

AIR FORCE GLOSSARY



U.S. AIR FORCE

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PREFACE

The Air Force Glossary contains terms and definitions that are unique to the US Air Force and not found in the DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms [Short title: DOD Dictionary]. If a term is not contained in this glossary, then check the [DOD Dictionary](#) for standard DOD terms. This publication along with the DOD Dictionary supplements standard English-language dictionaries.

The primary parts of the Air Force Glossary are:

- ✦ Terms and definitions.
 - ✦ Shortened word forms (abbreviations, acronyms, and initialisms).
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TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

A

airbridge. An air refueling operation that extends the unrefueled range of aircraft transiting from the continental United States and a theater, or any two theaters. This operation reduces the number of aircraft on the ground at forward staging bases, minimizes potential en route maintenance delays, enables airlift assets to maximize their payloads, and facilitates rapid transit of combat aircraft to area of operations. [Air Force Doctrine Publication (AFDP) 3-36]

air component commander. Leads Air Force forces as the commander, Air Force forces and the JFC's joint air operations as the joint force air component commander. (AFDP 1)

air expeditionary force. An organizational structure to provide Air Force forces and support on a rotational, and thus relatively more predictable basis. They are composed of force packages of capabilities that provide rapid and responsive airpower. Also called **AEF**. (AFDP 3-30)

Air Force Emergency Management Program. The single, integrated Air Force program to coordinate and organize efforts to prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the direct and indirect consequences of an emergency or attack. (AFI 10-2501)

airlift. Operations to transport and deliver forces and materiel through the air in support of strategic, operational, or tactical objectives. (AFDP 3-36)

Airman. Historically, the term Airman is associated with uniformed members of the US Air Force (officer or enlisted; regular, Reserve, or Guard) regardless of rank, component, or specialty. Today, Air Force civilians and members of the Civil Air Patrol, when conducting missions as the official Air Force Auxiliary, are incorporated within the broader meaning of the term, Airman. (AFDP 1)

air parity. A condition in the air battle in which no force has control of the air. (AFDP 3-01)

airpower. The ability to project military power through control and exploitation in, from and through the air. (AFDP 1)

aviation foreign internal defense. Programs for assessing, training, advising, assisting and equipping host nation aviation forces in the sustainment, employment, and integration of airpower to support their internal defense and development programs. Also called **AvFID**. (AFDP 3-05)

B

base security zone. The multi-dimensional space around the base from which the enemy might impact air operations by launching an attack against approaching or departing aircraft or personnel and resources located on the base and is critical to air base defense planning. Also called **BSZ**. (AFDP 3-10)

behavioral effect. An effect on the behavior of living constituents of a system. (AFDP 3-0)

C

cascading effect. One or more of a series of successive indirect effects that propagate through a system or systems. Cascading effects typically flow throughout the levels of conflict and are the results of interdependencies and links among multiple connected systems. (AFDP 3-0)

causal linkage. An explanation of why an action/task or effect may cause or contribute to a given effect. (AFDP 3-0)

combat support. The foundational and crosscutting capability to field, base, protect, support, and sustain Air Force forces across the competition continuum. Also called **CS**. (AFDP 4-0) NOTE: Air Force definition is an all-encompassing definition that includes aspects of the joint definitions of [combat support](#) and [combat service support](#).

commander, Air Force forces. The single Air Force commander of an Air Force Service component assigned or attached to a joint force commander at the unified combatant command, subordinate unified command, or joint task force level. Also called **COMAFFOR**. (AFDP 3-30)

commander, Air Force special operations forces. The senior Airman that presents Air Force special operations forces to a joint force commander. As with the commander, Air Force forces, the commander, Air Force special operations forces is the single Airman in charge of Air Force special operations forces issues. Also called **COMAFSOF**. (AFDP 3-05)

control of the air. Describes a level of influence in the air domain relative to that of an adversary, and is typically categorized as parity, superiority, or supremacy. (AFDP 3-01)

Coronet. A movement of air assets, usually fighter aircraft, in support of contingencies, rotations, and exercises or aircraft movements for logistics purposes. The tanker aircraft in a Coronet mission provides fuel to avoid intermediate stops and provides weather avoidance, oceanic navigation, communication, and command and control of the mission. (AFDP 3-36)

counterland operations. Airpower operations against enemy land force capabilities to create effects that achieve joint force commander objectives. (AFDP 3-03)

countersea. 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. (AFDP 3-04)

counterspace. A mission that integrates offensive and defensive operations to attain and maintain the desired control and protection in and through space. (AFDP 3-14)

counterthreat operations. The Air Force Office of Special Investigations capability to find, fix, track, and neutralize enemy threats in order to create a sustained permissive environment for air, space, and cyberspace operations. Also called **CTO**. (AFTTP 3-10.3)

cumulative effect. An effect resulting from the aggregation of multiple, contributory direct or indirect effects. (AFDP 3-0)

current intelligence. One of two categories of descriptive intelligence that is concerned with describing the existing situation. (AFDP 2-0)

cyber tasking order. Tasking document used by the Air Force cyber component commander to task assigned Air Force cyber forces to perform specific actions at specific time frames in support of Air Force and joint requirements. Also called **CTO**. (AFDP 3-12)

D

defense force commander. The senior Air Force commander responsible for the air base normally delegates operational authority to conduct integrated base defense to the defense force commander. The defense force commander exercises command and control through an established chain of command and directs the planning and execution of base defense operations. Also called **DFC**. (AFDP 3-10)

defensive counterspace. Operations that protect friendly space capabilities from attack, interference, and unintentional hazards, in order to preserve US and friendly ability to exploit space for military advantage. Also called **DCS**. See also counterspace; offensive counterspace. (AFDP 3-14)

director of space forces. A senior Air Force officer with broad space expertise and theater familiarity, normally nominated by the Commander, Air Force Space Command and appointed by the theater commander, Air Force forces (COMAFFOR). In the preferred construct of a dual-hatted COMAFFOR/joint force air component commander (JFACC), the director of space forces serves as the senior space advisor to the JFACC. Also called **DIRSPACEFOR**. (AFDP 3-14)

distributed operations. When independent or interdependent forces, some of which may be outside the joint operations area, participate in the operational planning or decision making to accomplish missions and objectives for commanders. (AFDP 3-30)

doctrine. Fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions in support of national objectives. (USAF Doctrine Primer)

E

effects-based approach to operations. An approach in which operations are planned, executed, assessed, and adapted to influence or change systems or capabilities in order to achieve desired outcomes. Also called **EBAO**. (AFDP 3-0)

electronic warfare integrated reprogramming. The systematic process designed to enable aircrew survivability and mission success while operating in an environment characterized by friendly, neutral and hostile threat systems that use the electromagnetic (EM) spectrum. Electronic warfare integrated reprogramming provides a capability to characterize the EM emissions of hostile and other systems, analyze and model their impact on operations, and to incorporate these characteristics to enable rapid detection, accurate identification and appropriate response within the EM spectrum. Also called **EWIR** (AFI 10-703)

E

force protection intelligence. Analyzed, all-source intelligence information that, when integrated or fused with other force protection information, provides an assessment of the threats to DOD missions, people, or resources. Also called **FPI**. (AFDP 3-10)

functional effect. An effect on the ability of a system to function as designed. (AFDP 3-0)

G

Global Air Mobility Support System. Provides responsive, worldwide support capability to airlift and air refueling operations. This system consists of an existing but limited set of CONUS and en route locations. Deployable forces capable of augmenting the fixed en route locations or establishing en route locations where none exist are also an integral part of this system. Also called **GAMSS**. (AFDP 3-36)

I

indirect effect. A second, third, or higher-order effect created through an intermediate effect or causal linkage following an action. An indirect effect is often delayed and typically is more difficult to recognize and assess than a direct effect. (AFDP 3-0)

indirect support. Efforts to develop and sustain host nation self-sufficiency and is often associated with steady-state shaping strategies. (AFDP 3-22)

information warfare. The employment of military capabilities in and through the information environment to deliberately affect adversary human and system behavior and preserve friendly freedom of action during cooperation, competition, and conflict. (AFDP 3-99)

intended effect. The desired, planned, and predicted outcomes of an action or set of actions. (AFDP 3-0)

J

joint planning process for air. A seven-step process similar to the joint planning process. Joint planning process for air culminates in the production of the joint air operations plan (JAOP) and supporting plans and orders. Also called **JPPA**. (AFDP 3-0)

K

kinetic. Relating to actions designed to produce effects using the forces and energy of moving bodies and directed energy, including physical damage to, alteration of, or destruction of targets. Kinetic actions can have lethal or non-lethal effects. (AFDP 3-0)

M

meaconing. Consists of receiving radio beacon signals and rebroadcasting them on the same frequency to confuse navigation. The meaconing stations cause aircraft or surface stations to obtain inaccurate bearings. (AFDP 3-51)

mission assurance (cyberspace). Measures required to accomplish essential objectives of missions in a contested environment. Mission assurance entails prioritizing mission essential functions, mapping mission dependence on cyberspace, identifying vulnerabilities, and mitigating risk of known vulnerabilities. (AFDP 3-12)

N

nonkinetic. Relating to actions designed to produce effects without the direct use of the force or energy of moving objects and directed energy sources. Kinetic actions can have lethal or nonlethal results. (AFDP 3-0)

O

offensive counterspace. Operations undertaken to negate an adversary's use of space capabilities, reducing the effectiveness of adversary forces in all domains. Also called **OCS**. (AFDP 3-14).

operational-level assessment. Joint force components' evaluation of the achievement of their objectives, both tactical and operational, through assessment of effects, operational execution, environmental influences, and attainment of the objectives' success indicators, in order to develop strategy recommendations. It also includes any required analysis of causal linkages. Also called **OA**. (AFDP 3-0)

operational weather squadron. Air Force units that provide characterization weather support to all Air Force and Army installations and activities within their associated combatant commander's area of responsibility. Also known as **OWS**. (AFDP 3-59)

P

parallel operations. Operations that apply pressure at many points across an enemy's system in a short period of time to cause maximum shock and dislocation effects across that system. (AFDP 3-0)

permissive combat airspace. A low risk exists for US and coalition aircraft operations within the airspace of interest. Operations can expect little to no use of adversary electronic warfare, communications jamming, anti-aircraft systems, or aircraft. Air superiority or air supremacy has been achieved. (AFDP 3-52)

Phoenix Raven. Security team tasked with providing close-in security for AMC aircraft at OCONUS areas where the local security has been assessed as inadequate or the security situation is not fully known.

physical effect. Results of actions or effects that physically alter an object or system. (AFDP 3-0)

policy. Guidance that is directive or instructive, stating what is to be accomplished. (USAF Doctrine Primer)

psychological effect. Results of actions or effects that influence the emotions, motives, and reasoning of individuals, organizations, and governments. (AFDP 3-0)

public information environment. A substantial subsystem of the information environment that includes all individuals, organizations or systems that collect, process and disseminate information for public consumption. (AFDP 3-61)

S

space supremacy. The degree of control in space by one force over another that permits the conduct of operations at a given time and place without effective interference from opposing forces. (AFDP 3-14)

split operations. One type of distributed operations. It describes those distributed operations conducted by a single command and control (C2) entity that is separated

between two or more geographic locations. A single commander should have oversight of all aspects of a split C2 operation. (AFDP 3-30)

I

total force. The US Air Force contributing components that provide varied capacities to meet the Nation's National Military Objectives. Total force includes Regular Air Force, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, civilian and contractor workforce, and Civil Air Patrol when conducting missions for the Air Force as the official Air Force Auxiliary. (AFI 90-1001)

W

wargaming. A conscious attempt to consider actions, reactions, and counteractions in order to visualize the flow of an operation. (AFDP 3-0)

weather. All meteorological and space environmental factors as provided by Services, support agencies and other sources. These factors include the whole range of atmospheric phenomena, from earth's surface up to and including the space environment. (AFDP 3-59)

SHORTENED WORD FORMS (ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, AND INITIALISMS)

AEF	air expeditionary force
AFDP	Air Force Doctrine Publication
AvFID	aviation foreign internal defense
BSZ	base security zone
CS	combat support
COMAFFOR	commander, Air Force forces
COMAFSOF	commander, Air Force special operations forces
CoL	continuum of learning
CTO	counterthreat operations; cyber tasking order
DFC	defense force commander
DCS	defensive counterspace
DIRSPACEFOR	director of space forces
EBAO	effects-based approach to operations
EWIR	electronic warfare integrated reprogramming
FPI	force protection intelligence
GAMSS	Global Air Mobility Support System
JPPA	joint planning process for air
OA	operational-level assessment
OCS	offensive counterspace
OWS	operational weather squadron
