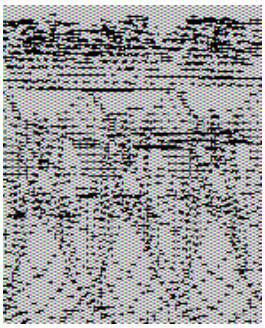

Global Reach—Global Power

Air Force Strategic Vision, Past and Future

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Abstract

The analysis presented in this thesis evaluates the contents of past Air Force strategic vision documents and studies the process used to create such documents. The thesis argument is that strategic vision documents can fulfill important func- tions for an organization, and that greater attention to the process of creating these documents can result in a more effective final product.

The author defines a strategic vision document as a formal, written product endorsed by the organization's senior leader that provides broad and motivational guidance for the organization in the present while providing sage direction for the future. Based on current literature addressing the subject, the author proposes a framework of three attributes and two functions for strategic vision statements. The attributes of such statements are a declaration of organizational identity, a disclosure of future goals, and a view of the methods by which goals will be met. The two functions of strategic vision are to unify internally and advocate externally.

Within this framework the author examines three past Air Force strategic vision documents for content and details the known processes behind their creation and distribution: General Arnold's 1945 report *Air Power and the Future*, the 1990 white paper *The Air Force and US National Security: Global Reach—Global Power*, and the 1992 white paper *Global Reach—Global Power: The Evolving Air Force Contribution to National Security*. Additionally, the author discusses the processes involved in two other official works, *Global Presence* and the ongoing efforts aimed at creating a new Air Force strategic vision.

Based on analysis of both content and process, the author develops and proposes a standard developmental process for vision documents including specific recommendations for content based on required attributes and functions.

About the Author

Maj Barbara J. Faulkenberry is a 1982 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA). After attending undergraduate navigator training, she was assigned to the 912th Air Refueling Squadron, Robins Air Force Base (AFB), Georgia, in the KC-135A/R aircraft. While at Robins, she was chosen for the flight crew of the United States Central Command commander and flew extensively throughout the Middle East. From October 1987 to October 1988, Major Faulkenberry was assigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Force Management and Personnel, in an Air Staff training assignment. In that capacity, she authored a report to Congress on permanent change of station (PCS) compensation for military members and conducted an analytical study on advanced pay during PCSs that resulted in a change in Department of Defense policy. From the Pentagon, she returned to Strategic Air Command and KC-135s at March AFB, California, as a training flight instructor navigator. After this assignment, Major Faulkenberry taught athletics and instructed cadets in basic aviation at the USAFA. In 1994, she was a distinguished graduate of the Air Command and Staff College and was chosen for the School of Advanced Airpower Studies (SAAS). Following graduation from SAAS, Major Faulkenberry returned to the KC-135 at Grand Forks AFB, North Dakota.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The United States Air Force remains the premier air and space force in the world and an essential contributor to our national security. Our mission is "to defend the United States through control and exploitation of air and space." Our guiding construct [is] Global Reach—Global Power.

—Gen Ronald R. Fogleman
1995 Air Force Posture Statement

Published in 1990 and updated in 1992, the Air Force white paper, *Global Reach—Global Power: The Evolving Air Force Contribution to National Security,* has served the force well as a strategic vision statement, providing airmen with a unifying concept of their role in national security. It served as a vehicle to advocate airpower to congressional leadership. It provided the framework to radically restructure the Air Force in a "new world order" environment. But does it provide the strategic vision to guide the Air Force into the twenty-first century? Is it time to update, to rewrite, to rethink, and to recolor the vision? Can a vision statement ever endure for long in a rapidly changing world? What good is strategic vision? Does it even matter?

Guiding construct, umbrella document, vision statement, strategic vision—whatever you call such a document, it can be vitally important. This study defines a strategic vision document as a formal, written product endorsed by the organization's senior leader that provides broad guidance for the organization in the present while providing sage direction for the future. It encapsulates the organization's mission and purpose, yet is not so detailed as to discuss doctrine.[1] A one-line "quality" vision statement, so fashionable in corporations today, can be used to summarize a vision document but is without substance if it stands alone. A strategic vision statement should declare what the organization is all about, disclose where it is going, and define how it is going to get there. It should provide position, vector, and velocity. It should unify the organization and proclaim itself to outsiders. It should reach back into history for perspective and conviction while boldly projecting the organization into the future.

The Air Force strategic vision statement should provide internal and external audiences the essence of Air Force identity, direction, and intentions. Internally, it should give the Air Force a unifying self-awareness to bring together diverse groups performing a myriad of tasks. Externally, taxpayers who invest billions yearly in their Air Force should have faith in, and an understanding of, the service's value and core competencies. The national

leadership should be assured that the Air Force's direction and velocity will be sufficient to secure national objectives in an uncertain security environment. While the vision document itself may not accomplish these lofty goals directly, it provides a framework critical to their fulfillment.

If a strategic vision statement is important to the Air Force, what principles are key to its content and how can the Air Force craft a more effective document for greater impact? These are the central questions that I address in this study. To answer these questions, I propose a framework for vision analysis and then examine the contents of past documents as well as the process of their creation.

Historical Perspective

Perhaps Gen Henry ("Hap") Arnold was the first air leader to recognize the value of delineating in one concise document the service's position in national defense, its direction at a critical juncture, and the requirement for congressional support. In his final report to the secretary of war in November 1945, General Arnold set out his vision for the service.[2] He used the occasion to proclaim a unique identity for an air force that was yet to be established. He succinctly detailed the postwar downsizing vector and the parallel requirement to retain a core of personnel skilled for operational planning, technical research, and the development of tactics. He foresaw future aerial warfare with supersonic aircraft, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and direct communications between a control center and individual aircraft. General Arnold detailed a strategic vision for the birth of the United States Air Force and its early development. It proved to be the last succinct vision statement for many years to come.

As the cold war began, the US Air Force's responsibility for nuclear deterrence provided a unifying sense of purpose. The national leadership and the public at large accepted and valued the service and its role in national security. The end of the cold war and turbulent years that followed, however, raised many questions. As the Soviet Union stumbled, the focus of the US military blurred, and the service searched for direction. At this critical juncture Secretary of the Air Force Donald B. Rice published a white paper in June 1990 titled *The Air Force and US National Security: Global Reach—Global Power*. It provided the USAF a sense of purpose and direction. It also advocated the role of the Air Force and airpower in an uncertain security environment.

The white paper forecast a wide variety of potential threats to US security. The future became the present when Iraq invaded Kuwait only months after *Global Reach—Global Power* was published. Shortly after the resolution of the Persian Gulf War, the Soviet Union, tormented by political and economic challenges, collapsed. Secretary Rice took time before departing his office to examine the Air Force's identity, direction, and intentions in light of these momentous events. The result of this examination was *Global Reach—Global*

Power: The Evolving Air Force Contribution to National Security published in December 1992. The basic vision remained intact. The Air Force vector had proved true, even when tested by war and dissolution of the Communist empire. The secretary updated his vision statement with vivid examples from Operation Desert Storm and used the revised document to further advocate the role of airpower in national security. Additionally, he took the opportunity to appeal for force modernization projects. Secretary Rice returned to private life but left the service with the vision to "reach out and touch anybody, anywhere."[3]

Years have now passed since the conception of *Global Reach—Global Power*. It would seem logical that the senior USAF leadership would want and need to update the service's vision periodically, particularly during periods of rapid technological advance and turbulence in international politics. In doing so, what principles must be kept in mind? What lessons do the past hold for architects of future strategic vision?

Overview

My argument is that a strategic vision document can fulfill very important functions for an organization, and that greater attention to the *process* of its creation can result in a more effective final product. To this end, I explore the contents and processes of past strategic visions and propose a standard developmental process for vision documents, including specific recommendations for content based on required attributes and functions.

To arrive at this developmental process for architects of future Air Force vision, in chapter 2 I also propose a framework in which to view a vision document based on current literature addressing the subject. The framework's principles include important attributes and functions of strategic vision statements. I conclude with a brief examination of the vision documents of the other military services for future reference.

With the framework principles in mind, my focus in chapter 3 is on the content and, where possible, the processes used to produce three previous strategic vision statements: General Arnold's 1945 report to the secretary of war, specifically the section titled *Air Power and the Future*; the 1990 white paper, *The Air Force and US National Security: Global Reach—Global Power*; and the 1992 white paper *Global Reach—Global Power: The Evolving Air Force Contribution to National Security*.

In chapter 4, I examine the processes behind two other documents. The 1995 released white paper titled *Global Presence* offers a new logic for America's presence strategy. While not a statement of strategic vision, *Global Presence* is a major Air Force pronouncement and has much to teach about steps in the bureaucratic process. Finally, I discuss Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Ronald R. Fogleman's current reexamination of US Air Force strategic vision as a work in progress.

Chapter 5 proposes an inductive, seven-phase process useful for a vision architect. The study concludes by delineating recommendations in content and process for the airpower strategist who seeks to produce a unifying, advocating airpower vision for the future.

The limitations of a study such as this are many. The subject defies quantitative analysis. My understanding of the Air Force organization, congressional advocation, and personal knowledge of the motivations, desires, and visions of senior Air Force leadership are necessarily finite. Additionally, access to intraoffice information within the Pentagon has been limited at times and restricted at others. The lack of trust and communication in Pentagon operations that plagues staff coordination is even more pronounced for an "outsider" attempting an objective analysis of a process with human and political dimensions.

Assumptions include a belief in the need for periodic reexamination of strategic vision. An additional belief is that while specific individuals can make a significant impact on the process, it is the process itself that is most important. Extensive interviews provide the source for much of the information presented on past and current vision statements. While this study does not focus on individuals, the interaction of people in bureaucracies is a critical part of the process.

What follows is certainly not a checklist approach to assembling a strategic vision document. Rather, it provides historically informed principles for key attributes and functions of strategic vision and for the conception of such vision, its formulation, and its proclamation. It emphasizes the often neglected process. The USAF as an institution has never lacked visionaries, but airmen have often lacked a unifying view of that vision and have sometimes been plagued by inept advocacy of its message. The service must be brought together internally with similar identity, direction, and intentions. Air Force members and congressional leadership need to understand airpower and its role in national defense and security clearly if it is to be employed most effectively to secure national strategic objectives.

Notes

1. Doctrine is defined by Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,* as fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives. Gen Merrill A. McPeak, as chief of staff of the USAF, believes "doctrine is important because it provides the framework for understanding how to apply military power." Air Force Manual (AFM) 1-1, *Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force*, vol. 1, March 1992, foreword. This study defines a strategic vision much more broadly than the specific principles of applying military force.

2. Gen Henry ("Hap") Arnold, general of the Army Air Forces, "Third Report of the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces," in Walter Millis et al., eds., *The War Reports* (Philadelphia, Pa.: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1947), 452.

3. Dr Donald B. Rice, secretary of the Air Force, handwritten notes on the future of the Air Force in the post-cold-war world, not dated. These notes outline what became the five pillars of *Global Reach—Global Power*. Notes were provided by Dr Christopher J. Bowie, RAND Issues and Policy analyst, by fax to the author, 23 May 1995.

Chapter 2

Strategic Vision Principles

We will not . . . shrink from the challenges created by new conditions. Our response will require strategic vision—a clear perception of our goals, our interests, and the means available to achieve and protect them. The essence of strategy is determining priorities. We will make the hard choices.

—George Bush
1991 Air Force Academy
Graduation Address

There are almost as many opinions as to what organizational "vision" entails as there are organizations. I take a straightforward approach without adhering to the exhortations of any of the many current management gurus. In this chapter I set forth a framework for analysis of past vision statements by defining the term and discussing its principles. Then I cover the importance of vision for an organization, especially for a military organization and briefly examine the strategic vision statements of the other services for future reference.

Vision, Defined and Explained

Vision commonly is defined in terms similar to "imaginative insight; statesmanlike foresight, sagacity in planning."[1] In this light, vision is the ability of a leader to perceive the state of his or her organization at a time and in a place currently not visible. The leader's perceptive ability is provided through the power of imagination, keen foresight, and a sense of determination. "The vision must precede the statement. The statement doesn't make the vision happen. The vision makes the statement possible and credible. And visions are formed and given life by leaders, not by committees."[2] RAND Corporation analyst Carl H. Builder's definition of vision refers to its function within the organization, as "an imagined objective, a conception of what can and ought to be. Visions provide a coherent basis for future decisions. . . . An institutional vision is a conception of what the organization can and ought to be and be about."[3]

Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, chief of staff of the United States Air Force at this writing, had his own view of vision and how to approach it. He calls his approach "looking back to the present."

> The other approach, the one I suggest we need to take . . . is to fly into the future, maybe to the year 2020. Then, we should put ourselves in a low earth orbit, in a

> position to take a look at what the world will most likely look like, at what society will be like, and what warfare in this period of time will be like. Armed with this perspective, we should look back to the present and identify what path we must take to get us where we need to be in the year 2020 to provide the nation the air and space forces it needs.[4]

These three views of the different aspects of vision address the requirement for leader foresight, the function of vision, and one approach to arriving at the leader's view of the future. My study defines a strategic vision document as a formal, written product endorsed by the organization's senior leader that provides broad and inspirational guidance for the organization in the present while providing sage direction for the future.

All of this begs the question, what must be included in a strategic vision statement to provide "insight," "foresight," "sagacity," and "perspective" to furnish guidance into the future? I propose that the contents of the vision should have three attributes and fulfill two functions.

Attributes of Vision

Three attributes of strategic vision are intuitively obvious. A vision statement should declare organization identity, disclose future goals, and refer to the methods by which the goals will be met. This "who, where, and how" can be thought of in airpower terms such as *position*, *vector*, and *velocity*.[5]

The "position" of an organization describes its identity and purpose and sums up its essence, which should be recognizable externally and accepted internally. The identity can take strength and authority from history. Members of the organization should see the worth of the position and be able to personally identify where they fit within the whole. If the organizational purpose is clear, members will better understand the meaning behind their jobs. "One [of the fundamental elements of vision] is to provide a conceptual framework or paradigm for understanding the organization's purpose—the vision includes a roadmap."[6] The "vector" of an organization points to where the organization is headed. Not all members need be able to personally visualize the destination, but they should believe in the heading and be willing to work for the goal. Finally, the "velocity" of an organization refers to how the organization should get from where it is to where it is going. It specifies the organization's intentions. Detailing every step between here and there is not required; rather, a plan should be evident to reinforce members' belief in the vector. "Velocity" is the enabling mechanism.

Functions of Vision

The functions of a strategic vision statement are to unify the organization and advocate it to external audiences. Within the organization, vision

provides cohesion and focus. "An organization's self-identity is central to its functioning."[7] As the size of the organization increases, the need for a unifying sense of purpose increases to maximize unit effectiveness in complex efforts. A strategic vision statement provides focus for members, some of whom may be far removed from what they perceive as the core purpose of the organization. Members have a need to see where they fit within the essence. Vision provides the common thread for diverse efforts and provides purpose, clear goals, and objectives for which to strive. It can be an effective tool to educate members as to the organization's raison d'être.

The second important function of strategic vision is to advocate. Samuel P. Huntington has this advice:

> Thus, the resources which a service is able to obtain in a democratic society are a function of the *public support* of that service. The service has the responsibility to develop this necessary support, and it can only do this if it possesses a strategic concept which clearly formulates its relationship to the national security.[8]

For a "public" organization, one dependent on external financiers, vision clarifies the service the organization provides to the paying public. It helps ensure the organization has the needed moral or financial support and promotes its necessary or desired vector. The American public no longer passively accepts large expenditures for defense. "The public purse is no longer open for the urgent defense of the nation. National security has moved from a seller's to a buyer's market, with the American public questioning the amount of insurance it needs and the premium it is willing to pay."[9]

Importance of Vision for an Organization

Recent studies focus on the role of organizational vision. A Harvard Business School study concluded that every organizational transformation effort that was successful depended on developing a picture of the future that was easy to communicate (no more than five minutes) both externally and internally.[10] An Office of the Secretary of Defense study of businesses that had successfully coped with exceptional change found that "most had an explicit *strategic vision*—a concise statement of where the organization wants to be in the long term—but they reject detailed long-range plans as unrealistic in highly uncertain situations."[11]

If strategic vision is important to civilian organizations facing the uncertainty of a changing market, it would appear to be even more important to a military organization facing an increasingly difficult to comprehend world externally and the turbulence of downsizing internally.

Politically, the military services of the United States are not independent actors. Rather, they are under the direction of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the secretary of defense, while under the command of the president. Two main documents provide broad guidance. President Clinton begins *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* by

stating, "Protecting our nation's security—our people, our territory and our way of life—is my Administration's foremost mission and constitutional duty."[12] This document assesses America's role in the international context and describes the administration's strategy to advance the nation's interests at home and abroad. The chairman translates the president's document into broad military guidance in the *National Military Strategy of the United States*, which is a guide for service planning.[13]

In a very real sense, the *National Security Strategy* is a strategic vision document for national security affairs. Likewise, the *National Military Strategy* is the Department of Defense strategic vision document for military affairs. Service-specific vision, while crafted to promote internal unity and external advocacy, should take its general direction from these two documents and be consistent with their broad guidance. Unity "springs from a sense of shared purpose, and cohesion is a fundamental necessity for a military organization to fight well."[14] External advocacy is vital when all of an organization's funding comes from its audience and the organization is dependent on a constant source of new members from this outside group to sustain its operations. Samuel Huntington noted,

> If a service does not possess a well-defined strategic concept, the public and the political leaders will be confused as to the role of the service, uncertain as to the necessity of its existence, and apathetic or hostile to the claims made by the service upon the resources of society.[15]

Army, Navy, and Marine Corps Vision

All of the services recognize the need for strategic vision. This recognition apparently did not come at the same point in time and sometimes seemingly came in response to the other services, rather than from recognition of the intrinsic value of the document. The US Navy may be able to take credit for being the first (in recent history) to produce a strategic vision document. A service reported to disdain published strategy and to rely on the "word-of-mouth" method of transmitting doctrine, the Navy broke with tradition to publish *The Maritime Strategy* in January 1986, as they sought to "think through and spell out a maritime strategy within the national military strategy."[16] The Navy white paper was actually a collection of four individual articles, one of which was, "The 600-Ship Navy," that became a very useful slogan in the budget battles on Capitol Hill. The chief of naval operations at the time, Adm James D. Watkins, said,

> We have met the real reformers, and they are us. We have implemented, and will continue to implement reforms, to meet new realities based on a continuously evolving strategic vision. Our critics may take issue with our strategy. We welcome such debate. But they cannot argue that we have no strategy, or that we are not capable of reform.
>
> The Maritime Strategy is a powerful statement of what we stand for, and a focus for reform that is in keeping with our finest traditions.[17]

In September 1992, the Navy followed with *Forward . . . From the Sea*. This document was the initial step in advocating a post-cold-war maritime strategy. It "defined the strategic concept intended to carry the Naval Service—the Navy and Marine Corps—beyond the Cold War and into the 21st century."[18] Additionally it "announced a landmark shift in operational focus and a reordering of coordinated priorities of the Naval Service. This fundamental shift was a direct result of the changing strategic landscape."[19]

Forward . . . From the Sea followed in late 1994 in response to the administration's "expanded guidance" and a shift in Department of Defense focus to "new dangers."[20] Rather than a wholly new document, *Forward . . . From the Sea* "expands and updates the strategic concept articulated in our 1992 paper . . . [it] amplifies the scope of our strategic concept while confirming the course and speed for the Naval Service as defined in the original document."[21] This updated strategic vision document clearly states the purpose of maritime forces and their five fundamental roles in support of the national security strategy. The 10-page document is a publication any Fortune 500 company would be proud to call its own with raised lettering on the cover, gold highlights, and color graphics. The Navy's current slogan is taken from the title, Forward . . . From the Sea.

The Army noted its need for strategic vision as the cold war ended. "The Army needs a vision that will inspire soldiers and elicit understanding from the public if it is to survive the coming loss of money, manpower and units with its spirit intact and its place as a strategic force ensured."[22] The Army's current vision is explained in the September 1994 edition of a yearly document titled *Focus*. In *Army Focus 94: Force XXI*, they "describe our vision of warfare in the next century and highlight some of the dynamic programs we have implemented as we transform from an industrial age army to an informational age force."[23] Described by the Pentagon office that produced it as "kind of an Army vision,"[24] it reflects on historical spirit and values and "serves as a guide to aid the Army in achieving its goals."[25] It is a 47-page, magazine-style document with a color cover and black and white internal pictures and graphs. Their slogan is Force XXI—America's Army for the 21st Century.

The Army has also produced a white paper titled *Decisive Victory: America's Power Projection Army*. Published in October 1994, the paper "charts the direction of change in America's Army."[26] It addresses changes that have guided the Army's transformation from a massive cold war force into a flexible strategic power projection organization and "points the way to the future."[27] Both the white paper and *Force XXI* were distributed on Capitol Hill and to major commands. While *Force XXI* has had a broader internal Army distribution, neither document seems widely known within the organization.[28]

The US Marine Corps believes their strategic concept and role was established long ago by Congress and has remained constant. In fact, the Corps revels in their history and simplicity. Amongst all the services, the Marine Corps has arguably had the most success in expressing their vision. It

is summed up with just one word, *marines*. Their service is not associated with particular equipment or operating medium. No slogan is required; they are simply the marines. Carl H. Builder and James A. Dewar of RAND Corporation admire the Corps approach to vision:

> By far the most powerful means for dealing with planning uncertainties is through what has become generally recognized as vision. An institutional vision, by clarifying "an organization's essential sense of identity and purpose," can resolve many uncertainties by making them irrelevant or inconsequential to the institution's sharply defined purposes. For example, the U.S. Marine Corps' unique sense of identity and clear sense of purpose makes the future uncertainties of budgets and force structures far less consequential than they are to its three brother services, whose identities have become increasingly associated with certain numbers of aircraft carriers, divisions, or aircraft wings. Hence, Marine Corps planning is likely to be less vulnerable than that of the other services to the uncertainty of its future size.[29]

The Marine Corps publishes what appears to be a vision document and Marine Corps primer all in one. The current edition, *Concepts and Issues 1995*, is the Corps thirteenth, and is subtitled *A Certain Force for an Uncertain Future*. The preface of the 100-page document addresses the Marine Corps "strategic concept" before getting into current issues, operations, weapon systems, and a financial overview. The 5″ by 9″ glossy booklet contains color pictures and graphs.

Clearly, all three services have found strategic vision to be an important tool. Whether for service advocation to the public and congressional policy makers and budgeters, or for the unity and sense of purpose it brings to the force, they view their unifying vision as vital. The next chapter will highlight the contents and known background behind three past vision statements of the United States Air Force.

Notes

1. *The Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary*, 1991 ed., s. v. "vision."

2. Dana M. Cound, *A Leader's Journey to Quality* (Milwaukee, Wis.: ASQC Quality Press, 1992), 43.

3. Carl H. Builder, *The Icarus Syndrome: The Role of Air Power Theory in the Evolution and Fate of the US Air Force* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 206.

4. Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, "Getting the Air Force into the 21st Century," address to the Air Force Association Air Warfare Symposium, Orlando, Florida, 24 February 1995.

5. This framework is heavily influenced by Maj Christopher D. Miller and Carl H. Builder. Builder, in his book *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), refers to service concepts of "who we are" and "where we're going." Miller, in *Aerospace Vision and Long-Range Planning: A Critical Combination for the Post-Cold War Air Force* (Newport, R. I.: Naval War College, July 1991), refers to vision in a geometric construct that includes identity, direction, and purpose. He uses the concept of a "vector" to encompass these aspects. I modify these two scholars' ideas into the explained framework. Generally, all our concepts are similar, but we use different terminology to explain our thoughts.

6. Noel M. Tichy and Mary Anne Devanna, *The Transformational Leader* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1990), 130.

7. Patrick E. Conner and Linda K. Lake, *Managing Organizational Change* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1994), 170.

8. Samuel P. Huntington, "National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy," US Naval Institute *Proceedings* 80, no. 5 (May 1954): 483.

9. Carl H. Builder and James A. Dewar, "A Time for Planning? If Not Now, When?" *Parameters* 24, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 9.

10. Peter Drucker, "The Theory of the Business," *Harvard Business Review* 72, no. 5, September/October 1994. This study was quoted by Dr Clark Murdock in his briefing *Institutionalizing Long-Range Planning: Key Issues* at the Chief of Staff of the Air Force Planning Conference, 31 March 1995, Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

11. Jim Martin, "Sustaining the U.S. Military Position in a Time of Exceptional Change," summer study, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Policy, 28 November 1994. Quoted by Dr Clark Murdock.

12. President William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, February 1995 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1995), i.

13. Gen John M. Shalikashvili, chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy of the United States: A Strategy of Flexible and Selective Engagement* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1995).

14. Miller, 3.

15. Huntington, 483.

16. James A. Barber, Jr., executive director, US Naval Institute *Proceedings (Supplement)*, January 1986, introduction. *The Maritime Strategy*, as an unclassified document, was first published in this issue of *Proceedings*. The *Supplement* actually had four articles: "The Maritime Strategy" by Adm James D. Watkins, USN; "The Amphibious Warfare Strategy" by Gen P. X. Kelley and Maj Hugh K. O'Donnell, Jr., USMC; "The 600-Ship Navy" by John F. Lehman, Jr.; and "Contemporary U.S. Naval Strategy: A Bibliography" by Capt Peter M. Swartz, USN.

17. Watkins, 17.

18. Department of the Navy, *Forward . . . From the Sea*, 1994, foreword.

19. Ibid., 1.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., foreword.

22. Col John S. Kelsey, "A Sense of Direction in Era of Uncertainty," *Army* 40, no. 5 (May 1990): 40.

23. Department of the Army, *Army Focus 94: Force XXI*, an army white paper (Washington, D.C.: United States Army Publication and Printing Command, 1994), introduction.

24. Lt Col Barrie Smith, Congressional Activities Division, Management Directorate, Office of the Chief of Staff Army (DACS-CAD), telephone interview with author, 18 May 1995.

25. *Army Focus 94*, 3.

26. United States Army, *Decisive Victory: America's Power Projection Army*, October 1994, 1.

27. Ibid.

28. This opinion is admittedly based on limited conversations with Army personnel at Maxwell Air Force Base and in Army organizations in the Pentagon. In fact, the only person or organization that even mentioned the white paper was the Army's Chief of Staff (CSA) Staff Group, the office that wrote it, and this only after a lengthy conversation on strategic vision and *Force XXI*. The author's opinion is that the Army has not used a strategic vision document as an internal unifier or external advocator. Rather, they have relied on other methods (e.g., commander to soldier interaction) to affect internal unity and, as the "nation's faithful and obedient and loyal military servant," not thought much about external advocation until recently. Colonel Smith, telephone interview with author, 18 May 1995. Lt Col Tim Hoffman, Office of the Chief of Staff, Army CSA's Staff Group (DACS-ZAA), telephone interview with author, 2 June 1995. Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 33.

29. Builder and Dewar, 11–12.

Chapter 3

Visions from the Past

I analyze three strategic vision statements from the Air Force past in this chapter. While not all of the principles were covered in each of the statements, generally they do serve to illustrate the attributes of position, vector, and velocity. Additionally, USAF leaders used each of the vision documents, either implicitly or explicitly, as a vehicle to unify and advocate.

Gen Henry ("Hap") Arnold, commanding general, Army Air Forces (AAF), provided the service's first vision in a section of a report he submitted to the secretary of war in 1945. In one short section of the report, *Air Power and the Future*, General Arnold proclaimed his strategic vision for the institution. The analysis of this study only includes content since much is unknown about the process of its development. The second and third strategic vision statements are the June 1990 white paper *The Air Force and US National Security: Global Reach—Global Power* and the December 1992 *Global Reach—Global Power: The Evolving Air Force Contribution to National Security*. My review is for both process and content, from conception through distribution of the message.[1]

Air Power and the Future

There have been few leaders as visionary as Hap Arnold. He presided over American airpower during one of the most critical, turbulent periods in our history. Entire nations were devastated by war. Technology had just released more destructive power in one bomb than humanity had ever imagined. The United States was emerging as a world power. The nation's huge military establishment was preparing to discharge its strength. The AAF, boastful of its accomplishments but still mindful of its failure to independently bring the war to conclusion, yearned for autonomy. General Arnold provided the leadership and strategic vision required at this critical juncture. He was able to peer into the past to discern historical strengths and critical mistakes. He saw near-term challenges to his institution and long-term threats to the nation.

General Arnold had the strategic vision for a soon-to-be United States Air Force. Yet he did not set out to pen a vision document, per se. Rather, we must discern his vision through a document he authored for other purposes. In a section of the "Third Report of the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces to the Secretary of War" titled *Air Power and the Future*, he detailed the identity and purpose of his institution, envisioned the future direction of

the service, and provided the framework and ideas required to meet the challenges of future warfare.[2] In short, General Arnold provided position, vector, and velocity to an emerging service.

The message was addressed to "those entrusted with the future security of our country, as well as to the leaders of our Air Forces in the future."[3] In that message, he elucidated what the organization was all about; in a word, *position*. General Arnold defined the Air Force as "a complex combination of many types of airplanes, weapons, personnel, units and tactics, supported by the industrial and scientific resources of the nation."[4] Airpower's purpose would be to "pass over all formerly visualized barriers or lines of defense . . . deliver devastating blows . . . even before surface forces can be deployed."[5] He explained the strategic bombing doctrine that had contributed mightily to the victory over Germany and Japan, yet called for the "ruthless elimination" of equipment, organization, or ideas "whose retention might be indicated only by tradition, sentiment or sheer inertia."[6] General Arnold therefore visualized the Air Force as an organization of people, ideas, and machines with the purpose of delivering devastating blows to the enemy, empowered by the technology of a nation excited about aviation. It was a force disdainful of the past, eager for the future.

As to the future, General Arnold looked out 40 years and prophesied aerial warfare would be conducted by manned craft and unmanned devices able to destroy targets many thousands of miles away. Aircraft would fly faster than the speed of sound, performing operations unhindered by darkness or weather and able to communicate directly to a central control center. He even envisioned spacecraft powered by atomic energy.

In the near term the challenges were demobilization and independence. General Arnold knew the service must downsize, yet realized that efforts must be made to improve equipment, infrastructure, and techniques. He called for continuous planning for offensive and defensive operations, technical research for advanced weapons, and development of the most effective tactics. In Arnold's view, annihilation awaited the nation that started the next war with the equipment and doctrine of the preceding war. The direction of the Air Force must be to further enhance airpower's range and striking power.

General Arnold was the early advocate of the "people-first" view touted by today's air leaders. The most technically sophisticated of the services relied ultimately on the strength of its people and the power of their minds. He recognized that "quality in volunteer regular personnel is a primary requisite"[7] and called for continuing education for airmen. He also proposed the establishment of a permanent scientific advisory group to tap into the nation's premier minds.

In addition to providing position, vector, and velocity, General Arnold used *Air Power and the Future* to unify and advocate. He carefully tied airman to machine to science and technology. Most importantly, he tied the service to the nation. "It is the American people who will decide whether this Nation will continue to hold its air supremacy. In the final analysis, our air striking force

belongs to those who come from the ranks of labor, management, the farms, the stores, the professions, the schools and colleges and the legislative halls. Air Power will always be the business of every American citizen."[8] General Arnold clearly realized that an internally unified service supported by an "air-minded" nation was essential to the strength of the emerging Air Force.

Finally, General Arnold advocated the service to the War Department and to the American public. "In any future war the Air Force, being unique among armed services in its ability to reach any possible enemy without long delay, will undoubtedly be the first to engage the enemy and, if this is done early enough, it may remove the necessity for extended surface conflict."[9] He called for equality of air forces with ground and naval forces. While the extent of distribution of the document is unknown, it is safe to assume that the unity and advocacy functions were not accomplished by putting a copy of the message in the target's hands. General Arnold entrusted the "leaders of our Air Forces" with this intellectual message who in turn used the concepts to advocate and bring unity to an emerging force.

Air Power and the Future was the first strategic vision of the United States Air Force. In 18 concise pages, General Arnold provided the vision and set the stage for future leadership to propel the service into the premier air and space power in the world. He issued both a challenge and a warning, "A modern, autonomous, and thoroughly trained Air Force in being at all times will not alone be sufficient, but without it there can be no national security."[10]

The Air Force and US National Security: Global Reach—Global Power

Many years passed with Air Force leaders hard at work in fulfilling General Arnold's prophesy of a scientifically advanced, technically proficient, and powerfully armed independent force. The focus was on requirements for a major conflict in Europe. Defense leaders, following the strategy of Gen Curtis E. LeMay, relied upon nuclear bombs as the weapon of choice in ensuring the United States' national security.[11] In the age of deterrence, civilians like John Foster Dulles, Bernard Brodie, Henry A. Kissinger, and Thomas C. Schelling became more and more involved in defense strategy and theory.[12]

As time passed and General Arnold's vision became less relevant to a maturing Air Force, some noticed the absence of a modern, encompassing, unifying, and advocating strategic vision. A brown paper circulated in 1989, lamented this lack of vision. (A *brown paper* is the term given unofficial papers that take a critical, sometimes satirical, view of the Air Force.)

> It is our view, however, that beneath these positive indicators and despite a widely respected tactical, technological and managerial efficiency, the Air Force has lost a sense of its own identity and of the unique contribution airpower makes to war-fighting. While it is true that the external environment has created problems for all the Services, many Air Force difficulties are largely of our own making.[13]

Air Force leadership, however, did not seem to notice the expanding void until late 1989 when the wall came down, literally, on the Department of Defense's historical raison d'être. The foundations of force structure and strategy of the past were shaken. Suddenly, the "bear" that had been Strategic Air Command's arch enemy seemed more like a cub. The need for vision was never more apparent.

Secretary of the Air Force Donald B. Rice noticed the void and an external lack of understanding of Air Force characteristics and capabilities. Two other concerns also contributed to the decision to craft a vision document. The first of these was the major changes occurring within the national security environment, including Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts at *perestroika* and *glasnost* as well as the prospect of declining defense budgets. The final impetus to a strategic vision was the need for a framework to restructure the Air Force in preparation for future challenges.[14]

Secretary Rice took personal interest and responsibility for the crafting of the "first official statement of the Air Force role in national security" since its founding as a separate service in 1947.[15] Under Dr Rice's direction, the Secretary's Staff Group (SAF/OSX) handled the project with little or no coordination with outside offices. Sensitivity to the nature of the changes led to keeping the ideas within the group until they had solidified to the point of secretarial endorsement. When the product was near its final form it was shared by the Air Force chief of Staff at a CORONA conference of Air Force four-star generals.

The result was a white paper titled *The Air Force and US National Security: Global Reach—Global Power* in June 1990. Secretary Rice described it as a "strategic vision that would guide the design and development of the Air Force in the post-Cold War world."[16]

The message itself was outlined by Secretary Rice[17] and primarily written by Maj David A. Deptula with help from Col John W. Brooks and Dr Christopher J. Bowie. A forceful personality, Major Deptula, seized the opportunity to break a few bureaucratic "stovepipes" and advocate an institutional unity built upon the core tenets of airpower. It evolved from a staff memo to a formal briefing and finally to a white paper.

> The *principle* [sic] intent behind the document was to establish a vehicle to articulate the capabilities and qualities of the Air Force which underlie our national security, and to do so in a manner, understandable, relevant, and acceptable (to both the public and our own AF people).[18]

Global Reach—Global Power was a document that embodied all aspects of vision. It delineated position, vector, and velocity and was a vehicle for unity and advocation. Table 1 provides representative examples of the white paper vision attributes and functions.

The message of *Global Reach—Global Power*[19] was disseminated in speeches, before congressional committees, and in interviews. Upon completion of the white paper document itself in June 1990, the Office of Public Affairs became involved with the process for the first time and sent copies to each senator and

Table 1

The Air Force and US National Security: Global Reach—Global Power

ATTRIBUTES	
POSITION *Identity and Purpose* *Who*	"a perspective on how the unique characteristics of the Air Force can contribute to underwriting US national security needs in the evolving world order" "The strengths of the Air Force rest upon its inherent characteristics of speed, range, flexibility, precision, and lethality—characteristics which are directly relevant to the national interest in the future" "With the Air Force's range and rapid reaction, we are prepared to meet the challenges of the future . . . to provide Global Reach—Global Power"
VECTOR *Direction* *Where*	"the concepts outlined here, which guided the development of our most recent program and budget recommendations, provide a framework to conduct future Air Force planning" "The Air Force is building a force with agile and responsive capabilities tailored for the world we see unfolding before us"
VELOCITY *Intentions* *How*	"an overview of evolving Air Force thinking and planning" "People programs must remain at the top of our priority list" "Prudent R&D investment will also help avoid strategic surprise" "We will continue developing these capabilities—planning the 'pieces' of our Air Force to complement each other, complement the capabilities of the Army, Navy, and Marines, and create optimum power to underwrite our national security strategy"
FUNCTIONS	
UNIFY *Internally*	"challenges Air Force members and others in the defense establishment to think about how we as a nation can best address the role of military forces for the future"
ADVOCATE *Externally*	"The United States has become an aerospace nation" "The Air Force is inextricably intertwined with the aerospace industry" "We see a window of opportunity to become even more useful to the nation"

Source: USAF white paper, *The Air Force and US National Security: Global Reach—Global Power*, June 1990.

representative, to the media, and to leaders of the defense community. Additionally, copies were internally distributed by command.

The physical product for the *Global Reach—Global Power* white paper was modest, to say the least. The document was produced on the office computer and then supplied directly to the printers. The production expertise of Public Affairs was noticeably absent. Prior to the publication of the June 1990 version, the Navy had come out with *Maritime Strategy*, a flashier product produced with little concern for expense. The Air Force secretary took a more conservative approach.

Secretary Rice sent copies to each of the four-star generals with the admonishment, "I encourage you and your people to get out to talk about the importance of airpower and the Air Force to the nation, and also to write about it; judging from some of the questions I get on the Hill and from the media—and on some of the things I've seen written lately—we have some educating to do."[20]

The concept of *Global Reach—Global Power* certainly took the Air Force by storm. Soon it could be seen on hangars, placards, and in publications. There

were even plans to produce a bumpersticker with the phrase.[21] Though studies attempted to quantify the Air Force's physical ability to provide its promised global power and reach, no attempt was made to see what effect the vision statement had on the force internally or if the message was perceived as intended.[22]

Global Reach—Global Power: The Evolving Air Force Contribution to National Security

Tactical Air Command and Strategic Air Command planned a large airpower exercise in 1990 to publicly demonstrate Air Force reach and power. August was designated *Global Reach—Global Power* month.[23] Plans for both were interrupted by the actual deployment of combat forces in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Desert Storm stimulated thought in Air Force strategy and vividly illustrated the capabilities of airpower with advanced precision and lethal technologies.

Secretary Rice expressed interest in a revision to *Global Reach—Global Power* in November 1992 with just two months left in his term.[24] Many things had changed since 1990.

> Developments in the intervening thirty months have been truly extraordinary—from unprecedented arms control agreements, the collapse of Communism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union to a major war in Southwest Asia, ethnic conflict in many corners of the globe and a series of natural and man-made disasters.[25]

As before, the Secretary's Staff Group (OSX) took up the task led this time by Dr Rebecca Grant, a RAND Issues and Policy analyst working in OSX. Again, an authoritarian style of producing the document was used, with limited outside involvement due to the extremely short suspense. Draft copies were given to a few individuals outside the staff group. Feedback was solicited from Colonel Deptula, primary drafter of the June 1990 version. No advice was asked for nor received from the Offices of Public Affairs or Legislative Liasion prior to publication.[26] As opposed to the seven months the earlier version took to evolve, the second version went from thought to product in just one month.

The staff worked hard to prepare the document in December 1992 so it would not be overshadowed by January's inaugural events and Secretary Rice's departure from government service.[27] *Global Reach—Global Power: The Evolving Air Force Contribution to National Security* reviewed the previous version's principles and showed how they had been applied. Even though there was a self-praising summary of Dr Rice's term of office (a greater emphasis on "identity"), the paper did look forward to "direction" and "intentions." The vision function of advocation was also present, this time with special accentuation in light of continuing budget cuts. Unfortunately, the paper made no attempt to internally unify the force. In the end, what emerged was an illustrated and "bluer" *Global Reach—Global Power*, written

more for external than internal consumption. Table 2 provides representative examples of the white paper vision attributes and functions.

Table 2

Global Reach—Global Power:
The Evolving Air Force Contribution to National Security

ATTRIBUTES	
POSITION *Identity and Purpose* *Who*	"The mission of the Air Force is: To defend the United States through control and exploitation of air and space" "a force well suited to the geopolitical and fiscal demands of a new era" "*Aerospace power*—a maturing, precise and flexible instrument of national power—is what the Air Force contributes" [to national security] "more capable of sustaining core capabilities and countering a wide variety of challenges to our nation's security and our interests abroad"
VECTOR *Direction* *Where*	"undertaken the most fundamental restructuring of the institution since it was established as a separate Service" "an era where smaller, more capable forces must meet unpredictable threats" "create the new concepts, doctrine, and strategies that will be required to support the joint forces commander" "part of a new form of combat where [in the future] it will no longer be necessary to close with the enemy in order to destroy him" "Five and ten years from now, the force will be smaller than it was in 1991, but more lethal, and hence more capable" "crafting an Air Force that fits the needs of the next century"
VELOCITY *Intentions* *How*	"sharpen our ability to *shape* the international environment" Specific mention of key weapon systems needed in the future to be able to conduct warfare with the power and reach required (F-22, B-2, C-17) "challenges the Air Force to concentrate precision and refine simultaneity to expand the contribution of airpower to the joint conduct of war . . . major procurement programs, the new Air Force doctrine manual, the command organization and the commitment to quality in personnel and training." "we need to sustain a research and industrial base sufficient to keep our technological edge" "prudently trade some force structure to maintain a high level of readiness and investment in critical modernization programs"
FUNCTIONS	
UNIFY *Internally*	
ADVOCATE *Externally*	"Today, air forces combined with space forces are the pivotal contributors to our national military strategy—in deterrence, forward presence, and crisis response. Beyond this, aerospace power gives America unique strengths for building influence and extending a helping hand around the globe" "the Air Force offers, in most cases, the quickest, longest range, leading edge force available to the President in a fast-breaking crisis" "With one-quarter of the budget spent on space, the Air Force is uniquely well-positioned to provide all aspects of space power" The challenge is to "create, steadily and affordably, the backbone of our forces for after the year 2000" "America is an aerospace nation. Our aerospace forces and technology are a national treasure and a competitive edge, militarily and commercially"

Source: USAF white paper**,** *Global Reach—Global Power: The Evolving Air Force Contribution to National Security,* December 1992.

The document itself was again a simply produced black and white pamphlet with just a few charts. Less attention seems to have been expended on disseminating the message, probably due to the "update" sense of the document. Public Affairs provided copies to politicians, the media, and key defense corporations and civic leaders. Again, no attempt was made to measure the effectiveness of the message. Secretary Rice stepped down in January 1993 and attention soon turned to a new secretary and other issues.

Notes

1. The information in the following sections regarding *Global Reach—Global Power* (both the June 1990 and the December 1992 versions), *Global Presence,* and the current efforts with a vision document was gathered through extensive interviews (on the phone, in writing, and in person) with many people. In particular, virtually all primary members of the offices involved in the specific document have been interviewed. Most information has been substantiated by two or more members.

2. General of the Army H. H. Arnold, Third Report of the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces in *The War Reports* (Philadelphia, Pa.: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1945). One of the sections in General Arnold's "Third Report" is titled *Air Power and the Future*, 452–70. The following information is taken from that section. Endnotes are used to annotate direct quotes only.

3. Arnold, *Air Power and the Future*, 452.

4. Ibid., 459.

5. Ibid., 452.

6. Ibid., 469.

7. Ibid., 460.

8. Ibid., 468.

9. Ibid., 453.

10. Ibid.

11. Robert Frank Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force 1907–1960,* vol. 1 (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Aerospace Studies Institute, 1971), 237–38.

12. Examples of their thoughts and works: John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace?* (New York: Macmillan, 1950); Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press,1959); Henry A. Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper, 1957); and Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, Conn. Yale University Press,1966).

13. Authors unknown, *A View of the Air Force Today*, a brown paper, Fall 1989, 6.

14. Lt Col David A. Deptula, "Global Reach—Global Power: A Brief History," 15 August 1991. The information in this paragraph is taken predominately from a brief history of the document written by Deptula at the request of an Air Force historian. Associated attachments and all original iterations of the product are included in Deptula's personal files at the Office of Air Force History. The details have been substantiated by numerous memos and documents of primary source material from the Secretary's Staff Group, as well as from interviews from each of the individuals assigned to that office (SAF/OSX) at the time.

15. *Global Reach—Global Power: The Evolving Air Force Contribution to National Security* (Washington, D. C.: Department of the Air Force, December 1992, 1.

16. Lt Col Michael Perini, "*Airman*'s Interview: A Conversation with the Secretary of the Air Force, Donald B. Rice," *Airman*, March 1991, 12.

17. Dr Donald B. Rice, secretary of the Air Force, handwritten notes on the future of the Air Force in the post-cold-war world, undated. These notes outline what became the five pillars of *Global Reach—Global Power*. Notes were provided by Dr Christopher J. Bowie, RAND Issues and Policy analyst, by fax, 23 May 1995.

18. Lt Col David A. Deptula, "What Is Global Reach—Global Power?" one-page information sheet, written July 1991.

19. An interesting sidenote concerns the phrase itself, global reach—global power. Dr Rice sought a "slogan—a catch phrase to essentially capture the essence of the Air Force." Major Deptula informally sought suggestions from others, including Col John A. Warden III, in the War and Mobilization Plans Division (XOXW), commonly called the Checkmate office. Colonel Warden held a brainstorming session with about 15 officers in his division and personally came up with the phrase, the Air Force—global reach, global power, as he summed up the session. Deptula chose this phrase as the one with the most potential. After getting no feedback on a memo to superiors recommending this phrase (among others), Deptula decided to use it as a subtitle to the briefing the staff is preparing for Secretary Rice to present to the secretary of defense. He also added it as a header on charts in the briefing. Dr Rice liked it and the phrase stuck. Ronald O'Rourke, a Congressional Research Service defense analyst, has since called it "the best slogan since the '600-ship Navy'." Sources: Deptula, "Global Reach—Global Power: A Brief History," 2; Colonel Warden, Air Command and Staff College commandant (ACSC/CC), interview with author, 11 May 1995; Deptula, Secretary's Staff Group (SAF/OSX), memorandum to Colonel Brooks and Colonel McIlvoy, subject: Phrase to Capture Essence of Air Force, 19 December 1989; James Kitfield, "The Drive for Global Reach," *Government Executive*, December 1991, 18.

20. Dr Donald B. Rice, secretary of the Air Force, informal letter to four-star generals, titled "Status of Global Reach—Global Power," June 1990. Provided by Colonel Deptula.

21. Col John A. Warden III, commandant, Air Command and Staff College, interview with author, 11 May 1995.

22. See documents: Scientific Advisory Board, *Concepts and Technologies to Support Global Reach—Global Power, 1995–2020*, November 1992; and *Methodology for Analyzing Global Reach—Global Power* (Washington, D.C.: Air Force Center for Studies and Analysis, 11 October 1990).

23. Lt Col David A. Deptula, Secretary's Staff Group (OSX). Memo to SECAF Rice, subject: Global Reach—Global Power Airpower Demonstration, 27 June 1990.

24. Dr Rebecca Grant, RAND Corporation, interview with author, 14 March 1995.

25. *Global Reach—Global Power*, December 1992, foreword.

26. Dr Grant, RAND, interview, 14 March 1995. Her words were "they don't have the training" to help.

27. Dr Grant, RAND, interview, 14 March 1995.

Chapter 4

Vision: A Present-Day View

In this chapter I review the creation process of two documents of current-day interest. The first, *Global Presence*, was a successful attempt to propose new logic for the nation's presence strategy—one that includes an Air Force role. The white paper is certainly not a strategic vision statement, but it provides illustrative lessons in the bureaucratic process to future authors of vision documents. The second is a product in development. Currently untitled, this document will be a strategic vision statement designed to supersede *Global Reach—Global Power* (December 1992).

An Interest in Updating Our "Guiding Construct"

In July 1994, students from Air University briefed the results of a chief of staff-directed study titled *Spacecast 2020*[1] to Gen Merrill A. McPeak. Briefers used the concept of the Air Force's "global view" to describe the advantages space systems provide to the war fighter. General McPeak preferred the term *global presence* to more fully characterize the idea of posturing military capability and leveraging information.[2]

General McPeak subsequently decided to update *Global Reach—Global Power* to include the concept of global presence. In the chief's words, it was time for a "shave and a haircut" for *Global Reach—Global Power* and thereby update the Air Force's strategic vision.[3] The so-called Skunk Works office of the Air Staff's Strategy Division (XOXS), which had been informally working on a new vision product since the spring, received the tasking. They soon ran into difficulty incorporating what they saw as a quality (presence) with two characteristics (reach and power).[4] The Strategy Division decided to separate the task and handle the concept of presence in a separate document.

Global Presence

The decision to issue a separate "presence" document narrowed the effort from recrafting the Air Force's strategic vision statement to redefining an old term in light of new technologies and capabilities. The purpose behind the *Global Presence* white paper was clear—to propose a new logic for America's "forward presence" strategy.[5]

The coordination of this document took a different approach than had the *Global Reach* white papers. *Global Presence*'s primary author was Maj George R. Gagnon of the Strategy Division. He coordinated extensively within the Air Staff, including the Secretary's and Chief's Staff Groups. The Office of Public Affairs (SAF/PA) was also brought into the process while the product was in draft. They provided helpful comments concerning how the press would react to various words or concepts. Additionally, Maj Gen Robert E. Linhard, Directorate of Plans (XOX), sought outside the Beltway assistance from Lt Gen Jay W. Kelley, Air University commander. This was the "first time since the 1950s that an Air Staff has relied on our Air University to help with 'thinking' and 'cold reads'."[6]

Though begun in August 1994 under General McPeak's tenure as chief of staff, it was completed after Gen Ronald R. Fogleman became the chief. Under General Fogleman's direction, the document was recolored from "blue," highlighting the role the Air Force plays in the nationally directed presence mission, to "purple," emphasizing the role of airpower in a "common core mission."

The communications between the Air Staff crafters and the publicists, improved from vision efforts of the past, ultimately proved faulty. In January 1995, Public Affairs provided the Strategy Division with a draft copy of their marketing plan for *Global Presence*.[7] This two-page document summarized the background of the product, its audience and messages, and provided initiatives to get the word out. Unfortunately, in the view of the strategists, Public Affairs "dropped the ball" and did not follow through with the first phase of the PA marketing initiatives: "Set up schedule for publication. Determine what avenue to use for production."[8] In reality, PA staffers eventually accomplished the vast majority of the marketing initiatives. But the entering lack of belief in the Public Affairs institution itself and a feeling that PA had not assisted adequately in the publication, led staff members to arrange for their own op-ed pieces, ultimately contributing to a communications nightmare with long-term consequences. The details of the story merit explanation.[9]

Public Affairs, in their marketing plan, had identified "key media." The list did not include the *Wall Street Journal*. As the release date approached, Strategy Division staff members, less than confident in Public Affairs abilities, prepared their own op-ed piece for their choice of media, the *Wall Street Journal*. A *Journal* reporter, Thomas Ricks, took the Air Force information and went straight to the most interested (and sensitive) audience for *Global Presence*, the Navy. Ricks's article relates what happened.

> Admiral Jeremy Boorda, the chief of the Navy, seemed displeased with the Air Force's apparent claim to providing a cheaper alternative to his service. "I didn't know they were doing this," he said in an interview. He said he believes the Air Force has "a good role to play" in providing forward presence. But he was dismissive of the idea of "virtual presence," saying, "I don't know what that means. . . . I guess we're never going to have a 'virtual Navy'."[10]

Of course, it is not the fault of staff members that the Navy chief was broadsided with this new document. But they clearly should have been more aware of the potential difficulties when dealing with an aggressive member of the press. Obviously, General Fogleman would have been the best person to discuss the new white paper with Admiral Boorda (prior to its official publication), not a reporter seeking controversy.

Initially the timing of the release of *Global Presence* threatened to coincide with the unveiling of the President's budget in January. Public Affairs's second initiative was, "Deconflict release with major White House and Congressional political events. Ensure deconfliction with budgetary matters."[11] Coordination and publication problems ultimately delayed the event until the end of February. The white paper was a two-toned, glossy product with black and white photos of Air Force weapon systems, clearly reflecting the influence of Public Affairs. It was distributed widely on Capitol Hill, to defense corporations, and to internal major commands.

Since *Global Presence* had a fairly narrow mission—propose new logic for the nation's presence strategy—measuring its effect is easy. The Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces released their report, *Directions for Defense*, in June 1995. In it they agreed with the Air Force position that sending a Navy aircraft carrier abroad should no longer be viewed as the primary way to provide US presence overseas. The commission's recommendation: "Experiment with new approaches for achieving overseas presence objectives."[12] *Global Presence* was a successful white paper.

Current Efforts for a New Strategic Vision

On 30 November 1994 General Fogleman had a Posture Team kickoff meeting attended by a cross section of staff representatives. At this meeting, the general discussed the philosophy which would guide his term in office: total access between and among staff members; need for a fresh approach, enthusiasm; focus on how the Air Force contributes to the joint arena; recognition of Air Force programs and initiatives as national programs; strengthen the service position on issues. He added some warnings: beware of bureaucratic stovepipes; stay focused on the big issues and out of the weeds; don't just update last year's products.[13]

Before the meeting was over General Fogleman pointed to his Staff Group representative and told them to get working on a short, hard-hitting theme for the nineties to boil down *Global Reach—Global Power*. He envisioned an internal and external audience, more broadly defined than before, and specifically included the joint community and the American public. General Fogleman's words were "in the Cold War the American public needed the military; today the military needs the American public."[14]

Why now? Given the chief's desire to rewrite the vision document, what has happened externally or internally to require the recalibration of the Air Force

compass? Clues to the answer may lie in some of the criticisms current Air Staff members have for past *Global Reach* white papers:

> "Under emphasized space, information."
> "Too focused on lethal operations; not enough on the stuff we most often do (operations other than war)."
> "The [new] Chief doesn't want a document that claims the Air Force can win war independently."
> "A description of how we planned to deal with the end of the Cold War—not a vision document."
> "It was advertising; a coffee table document."[15]

The "why" in this case seems to be to *improve* the past product. Political motivations also seem probable; there had been an internal leadership change as a new secretary and chief had taken the controls.

The coordination process for the ongoing vision document has been a confusing affair. Two different leadership styles have been used in its crafting which may have contributed to the confusion. When General Fogleman verbally tasked his Staff Group to begin working on a short, hard-hitting theme for the nineties, the Strategy Division had already been toying with a *Global Reach* follow-on for over six months. The Chief's Staff Group seemingly handed the lead over to them. Members from the two key offices plus the Secretary's Staff Group met in December to share ideas and to plan a strategy, yet no formal tasking or even informal division of responsibilities was determined. Communication between the groups soon broke down.

By March I found all three offices moving in different directions with respect to the task. In each of the three offices, I was allowed access to some materials (outlines, drafts, point papers) that pertained to the upcoming vision document. In *each* of the cases, I was told that the information or materials were not to be shared. Additionally, each office gave me the distinct impression that *they* were the lead office in the vision rewrite.

In the absence of any authoritative direction, writers from the Strategy Division proceeded and arrived at what they believed was a good product in March. A draft of this document, titled *Global Missions*, was circulated informally at the end of March.[16] At the same time work was in progress on *Global Missions*, the Chief's Staff Group sought to formulate their view of the new vision document. In mid-March, they provided an outline of thoughts to the Strategy Division. The outline took an entirely different tack than did *Global Missions*. Unfortunately, the Strategy Division's product, over a half-year in the making, was not the strategic vision anticipated by the Chief's Staff Group. Progress continued along these two separate paths through May.

General Fogleman inked no specific direction for the crafters of the vision until April when he conditionally approved an outline of the paper produced by his staff group. He conditionally reserved ultimate judgment until seeing the final product. Even at the lower level, between Air Staff offices, the most fundamental of questions of purpose, intent, and message were never answered. The formal outline, blessed by the chief, at least identifies the audience.[17] Regrettably, the most important "what" questions—What is the

message? What is the purpose of the document?—have yet to be answered, even in a detailed outline of the proposed contents. This still-evolving paper is in draft form at this writing and not releasable.

This review of past strategic vision documents and the current efforts to recraft the service's vision illustrate a number of pitfalls that serve to limit the effectiveness and overall impact of the document. The study of these products leads one to believe that if steps along the vision production process were more carefully navigated, perhaps the impact of the document would increase. Within this process, if the vision architect more clearly understood the important attributes and functions of strategic vision, perhaps he could craft a more effective final product. In the concluding chapter, the study proposes a standard developmental process for vision documents, including specific recommendations for content based on required attributes and functions.

Notes

1. Air University, *SPACECAST 2020: Into the Future* (Maxwell AFB, Ala.: Air University Press, June 1995). SPACECAST 2020 was an Air Force-directed space study to identify and conceptually develop high-leverage space technologies and systems to best support the war fighter in the twenty-first century.

2. Maj George R. Gagnon, Strategy Division (XOXS), telephone interview with author, 24 January 1995.

3. Col Richard Szafranski, Air War College, National Military Strategy chair, interview with author, 22 May 1995.

4. Major Gagnon, telephone interview, 24 January 1995.

5. *Global Presence* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Air Force, 1995), 1.

6. Colonel Szafranski, comments on this draft thesis, 14 June 1995.

7. Public Affairs, "Public Affairs Marketing Plan: Global Presence," draft, no date. This document succinctly addresses the document's background, audience, and messages before outlining Public Affairs initiatives.

8. "Public Affairs Marketing Plan," first initiative.

9. The details of this story were provided by interviews with: Col Ron Sconyers, secretary of the Air Force, Public Affairs (SAF/PA), interview with author, 15 March 1995; Maj George R. Gagnon, Strategy Division (XOXS), interview with author, 14 March 1995; and Maj Ron Lovas, secretary of the Air Force, Public Affairs (SAF/PA), telephone interview with author, 9 June 1995; and personal observations.

10. Thomas E. Ricks, "Air Force Says It Can Offer 'Presence' in Peacetime at Lower Cost Than Navy," *Wall Street Journal*, 27 February 1995.

11. "Public Affairs Marketing Plan," second initiative.

12. *Directions for Defense*, Report of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, 2–21. See also Steven Watkins, "How the Air Force Fared," *Air Force Times*, 5 June 1995.

13. Lt Col Tom Owen, Chief's Staff Group (CCX), interview with author, 16 March 1995.

14. Ibid.

15. All of these comments came from one or more of the Air Staff members currently involved with a vision document rewrite. Comments were made to the author either in phone interviews or in personal interviews between January and May 1995.

16. "Global Missions: Global Security for the 21st Century . . . and Beyond," draft, Strategy Division (XOXS), 28 March 1995.

17. "Global Reach, Power, and Awareness: The Global Missions of Our Nation's Full-Service Air Force," draft outline, Chief's Staff Group (CCX), 28 April 1995.

Chapter 5

Improving the Process

Our Air Force must be flexible in its basic structure and capable of successfully adapting itself to the vast changes which are bound to come in the foreseeable future.

—Gen Henry ("Hap") Arnold
Air Power and the Future

Having reviewed the content and process of Air Force strategic vision documents from the past, it is now time to gather the lessons from the past as a basis for proposing guidelines for architects of future vision. Based on an inductive analysis of the documents in chapters 3 and 4, I offer a framework of phases for the vision "production" process.

Phases in the Process for the Vision Architect

The organizational need for vision is well established. "[L]arge organizations cannot prosper long without a clear sense of identity and purpose, even in a relatively stable environment (let alone in one that is rapidly changing)."[1] Even a proverb in the Bible proclaims, "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

While there is ample literature about what vision is and what it does for an organization, there is little guidance for those who want to put one down on paper. In this section I propose a standard process for vision document development, including specific content recommendations. The framework is composed with a view to a military organization; civilian companies may not find it applicable for their environments. The last caveat is that the framework is not presented as a blueprint or a checklist; rather, the phases are a self-evident and logical way of navigating from thought to document. This framework is simply designed to be a commonsense guide for Air Force leadership contemplating vision and the Air Staff officer tasked to produce the document.

The seven phases in the creation of a vision document induced by this study are conceiving, crafting, coordinating, producing, presenting, distributing, and measuring. Obviously, phases could be further subdivided or combined based on need or author's desires. Each of the phases are defined and then illustrated using the four documents covered in the previous two chapters.

Conceiving. The first phase in the process is deciding that a vision document is required. It answers the question "Why?" What is missing in the organization that requires leadership to take strategic inventory? Or is an update of a previous vision document needed due to a change in the organization or environment?

Of the three concerns behind the creation of *Global Reach—Global Power* (June 1990), perhaps the greatest "why" push came from a radical change in world events. Similarly, world events motivated the second version in December 1992, as did the successful illustration of airpower in action. The question of "why" posed by the initial phase of conceiving a vision document seems well answered in these two cases.

In contrast, the case for changing the Air Force compass seems much weaker in the third case. The "why" of the ongoing effort to rewrite the vision seems to be to *improve* the past product. Or, in General McPeak's words, to give it a "shave and a haircut."[2] Perhaps the lack of a compelling reason to update it has contributed to its year of wallowing within Pentagon offices.

Resist the temptation to create a "new" vision document by tinkering with the last document. It is the service's most important and enduring concept piece. It is not meant to be updated with the day's most trendy terms or tweaked by every new leader to show rights of ownership.[3] Such actions can only trivialize the document. While it should not be tinkered with, vision should be continually analyzed and tested. Members and leaders should intellectually challenge its concepts and debate its principles.

Strategic vision should, however, be reconceived when radical external or internal change occurs. Events might include the altering of the international security environment or a major change in the domestic political, economic, or security situation. Substantial philosophical changes in military or civilian leadership might precipitate a reexamination. Additionally, if force structure, strategy, doctrine, or technology radically changes, the institution's compass may need to be reset to a different grid system.

Crafting. The second phase is deciding the "how" of writing the document. Col Bob Elder, described the three leadership styles that were considered in crafting the ongoing vision.[4] The first is an authoritarian style where the leader determines what the vision will be and writes the document or provides detailed guidance in the writing. In the second style, the leader turns the process over to the second in command to get consensus at senior levels. Their ideas are then presented to the leader. In a military situation this may mean allowing the major commands or Air Staff directorates to come up with the vision to present to the chief of staff. The final style is to allow the staff to work up a vision as an iterative process. Wide input is encouraged in an informal atmosphere. This method takes longer yet benefits from a better "buy-in" for the final product. In Colonel Elder's opinion, General Fogleman prefers the last, more inclusive style. In actuality, a blend of the first and third styles is being employed in the vision under development.

The Applied Futures company recommends yet another blend of styles. It recommends that the senior leader "develop a vision which is not entirely

complete or perfect, but which has a few loose ends dangling. Then the remainder of the organization, at different levels, can be asked how they can contribute to the corporate vision."[5] There are many different styles to choose from in the "how" of crafting vision. The important point is to conscientiously decide what is the best one, given the situation, and realize the trade-offs (time, buy-in, leader personality).

Secretary of the Air Force Donald B. Rice answered the "how" question by taking personal interest and responsibility for the *Global Reach—Global Power* white papers. He used an authoritarian style to produce both vision documents. In June 1990 this style was perhaps the only type possible, given that the paper set the stage for a radical restructuring of the service. For example, the following changes within the flying commands indicate just how extensive the restructuring was dissolution of Strategic Air Command, Tactical Air Command, and Mobility Air Command; merging of bomber aircraft with fighters into Air Combat Command; and merging of air refueling aircraft with cargo planes into Air Mobility Command. In December 1992 this was the only style that allowed the short suspense of one month. Obviously, having the highest leader in the organization "champion" the process focused efforts and allowed for rapid progress to a final product.

General McPeak, though "interested" in a rewrite, never took charge of the effort or even directed its completion. Current Chief of Staff Gen Ronald R. Fogleman also indicated an "interest" in November 1994, though again, no official tasking was done for months. He has intentionally chosen an informal, iterative process, a style known for its slow progress. The rewrite has been in progress for more than a year and is still in draft form.

It is important that senior leadership "champion" the process of creating a vision document. "Only the senior leadership can establish a sense of urgency, create and communicate a vision, ensure that innovative behavior is not punished, empower others to act on the vision and institutionalize new approaches."[6] The specific words may be the products of staff officers, and the ideas can come from all realms of the organization, yet the vision must be owned by the leader. He may choose any one of a variety of different styles for arriving at the final product based on his personality, time requirements, or force buy-in determinations. Regardless of style, the leader's personal attention is imperative. "Responsibility for developing the vision lies with the CEO and his or her direct reports and cannot be delegated."[7] Vision speaks for, and to, the entire organization; vision must emanate from the senior leader.

Coordinating. The next phase is determining "who" will be involved in the process. Who is the primary author or office in charge? What other offices or specialties should be involved? Will it be coordinated strictly within the staff (Air Staff) or will outside agencies (major commands, war-fighting commanders, other services) be brought into the process? Are there efforts to study the previous vision documents for their lessons? Or are lessons and mistakes of the past painfully relearned?

The “who” of who will be involved in the writing process was defined simply and narrowly in the *Global Reach—Global Power* white papers. In both cases, the Secretary’s Staff Group handled the project with little or no coordination with outside offices. In the first case, sensitivity to the nature of the changes led to keeping the ideas within the group. In the second case, the short suspense led to limited coordination. No advice was asked for nor received from the offices of Public Affairs or Legislative Liasion prior to publication in either case.

The coordination problems with the vision in progress detailed in chapter 4 were many. The confusion that resulted was due to the “who” question not being adequately addressed at the beginning of the project. Once made aware of the problem, the three offices were quickly able to resolve the problem—that is, until the next phase of the vision process tripped them up again.

A holistic view should be taken of the organization’s resources to produce the most effective document possible. The chief should choose a specific individual or office to lead the coordination and writing process. Then, contingent on the crafting style chosen, expertise from a variety of specialties should work closely with the document’s lead agency. Three examples of these agencies are offered here, but the list is by no means inclusive.

Public Affairs brings unique expertise to the table that should be in touch with the mood and needs of the force. PA should specifically be an asset to ensure the unity function of the document can speak to the entire force. Since one of the target audiences is always Congress, then Legislative Liaison should obviously be involved to provide specialized expertise in a wide range of things—how the American public will view the direction of the service, how timing will affect Congress’s reception of the message, and how well the words of the document mesh with the service’s actions on Capitol Hill.

The intellectual assets of Air University should be employed. The captive and creative minds of midlevel NCOs and officers, in a nonattribution atmosphere, are a valuable resource to true the compass of the service. Additionally, challenging the status quo and critically analyzing the thoughts of leaders is much more easily accomplished from Maxwell Air Force Base than from the Pentagon. These agencies, and others, should be in a horizontal structure directly under the lead office to preclude filtering.

Producing. Perhaps the most important phase in the vision process is deciding “what.” What is the message and the purpose of the document? Who is the audience? What type of product is needed? Obviously audiences and messages require different writing styles and lengths. Making the right match is important.

In the *Global Reach—-Global Power* June 1990 white paper, staff members did not begin working on the memo, then the briefing, and finally the paper that became the first strategic vision the Air Force had written in 45 years with a clear view of what the document would ultimately become.

The “what” question has yet to be resolved by those writing the next vision document. Certainly it has been approached differently by the offices

involved. At this point, General Fogleman or Secretary Widnall are the only people who can answer the question.

The "what" question can be best addressed by returning to the attributes and functions of a strategic vision document—succinctly address the purpose of the institution and reexamine the mission statement because the Air Force does more than "defend."[8] It is the *only* service that provides responsive global view, global reach, and global power. Look ahead 10 to 25 years and decide where you want to be.[9] There are obviously risks in embracing a truly visionary view of the future battlefield. Suddenly we are much less able to justify short-term gains given a long-term view of the benefits and risk trade-offs. This is one of the reasons that truly visionary products are so rare. Detail how to get there through the hardware, software, and thought process, yet don't get bogged down in begging for current acquisitions or the details of the latest management craze. The demanding requirements of an armed force necessitate unity. Inspire it in the vision statement; this has been a clear weakness of past documents. (It may be a telling fact that there are no pictures of airmen in either of the *Global Reach* documents, nor in the *Global Presence* white paper, only pictures of weapon systems and graphs of bomb loads. In contrast, *Concepts and Issues 1995: A Certain Force for an Uncertain Future* has many photos of marines.) Use it as a primary weapon to combat the occupationalism versus professionalism war noted by critics.[10]

General McPeak recognized that

> absent a clear understanding of overarching purposes, some people give their loyalty to the next best thing—their particular job or their equipment. . . . We all recognize this problem as occupationalism. It's what can happen when an institution does not convey a sense of mission to its people.[11]

Counteract the declining interest of Americans in their military. Clearly state the service's value, contribution, and dependence on the US citizen. As a service, we have often been criticized for leaders taking conflicting messages to Capitol Hill. An embraced vision provides the similar sheet of music needed to make our position clear.

A few key principles must be clear for the writer before fingers are put to keyboard. Since the leader of the organization is personally "championing" the process, he must determine or at the very least, endorse, the vision document's purpose, message, and audience. This is best done in writing to provide clear guidance for the staff. Without direction from the top, the frustrated staff is likely to spend many fruitless hours struggling to produce the chief's vision and will rarely be successful. This direction can also help keep the coordinating agencies in tune with the desired product.

The message of the document should be clear and able to speak to both mechanic and engineer. The message should also be credible and economically affordable, though this is not meant to imply that it should be subdued or that the vision sights should be set low. Brevity is advantageous to convey the message to those not willing to wade through a long document. Finally, it is important to remember what this document is not. It is not supposed to

explain all aspects of the organization. As an example, long-range planning should flow from the vision, yet the vision document is not the place to explain how senior staff actually does long-range planning. If it is expected to do everything, it will end up doing nothing.

Presenting. The fifth phase is figuring out the "when" of the vision document. Timing in releasing the product is crucial, especially if the target audience is a group with predictable patterns. If more than one group is targeted, different strategies should be involved while the timing will be governed by the most important group or the one with the most sensitive schedule. Included in the presentation of the product is its visual attributes such as what type paper, colors, and styles of photos or graphs to include.

There are two important aspects about organizational vision—having the vision and communicating the vision. Deciding "when" to release the product to the organization or to the public is important. How this is done is key to its reception. Writers of vision typically do not have the specialized knowledge for the publicity part of communicating the vision, especially with outside agencies such as the public or Congress. In the Air Force the Public Affairs office is charged with that responsibility.

For the initial *Global Reach—Global Power* document presentation, it may not be too simplistic a statement to say that Public Affairs was not consulted and was not interested. While Public Affairs was involved in *Global Presence*, lack of trust and belief in their expertise led to the "leak" to the *Wall Street Journal*.

Unfortunately, such relatively minor incidents have a long life. After the heat the Air Force took from the Navy on this white paper, there was a natural reaction of the staff to go into a "defensive crouch." One wonders if the message of the new vision document is being "watered down" to avoid provoking the ire of the other services. Visions are not meant to be watered down or noncontroversial.

The physical product for both *Global Reach—Global Power* white papers was modest, to say the least. For most uniformed members, the idea of "packaging" a product to improve its effect is neglected at best and belittled at worst. Other services, as evidenced by their vision documents, have a different idea of the importance of appearance. The Navy has taken the lead in this packaging war. *Forward . . . From the Sea* is an extremely sophisticated document, appropriate for the world's most powerful naval force. While not advocating appearance over content, effectiveness and impact can be improved with attention to the packaging. The Air Mobility Command publication—*Air Mobility Command Flight Plan: Global Reach for America*, for example, designed to "illustrate the critical role of air mobility in supporting U.S. national security and military strategies"—is a much more impressive and professional-looking document than are either of the *Global Reach—Global Power* white papers.[12]

Care must be taken with respect to the timing of strategic visions. "If an organization's top leadership attempts to change its vision too freely, that vision will be too unstable to serve as a pervasive and reliable guide for

action. If top leaders wait too long to change an organization's vision in a changing environment, that vision becomes irrelevant—and so may the organization."[13]

This is the chief's vision for the whole organization; the chief has the prime responsibility to proclaim it to internal and external audiences. The attention of senior leadership usually results in the attention of the troops. Coordinating agencies who have helped to create a coherent, potent product have the responsibility to help get the word out effectively. Public Affairs should be responsible for an effective media campaign within the organization and beyond.[14]

Prior to the day of release, the chief may choose to personally introduce other interested service chiefs to the product to preempt the media's attempt to create controversy. Public Affairs should plan a media blitz for the release. Rather than the end of their responsibilities, however, this is just the beginning. The message should be repeated, via different media and at various levels, to be retained. A formal method of tracking their adherence to the previously coordinated marketing plan might be helpful.

Legislative Liaison should plan a campaign to educate Congress about the vision. In this environment, personal interaction between senior leaders and congressional members is key. The message should be presented verbally and personally, backed up by the document itself for the reference of staffers. Senior leadership must speak with a consistent voice.[15] There are few things more damaging to the institution than a unifying message presented by a variety of individuals who have their own parochial interests to advance. Nothing will undercut the message quicker.

It is important that all individuals in an organization be aware that the institution has a strategic vision and understand where they personally fit within that vision. Members should therefore be exposed, educated, and reinforced with respect to the vision. Commanders have the prime responsibility to bring the message to the troops. Air Education and Training Command (AETC) should incorporate vision exposure and education in each level of formal professional military education. The bottom line is, it is not enough to have a pretty document. Members must believe in and embrace the message for it to lead the organization into the future.

Distributing. "Where" will the vision be distributed? How will it get to the target audience? Who is on the distribution list? How wide and to what depth should you target the interested group? Is the message required to get to every member of the organization or just the group leaders? Is it sufficient just to get the document in their hands, or must the message be reinforced by personal visits or individual interaction? Again, multiple audiences require multiple methods of getting the word out. Commanders' calls and internally produced videos may be effective for internal military audiences, while press conferences may be required for targets externally.

"Where" to distribute the message may be a small adjunct to the presenting phase, though it is important nevertheless. Simplistically, the answer to "where" for a strategic vision document is "everywhere." Yet cost and benefit

trade-offs remain. It is important for all those internal to the organization to hear the vision, but that does not imply that members must have their own paper copy. At the other extreme, even if everyone had a copy that does not imply comprehension or even that the individual would open the cover. For the *Global Reach* white papers, internal distribution was accomplished through major commands. Additionally, Secretary Rice and General McPeak used an "Air Force Now" video shown at commanders' calls as an avenue to get out the *Global Reach—Global Power* message. Unfortunately, while exposure was high, there was no attempt at formal education of the message to the individual airman.

The answers to "where" become even more difficult when dealing with the external audience. Who really needs to know? Who really cares? There are some uniformed members of the Legislative Liaison offices who don't believe any written document (besides the budget) can get the attention of congressional members or staffers. They see written communication as largely ineffective, too quickly outdated, and too static for the dynamic reality on Capitol Hill. Nearly all agree that the most effective way to communicate to Congress is by word of mouth in personal interaction. Air Force leaders should personally visit key congressional leaders to provide the message and answer questions. Most see the written product as simply documentation or substantiation for messages passed via other means.[16]

Still, efforts continue to get the document into the hands of key members of the external audience. Typically, a copy of the vision document is distributed to each member of Congress with a cover letter from the secretary of the Air Force explaining its importance. Similar distribution is made available to the media as well as interested civic leaders and defense contractors.

There should be a plan for wide distribution as economically possible. In fact, if the expense of the document itself impedes its distribution, then two versions should be produced; one for wide internal consumption, and one for external show. Imagination will lead to previously unexplored avenues: a supplement to the *Air Force Magazine*, weekly installments in base newspapers, or electronic mailing to commanders. As for the physical distribution of the vision document itself, internal dispersing of the message should be down through the major commands. AETC should take the lead in a systematic education of the force as to the meaning of the vision. In the foreword to Air Force Manual (AFM) 1-1, *Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force*, volume 1, there is a message from the chief of staff.

> I expect every airman and, in particular, every noncommissioned and commissioned officer to read, study, and understand volume I and to become fully conversant with volume II. The contents of these two volumes are at the heart of the profession of arms for airmen.[17]

There might be a similar comment inside our vision document.

In sum, the message should be widely distributed and continually reinforced. But this is not to imply it should be a hallowed document, beyond questioning. The active involvement of troops and taxpayers is encouraged;

comment and debate as to the vision's contents and compass direction should be solicited.

Measuring. The final phase in producing a strategic vision document is determining "how well" the message got out. There are actually two questions of importance: Did the desired message get to the target audience, and did they comprehend the message? Deciding "how well" the vision document is received is first contingent upon knowing the "what" of the message, the purpose, and the audience. If you do not know what it is you want, it is obviously difficult to know if you have accomplished it. Obviously, feedback from this process can help improve the presenting and distributing phases. One of the functions of vision is to unify. Members must be exposed to, understand, and believe in the vision of their organization.

There is no doubt that *Global Reach—Global Power* has become an Air Force household term. It can be seen on billboards and hangers on Air Force bases worldwide. The term pervades Air Force literature. Unfortunately, the words have been bastardized over time. Meant to graphically portray air and space power's overwhelming characteristics and contributions to national defense, they have become mere terms describing commands. Air Mobility Command's vision statement is "Responsive Global Reach for America—Every Day."[18] A pamphlet detailing the facts of Air Combat Command is titled "Global Power for America."[19] The "Air Mobility Command = Reach, Air Combat Command = Power, Air Force Space Command = Presence" simplification trivializes air and space power's contribution to the national will. The reach of American air and space power is demonstrated in a B-1 taking off from the continental United States and flying to the Middle East to drop bombs within audible range of Iraqi forces; it is not the sole prerogative of Air Mobility Command. The power of American air and space power is demonstrated in a C-5 delivering a water purification system to Rwanda within 72 hours after the cry for help to prevent thousands of lives from being lost; it is not the sole prerogative of Air Combat Command.[20]

For the three published documents that were discussed in this study, there have been no attempts to measure their impact, or even their reception. In fact, there is no office designated to evaluate the results. Public Affairs does track the product's marketing plan, but it is noticeably focused on the physical reception of the message ("propose AF Times Op-Ed" and "propose interview")[21] rather than on the effect or understanding of the message to the airman or congressional staffer. Legislative Liaison has recently tried soliciting written feedback from staffers on the services they desire but have not attempted to see if any specific message has been received or understood. There is no internal effort to see how Air Force members have understood or been affected by their strategic vision.

It is important to determine if the strategic vision is getting to the desired audience and if the message is being perceived. Measuring results is a difficult task made even more difficult by the military's legal prohibition against using polls to gather data.[22] Public Affairs should have the lead role in evaluating the effectiveness of the product internally and externally.

Upcoming PA endeavors include the hiring of two PhDs for greater expertise, establishing a quarterly computer-assisted internal issues-related survey to track impact, and a pending legal request to allow external surveys as part of the "Reinventing Government" initiatives.

Computer products like Lexis/Nexis databases can track references of the vision document in virtually any media or in any political interaction.[23] One idea to solicit feedback is to add a comment sheet attached to the back of the vision document itself. It could be preaddressed to the chief of staff and tracked by PA to allow troops to communicate their view of Air Force vision directly to the top. Another idea is to have Quality Air Force Assessment teams inquire about the troops' knowledge of the organization's vision.

Legislative Liaison should be tasked to provide congressional feedback to Public Affairs. The Senate and House Liaison offices have recently begun employing a Military Legislative Assistant Questionnaire to track service to their customer.[24] Questions could be added to measure their physical receipt of the document, determine if they read and understood it, and solicit comments or criticisms.

Much of this is necessarily subjective feedback. Quantitative metrics are valuable, yet sometimes the nature of the situation does not lend itself to numbers. Counting the number of vision documents printed or distributed in itself says nothing about the actual message reception. Quantify what can be counted, yet realize the benefit of the subjective determinations of educated professionals.

Lesson Implications

The seven phases described in this study are not discrete, sequential events. They describe a process that should be ongoing and continuous. The process may, in actuality, shape the vision itself. Certainly efforts to measure the impact will provide clues for the next vision document. Together, the phases outlined above in the vision document process can help future vision architects produce a more effective product.

Conclusion

Airmen have never suffered from a lack of visionary thinkers. Airmen are not known for lacking the courage of their convictions. What airmen have been critiqued for is making unsubstantiated claims, seemingly acting on faith much more than plans. A strategic vision document taps into the vision of our leaders, clearly states our convictions, and provides an avenue to attaining our goals of the future. Vision provides the coherence for our Air Force.

> [A]ir power is one piece, the profession of arms is the other. One is the heart of the Air Force, the other is its soul. The senior leadership of the Air Force is the trustee of the heart; but everyone in the Air Force is a trustee of its soul. The heart is about organizational purpose or mission—air power—and the soul is about the profession of arms—the absolute and total commitment to mission.[25]

The Air Force's strategic vision document provides the body for this heart and soul.

Notes

1. John K. Setear et al., *The Army in a Changing World: The Role of Organizational Vision*, RAND Report R-3882-A (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1990), 19.

2. Col Richard Szafranski, Air War College, National Military Strategy chair, interview with author, 22 May 1995. Hereafter referred to as Szafranski interview.

3. Col David A. Deptula, professional staff member, Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, interview with author, 12 June 1995. Colonel Deptula's comment was to the effect that every chief who comes on board must prove his manhood by leaving his mark. Szafranski interview. Colonel Szafranski emphasized the point that too much tinkering is bad by noting that Air Force doctrine is on its twelfth major revision since 1947. His point was that stability has value, in and of itself.

4. Col Bob Elder, Chief's Staff Group (CCX), telephone interview with author, 27 March 1995.

5. Christine A. R. MacNulty, Applied Futures, *Vision-Based Planning*, prepared for the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 20 February 1995, 3.

6. Dr Clark A. Murdock, "Institutionalizing Long-Range Planning: Key Issues," briefing, Chief of Staff of the Air Force Long-Range Planning Conference, Pentagon, Washington, D.C., 31 March 1995.

7. Ernest C. Huge, *Total Quality: An Executive's Guide for the 1990s* (Homewood, Ill.: Business One Irwin, 1990), 44.

8. Lt Col Bill Williams, Secretary's Staff Group (OSX), interview with author, 16 March 1995. The USAF mission statement is "to defend the United States through control and exploitation of air and space." Currently the Secretary's Staff Group has the lead in relooking the mission statement.

9. Maj Gen Perry M. Smith, USAF, Retired, "Long-Range Planning: A National Necessity," *Creating Strategic Vision* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1987), 3. He recommends a look ahead 10 to 25 years into the future for the benefit of long-range planners:

> Any time short of 10 years is so near term that it is hard to conceive of significant changes or approaches that might move an institution in new directions. . . . A timeframe beyond 25 years is so difficult to deal with intellectually that it is probably not worth much time and effort.

10. Quoted in Carl H. Builder, *The Icarus Syndrome: The Role of Air Power Theory in the Evolution and Fate of the US Air Force* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 180–82 and 283. Charles C. Moskos and Frank R. Wood, eds., "At the Cutting Edge of Institutional and Occupational Trends," *The Military: More Than Just a Job?* (Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brasseys, 1988), 53. Builder quotes Frank Wood in differentiating between the imperatives of business and the profession of arms:

> "nation-centered, not organization-centered; mission-centered, not career-centered; group-centered, not individual-centered; service-centered, not work-centered."

11. Quoted in Builder, 283.

12. Gen Robert L. Rutherford, *Air Mobility Command Flight Plan: Global Reach for America*, foreword.

13. Setear et al., 20.

14. Col Ron Sconyers, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Public Affairs, SAF/PA, interview with author, 15 March 1995. Public Affairs must have the staffing and the faith of the chief if it is to adequately fulfill their role. General McPeak had a well-known dislike for his PA staff which resulted in low morale within the organization. He left them to "pick up the broken glass." In fact, he fired the first PA director and replaced him with a succession of two non-Public Affairs professionals in a row. General Fogleman, who has been described as a zealot and strong advocate in the role of Public Affairs, is working to improve the situation. Unfortunately, as the electronic medium has exploded and the media covering the Pentagon has increased fourfold, the PA office has been cut from 150 people to 47.

15. The importance of leaders speaking from the "same sheet of music" was reinforced many times over the course of the research. Secretary Rice passed on these words to four-star generals in a letter accompanying the release of the June 1990 *Global Reach—Global Presence*. "It provides a unifying document allowing the Air Force to speak from the "same sheet of music," and is a vehicle to explain our characteristics, capabilities, and plans to the American people." (Rice, informal letter to four-star generals, titled "Status of Global Reach—Global Power," provided by Colonel Deptula.) Additionally, Public Affairs and Legislative Liaison officers also raised concern about a unified Air Force voice.

16. These concerns were common among Legislative Liaison officers I interviewed. Interviews were conducted with members of the following offices: Senate Liaison, House Liaison, Legislative Liaison, Weapons System Liaison Division in March 1995.

17. AFM 1-1, *Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force*, vol. 1, March 1992. Comment was made by Gen Merrill A. McPeak, chief of staff, USAF, in the foreword of the document, v.

18. Gen Robert L. Rutherford, *Air Mobility Command Flight Plan: Global Reach for America*, foreword.

19. Air Combat Command (ACC) Public Affairs, *ACC: Global Power for America*, December 1993.

20. Steven Watkins, "Many Lives Were Saved," *Air Force Times* 55, no. 11 (17 October 1994): 24.

21. "Public Affairs Marketing Plan."

22. Col Don Black, Headquarters Air Combat Command, Public Affairs (ACC/PA), telephone interview with author, 7 March 1995.

23. Lexis/Nexis 1994 Library Contents, Dayton, Ohio: Mead Data Central, 70). The Lexis/Nexis is an on-line service that includes 163 libraries. The Federal News Service is just one of the databases available. It includes "verbatim transcripts of press briefings, speeches, backgrounders, and conferences, as well as interviews on official US policy on a broad range of national and international issues. . . . Subject coverage includes, but is not limited to, the following; speeches and statements made by the President in the US and abroad; . . . Daily White House, State Department, and Defense Department briefings; U.S. Trade Representatives press briefings and statements; statements and testimony of senior officials of the Office of Management and Budget; and the Treasury, State, and Defense Departments; National Press Club luncheons, including the question and answer periods; statements made by foreign dignitaries while in the U.S.; transcripts of TV news programs from ABC, CBS, NBC, and others; English transcripts from the Kremlin of official policy statements by Russian officials; and selected coverage of UN events."

24. Air Force Legislative Liaison, Military Legislative Assistant Questionnaire, SAF/LL, undated. A copy of this one-page questionnaire was provided by Col Robert Behler, Senate Liaison Office, 13 March 1995.

25. Builder, xvii.

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