

**AIR FORCE DOCTRINE**

**SMART BOOK**



**U.S. AIR FORCE**

**20 April 2026**

# Introduction

This *Doctrine Smart Book* is a collection of Air Force operational doctrine summaries prepared by the LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. These summaries reflect currently approved doctrine and emerging doctrine. Please note the current as of date, when using this document. The source publications at [www.doctrine.af.mil](http://www.doctrine.af.mil) take precedence.

Part one of the *Doctrine Smart Book* provides a visual representation of the Air Force's capstone and operational doctrinal hierarchy. Part two of the *Doctrine Smart Book* consists of one-page synopses of each current approved Air Force doctrine publication (AFDP) or note (AFDN) and its relationship to Joint Publication (JP). The Air Force's capstone doctrine publications, AFDP 1, *The Air Force*, and AFDP 1-1, *Mission Command*, are signed by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Operational doctrine is signed by the LeMay Center commander.

Each synopsis contains basic characteristics, fundamentals, terms, and ideas as they are discussed in each publication. The principal audience for the *Doctrine Smart Book* is all readers of doctrine—military, civilian, and contractor.

The preparing agency is the Directorate for Doctrine Development, Curtis E. LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education. Email questions, comments, and recommendations to [usafdoctrine@us.af.mil](mailto:usafdoctrine@us.af.mil).



## SMART BOOK



U.S. AIR FORCE

20 April 2026

# Air Force Doctrine

## Smart Book

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# Air Force Doctrine

## Hierarchy and Ties to Joint Doctrine

### Capstone Doctrine

AFDP 1  
The Air Force

AFDP 1-1  
Mission  
Command

JP 2-0

AFDP 2-0  
Intelligence

JP 4-0

AFDP 4-0  
Combat  
Support

### 2-0 Series

### 4-0 Series

JP 3-0

AFDP 3-0  
Operations

JP 3-30

AFDP 3-0.1  
Command &  
Control

JP 3-01

AFDP 3-01  
Counterair  
Operations

AFDP 3-02  
Strategic Attack

AFDP 3-03  
Counterland  
Operations

AFDP 3-04  
Countersea  
Operations

JP 3-05

AFDP 3-05  
Special  
Operations

JP 3-10

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Force  
Protection

JP 3-12

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Cyberspace  
Operations

JP 3-04

AFDP 3-13  
Information in  
Air Force  
Operations

JP 3-14

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Space Support

JP 3-22

AFDP 3-22  
Foreign  
Internal  
Defense

JP 3-27

AFDP 3-27  
Homeland  
Defense

JP 3-34

AFDP 3-34  
Engineer  
Operations

JP 3-36

AFDP 3-36  
Air Mobility  
Operations

JP 3-40

JP 3-41

AFDP 3-40  
Counter-WMD  
Operations

JP 3-50

AFDP 3-50  
Personnel  
Recovery

JP 3-52

AFDP 3-52  
Airspace  
Control

JP 3-59

AFDP 3-59  
Weather  
Operations

JP 3-60

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Targeting

JP 3-61

AFDP 3-61  
Public Affairs

JP 3-72

AFDP 3-72  
Nuclear  
Operations

JP 3-84

AFDP 3-84  
Legal Support

JP 3-85

AFDP 3-85  
EMS  
Operations

JP 5-0

AFDP 5-0  
Planning

### 3-0 Series

### 5-0 Series

### Operational Doctrine

AFDN 1-21  
Agile Combat  
Employment

AFDN 25-1  
Artificial  
Intelligence

### Emerging Doctrine

## THE AIR FORCE

U.S. AIR FORCE

10 March 2021

**AFDP 1**

forms the basis of Air Force Service culture. This publication articulates the Air Force's perspective of warfare and airpower across the competition continuum.

**AFDP 1** addresses why we fight, who we are, what we do, and how we do it.

This publication also contains the Air Force Chief of Staff's perspective on doctrine.

The principal audience for **AFDP 1** is all members of the profession of arms of the United States Air Force.

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 1

## The Air Force

### Airpower

Airpower is the ability to project military power through control and exploitation in, from, and through the air.

**Airmen support Joint All-Domain Operations by conducting operations principally in, from, and through the:**

- Air
- Information Environment
- Electromagnetic Spectrum

### Airman's Perspective

- Control of the air is a necessary precondition for control of the surface.
- Airpower creates effects at the strategic level of war.
- Airpower exploits the principles of mass and maneuver simultaneously.
- Airpower applies force against many facets of enemy power.
- Airpower is not bound by geographical operating areas, it creates effects throughout a theater.
- Airpower's attributes combine to make it one of the most versatile components of military power.
- The choice of appropriate capabilities is a key aspect in the realization of airpower.
- Airpower is a critical component of operations in the information environment.
- Airpower provides more than lethal effects.
- Airpower requires protection and sustainment to enable air operations and requires effective integration of capabilities, people, weapons, bases, logistics, and supporting infrastructure.
- Airpower's unique attributes necessitate it be centrally controlled by an Airman.

### Tenets of Airpower

- Mission Command
- Flexibility and versatility
- Synergistic effects
- Persistence
- Concentration
- Priority
- Balance

### Mission Command

The Airman's philosophy for the command and control of airpower is mission command. Mission command is an approach to command and control that empowers subordinate decision-making for flexibility, initiative, and responsiveness in the accomplishment of commander's intent. Mission command provides Airmen operating in environments of increasing uncertainty, complexity, and rapid change with the freedom of action needed to exploit emergent opportunities and succeed. Airmen execute mission command through centralized command, distributed control, and decentralized execution.



## MISSION COMMAND



**AFDP 1-1** clarifies current operational doctrine by providing further detail regarding the Airman's perspective on mission command and establishes the framework for its execution and a supporting culture.

**AFDP 1-1** defines **mission command** as *"a philosophy of leadership that empowers Airmen to operate in uncertain, complex, and rapidly changing environments through trust, shared awareness, and understanding of commander's intent."*

## Air Force Doctrine Publication 1-1

## Mission Command

## The Execution of Mission Command

The USAF executes mission command through the framework of Centralized Command—Distributed Control—Decentralized Execution (CC-DC-DE).

- **Centralized command** gives the commander the responsibility and authority for planning, directing, and coordinating a military operation.
- **Distributed control** enables commanders to delegate authorities for planning, coordination, execution, and assessment activities to dispersed locations to achieve an effective span of control and maintain the initiative, particularly in contested environments.
- **Decentralized execution** is the empowerment of subordinate decision-making to enable flexibility, initiative, and responsiveness in mission accomplishment.

## The Principles of Mission Command

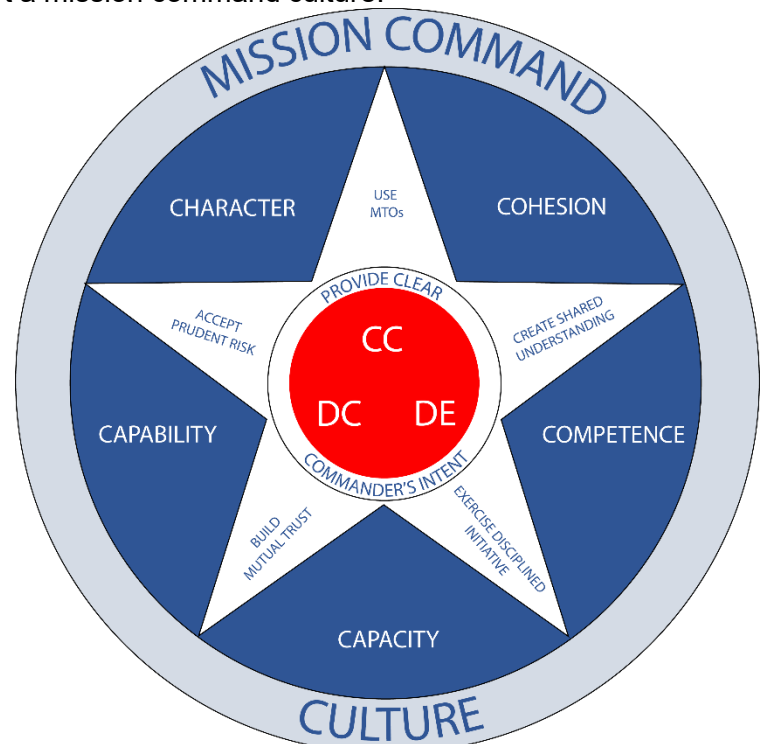
The principles dictate the *actions* required of commanders and Airmen responsible for the application of a mission command philosophy in the conduct of operations.

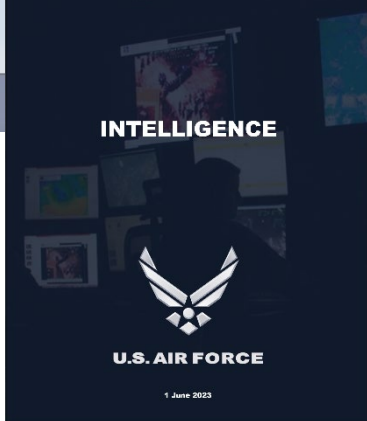
- **Commander's intent**
- **Shared understanding**
- **Disciplined initiative**
- **Mutual trust**
- **Accept prudent risk**
- **Use Mission-Type Orders (MTOs) when appropriate**

## The Attributes of a Mission Command Culture (Five C's)

The attributes constitute the individual and organizational attributes commanders should foster and reinforce to build the individual and organizational capacity required to establish and support a mission command culture.

- **Character**
- **Competence**
- **Capability**
- **Cohesion**
- **Capacity**





# Air Force Doctrine Publication 2-0

## Intelligence

### Tenets of Intelligence

Intelligence should be **anticipatory, timely, accurate, usable, complete, relevant, objective,** and **discoverable** to impart confidence in information sources and facilitate decision advantage to commanders.

### Key Principles of Intelligence

The key principles of **integration, survivability, sustainability, deployability,** and **network-centricity** enable theater-wide air component intelligence operations.

### Intelligence enables decision advantage through three integrated capabilities:

- **Battlespace characterization.** Understanding and predicting adversary actions by examining their capabilities, tactics, dispositions, centers of gravity, and courses of action within the context of the operating environment to provide indications and warning, identify potential vulnerabilities to friendly forces, and identify opportunities to achieve commander objectives.
- **Collection operations.** Tasking and synchronizing ISR sensors, platforms, and exploitation resources to characterize adversary activities and infrastructure as well as the operational environment. Collection operations are driven by battlespace characterization and targeting requirements.
- **Targeting.** Selecting and prioritizing targets and matching the appropriate response to them, considering operational requirements and capabilities.

### Intelligence Process

The Air Force follows the joint intelligence process which provides the basis for common terminology and procedures and is comprised of six interrelated categories (PCPADE):

- Planning & Direction
- Collection
- Processing & Exploitation
- Analysis & Production
- Dissemination & Integration
- Evaluation & Feedback

### Intelligence Disciplines

- GEOINT – Geospatial intelligence
- IMINT – Imagery intelligence
- HUMINT – Human intelligence
- SIGINT – Signals intelligence
- COMINT – Communications intelligence
- ELINT – Electronic intelligence
- FISINT – Foreign Instrumentation Signature intelligence
- MASINT – Measurement and signature intelligence
- OSINT – Open-source intelligence
- TECHINT – Technical intelligence
- CI – Counterintelligence

**AFDP 2-0** describes the key aspects of intelligence operations and support to air operations.

Air Force intelligence enables commanders and decision-makers at all levels to make informed and timely decisions to meet requirements, achieve objectives, and enhance decision advantage.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 2-0** are the Air Component Commander, all personnel engaged in intelligence operations, operations commanders, and intelligence consumers.



# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-0

## Operations

### OPERATIONS



U.S. AIR FORCE

22 January 2025

**AFDP 3-0** is the Air Force's foundational doctrine on applying, commanding, and employing.

**AFDP 3-0** frames operations within the USAF functions and connects USAF capabilities to the joint functions.

The principal audience for **AFDP 3-0** is all members of the profession of arms in the United States Air Force.

**AFDP 3-0 is the foundational doctrine on applying, commanding, and employing airpower.** It frames operations within the USAF functions and connects USAF capabilities to the joint functions through the tenets of airpower and principles of joint operations. Furthermore, it addresses the competition continuum, the application of military power, the chain of command, command relationships, force generation, and force presentation. It also introduces the primacy of the C2 function and serves as the cornerstone for all USAF operational doctrine publications.

Airpower—the ability to project military power through control and exploitation in, from and through the air—provides simultaneous and rapid attacks on key nodes and forces, producing a convergence of effects that can overwhelm the enemy's capacity to adapt or recover. **The primary USAF contribution to warfighting is airpower.**

### The Role of Airpower

Airpower is applied in the context of enduring competition that includes cooperation, adversarial competition, and armed conflict. Across the continuum, the air component gives the JFC a primary means of action since airpower can be deployed and employed farther and faster than most other forms of military power.

### USAF Functions and Capabilities

The USAF provides airpower through distinct capabilities that contribute to five core functions:

- Air Superiority
- Global Precision Attack
- Rapid Global Mobility
- Global Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
- Command and Control

### Presenting Air Force Forces

Applying airpower depends on the USAF's ability to generate and present combat-ready forces. Force generation is the Service's term for the system and processes by which it ensures the availability and readiness of operational forces to be provided to CCMDs when directed. Whether assigned or attached, Service forces are presented to a JFC as a Service component by the senior Service commander.

### Commanding Air Forces

The USAF organizes, trains, and equips forces to apply airpower with centralized command from an air component commander. The air component commander's operational authorities are delegated from the Joint Force Commander (JFC) and exercised as both the Commander, Air Force forces (COMAFFOR), and as the joint force air component commander (JFACC), over joint air forces made available for tasking. Thus, the air component commander leads Air Force forces as the COMAFFOR and the JFC's joint air operations as the JFACC.

### Airpower Application

The USAF's approach for applying airpower is driven by concepts and schemes of maneuver that support joint operations. These include the Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC), Joint All-Domain Operations (JADO), the Air Force Future Operating Concept (AFFOC), and Agile Combat Employment (ACE).



## COMMAND AND CONTROL



U.S. AIR FORCE

22 January 2025

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-0.1

## Command and Control

AFDP 3-0.1 supersedes AFDP 3-30, *Command and Control*, and aligns command and control (C2) as an integral component of operations. The publication articulates in the context of mission command to enable the USAF to adapt its force presentation to respond to Great Power Competition and facilitate joint all-domain operations. It provides a common language and characterization for C2 that is aligned with Distributed Control.

### The C2 Function

C2 is the central and synchronizing joint function. It is the act of exercising authority that encompasses a commander, a method for delegating authorities, the process that translates decisions into actions, and the appropriate systems that enable the direction of forces.

### Commander

The commander is the C2's core element. Commanders use their authority to make decisions and direct action. Commanders drive the C2 process through understanding, visualizing, deciding, and directing in a continuous cycle.

### Framework

Authority delegation is guided by the Centralized Command–Distributed Control–Decentralized Execution (CC-DC-DE) aspect of mission command. The C2 framework provides the overarching approach to command relationships and authority delegation.

### Process

The C2 process is the progressive and iterative series of major C2 activities, led by a commander, that characterize the act of command and control—planning, preparing, executing, and assessing. The C2 process encompasses many of the processes and cycles within the air component that are essential for command and control (i.e., the Air Tasking Cycle, Targeting Cycle, Airlift Cycle).

### Systems

A C2 system is the integrated network of personnel, facilities, equipment, communications, and procedures essential for a commander to plan, direct, and C2 the forces for the missions assigned. C2 systems include two major elements: the organization of C2 personnel, facilities, and equipment (i.e., AFFOR staff, AOC staff, wing A-Staff, & TACS) and the technology that enables effective communication and decision-making.

**AFDP 3-0.1** presents a comprehensive understanding of mission command as it is implemented through the framework of Centralized Command-Distributed Control-Decentralized Execution.

**AFDP 3-0.1** articulates entirely new content to depict the C2 function through its major elements.

The principal audience for **AFDP 3-0.1** is all members of the profession of arms in the United States Air Force.





U.S. AIR FORCE

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### **AFDP 3-01**

provides guidance on how to effectively organize and employ counterair capabilities against peer and near-peer competitors.

Control of the air provides the joint force with freedom of action while reducing vulnerability to enemy threats from all domains.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-01** are the air component commander and all personnel engaged in counterair operations.

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-01

## Counterair Operations

### Counterair Operations

The integration of offensive and defensive operations to attain and maintain a desired degree of control of the air and protection of forces by neutralizing or destroying threats from all domains that directly or indirectly challenge control of the air.

- Control of the Air: a level of influence in the air domain relative to that of an adversary
- Air parity: condition in which no force has control of the air.
- Air superiority: degree of control of the air by one force that permits the conduct of its operations at a given time and place without prohibitive interference from air and missile threats.
- Air supremacy: degree of control of the air wherein the opposing force is incapable of effective interference within the operational area using air and missile threats.

### Counterair operations consist of offensive, defensive, and integrated air and missile defense operations:

- Offensive operations: seek to dominate enemy airspace and prevent the launch of threats, resulting in greater freedom from attack and increased freedom of action.
- Defensive operations: defend friendly line of communication, deny the enemy the freedom to carry out offensive attacks from the air, and provide a secure area from which all elements of the joint force can operate.
- Integrated air and missile defense operations: an approach to counter some, but not all, air and missile threats while integrating capabilities and overlapping operations to defend the homeland, protect the joint force, and enable freedom of action by negating the effectiveness of an adversary's air and missile capabilities.

### Command and Control Roles

- The joint force air component commander is the supported commander for counterair operations.
- The area air defense commander role is assigned to the component commander with the command and control capability to plan, execute, and assess air & missile defense with other air operations (typically the air component commander).
- The airspace control authority (typically the air component commander) is responsible for airspace control, coordinating airspace use to include policy and procedures, and directing required coordination among theater airspace users.
- The air operations center is the senior element of the theater air control system.

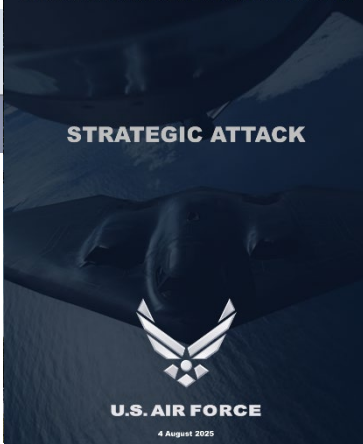
### Counterair Planning

Counterair planning should account for the capabilities of all Services, joint force components, interagency and multinational partners, and every instrument of national power that can be leveraged to achieve counterair objectives. Planning should be informed by the joint intelligence preparation of the operational environment and balanced against the joint force commander's acceptable level of risk.

### Counterair Assessment

Effective counterair assessment depends on thorough planning. Once in execution, planning hinges on the ability to accurately assess the progress of operations. Offensive and defensive counterair performance may be measured separately or combined depending on the course of action with desired effects applicable to both..





## AFDP 3-02

is the Air Force's operational-level doctrine for conducting strategic attack against enemy centers of gravity.

## AFDP 3-02

articulates how the Air Force commands, plans for, executes, and assesses strategic attack.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-02** are the air component commander and any personnel involved in strategic attack operations.

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-02

## Strategic Attack

### Strategic attack

Strategic attack is an offensive action against a target—whether military, political, economic, or other—that is specifically selected to achieve strategic objectives. **Strategic** refers to the highest level of an adversary system that, if affected, will contribute most directly to the achievement of our national security objectives. **Attack** entails offensive action, implying proactive and aggressive operations against an enemy. It may be used preemptively and without regard to enemy military force.

**Strategic attack is not defined by specific weapons or platforms, but rather by the intended effect of the operation—nearly any system may conduct strategic attack.**

- **Strategic objectives:** determined by the President and Secretary of Defense, usually in cooperation with the relevant combatant commanders.
- **Strategic effects:** generate a desired physical or behavioral state in an adversary system that results from an action, a set of actions, or another effect.
- Strategic attack is conducted by systems capable of creating effects at all levels of war and in all domains; Air Force air and cyberspace capabilities may conduct strategic attack that has strategic effects in any or all domains.

**Strategic attack achieves strategic objectives by generating effects aimed at adversary centers of gravity.**

- A **center of gravity** is a source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act.
- **Systemic effects:** treat enemy as a system and plan for effects within that system.
- **Kinetic and non-kinetic** actions, capabilities, and weapons: mechanisms for producing effects.
- **Lethal and nonlethal** effects: (ir)reversible impacts on adversary power projection.
- **Direct and indirect** effects: immediate versus cumulative and cascading impacts.

**Strategic attack can contribute to warfighting strategy and conform adversary behavior to US interests by impacting the adversary's will and capacity to fight.**

- **Power base erosion:** threatening a regime's relationship with its key supporters.
- **Unrest and weakening:** some military targets can impact the enemy's population or infrastructure.
- **Leadership attack:** striking leaders directly or isolating them from their forces.
- **Transportation systems:** disrupting, degrading, or destroying the enemy's ability to move personnel, equipment, and supplies.
- **Conflict-sustaining resources:** denying resources (including money, e.g., through cyberspace operations) needed to continue or initiate conflict.

**Elements of effective strategic attack employment include:**

- **Control of the air** sufficient to allow air forces to attack strategic targets effectively.
- **Parallel operations:** strategic attack is often most effective at causing system-wide paralysis if part of operations simultaneously striking a wide array of targets chosen to cause maximum shock to the enemy, limiting enemy ability to react and adapt.
- Use in conjunction with other instruments of power.

**Command and control of strategic attack may be held at higher levels than other operations due to the sensitivity of certain targets or effects.**





**AFDP 3-03** presents the Air Force's doctrine for counterland operations.

**AFDP 3-03** articulates the Air Force's role in operations against enemy land forces and breaks down the types of air interdiction and close air support.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-03** are the air component commander, air operations planners, and those personnel engaged in counterland operations.

**AFDP 3-03** provides a land warfighter perspective to aid in planning.

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-03

## Counterland Operations

### Counterland Operations

Counterland operations are airpower operations against enemy land force capabilities to create effects that achieve joint force commander (JFC) objectives.

Counterland operations create effects at all levels of warfare and significantly influence the course of joint all-domain operations. Counterland effects focus on the tactical and operational levels of war by targeting fielded enemy ground forces and supporting infrastructure. Counterland operations contribute to strategic effects by denying the enemy's ability to execute coherent ground operations. In cases where the enemy places strategic value on a specific portion of its ground combat force, counterland operations can produce more immediate effects at the strategic level.

### Counterland and Unity of Effort

Counterland operations are planned and conducted by a joint force. Counterland operations levy requirements on the air component to plan, execute, and assess in coordination with land components to ensure unity of effort. Commanders collaborate to identify crucial targets, decide when, where, and how to attack them, and determine how ground operations and counterland efforts best complement each other to achieve JFC objectives and create opportunities for other maneuver elements to exploit.

### Role of Counterland Operations

- Counterland operations seek to destroy an enemy's fighting ability through focused attacks against key enemy ground targets.
- Counterland operations can be the main attack and decisive means for achieving JFC objectives.
- Counterland operations support and facilitate maneuver warfare on land by shaping the battlefield in preparation for future land force operations or by providing additional fire support to current land force operations.

### Airmen support counterland operations primarily through:

- Air interdiction (air operations conducted to divert, disrupt, delay, or destroy the enemy's military potential *before being brought to bear effectively against friendly forces*).
  - AI can channel movements, constrict logistics systems, disrupt communications, force urgent movement, and attrit enemy fielded forces.
- Close air support (as air action by aircraft against hostile targets that are *in close proximity to friendly forces and that require detailed integration* of each air mission with the fire and movement of those forces).
  - CAS provides firepower in offensive and defensive operations, day or night, to destroy, suppress, neutralize, disrupt, fix, or delay enemy forces in close proximity to friendly ground forces.

### Basic planning considerations:

- Command and control requirements
- Air refueling requirements
- Target development
- Weaponeering and munitions allocation requirements
- Air and land battlespace geometry and boundaries





U.S. AIR FORCE

20 September 2023

## AFDP 3-04

articulates the Air Force's operations in the maritime domain to achieve the objective of maritime superiority.

Airpower offers distinct advantages when employed in the maritime domain due to its inherent offensive nature, precision, speed, range, and flexibility.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-04** are the air component commander and those personnel engaged in countersea operations.

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-04

## Countersea Operations

### Countersea Operations

Countersea operations are operations conducted to attain and maintain a desired degree of maritime superiority by the destruction, disruption, delay, diversion, or other neutralization of threats in the maritime environment.

### Maritime Domain

The maritime domain includes the oceans, seas, bays, estuaries, islands, coastal areas, and the airspace above these, including the littorals. Airpower provides a rapid, maneuverable, and flexible element in this environment. Air Force capabilities can extend the reach and increase the flexibility of naval surface, subsurface, and aviation assets, playing a key role in controlling the maritime domain; particularly in a contested peer or near-peer conflict.

### Conducted independently, or in conjunction with other military operations, countersea operations may be used to:

- Support the establishment of military lodgments during initial operational phases.
- Deny use of an area or facilities to the enemy, or to fix enemy forces' attention in support of other combat operations.
- Deter war, resolve conflict, promote peace and stability, or support civil authorities.
- Prevent the disruption of sea lines of communication and attacks against the US and its interests.
- Achieve operational or strategic objectives in the maritime domain.

### Air operations in maritime surface warfare:

The employment of airborne assets in direct support of the joint force maritime component commander and due to the proximity of friendly surface forces, controlled by a surface warfare commander to integrate air operations with the fire and movement of maritime forces. Encompasses the following missions that comprise the concept formerly known as maritime air support:

- Surface surveillance coordination
- War-at-sea strike
- Strike coordination and reconnaissance
- Armed reconnaissance
- Counter-fast attack craft/inshore attack craft
- Airborne maritime mining

### Liaison Roles

Due to the joint nature of most countersea operations, liaisons serve a vital and active role in coordinating, integrating, and planning effects in a maritime area of operation. The naval and amphibious liaison element, the marine liaison element, and the special operations liaison element located at the air operations center ensure mutual understanding and unity of effort and reduce friction between components. The joint air component coordination element will represent the air component commander to the maritime component commander and provide operational level assessment and coordination of air component planning and execution to ensure integration.



## SPECIAL OPERATIONS



**AFDP 3-05** captures USAF special operations fundamentals and principles that guide Air Force special operations forces (AFSOF) to support national objectives across the competition continuum.

**AFDP 3-05** provides general guidance for commanders to plan, employ, support, and conduct command and control (C2) of AFSOF to accomplish global campaign plans, national and theater strategies, and respond to contingencies.

**AFDP 3-05** explains AFSOF's unique command relationships to facilitate the planning and execution of joint operations.

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-05

## Special Operations

### Special Operations

Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) is a USAF major command (MAJCOM) and the Air Force component to US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) tasked to organize, train, equip, and present Air Force special operations forces (AFSOF). AFSOF is the encompassing term for the USAF's active and reserve component to include those units or forces specifically designated as special operations forces (SOF) by the Secretary of Defense. AFSOF consist of highly trained operations and support personnel, unique aircraft, and other specialized equipment.

#### AFSOC Core and Integrating Missions:

- AFSOC Core Missions
  - SOF Air Mobility
  - SOF Strike
  - SOF Air-Ground Integration
  - SOF Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR)
- AFSOC Integrating Missions:
  - Theater Engagement
  - Command & Control
  - Operations in the Information Environment
  - AFSOF Support

#### AFSOC provides combatant commanders (CCDRs) with special operations aviation capabilities to:

- Generate advantage in competition below armed conflict
- Execute operations that support the joint force to win in armed conflict
- Execute counter-violent extremist organization (VEO) operations
- Respond to crisis

#### AFSOF Unique Organizations:

- Special Operations Task Group (SOTG)
- Special Operations Task Unit (SOTU)
  - Aviation
  - Special Tactics
  - Mission Sustainment Teams
- Aviation Staff Augmentation Team (ASAT)

#### Foundational AFSOF Capabilities in support of global campaigning:

- Special Operations Theater Air Operations Squadrons (SOTAOS)
- SOF Air Advisors
- Special Tactics (ST)
- Agile Combat Support (ACS)
- Information forces conducting Operations in the Information Environment (OIE)

#### Special operations Theater Air Operations Squadron (SOTAOS):

The SOTAOS is a regionally aligned squadron assigned to a Power Projection Wing that regionally synchronizes, integrates, and selectively employs AFSOF capabilities to increase advantage against national priorities and strategic competitors by providing multi-domain options for the joint force.



## FORCE PROTECTION



U.S. AIR FORCE

1 June 2023

## Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-10

## Force Protection

Due to the increased lethality of international and domestic threats, it is imperative the Air Force, as part of a coordinated and integrated joint force, take strong measures to protect personnel and installations around the world. How the Air Force protects forces is critical to global engagement.

**Force Protection**

Force protection (FP) consists of measures taken to prevent or mitigate enemy and insider threat actions against Department of Defense (DOD) personnel (to include family members and certain contractor personnel), resources, facilities, and critical information. It is a fundamental principle of all military operations as a means to ensure the survivability of a commander's forces.

**Airman's Perspective on Force Protection**

- Effective FP is more than just law enforcement; all airmen contribute to FP.
- FP is multi-dimensional and multi-layered protection of forces and resources.
- FP requires a global orientation.
- FP is both an individual and a command responsibility.
- FP uses technology to enhance capabilities.

**Command Responsibilities for Force Protection**

- FP is not exclusively a Service responsibility. According to both the Unified Command Plan and Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, combatant commanders (CCDR) with geographic responsibilities have the overall requirement to establish and implement force protection in their areas of responsibility (AOR).
- A CCDR's authority for FP over those forces in their AOR that are not assigned or attached is exercised through tactical control (TACON). TACON for FP authorizes the CCDR to change, modify, prescribe, and enforce FP measures for covered forces.
- Force protection fundamentals are applied in many different operational environments and organization command structures. In the course of planning, commanders should maintain an awareness of legal constraints that may affect operations.
- The base perimeter is the physical and logical base boundary. The base perimeter is not the first line of defense from which all efforts to deter, detect, delay, deny, and defeat an enemy begin. Rather, in the context of protecting a system of systems, it is the last line of defense against a determined enemy.
- Tailored force protection intelligence is fundamental to the prosecution of an effective program and is a mission set used to identify intelligence support to force protection.

**Force Protection Lines of Effort**

Force protection is achieved through the successful execution of many related, but distinct, lines of effort such as integrated defense, defensive countermeasure operations, mission assurance, OPSEC, emergency management, and the critical infrastructure program.

**AFDP 3-10** constitutes the Air Force's approach to force protection.

**AFDP 3-10** articulates how the Air Force protects forces, which is critical to global engagement.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-10** are the air component commander and all USAF personnel in an operational area.





U.S. AIR FORCE

1 February 2023

### **AFDP 3-12**

constitutes the Air Force's approach to cyberspace support for Air Force, joint, and multinational operations.

### **AFDP 3-12**

articulates the fundamentals, effects, functions, and presentation of cyberspace operations forces.

The principle audiences for **AFDP 3-12** are the air component commander, those charged with command and control duties, and those whose operational environment requires an understanding of cyberspace operations.

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-12

## Cyberspace Operations

### **Cyberspace**

Cyberspace is a global domain within the information environment consisting of the interdependent networks of information technology infrastructures and resident data, including the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, and embedded processors and controllers.

### **Cyberspace Domain**

The cyberspace domain is a primary conduit for transactions vital to every facet of modern life. To assist in the planning and execution of cyberspace operations, cyberspace can be described in terms of three interrelated layers: the physical network (devices, infrastructure), the logical network (data, software, networks), and the cyber-persona (digital identity, user accounts).

### **Cyberspace Operations**

Cyberspace operations are the employment of military capabilities where the primary purpose is to achieve combatant commander objectives in or through cyberspace. Links cyberspace operations to Joint operations in the information environment (OIE). Cyberspace operations can be conducted independently or synchronized, integrated, and deconflicted with other information capabilities and activities for more effective OIE.

### **Command and Control of Cyberspace Operations**

16 Air Force (16AF) Commander has multiple roles and authorities, including cyber air component commander, the sole entity responsible for presenting Air Force cyberspace forces to US Cyber Command. Identifies the command relationship differences between CDRUSCYBERCOM and 16 AF, Air Forces Cyber (AFCYBER), and Commander, Joint Forces Headquarters-Cyber (Air Force) (CDRJFHQ-C [AF]). Describes USAF command and control of cyberspace forces and the development of the cyber tasking Order (CTO) in the Joint Planning Process.

### **Cyberspace Operations Framework**

- Defines blue, red, and gray cyberspace operations consistent with Joint doctrine.
- Offensive cyberspace operations project power in and through gray and red cyberspace.
- Defensive cyberspace operations defend blue cyberspace from imminent or active threats by defeating those that have bypassed, breached, or are threatening to breach security measures.
- DOD Information Network operations are standing missions that involve day-to-day security and maintenance operations, threat response, and support to DCO forces through regularly scheduled, but not routine, events supporting the framework for most Air Force missions.



INFORMATION IN  
AIR FORCE OPERATIONS

U.S. AIR FORCE

1 February 2023

**AFDP 3-13**

describes the Air Force's construct to leverage the information joint function in support of friendly objectives and desired end states.

**AFDP 3-13**

articulates the fundamentals and presentation of Air Force informational capabilities, activities, and operations into joint operations in the information environment.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-13** are the air component commander and those Airmen charged with integrating information capabilities into military operations.

## Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-13

## Information in Air Force Operations

**Information Environment**

The information environment (IE) is defined as the aggregate of social, cultural, linguistic, psychological, technical, and physical factors that affect how humans and automated systems derive meaning from, act upon, and are impacted by information, including the individual organizations, and systems that collect, process, disseminate, or use information.

**Operations in the Information Environment**

The purpose of operations in the information environment (OIE) is to shape perceptions and behaviors in ways to aid friendly objectives. The Air Force leverages the range of capabilities within the information joint function to support friendly objectives and desired end states by informing or influencing relevant actors and exploiting their information networks while also protecting friendly information and systems.

**Relevant Actors**

Individuals, groups, populations, or automated systems whose capabilities or behaviors have the potential to affect the success of a campaign, operation, or tactical action. Relevant actors may include adversary political leadership, military forces, allies/partners, general populations, and/or third parties whose support can significantly affect joint force success.

**Air Force Information Warfare**

Information Warfare (IW) is the Air Force's term for the military capabilities employed in and through the IE to deliberately affect adversary human and system behavior and preserve friendly freedom of action during cooperation, competition, and conflict.

- Air Force IW consists of six principal capabilities - cyberspace operations; electromagnetic spectrum operations; information operations forces; public affairs; intelligence; and weather. There are numerous other information capabilities, operations, and activities, such as data science, operations research and international affairs, that inform and support Air Force IW.

**Command and Control**

When directed, the Air Force presents IW planners and forces to combatant commands to support national and theater-level OIE taskings. Sixteenth Air Force is responsible for developing, preparing, generating, and presenting IW forces.

**Service and Functional OIE Roles**

Air Force information planners serve as a focal point for coordinating requirements for reachback support from information capabilities outside the theater to ensure their plans and support are integrated with joint OIE. In general, the Service component staff coordinates planning actions at the joint force commander level while the functional component (air operations center) staff coordinates information planning and tasking actions at the Joint Task Force-level.

1 February 2023

<https://www.doctrine.af.mil>

## SPACE SUPPORT



U.S. AIR FORCE

1 April 2025

## Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-14

## Space Support

**Space Operations**

Effective space operations start with control of the air as a joint force priority. Without this control, adversaries will inhibit the joint force commander's operational maneuver across all domains. Potential adversaries have expanded their reach to threaten US space operations. In response to these growing threats, the US re-established US Space Command (USPACECOM) as a combatant command (CCMD) and established the US Space Force (USSF) as an armed Service within the Department of the Air Force to maintain space superiority through the application of military spacepower.

**Air and Space Integration**

The USAF enables USSF space operations both in execution (e.g., counterair, air interdiction) and via the conduct of support activities (e.g., security, communications, finance, medical, legal, logistics). Since the air component relies on a wide range of space capabilities to provide effective combat airpower, it integrates space effects into air operations through the air operations center in close coordination with the appropriate CCMD Commander, Space Force forces (COMSPACEFOR), or joint force space component commander (JFSCC), if designated.

**Air Force Support to Space Operations**

The USAF uses various capabilities to suppress threats against terrestrial space systems and infrastructure critical to enabling space operations.

- Offensive Counterair (OCA) operations seek to dominate enemy airspace and prevent enemy action in and from the air, resulting in freedom from attack and increased freedom of action. OCA in support of space operations can include attack operations and suppression of enemy air defenses.
- Defensive Counterair (DCA) operations defend friendly lines of communication, deny the enemy freedom of action in the air, and provide a secure area from which all elements of the joint force can operate. DCA operations can be conducted in conjunction with, or independent of, OCA operations and may consist of either active or passive air and missile defense (AMD).
- The USAF also provides counterland, air interdiction, electromagnetic spectrum, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, sustainment, and weather operations to enable USSF missions worldwide.

**Space Force Support to Air Operations**

Space forces provide the joint force air component commander (JFACC) with several unique and critical capabilities to enable air operations such as long-range kill chains and integrated AMD. These capabilities include intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; space-based missile warning; electromagnetic warfare; satellite communications; and positioning, navigation, and timing.

**Command and Control of Space Operations**

Prior to the establishment of USSPACECOM and the USSF, the JFACC was normally dual-hatted as the lead for space operations. With the advent of a dedicated space command structure, combatant commanders can designate a JFSCC, delegate the responsibilities to the COMSPACEFOR, or retain the responsibility for C2 and coordination of space requirements, functions, capabilities, and requests.

**AFDP 3-14** articulates USAF roles and responsibilities for supporting joint space operations.

The primary focus of **AFDP 3-14** is the integration of military airpower and spacepower. USAF and USSF capabilities are included to describe the interdependencies inherent in joint space operations.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-14** are the air component commander and those involved in planning airpower support to joint space operations.



FOREIGN INTERNAL  
DEFENSE

U.S. AIR FORCE

20 March 2026

**AFDP 3-22** presents the Air Force's role in foreign internal defense operations.

**AFDP 3-22** articulates the strategic goals of foreign internal defense, and the foundational philosophy of the Air Force's role in foreign internal defense.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-22** are the air component commander, those involved in the planning and execution of foreign internal defense operations, and those working with host nation partners in any capacity.

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-22

## Foreign Internal Defense

### The "By, With, and Through" Whole-of-Government Approach

The Air Force's approach to FID is to empower the Host Nation (HN) to secure its own environment "by, with, and through" its own institutions. This philosophy is executed within a "whole-of-government" framework, integrating military activities with diplomatic, economic, and informational initiatives to address the root causes of instability and bolster HN legitimacy.

### The Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) Strategy

The IDAD program is the comprehensive strategy that integrates security measures with societal development. It is built on four balanced functions:

- **Balanced Development:** Fostering and protecting the social, economic, and political institutions that build stability and address popular grievances.
- **Security:** Protecting the population and securing national resources from internal and external threats, creating a safe environment for development.
- **Neutralization:** Defeating, containing, or co-opting hostile elements that threaten the stability and authority of the host nation government.
- **Mobilization:** Effectively marshalling the host nation's manpower and material resources to support the comprehensive IDAD program.

### The USAF FID Framework: Equip, Assess, Train, Advise, and Assist

- **Equip:** Providing the HN with the necessary military articles and services to build and sustain its airpower capabilities.
- **Assess:** Continuously evaluating the HN's capabilities, vulnerabilities, and operational environment to tailor support effectively.
- **Train:** Developing the HN's ability to operate and maintain its equipment and conduct effective air operations independently.
- **Advise:** Providing counsel and mentorship at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels to HN leadership and airmen.
- **Assist:** Providing direct operational support to HN forces when their own capacity is insufficient to meet critical security threats.

### Key Enabling Activities in FID

These activities are critical for building the partnerships and environment necessary for successful FID operations.

- **Joint and Multinational Exercises:** These are primary tools for building the interoperability, shared procedures, and trust required for effective multinational FID operations.
- **Humanitarian and Civic Assistance (HCA):** HCA activities, conducted in conjunction with FID, build goodwill, improve local conditions, and enhance the legitimacy of the HN government in contested areas.
- **USAF Security Assistance Teams:** Specialized teams like Technical Assistance Teams (TATs) and Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) are key on-the-ground enablers of FID, providing targeted training and expertise.



## HOMELAND DEFENSE



U.S. AIR FORCE

20 March 2026

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-27

## Homeland Defense

### Homeland Defense

Homeland Defense is the military protection of United States sovereignty and territory against external threats, aggression or, other threats as directed by the President. The greatest responsibility of the United States Air Force is protecting the American people. The Air Force contributes air power to achieve joint force commander objectives in the form of air superiority, global precision attack, rapid global mobility, global ISR, and command and control.

### Defense Support of Civil Authorities

Many of the USAF capabilities that support HD are equally applicable to defense support of civil authorities. Defense support of civil authorities, often referred to as civil support, is defined as support provided in response to requests for assistance from civil authorities, for domestic emergencies, law enforcement support, and other domestic activities, or from qualifying entities for special events.

### Homeland Security Relationships

The multitude of commands operating within the US drives the need to deconflict roles, responsibilities, and missions. **Unity of command** ensures concentration of effort for every objective under one responsible commander. **Unity of effort** is critical during interagency operations and can best be achieved through consensus building. Combatant commanders with designated areas of responsibility support homeland defense through a layered defense construct (in the forward areas, the approaches, and the homeland itself).

### Homeland Defense Planning and Support

- Defense of the homeland is not entirely unique and should primarily follow established warfighting doctrine. However, the command structure for homeland operations is more complex than in most areas of responsibility.
- In providing defense support of civil authorities, Air Force forces support federal, state, or local civil authorities in cases of natural or manmade domestic emergencies, civil disturbances, or authorized law enforcement activities. Planning for and responding to these events should be a Total Force effort.

### Legal Status & Authority Considerations

Airmen (regular Air Force, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and Air Force Auxiliary) accomplish homeland defense and provide support to civil authorities under multiple laws and authorities. The authorities are derived from law and statutes which may enable or restrict Airmen's actions. Within the homeland, Air Force forces may operate in different legal statuses (Title 10, Title 32, Title 50, etc.).

Regardless of the status the forces are in, there should be clarity of the chain of command to support unity of effort. There are specific federal laws affecting Air Force personnel and operations on the homeland. The Posse Comitatus Act and the Enforcement of the Laws to Restore Public Order Act (formerly the Insurrection Act) place limitations on Air Force forces; all Air Force personnel, regardless of status, should be aware of this information.

**AFDP 3-27** is the Air Force's operational-level doctrine describing the air component's role in both Homeland Defense and defense support of civil authorities.

**AFDP 3-27** articulates the relationships with external organizations, and outlines the command relationships for Homeland Defense operations.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-27** are the air component commander and those forces charged with Homeland Defense or defense support of civil authorities.



## ENGINEER OPERATIONS



U.S. AIR FORCE

20 March 2026

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-34

## Engineer Operations

The Air Force projects airpower from installations, and Air Force Civil Engineers provide critical capability by building, maintaining, and recovering those installations. In a new reality where operating in contested, degraded, and operationally limited environments is a primary concern, the ability of Civil Engineers to execute their mission is as important as ever to the employment of airpower. From the beginning of military aviation to today, engineers have been pivotal players in ensuring airfields, facilities, and infrastructure set the conditions for operational dominance.

### Civil Engineer Key Functions

Civil Engineers execute their mission through the employment of three key functions:

- **General Engineering:** Consists of capabilities and activities that provide infrastructure; modify, maintain, or protect the physical environment; and respond rapidly to establish, sustain, and recover airbases.
- **Geospatial Engineering:** Provides capabilities and activities that portray and refine data about the geographic location and characteristics of natural and constructed features, enhancing situational awareness.
- **Installation Support and Services:** Provides activities essential for effective real property lifecycle management, emergency services, and the operation and sustainment of facilities and infrastructure.

### Civil Engineer Enterprise

The civil engineer enterprise consists of a total force mix of regular Air Force, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, and civilian engineers. These engineers perform their key functions organized under several core operational pillars:

- Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force (Prime BEEF)
- Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineer (RED HORSE)
- Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)
- Fire and Emergency Services
- Emergency Management (EM)
- Other Specialized and Staff Augmentation Teams

### Operations Across the Competition Continuum

Civil Engineers provide crucial engineer support to operations in contested environments and across the competition continuum. Engineers are critical to enabling Agile Combat Employment (ACE) by providing the infrastructure, protection, and essential services that underpin the maneuverability and resilience of ACE forces. Through passive defense, hardening, and recovery operations like Rapid Airfield Damage Repair (RADR), engineers directly help counter adversary kill chains. From setting the theater to conducting stability operations, engineers apply their expertise to enable the mission and ensure commanders have the freedom to act, sustain, and prevail.

**AFDP 3-34** establishes the Air Force's approach to supporting airpower projection via engineer operations throughout the competition continuum.

**AFDP 3-34** articulates the various means the Air Force employs its engineering assets.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-34** are the air component commander and those involved in planning engineering activities.





U.S. AIR FORCE

24 June 2024

**AFDP 3-36** presents the Air Force's perspective on air mobility operations.

**AFDP 3-36** articulates air mobility operations in relation to meeting national objectives through rapid global mobility.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-36** are the air component commander and Mobility Air Force personnel, to include and transportation and logistics Airmen.

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-36

## Air Mobility Operations

### Rapid Global Mobility

The USAF provides the rapid global mobility function to employ and sustain military forces that enable joint force commanders to conduct decisive operations across the competition continuum. To fulfill the rapid global mobility function, air mobility operations are classified into four core functions: airlift, air refueling (AR), aeromedical evacuation (AE), and air mobility support. These capabilities enable the joint force to gain operational reach and positional advantage.

### Airman's Perspective

Air mobility operations are an extension of airpower—the ability to project military power through control and exploitation in, from, and through the air. Air mobility contributes to airpower by creating effects at all levels of warfare and breaking down geographical boundaries to apply force rapidly against many facets of an adversary's sources of power. Air mobility's impact is best understood by connecting the air mobility core functions to the USAF functions, joint functions, principles of joint operations, and tenets of airpower. Successful air mobility operations depend on the total force integration of regular and reserve forces, Air Force civilians, and civilian air transportation partners.

### Air Mobility Operations core functions:

- **Airlift** enables rapid and responsive deployment, sustainment, and redeployment of personnel and equipment to/from areas unreachable by other means. Airlift projects combat power to enable persistent joint and multinational operations. Payloads are delivered via two methods: airland or airdrop.
- **Air Refueling** provides the joint force the ability to maneuver and mass forces to coerce or defeat the enemy at times and places where they are least prepared. AR supports six primary operations: nuclear operations support, global strike support, airbridge operations, aircraft deployment, theater combat support, special operations support.
- **Aeromedical Evacuation** improves casualty recovery rates by providing time-sensitive, mission critical, en route care and transportation for patients or casualties to and between medical treatment facilities when increased levels of care are required. AE comprises a system of systems including aeromedical evacuation liaison teams, crew stages, and crews; critical care air transport teams; other specialty teams; and en route patient staging systems. AE forces execute patient movement on Mobility Air Force aircraft, other Service aircraft, international partner aircraft, and contracted aircraft.
- **Air Mobility Support** consists of command and control, aerial port, and maintenance ground support capabilities provided to air mobility forces operating around the globe. Support is provided by the Global Air Mobility Support System, which includes CONUS and OCONUS support locations and deployable contingency response forces that open and operate airbases with minimal support.

### Global Mobility Enterprise

Global Mobility Enterprise encompasses the entire system required to conduct and support air mobility operations. The four components of the enterprise are personnel, equipment, infrastructure, and command & control capabilities.



COUNTER-WEAPONS OF MASS  
DESTRUCTION OPERATIONS

U.S. AIR FORCE

6 July 2022

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-40

## Counter-Weapons of Mass Destruction Operations

### Counter-weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD) Operations

Deterring or preventing adversaries from acquiring, proliferating, or using WMD – **chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons capable of high order destruction or production of mass casualties** – is a primary national security objective. Such attacks are capable of second- and third-order political and psychological effects that exceed their immediate impact on military operations. Whether aiming to counter US conventional military superiority, to gain strategic advantage, or to destabilize international order in their favor, adversaries, including nonstate actors, will continue to pursue WMD, advance their lethality, or proliferate their spread.

**Weapons of mass destruction are generally considered synonymous with chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear capabilities and their means of delivery.**

***DoD Strategy for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction* establishes three strategic end states:**

- No new weapons of mass destruction possession.
- No weapons of mass destruction use.
- If used, minimization of weapons of mass destruction effects.

**These end states are achieved through three main lines of effort:**

- Prevent acquisition
- Contain and reduce WMD threats
- Respond to WMD crises

**In addition to the three LOEs, *Prepare* activities serve as a strategic enabler that continuously ensure joint forces are ready to execute CWMD across the LOEs.**

**The Air Force contributes to the strategic ends, main LOEs, and prepare activities across the competition continuum and in cross-functional participation with the following missions and operations:**

- Conduct nuclear deterrence operations
- Maintain/expand technical expertise
- Safeguard the force
- Synchronize with USG
- Understand the environment, threats, and vulnerabilities
- Provide C2ISR
- Control
- Dispose
- Defeat
- Disable
- Manage Consequences
- Cooperate with and support partners

***AFDP 3-40*** is the Air Force's operational-level doctrine for preventing, countering, and mitigating the effects of enemy weapons of mass destruction.

***AFDP 3-40*** articulates how the Air Force commands, plans for, and executes counter-weapons of mass destruction.

The principal audiences for ***AFDP 3-40*** are the air component commander and Airmen desiring to understand how the Air Force fits within the whole-of-government counter-weapons of mass destruction construct.



# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-50

## Personnel Recovery

### PERSONNEL RECOVERY



U.S. AIR FORCE

26 September 2025

**AFDP 3-50** presents the Air Force's best practices on personnel recovery.

**AFDP 3-50** articulates the Air Force's strategy and approach to planning personnel recovery.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-50** are the air component commander and all personnel involved in any part of the personnel recovery preparation, planning, execution, and adaptation processes, to include anyone who has potential to become an isolated person.

### Personnel Recovery

Personnel Recovery is defined as the sum of military, diplomatic, and civil efforts to prepare for and execute the recovery and reintegration of isolated personnel, and to prevent, plan for, and coordinate a response to isolating events to include all US Government departments and agencies.

### Joint Personnel Recovery Center

The Joint Personnel Recovery Center is the coordination cell, or hub, of personnel recovery command and control activities.

### Personnel recovery system consists of:

- **Preparation.** Development of policy, doctrine, equipment, education, and training through tactical, operational, theater strategic, and national strategic lenses.
- **Planning.** conducted using the joint planning process for air with outcomes based upon commander's intent; individual, component, joint, and multi-government capabilities; the Joint Personnel Recovery Center and Joint Personnel Recovery Agency; intelligence, security, medical, space, weather, and information operations; and mobility planning considerations.
- **Execution.** Reporting, locating, supporting, and the immediate, deliberate, hold, and reintegration methods used by the Air Force; and the adaptation methods gained from the collection of personnel recovery information.
- **Adaptation.** Continually assesses the entire DoD PR system to identify and mitigate PR gaps to alleviate risk and save lives on the battlefield.

### Combat Search and Rescue

Combat search and rescue is the Air Force's preferred method to recover isolated personnel and consists of three components:

- Command and control
- Recovery forces
- Isolated personnel

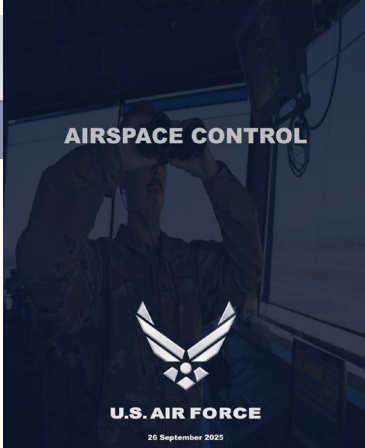
### Combat search and rescue recovery forces:

- Are often combined into a tailored combat search and rescue task force in denied or contested environments.
- Are a mutually supporting package designed to protect the isolated personnel on the ground as well as the recovery force package from threats.
- Consist of vertical-lift aircraft, fixed-wing rescue aircraft, Guardian Angel, rescue mission commander, rescue escort, airborne mission coordinator, and an on-scene commander. These are augmented by forward air controllers; aerial refueling assets; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms; space; suppression of enemy air defenses; electromagnetic warfare; and joint and coalition personnel recovery forces.

### Education and training of potential isolated personnel:

- Specialized training is given to those at high risk of isolation to aid their survival, evasion, and escape.
- Combatant commanders establish theater entry requirements to ensure all personnel receive preparation measures commensurate with the assessed risk.
- Combat air forces and Air Force special operations forces complement and support each other as required.





# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-52

## Airspace Control

### Airspace Control

Airspace control is the exercise of delegated authority over designated airspace and users through control procedures and coordination measures to maximize operational effectiveness. The primary goal of airspace control is to enhance the effectiveness of joint and multinational operations.

### Airman's Perspective

The Airman's Perspective on airpower is that control of the air is a necessary precondition for control of the surface and requires theater-wide visibility of the air domain. They must maintain the requisite expertise and capabilities to control and operate across theaters, transitioning seamlessly from operational levels to the lowest tactical level, anywhere around the globe.

### Command and Control

- Joint force commander is responsible for airspace control within the joint operations area.
- Commander, Air Force Forces provides the Air Force theater air control system and airspace control expertise and resources to the Joint Force Commander.
- Airspace control authority is typically the commander with the preponderance of airspace control and management capabilities in the joint operations area and who has been delegated overall responsibility for airspace control.
  - As a guiding principle for all operations, the host nation retains sovereign control of its national airspace unless otherwise agreed upon by treaty or international agreement. In such circumstances, joint forces primarily use existing international, HN, or Department of War procedures.
- Area air defense commander plans and executes integrated air defense operations assigned to the operational area.

### Airspace Control Planning:

Airspace control considerations should be integrated into planning to ensure joint and combined force effectiveness. Some best practices include:

- Command and control personnel, air traffic control personnel, and airspace planners should be involved from the outset in planning and executing command and control, air traffic control, and airspace management.
- Establishing relationships with host and key neighboring nations' air traffic control is critical.

### Airspace Control Execution:

Airspace control procedures within an operational area are approved by the joint force commander and are derived from the joint force commander's authority. Properly employed, airspace control aims to maximize the effectiveness of combat operations without unduly restricting the capabilities of any Service or functional component.

- Airspace control supports combatant command steady state operations, activities, and investments in cooperation and competition to discourage potential adversaries and develop relationships with friends and allies.
- Integration with counterair assets, air and missile defense systems, and land component forces are critical during combat operations.

**AFDP 3-52** presents principles and procedures to increase operational effectiveness by promoting the safe, efficient, and flexible use of airspace.

Airspace control is a broad term used to describe the activities performed and authorities executed by a wide range of entities, both civil and military.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-52** are the air component commander and those charged with command and control duties for airspace control.





**AFDP 3-59** presents the Air Force's approach to providing weather support to Air Force, joint, and multinational operations.

**AFDP 3-59** articulates the fundamentals, effects, functions, roles, and presentation of weather forces.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-59** are the air component commander and those who require an understanding of weather operations.

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-59

## Weather Operations

### Weather

Weather is defined as the past, current, and projected physical conditions of the terrestrial and space environment. These conditions include environmental factors from the surface of the earth up to the ionosphere and outward into space.

### Four Principles

The enduring principles of weather operations are accuracy, consistency, relevancy, and timeliness. Effective weather operations are executed through adherence to these principles, providing tailored weather support that enhances operational effectiveness and optimizes operational advantage.

### Two Functions

Two key functions of weather operations are characterization and exploitation. Environmental characterization describes past, present, and future weather operations using a systematic and consistent approach to forecasting. Exploitation enables decision-makers to adjust and maximize operations based on the weather and any relevant effects on friendly and adversary forces.

### Eight Processes

Using accurate, consistent, relevant, and timely characterization and exploitation of environmental information, weather personnel provide friendly forces with the requisite knowledge of the environment to secure a warfighting advantage over the adversary via eight processes (processing, collection, analysis, prediction, tailoring, integration, mitigation, dissemination).

### Presentation of Weather Forces

Weather capabilities require integration with those of other Services and nations to provide structured weather operations to joint and multinational forces. Members of weather specialty teams support the air component at the operational level while numerous air force weather personnel integrate capabilities into Army, Space Force, and special operations.

### Planning, Execution, and Assessment

Because weather significantly impacts planning and execution of joint force operations, environmental information relevant to friendly and adversary forces should be integrated into all stages of military operations, including planning, execution, and assessment. Weather support is most effective when weather personnel know the mission, organization, capabilities, plans, doctrine, and procedures of the supported unit. Weather has a particularly profound effect on flight operations, but it impacts all forms of operations.



# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-60

## Targeting

TARGETING



U.S. AIR FORCE

12 November 2021

### **AFDP 3-60**

is the Air Force's operational-level doctrine for the conduct of targeting operations including assigned roles and responsibilities within the joint targeting cycle.

### **AFDP 3-60**

articulates how the Air Force uses an effects-based approach to identify, plan for, and engage targets.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-60** are the air component commander and any personnel involved in the targeting processes.

### Targeting

Targeting is the process of selecting and prioritizing targets, matching appropriate responses, and taking account of command objectives, operational requirements, and capabilities to achieve joint force commander objectives. A **target** is an entity or object considered for possible engagement or other action.

**Targeting occurs across the competition continuum, over the full range of Air Force operations, and at all levels of warfare:**

- Targeting is one means of translating strategy into discrete actions by helping link ends, ways, means, and risk.
- Targeting allows commanders and planners to choose the best ways to create desired effects, allowing them to attain objectives and other desired outcomes.

**Targeting is effects-based and is used to affect all domains:**

- Effective planning for targeting starts with objectives, then considers the effects needed to achieve them, and lastly matches capabilities against targets likely to achieve the effects required.
- Air Force forces use both kinetic means (like bombs and missiles) and non-kinetic means (like cyberspace capabilities) to create lethal and nonlethal effects.
- Non-kinetic means and nonlethal effects can be vital for achieving end state conditions and preventing undesired indirect effects.

### Targeting Categories

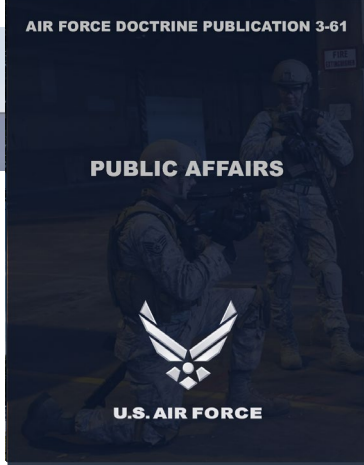
- **Deliberate** targeting applies when there is sufficient time to include a target in a plan or an air tasking order as part of the air tasking and targeting cycles.
- **Dynamic** targeting applies to targets identified too late to be included in deliberate targeting (usually after air tasking order production), but that meet criteria specific to achieving objectives.
  - Dynamic targeting consists of six distinct steps (also referred to as the kill chain): find, fix, track, target, engage, and assess.
  - Dynamic targeting process takes place in a much more time-limited context. The kill chain is often used to prosecute joint force commander-designated time-sensitive targets, component-critical targets, and other targets emerging during execution that friendly commanders deem worthy of targeting.

### Air Tasking Cycle

The tasking cycle differs in minor ways from the joint targeting cycle, and the two are often conducted in parallel, especially when airpower provides the preponderance of targeting capability. Most deliberate targeting is done through the stages of the air tasking cycle:

- Objectives, effects, and guidance
- Target development
- Weaponing and allocation
- Air tasking order production and dissemination
- Execution planning and force execution
- Assessment





# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-61

## Public Affairs

### Public Affairs

Public affairs (PA) is an operational information capability that affects friendly, neutral, and adversary perception and behavior through the planning and execution of public communication and engagement as well as the release of true, accurate, and timely information. PA is the Department of the Air Force's (DAF) primary public communication capability.

### Tenets

- Tell the truth
- Communicate with consistency
- Engage early, often, and with context
- Balance engagement and OPSEC
- Tell the DAF story
- Think strategically and critically
- Integrate communication into planning

### Core Competencies

- Trusted counsel to leaders
- Global influence and deterrence
- Airmen and Guardian morale and readiness
- Public trust and support

### Activities

- Communication and overt effects planning
- Security and policy review
- Media operations
- Community engagement
- Environmental public affairs
- Visual information
- Band operations
- Command information
- Information warfare
- Contingency operations and wartime readiness

### Integration with Operations

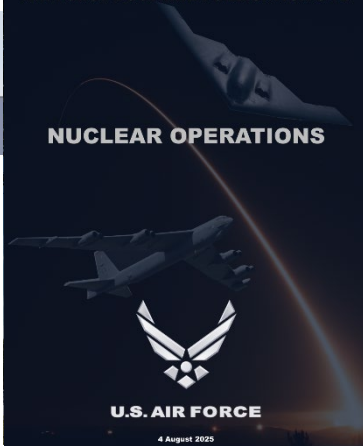
The PAO is responsible for planning and executing PA operations to support and create the desired effects necessary to accomplish the commander's operational objectives. PA liaisons may be aligned across staff directorates and divisions as appropriate to serve in a planning and deconflicting capacity.

Operations in the Information Environment (OIE) teams and cells help integrate OIE activities into joint air component OPLAN. While PA operations should be closely coordinated with OIE, the timely flow of information for release in public IE should not be impeded, even if it will have a detrimental effect. PA professionals directly advise the commander and deliver truthful time-critical information to meet commanders' desired effects.

**AFDP 3-61** articulates how the Department of the Air Force advances priorities and achieves mission objectives through integrated planning, execution, and assessment of communication capabilities.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-61** are the air component commander and any personnel involved in public affairs processes.





# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-72

## Nuclear Operations

### Strategic effects of nuclear weapons:

Intercontinental ballistic missiles and dual-capable bombers and fighters are the Air Force's delivery platforms. Each Air Force nuclear-capable system offers distinct advantages. Intercontinental ballistic missiles are the most responsive, offering prompt, on-alert capability combined with dispersed fielding. Dual-capable aircraft offer mission flexibility and capabilities to provide distinct signaling in a crisis through alert posturing and shows of force.

### The purpose of nuclear forces in US strategy:

- **Deter Strategic Attack.** Air Force nuclear forces integrate with both conventional and nuclear joint forces as part of the instruments of national power for deterrence. Nuclear operations increase the costs of attacks for adversaries and strengthen regional nuclear deterrence with allies and partners.
  - **Deterrence.** Prevents adversary action through credible threat presentation of unacceptable counteraction and/or belief the action cost outweighs perceived benefits.
- **Assure Allies and Partners.** Assurance involves easing the fears and sensitivities of Allies and partners. Assurance often takes the form of security cooperation, combined exercise, and forward stationing of U.S. forces.
- **Achieve U.S. Objectives if Deterrence Fails.** If deterrence fails, the President may authorize the use of nuclear weapons to conclude any conflict with the lowest level of damage possible, securing the most favorable terms achievable for the US and its allies and partners.

### Nuclear command, control, and communications

Nuclear command, control, and communications system refers to the means through which Presidential authority is exercised and operational command and control of nuclear operations is conducted. Resilient and effective nuclear command, control, and communications ensures that civilian authorities have the maximum possible decision time in all scenarios, which strengthens strategic stability particularly at lower force levels; strengthens the Air Force's ability to employ forces against a target or series of targets in a timely manner; provides civilian authorities the means to terminate a conflict and thus avoid further escalation; and strengthens the Air Force's ability to respond even after suffering an attack or series of attacks. Because only the President can authorize the employment of US nuclear weapons, nuclear operations require nuclear command, control, and communications systems to provide national leaders with situational awareness, advance warning, and command and control capabilities.

### Planning Considerations

Planning for nuclear operations differs in one important aspect from other forms of joint planning: US Strategic Command performs detailed planning down to the individual sortie level, and as a result there is no separate supporting Service component operation plan. Air Force nuclear capabilities require robust integration with full spectrum operations to ensure effective employment within a particular region, account for larger political ramifications, and allow effective operations in a nuclear environment. Planners should integrate nuclear options with conventional or other nonnuclear operations to enhance effectiveness and minimize collateral effects.

**AFDP 3-72** establishes that nuclear operations are a key component to the success of joint all-domain operations and critical to this current era of great power competition.

The principal audience for **AFDP 3-72** is Service members who are part of the nation's nuclear enterprise.





# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-84

## Legal Support

Legal support to operations focuses on providing legal advice to maximize operational freedom and support to national security objectives. Legal support to Air Force commanders enhances commanders' decision-making ability and is critical to mission success. Air Force commanders turn to their judge advocates for insight into the law, his or her command authorities, and how the law impacts Air Force operations across the competition continuum.

The authority and responsibilities of command are distinctive elements of military operations. The concept of command embodies two essential functions. First, it is the legal authority over people, including the power to discipline. Second, command is the legal responsibility for assigned resources and mission accomplishment.

### Role of legal support to operations:

- Provide insight into legal basis for the operation.
- Advise on preparing the operational environment and positioning the force.
- Fully integrate and advise throughout the planning process.
- Assist in employing the force and capabilities to execute the mission in compliance with the law of war.

### JAG Corps (JAGC) personnel support operations primarily through:

- Reviewing and opining on command and control issues.
- Providing legal subject matter experts for a wide variety of Air Force operations (e.g., air combat, cyberspace, air mobility, space, nuclear, and special operations).
- Addressing legal considerations during planning and execution.
- Integrating into the divisions of the air operation center (AOC).
- Providing guidance on authorities, rules of engagement, rules for use of force, and law of war considerations.

### Major legal subject matter expertise for operations:

- Command relationships (COMREL)
- Fiscal law
- Law of war
- Intelligence law
- Contract law
- International and humanitarian law
- Cyber law

### Legal advice team of the Air Force includes:

- The Judge Advocate General (TJAG)
- Headquarters US Air Force Legal Areas of Operations and International Law, Military Justice and Discipline, and Civil Law and Litigation
- Staff Judge Advocates (SJA)
- Air Force officers designated as judge advocates
- Active duty enlisted paralegals
- Air Force Reserve Component officers designated as judge advocates
- Air Force Reserve Component enlisted paralegals
- Civilian attorneys and legal services civilians

**AFDP 3-84** establishes Air Force doctrine focused on legal advice and considerations for Air Force operations. It highlights the types of legal issues addressed by Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corps personnel for command.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-84** are the air component commander and staff involved in operations.



ELECTROMAGNETIC  
SPECTRUM OPERATIONS

U.S. AIR FORCE

14 December 2023

**AFDP 3-85** presents the Air Force's approach to conducting electromagnetic spectrum operations.

**AFDP 3-85** articulates the fundamentals of electromagnetic spectrum operations and activities, relationships, and Air Force support.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 3-85** are the air component commander and those charged with command and control duties in electromagnetic spectrum operations.

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-85

## Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations

### Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations

Electromagnetic spectrum operations comprise coordinated military actions to exploit, attack, protect, and manage the electromagnetic spectrum environment to achieve the commander's objectives. These actions include spectrum management and electromagnetic warfare that can be employed in an offensive and defensive manner.

- **Offensive electromagnetic spectrum operations** are used to deceive, disrupt, degrade, or destroy the enemy's ability to use the electromagnetic spectrum.
- **Defensive electromagnetic spectrum operations** can provide protection from physical attack or defend friendly the electromagnetic spectrum systems from enemy offensive systems operations.

### Spectrum Management

Electromagnetic spectrum management involves the operational, engineering, and administrative procedures to plan and coordinate operations within the electromagnetic operational environment.

### Electromagnetic Warfare

Electromagnetic warfare is waged to secure and maintain a desired degree of control and freedom of action in the electromagnetic spectrum and is divided into three divisions.

- **Electromagnetic attack** uses electromagnetic energy, directed energy, or anti-radiation weapons to attack personnel, facilities, or equipment to deceive, disrupt, degrade, or destroy enemy operational capability.
- **Electromagnetic protection** involves passive and active actions taken to reduce or prevent personnel, facilities, and equipment from intentional and unintentional electromagnetic spectrum effects.
- **Electromagnetic support** actions search, intercept, identify, and locate sources of intentional and unintentional radiated electromagnetic energy. Electromagnetic support information contributes to the development of the electronic order of battle, provides updates to the electromagnetic warfare integrated reprogramming database, and supports the development of electromagnetic countermeasures.

### Information Warfare Team at the Air Operations Center

The air component commander may form an information warfare team within the air operations center to provide fires expertise to the air operations center divisions and enable coordination for electromagnetic spectrum operations. The information warfare team also assesses air component electromagnetic warfare operations and ensures effective coordination and synchronization with other joint force components and the joint electromagnetic spectrum operations cell located at either the combatant command or joint task force level. The information warfare team is also responsible for ensuring control, access, and management of the electromagnetic spectrum.



## COMBAT SUPPORT



U.S. AIR FORCE

5 January 2020

**AFDP 4-0**

comprises the Air Force's approach to supporting combat operations through the opening of airbases and forward operating sites.

The principal audiences for **AFDP 4-0** are the air component commander and those involved the monitoring, assessing, planning, and executing combat support activities.

# Air Force Doctrine Publication 4-0

## Combat Support

### Combat support

Combat support is the foundational and crosscutting capability to field, base, protect, support, and sustain Air Force forces during military operations across the competition continuum.

### Combat Support Principles

- Combat support enables military operations across the competition continuum with effects supporting national interests at any time or place.
- Combat support provides essential support according to the needs of the mission by leveraging the right mix of deployed and distributed footprint and reliable reach back.
- Combat support provides the ability to transition swiftly from home station to a deployed environment and between operational requirements.

### Combat Support Construct

- Core effects
- Core processes
- Core capabilities
- Functional communities

### Combat Support Processes

- Monitoring
- Assessing
- Planning
- Execution

### Combat Support Capabilities

Field forces; posture responsive forces; base forces; protect forces; generate the mission; and support and sustain the mission, forces, and infrastructure.

### Planning

Planning should aim for the minimum possible footprint consistent with effective operations, especially while preparing the operational environment.

### Lines of Communication

Air, ground, and sea lines of communication are transportation bridges to deploy, sustain, and redeploy forces to and from a theater of operations.

### Base Forces

Establishing, sustaining, recovering, and closing airbases and forward operating sites.

### Airbase Opening Transition Events

There are specific times during airbase opening when transitions between events drive actions that combat support forces need to be prepared for, these are outlined in AFI 10-401, *Air Force Operations Planning and Execution*.



# Air Force Doctrine Publication 5-0

## Planning

### PLANNING



U.S. AIR FORCE

22 January 2025

**AFDP 5-0** presents the Air Force Planning Process (AFPP), which provides a planning methodology for Airmen to solve complex problems. The AFPP is derived from the Joint Planning Process (JPP) for use by Air Force commanders and staffs at all levels.

**AFDP 5-0** provides guidance on the application of the AFPP. Airmen utilize the AFPP when the guidance, mission, situation, and environment dictate the need for USAF specific outputs.

**AFDP 5-0** is foundational doctrine that should be understood by all Airmen.

**Planning is how Airmen address and solve complicated problems.** It is the process through which Airmen frame a problem and provide solutions to achieve the full range of military objectives. The Air Force Planning Process (AFPP) is intended to provide Airmen with a conceptual framework for operational planning across the competition continuum, yet remains equally applicable to institutional problems that require a disciplined planning methodology. **The commander is the central element of all USAF planning and the result of the AFPP is a commander's plan or order.** It is important to remember that the value of planning is often greater than the plan itself.

### AFPP Purpose:

- Plans and orders production allow commanders to provide subordinates formal, standardized, and authoritative guidance in a joint force recognized format.
- Planning is an integral **element of the C2 Process** and a key enabler of the USAF's CC-DC-DE framework.
- A standardized, repeatable process enables commanders and staff to identify, understand, and methodically address problems, even in a CDO-L environment.

### AFPP Methodology:

- 1) **Planning Initiation.** Commanders at any echelon initiate the AFPP in response to, aligned with, and supported by HHQ guidance and direction.
- 2) **Mission Analysis.** Planners define and refine the problem during this step. The staff analyzes the HHQ's operational approach, plans, or orders to gain an understanding of the mission, intent, operational environment, resources available, limitations, and specified and implied tasks.
- 3) **Course of Action (COA) Development.** In this step, planners seek to determine "how" to use available resources and capabilities to accomplish the "what" derived during mission analysis. Staffs should consider the elements of the 5-paragraph order format as they develop potential COAs.
- 4) **Course of Action Analysis and Wargaming.** This crucial step allows planners to analyze the problem and visualize COAs to make improvements. Wargaming is a "what if" session designed to visualize and evaluate each COA in light of the challenges posed by the problem and the Operational Environment (OE).
- 5) **Course of Action Comparison.** Each COA is assessed independently against criteria related to the commander's intent, then compared after independent assessments are complete. This step facilitates the commander's decision-making process by considering the ends, ways, means, and risks associated with each COA.
- 6) **Course of Action Approval.** The staff presents COAs and a recommendation, along with supporting data from analysis, to the commander for approval.
- 7) **Plans and Orders Development.** The AFPP culminates with a plan or order (written or otherwise) that conveys the commander's intent and direction to subordinates in the most simple and direct manner practical. The order should include a shared understanding of an operation's purpose and the wider strategic context. The Mission Type Order (MTO) technique enables flexibility in execution to adjust to changes in the OE and exploit emergent opportunities.

#### USAF Modified Five-Paragraph Order Format (JP 5-0)

1. Situation
2. Mission
3. Execution
4. Force Sustainment
5. Command, Signal and Communications



## AGILE COMBAT EMPLOYMENT



*AFDN 1-21* is a doctrine “note” that formalizes Agile Combat Employment as emerging doctrine.

*AFDN 1-21* articulates the Air Force’s new approach to combat operations using distributed forces re-aggregated to mass airpower and achieve operational advantage. It explains agile combat operations from an operational level, at a speed, scope, complexity, and scale exceeding recent campaigns from distributed locations.

The principal audience for *AFDN 1-21* is all members of the profession of arms in the United States Air Force.

# Air Force Doctrine Note 1-21

## Agile Combat Employment

**Agile Combat Employment (ACE): a proactive and reactive operational scheme of maneuver executed within threat timelines to increase resiliency and survivability while generating combat power.**

Adversaries can challenge the United States’ ability to project power from enduring locations. To address this threat, ACE shifts operations from centralized physical infrastructures to a network of smaller, dispersed locations that can complicate adversary planning and provide more options for joint force commanders and hold adversary targets at risk from multiple locations.

When applied correctly, ACE complicates the enemy’s targeting process, creates political and operational dilemmas for the enemy, and creates flexibility for friendly forces.

ACE is an operational concept that supports joint all-domain operations (JADO). The successful employment of ACE positions the force to observe, orient, decide, and act in concert across all domains. To achieve freedom of action, ACE enables convergence across domains, presenting an adversary with dilemmas at an operational tempo that complicates or negates adversary responses and enables the joint force to operate inside the adversary’s decision-making cycle.

ACE requires a revolutionary change in how the Air Force thinks about and conducts operations within the modern operational environment. This doctrine note informs ACE concepts and provides a mechanism to quickly evolve doctrine to adapt to an ever-changing security environment.

### Agile Combat Employment Enablers

- Expeditionary and multi-capable Airmen
- Mission Command
- Tailorable force packages

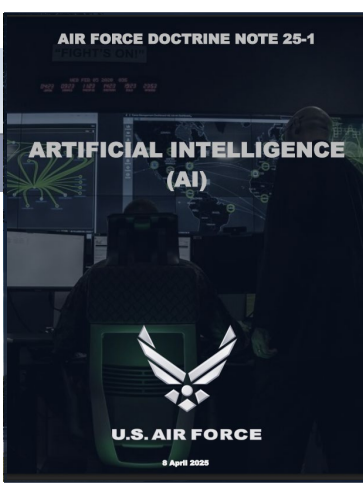
### Agile Combat Employment Enablers Operations Framework

- **Posture.** Forces must be able to rapidly execute operations from various locations with integrated capabilities and interoperability across the core functions.
- **Command and Control.** Mission command provides the framework.
- **Movement and Maneuver.** Agility and ability to outpace an adversary’s action through movement and maneuver to achieve and fight from positions of advantage; disrupts the adversary’s decision cycle by creating multiple dilemmas.
- **Protection.** A robust and layered integrated air and missile defense is paramount to protect the force from threats, including small unmanned aircraft systems, cruise missiles, ballistic missiles, and hypersonic weapons.
- **Sustainment.** Innovative logistics solutions and pre-positioned materiel are mandatory.
- **Information.** Agile Combat Employment supports information warfare’s aim of shaping the perceptions, behaviors, and attitudes of relevant actors.
- **Intelligence.** Intelligence and counterintelligence should be prepared to support operations in a degraded environment characterized by mission command and rapidly changing basing.
- **Fires.** The execution of fires does not fundamentally change but requires the use of mission-type orders and delegation of authorities to the lowest appropriate level.

23 August 2022

<https://www.doctrine.af.mil>





# Air Force Doctrine Note 25-1

## Artificial Intelligence

**Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is a broad field of technology that enables complex, rules-based autonomy in systems—distinguishing it from simpler, repetitive automation—by leveraging core concepts like Machine Learning (ML) and Neural Networks (NN).

### The Promise and Risks of AI

AI has the potential to be a force multiplier, enhancing capabilities in Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), enabling autonomous systems, and accelerating decision-making. However, AI comes with risks, including the rapid AI development by adversaries like China and Russia, the potential to lower the threshold for conflict, and vulnerabilities such as data poisoning. Consequently, for every Airman, the imperative is to master this technology to gain a decisive edge in a race where adversaries are determined to turn that same power against the US.

### Human-Machine Teaming (HMT)

The core of the Air Force's approach to fully integrating AI into airpower operations is HMT, where AI functions as an amplifier for Airmen's capabilities. This model combines human intuition with AI's data processing speed, rather than fully replacing human judgment. In short, AI is being developed not to make the Airman obsolete, but to make the Airman a more lethal and intuitive warfighter by serving as their tireless digital wingman.

### Core Concepts and Terminology

AFDN 25-1 provides foundational knowledge on AI, defining key terms like Machine Learning (ML), Neural Networks (NN), and Large Language Models (LLMs). It also draws a critical distinction between automation (simple, repetitive tasks) and autonomy (more complex, rules-based tasks). For the warfighter, AFDN 25-1 is not an academic lesson—it is the foundational language needed to understand the true capabilities and limitations of the AI Airmen will employ.

### Applications in Core Functions

The doctrine note details how AI will be applied across key Air Force functions, including Air Superiority, Global Precision Attack, Rapid Global Mobility, and Command and Control (C2). A key example is the development of Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA) to work in concert with manned aircraft. This signals that no matter the career field, AI is a near-term reality that will fundamentally change the tools, tactics, and teamwork used to accomplish the Air Force mission.

### Requirements for an "AI-Ready Force"

For successful implementation of AI, AFDN 25-1 stresses the need for an AI-fluent workforce, high-quality data, massive computing power, and talented personnel. It also emphasizes the importance of managing data ethically, being aware of bias, and ensuring robust cybersecurity for all AI systems. Ultimately, the Air Force's strategic advantage in AI will be won or lost not by the machines themselves, but by Airmen's personal commitment to mastering this technology.

**AFDN 25-1** is a doctrine note that serves as an informational guide on the integration of AI into Air Force operations.

**AFDN 25-1** provides a strategic primer to prepare the Air Force for a future where AI is integral to maintaining a competitive combat advantage. It provides the "what" and the "why" for AI adoption, without issuing specific orders on "how" to implement it.

The principal audience for **AFDN 25-1** is all members of the profession of arms in the United States Air Force.

8 April 2025

<https://www.doctrine.af.mil>

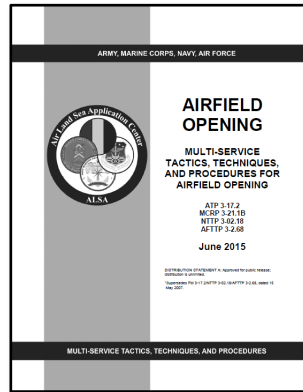


# Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

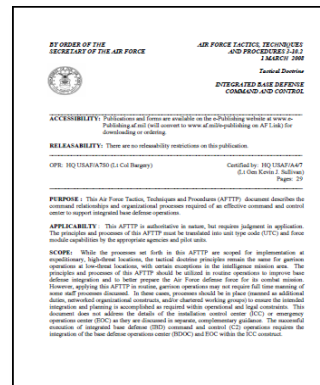


## AFI 10-1301, Air Force Doctrine Development

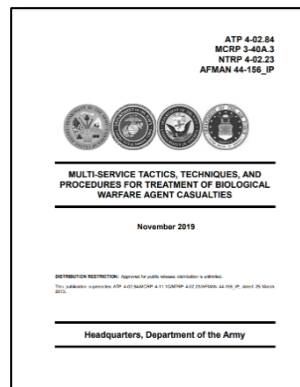
“TTPs are tactical doctrine that describes the proper employment of specific resources, individually or in concert with other resources, to accomplish detailed objectives.”



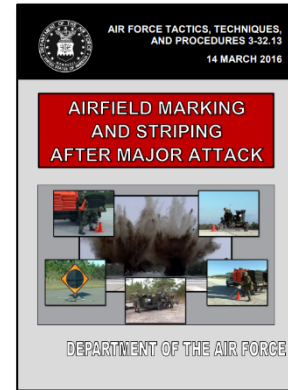
## Air Land Sea Applications Center 3-2 Series



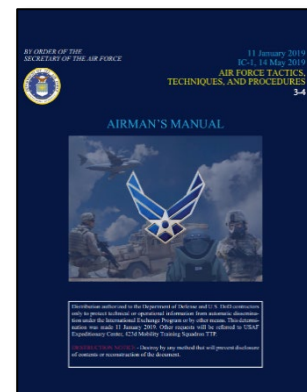
## Weapons Systems 3-1/3 Series



## Air Force Medical Service 3-42 Series



## AF A4 / Air Force Civil Engineer Center 3-32 Series



## USAF Expeditionary Center 3-4 Series



**401 Chennault Circle**  
**Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6112**  
**Email: [usafdoctrine@us.af.mil](mailto:usafdoctrine@us.af.mil)**  
**Website: [www.doctrine.af.mil](http://www.doctrine.af.mil)**

