

BULLET BACKGROUND PAPER

ON

CGO SOLUTIONS TO AIR FORCE MORAL/ETHICAL LAPSES

PURPOSE

Identify root causes of moral and ethical failures in the Air Force, and propose COAs for CGOs to reinforce the AF's commitment to its core values.

DISCUSSION

- Identifying Drivers Affecting the Ethical Spectrum

-- Ethical and moral lapses in the AF are not isolated events, but rather punctuated events occurring on a spectrum of ethical behavior. This spectrum exists in a complex culture with competing and conflicting values that can create a moral dilemma for Airmen. Positive and negative behavioral drivers determine the choices of an individual who is faced with such a dilemma. An organization can also influence the individual's decision-making through separate negative drivers collectively referred to as "moral gravity." Lapses in an individual's commitment to the Air Forces Core Values occur when positive individual and organizational drivers are not emphasized in the presence of moral gravity.

-- The drivers affecting the spectrum of ethical behavior can be consolidated into six core categories: Using Core Values (particularly Excellence) as Standards; Mentorship and Feedback; Lessons Learned from Previous Ethical Lapses; Unified Group Vision (Resolution of Competing Values); Culture of Trust, Transparency, and Accountability; and Locus of Control.

- Proposed COAs for CGOs

-- **What should CGOs BE?** Before determining what CGOs can do to positively affect ethical behavior, this Think Tank took an intermediary step of creating a vision of what roles and responsibilities CGOs should embody.

--- **Officers First:** CGOs' identities should be centered on the fact that they are leaders in the "Profession of Arms," rather than experts or operators in their specialty (AFSC).

--- **Stewards of Culture:** CGOs should be stewards of an AF culture that promotes positive drivers (transparency, accountability, trust) and reduces and mitigates negative drivers (disenfranchisement, individualism, arrogance, disloyalty).

--- **Relentless Streamliners:** CGOs should relentlessly identify and eliminate inefficiencies that impede the mission, constrain the ability to perform primary duties, or inhibit an officers' ability to be an Officer First or a Steward of Culture.

-- **What should CGOs DO?** The following four actions are recommended to promote positive drivers while mitigating negative drivers.

--- **Build a CGO identity:** Develop a document that describes specific responsibilities for CGOs, and provides provide a common understanding of their roles and priorities as leaders in Profession of Arms.

--- **Publish lessons learned:** Create a publication to use as a study tool for learning from others' ethical successes and failures. This publication would focus on analyzing the root causes of ethical lapses (similar to an aircraft mishap report), and examine how these situations could have been avoided. The publication will also identify best practices and recognize ethical successes.

--- **Create a CGO toolkit:** Create a CGO Toolkit that will enable CGOs to focus on continuous professional development, with an emphasis on ethical leadership. The Toolkit would be a repository of lessons learned, helpful tips, and useful resources. It could include a CGO reading list (similar to the CSAF Reading List), tips for giving feedback, and multimedia resources that would emphasize success stories and shared experiences.

--- **Start a To Do List:** Develop a "To Do List" to help identify processes that can be eliminated or streamlined to optimize Airmen's time and values, so that CGOs are better able to focus on professional development and mentorship of peers and subordinates.

-- **Suggestions for Implementation:** The guiding principles for these courses of actions are to preserve CGO time and maintain a "grassroots" perspective.

--- **Think Tank Next:** Think Tank will undergo changes as SOS shifts from an eight-week to a five-week course. Smaller-scaled Think Tanks can be utilized in the future to promote continued critical thinking about Air Force level problems and to accomplish the specific COAs recommended above.

--- **Cross-Check:** Think Tank alumni serve a cadre of CGOs with experience in tackling complex issues at the junior officer level. This expertise can be leveraged to create a Cross Check program—essentially franchising the Think Tank process across the Air Force. Cross Checks would serve as forums in which CGOs could lead discussions and address ethical dilemmas with other individuals of all ranks and AFSCs.

--- **Reachback Cell:** To promote Cross-Check across the Air Force, this Think Tank requests senior leadership support in two ways. First, this Think Tank requests that senior leaders create buy-in for Cross Check at the wing commander level. Second, this Think Tank requests that a Reach Back Cell be established at AETC to support and facilitate the work of Cross Checks around the Air Force.