

Chapter 12

Concluding Remarks

A great deal of progress has been made in the technologies that would support combat and combat support roles for UAVs. Many of the requisite technologies are mature; others need additional development. Moreover, there appears to be greater acceptance of UAVs in the conduct of Air Force mission tasks. The study group concludes that a number of key missions should be pursued as development and demonstration programs by the Air Force. These suggested programs will serve to establish the utility of the UAV and develop the operational concepts.

The study group observes the need for an evolutionary approach to introducing the UAV into the Air Force mission, with special consideration given to UAV operation as complementary to manned aircraft. Such approaches to demonstrating incrementally increasing capabilities will allow technical obstacles to be overcome as well as rules and concepts to be developed for successful integration of UAVs into the civil and military airspace environment and operational tactics. An acquisition strategy with carefully selected milestones, reviews, and decision points will aid in assuring sound program management practices.

With careful management and appropriate diligence, the UAV can become an important element of the United States Air Force. The study group encourages Air Force leadership to make available the support and resources to realize the benefits of these emerging weapon systems.

UAVs have significant potential to enhance the ability of the Air Force to project combat power in the air war.

Be cautious to avoid requirements growth!

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