



INTRODUCTION TO STRATEGIC ATTACK

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War is one of mankind's most complex endeavors. Destroying or incapacitating enemy military forces while attriting them into ineffectiveness is one means, but not the only means, of achieving warfare's objectives. [Airmen](#) have always envisioned going directly to the heart of an enemy. Modern airpower has come a long way toward realizing this vision. The combination of advanced systems with stealth and precision has made airpower a highly capable joint force option. Commanders now have the capability to directly affect an adversary's strategic [centers of gravity](#), helping to accelerate the achievement of US national objectives.

[Strategic attack](#) is offensive action specifically selected to achieve national strategic objectives. These attacks seek to weaken the adversary's ability or will to engage in conflict, and may achieve strategic objectives without necessarily having to achieve operational objectives as a precondition. Strategic attack involves the systematic application of force against enemy systems and centers of gravity, thereby producing the greatest effect for the least cost in lives, resources, and time. Vital systems affected may include leadership, critical processes, popular will and perception, and fielded forces. Strategic attack provides an effective capability that may drive an early end to conflict or achieve objectives more directly or efficiently than other applications of military power.

Airpower has inherent advantages in conducting strategic attack, with the distinct aim of producing effects well beyond the immediate tactical and operational effort expended and of directly contributing to achieving strategic, war-winning effects and objectives.

AFDP 3-70, *Strategic Attack*, is doctrine for understanding, planning, executing, and assessing this crucial function across the [range of military operations](#). Air Force personnel need to articulate the rationale for strategic attack as an essential and valuable warfighting option for the combatant commander. More importantly, Air Force personnel must understand how strategic attack as a tool for defeating our nation's adversaries can help fulfill or enhance our national security and military strategies.
