed and all the traditional engineers at Wright Field just laughed and laughed because everybody knew you could not build a bomber like that.

I should like to speak briefly about the school mission - As I see it the school mission is primarily two-fold. The first part of that mission is to impart factual knowledge and skills to officers. All of our younger officers are more or less specialists, necessarily so. They are fighters, bombers, bombardiers, or communicators or ordnance people, or something of that sort. As they gain in experience - - in years of service - - it becomes necessary that they be given a view outside of their specialty. Our Tactical School will still place a great deal of emphasis on specialization. When we come to the Command and Staff School, however, we get almost completely away from the specialist and are engaged in rounding that officer out and fitting him for wider responsibility.

The second part of that mission and a very important part, is to shape the thinking of the Army Air Forces for the future. We must do that - it is an essential role of the Air University. Here at the Air University we are going to have the greatest collection of senior people whose job is to think that there will be anywhere in the AAF. As all of you are well aware, the man who is on an operational job does his thinking on his own time. For you men and those who are to

join you here, however, your job is to think. That is what you are being paid for. The future of the AAF School and the very future of this nation may well depend on how correct that thinking is.

Our thinking in the past, overall, was largely correct and we came through this war in pretty good style. If it had not been for the correctness of our thinking we would not have had a B-17 or B-29. We must be sure that our thinking for the future is as correct, overall, as our thinking for the past has been. That function is so important that all of us must contribute to the utmost of our ability. There is only a minor place in the Air University for the man who cannot contribute in shaping thought for the future.

General Barnes has told me of the framework which he has established for the Command and Staff School. He has said that he divides the framework into four principal parts:

1. The tools, present and future.
2. Proper employment of the tools.
3. The Job to be accomplished.
4. Application of the tools to the job.

I believe this is a very good framework. It follows quite closely the mission I have outlined. The first two of those parts, the tools and the proper employment of the tools clearly fall into the first part of our mission to impart factual

knowledge and skills. The third and fourth points fall into the second part of the mission, to shape the future thinking of the AAF.

The division of time between the first two and the last two items will obviously vary greatly between the schools. In the Tactical School the majority of the time will be devoted to the first two and only a minor amount of time will be placed on the last two. In the Command and Staff Course, the emphasis has shifted and a much greater amount of time will be devoted to the last two parts though still the great bulk of time falls on the first two parts. In the Air War College practically all of the time is devoted to the last two with just a minimum on the first two parts.

I would like to speak now about what I think is the theme of these various courses and one which should run through all of the Schools. That theme seems to me is that the ultimate mission of air power is to force the capitulation of enemy nations through the application of strategic air action. That, it seems to me, is the theme that runs all the way through our instruction. Not that this is the only mission of air power, nor that it is necessarily the most important mission at any given time, but that it is the ultimate mission we are striving for. Our ultimate mission is not to help the Ground Forces get Hill 606, though that may at any given time be the most important mission we have at that time. However, what we must emphasize all the way through is that the ultimate mission of Air Power is to apply air action on enemy nations and force

their capitulation by air action alone.

There is no doubt in my mind that Japan capitulated primarily because of air action against the homeland. Here then we have our first great example of this role of Air Power. From the air viewpoint the other roles of air power (and there are many) are either preparatory to that ultimate role, subsidiary to it or they are defensive roles. This does not mean, once more, that the ultimate mission is always the most important mission at any particular time. It means that it is the final thing we are driving for and that it is what we are going to strive to accomplish when we are able to do so.

One of those other roles is the defensive role and I should like to emphasize that. I have been troubled myself by the lack of thought that I seem to find throughout the Air Forces on the importance of the defensive role of air power. We must correct that line of thinking. The defensive role of air power for the United States in the future war is almost of primary importance. If we are not prepared properly to carry out that defensive role we may never have the opportunity of carrying out an offensive role. Therefore, we must in our course emphasize the importance of this defensive role.

If we consider the character of the United States and its past history we must reach the conclusion that there is no likelihood that the U. S. in the foreseeable future will ever strike the first blow in any major war. We, almost of certainty, will receive the first blow. We can't miss the very obvious

lessons of the last two wars. If a major power starts a war of aggression and gives the United States time enough, eventually she will make up her mind for her own safety and security she must enter that war. It seems to me certain that if any major power starts on a career of aggression in the future, that power will strike first at the U. S. Unless we are in a position to mitigate the force of that attack, it is completely conceivable that our offensive capacity may never be able to get into action. I should like to leave the thought with you therefore that we must provide proper emphasis on the defensive role of the AAF. It will never win a war for us but it may lose a war for us if we neglect it.

In that connection I should like to emphasize the correct importance of intelligence. Intelligence on a national scale. If we do not do better in the future than we have in the past this blow will possibly come without warning. I think myself that a centralized national intelligence system is of such importance as to rank fully equal with the maintenance of the Armed Forces of the nation.

I think that we must emphasize the importance of national intelligence and the importance of air forces intelligence. That runs both to an appreciation and as full a knowledge as possible of the intentions of an enemy nation and also to its capacity. What that nation is able to do in the way of new weapons. What scientific advancement has the nation been able to make which we must be prepared to meet.

About this future war of the United States, there has been a profound change from the past during this last war. There has been a complete redistribution of world power. That has a lot of implications for us here in the United States and particularly for us in the Air Forces. Out of this redistribution of world power two giant nations have emerged, the United States and Russia. Another important nation is the United Kingdom but it does not by any means rank in the same way as the U. S. and Russia. It is far below them in strength, actual and potential.

This fact of the redistribution of world power has an important bearing on our thinking. For the first time in our history we have a potential enemy. Not a potential enemy for political reasons or because of any clash of interests but a potential enemy because of the mere fact of the new distribution of world power. It is perfectly obvious upon careful examination that if the United States is to fight a major war in the foreseeable future that Russia must be on the other side. That is so because there isn't enough power left in the world outside of Russia to make another major war possible against the United States. It is unthinkable for us to come to war with the United Kingdom. Therefore, for the first time we have one potential enemy just due to the new world power distribution and the military facts of life.

In the period between the wars in our thinking and planning we had no potential enemy. We did not do too well at our thinking and planning for this reason. That condition

is not true now and the potential enemy for the foreseeable future is very clear. This does not mean at all that we are actually going to have a war with Russia. I sincerely trust we are not, and there seems to be no basic reason why we should. On the other hand, if this major war is to come, we must find Russia on the other side of the fence.

Knowing that to be true we must study the character of such a war. First we find Russia to be a vast land which dominates the whole Eurasian continent. The power of that entity is such that all of Europe must fall under its domination if there is a major war. The same is largely true in the Far East.

In looking at that picture and imagining a major war between the U. S. and Russia, it is rather obvious that a Naval force cannot hope to be decisive in that war. Not too much can be accomplished by the blockade of the Eurasian continent. While a Naval blockade undoubtedly would be employed and would be annoying it could hardly be considered to be a decisive weapon.

Much the same conclusion could be reached about the Ground forces in such a war. I believe it would be impossible for us to support logistically the size forces that would be capable of penetrating to and beyond the Ural mountains from the coast of Europe and surely this would be true of an attempted penetration from the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, it seems to me that this emphasizes the importance of what I have said before. The ultimate mission of air power is the application of that air power directly upon an enemy nation with the idea of forcing capitulation by that air action alone.

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~ That I have said, I do not mean to decry at all the importance of our Naval forces and particularly of our Ground forces. In order to carry out any such operations effectively and efficiently we must have advanced bases. The Air Forces by themselves cannot seize, hold or protect those advance bases. Neither can they surely deny similar bases to an enemy.

We must envisage the necessity for large scale major airborne and air supported operations. Quite likely also major amphibious operations would be required in order that these base sites may become available to us and that they may be held and supported. This indicates the necessity for stimulating thought throughout the AAF along these lines so that we may eventually emerge with a carefully considered and thought out war plan.

The development of such a plan must be one of the major roles of the Air War College but consideration of these problems must not be neglected in the Command and Staff School as well. Obviously there are many ramifications to such a war plan. It involves matters of development and procurement and cold weather operation and the future of guided missiles and long range target seeking missiles.

All of this, I think, emphasizes once more the importance, for the Air University, and for the AAF, and for the nation, of approaching these problems with flexibility, imaginativeness and a forward looking viewpoint, based on the soundest principles that we are able to derive from our study of the past and from a full consideration of the developments of scientific warfare

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that are going on right now. Such an approach is essential
to the fulfillment of the role of the Air University.

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