



STRATEGIC ATTACK PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

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[Strategic attack](#) (SA) should be a key element of any warfighting [strategy](#). It has been a major element of every conflict the US has engaged in since WW II and has enhanced or decisively shaped many of them. This powerful weapon in the [joint force commander's](#) (JFC) arsenal cannot be employed effectively if it is not well understood. At the [tactical](#) level—to aviators in the cockpit—SA missions look very much like any other force application mission, and this may incline strategists at the [operational](#) level to treat them as such. However, there are significant differences between SA and counterforce missions, especially in terms of [planning](#) and [assessment](#).

Planning and assessment are combined in this chapter because many of the considerations that govern the former apply to the latter as well. As part of an [effects-based approach to operations](#) (EBAO), they form a seamless whole with employment (covered in [Employment Considerations](#)) in the context of an overall strategy. Planning before operations will obviously be separated in time from employment and assessment, but many of the factors that guide them are the same and should be considered during planning. Once an operation's [battle rhythm](#) has begun, the three operate together as part of an [ongoing cycle](#).
