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AIR FORCE DOCTRINE PUBLICATION (AFDP) 3-99 DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ROLE IN JOINT ALL- DOMAIN OPERATIONS (JADO)

APPENDIX B: KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR AGILE COMBAT EMPLOYMENT (ACE)

08 OCT 2020

- ✦ The senior-ranking Airman must operate on [joint force commander](#)'s intent communicated through a series of mission-type orders to subordinate commands.
- ✦ Individual wings, groups, and squadrons require more planning personnel and systems to handle the workload, such as allocation and weaponeering, previously performed within the [air operations center](#) in non-contested environments.
- ✦ The coordination of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and air refueling assets in a degraded communications environment is more difficult and requires alternative organizational structures akin to the composite wing structure¹ to execute operations.
- ✦ DAF leaders throughout the chain of command require greater understanding of commander's intent, including the operation as described in the air operations directive and joint air operations plan, as well as follow-on mission-type orders.
- ✦ ACE operations require greater risk acceptance throughout the chain of command. ACE involves higher risk activities like integrated combat turns, specialized fueling operations, or wet wing defueling to maintain momentum. Operations inside an adversary's integrated air defense system, landing sites operating with limited defenses, short notice dispersal operations, etc., may also be necessary.
- ✦ ACE-resilient basing plans consist of main operating bases with significant passive and active defenses, a network of forward operating sites used for dispersal and short term operations, and a series of additional landing sites used for refueling and reloading to complicate adversary targeting.
- ✦ ACE requires increased theater access within and across partner nations,

¹ Moschgat, James E., Maj, The Composite Wing: Back to the Future!
<https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a425511.pdf>

complicating the area air defense plan, combat support plan, and airspace control plan.

- ✦ ACE combat support requires personnel with multiple qualifications to continue operations and maintain a smaller footprint at forward operating sites.
 - ✦ In a contested environment, relying on sustainment and [reachback](#) from the continental US is tenuous; develop organic and theater sustainment options should include pre-positioned materiel caches.
 - ✦ Advancements in adversary anti-access and area denial capabilities make defending against, withstanding, recovering from, and avoiding airfield attacks key components of ACE.
 - ✦ Traditional, main operating base-focused force protection plans and strategies prove insufficient to meet needs of short-term, austere, or dispersed operations. On-demand force protection-related intelligence and support enables survivability of air operations against ground-based threats.
 - ✦ Intelligence preparation of the operational environment (IPOE) activities precede operational ACE execution to identify ground-based, foreign intelligence, and criminal threats at potential forward operating sites and refueling points, providing planners and leaders information to make basing and risk mitigation decisions. IPOE also provides insight into enemy kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities and threats to proposed ACE operating locations. Commanders should consider delegating risk acceptance to decision makers at the lowest echelon.
 - ✦ ACE operations require networks with the ability to operate in both connected and disconnected modes.
 - ✦ DAF intelligence, counterintelligence, and law enforcement entities leverage existing access to and relationships within planned and potential ACE basing locations to establish plans to provide just-in-time force protection and intelligence support. In locations with no current presence, DAF equities initiate and develop new relationships with individuals and organizations capable of providing desired information.
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